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ABSTRACT

“YOU MUST PROPHECY AGAIN”:  
THE MISSION OF GOD’S PEOPLE IN REVELATION 10–14

by

Adenilton Tavares de Aguiar

Adviser: Ranko Stefanovic

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: “YOU MUST PROPHECY AGAIN”: THE MISSION OF GOD’S PEOPLE IN REVELATION 10–14

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Name and degree of faculty adviser: Ranko Stefanovic, Ph.D.

Date completed: July 2022

The primary task of this study was to delineate the theology of mission in the book of Revelation, with a focus on chaps. 10–14 and special attention to the people of God as participants in the mission of God.

The historical survey demonstrated that the theology of mission conveyed by the book of Revelation is a topic broadly neglected in recent scholarship and, hence, requires an in-depth treatment. The object of research was addressed from a biblical-theological perspective by means of an exegetical analysis of relevant passages and key terms that were identified on the basis of a semantic field approach. Nine semantic fields of mission in Revelation, including their elements, were listed. This fact alone demonstrates that Revelation has more to say about mission than one could think on first reading. There is

more on mission in Revelation than one could identify by searching only for sending terminology. Mission, in this sense, refers to God's initiative to bring humanity back to him by means of agents divinely commissioned. In Revelation, God uses his end-time people to present the last message of warning to this world.

This study demonstrates that Revelation 10–14 focuses on the commission of the end-time church, God's remnant. The commission itself is found in 10:8–11:2.

Revelation 11:3–13 shows how such a commission is accomplished, and Revelation 14:6–13 presents the content of the end-time message to be proclaimed to the world. In turn, Revelation 12–13 indicates that the cosmic conflict between God and Satan is the theological background underlying the missionary activity of God's end-time people. More particularly, this section of the book shows that mission is accomplished amid severe opposition by Satan and his allies on earth.

Finally, this study has pointed out that the heavenly announcement in 11:15, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever" points to the fulfillment of all God's covenantal promises and, hence, the completion and triumph of God's mission through the establishment of his everlasting kingdom. Thus, Revelation presents the final chapter of the beautiful story of the *missio Dei*!

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

“YOU MUST PROPHECY AGAIN”:  
THE MISSION OF GOD’S PEOPLE IN REVELATION 10-14

A Dissertation  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BCBC	Believers Church Bible Commentary
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BST	The Bible Speaks Today
CBC	Cornerstone Biblical Commentary
CCGNT	Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament
CCSS	Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CCGNT	Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament
CGNTC	Cambridge Greek New Testament Commentary
DARCOM	Daniel and Revelation Committee Series
EDNT	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990–1993.
EEC	Evangelical Exegetical Commentary

ESBT	Essential Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
GNTG	Guides to New Testament Exegesis
Hermeneia	Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible
Interpretation	Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ITC	International Theological Commentary
IVPNTC	IVP New Testament Commentary Series
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
MC	Mentor Commentaries
L&N	Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida, eds. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains</i> . New York: United Bible Societies, 1996.
NAC	New American Commentary
<i>NBD</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>New Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. R. W. Wood, Howard Marshall, J. D. Douglas, and N. Hillyer. 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
NDSB	New Daily Study Bible
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTL	The New Testament Library

OTL	The Old Testament Library
PAI	Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
RHBC	The Randal House Bible Commentary
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
SGC	Study Guide Commentary Series
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
SNTS	Society for New Testament Studies
THNTC	Two Horizons New Testament Commentary
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
UBC	Understanding the Bible Commentary Series
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WeBC	Westminster Bible Companion
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

For a long time, the book of Revelation was given only a marginal place in scholarly works dealing with the NT. This has changed considerably in recent decades, and Revelation has become the subject of intensive academic research.<sup>1</sup> So vast is the availability of Revelation resources that any serious study will be able to cover the existing scholarly works only by addressing the representative views. Recent debates revolve around matters such as the genre of Revelation, its ancient environment, and its Jewish roots, as well as literary, theological, pacifist, and social approaches to understanding the message of the book.<sup>2</sup> While several theological themes in Revelation have been addressed, the present research identifies mission as one topic that has not received in-depth treatment from a biblical-theological perspective.

#### **Statement of the Problem and Rationale for Mission in Revelation 10–14**

Scholars recognize that Revelation ends the biblical story of the *Missio Dei*.<sup>3</sup> Despite this fact, no comprehensive study has carefully assessed the biblical data from a

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<sup>1</sup> Russell S. Morton, *Recent Research on Revelation*, *Recent Research in Biblical Studies* 7 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2014), 11–12.

<sup>2</sup> Morton, *Recent Research on Revelation*, 12. See also Grant R. Osborne, “Recent Trends in the Study of the Apocalypse,” in *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*, ed. Scot McKnight and Grant R. Osborne (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Many scholars have failed to give Revelation the room it deserves in the discussion on mission in

biblical-theological perspective in order to, as it were, trace a theology of mission based on them. Therefore, such a gap in recent literature calls for research. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 2 (Mission in Revelation 10–14 in Recent Literature), recent studies on mission in Revelation have revolved around the destiny of the nations and the witnessing motif.<sup>4</sup> However, there is more to explore, since, in addition to the witnessing motif, mission is also expressed in the Apocalypse of John in relation to themes such as discipleship, covenant, judgment, monotheism, creation, new creation, among others—some of which have not been considered in recent treatments of the subject or have been underexplored.

Two important questions are related to the issue above: (1) What images, words, ideas, and passages in Revelation connect to the story of God’s mission in the OT and NT? (2) In what sense and in what way does Revelation present the “final chapter” of mission in the biblical story and provide a prophetic description of the accomplishment of Christian mission as it is referred to in the rest of the NT? In a sentence, the main focus of this dissertation concerns the people of God as participants in the mission of God—who they are, what they do, how they do it, their message, and the outcomes of their missionary action.

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the Bible, but one can hardly deny its crucial role as the book that ends the story of God’s mission. This is, for instance, the view of biblical scholars such as Christopher Wright (see Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006], 195; Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God’s People: A Biblical Theology of the Church’s Mission* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 76–77) and Michael J. Gorman (see Michael J. Gorman, *Reading Revelation Responsibly: Uncivil Worship and Witness: Following the Lamb into the New Creation* [Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011], 171–75) and missiologists such as Zane Pratt, M. David Silss, and Jeff K. Walters (see Zane Pratt, M. David Silss, and Jeff K. Walters, *Introduction to Global Missions* [Nashville: B & H, 2014], 65–66).

<sup>4</sup> See Eckhard J. Schnabel, “Mission, Early Non-Pauline,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 769–70.



Revelation 10–14 contains a large number of mission ideas, and some scholars view it as the main section of the book.<sup>5</sup> This section of Revelation is clearly made up of two pericopes that are central for the understanding of the book: 10–11 and 12–14. Whereas 10–11 is a sort of introduction to the second part of the Apocalypse of John,<sup>6</sup> 12–14 describes the tenacious opposition of the evil triumvirate in the cosmic conflict (Rev 12–13), culminating with the end of earth’s history (Rev 14). In a particular sense, 10–11 can also be seen as an introduction to 12–14,<sup>7</sup> in that the commissioning in 10–11 is fulfilled by means of the church’s witnessing in 12–14. In addition, linguistic and theological connections between Revelation 10–11 and Revelation 14 indicate that the latter can be seen as a counterpart of the former,<sup>8</sup> which means that Revelation 10 and Revelation 14 demarcate this large section in Revelation.

Richard Bauckham pointed out several links between 10–11 and 12–14.<sup>9</sup> In turn, Sigve K. Tonstad has recently observed that Revelation 12 should be seen as the Apocalypse in miniature.<sup>10</sup> Buist M. Fanning sees a similar function in 10–11.<sup>11</sup> If all

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<sup>5</sup> Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 2nd ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009), 37; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Composition and Structure of the Apocalypse,” *CBQ* 39 (1977): 364; also Fiorenza, *Revelation: Vision of a Just World*, Proclamation Commentaries (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991), 35–36.

<sup>6</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), 520.

<sup>7</sup> Fiorenza, “Composition and Structure,” 361.

<sup>8</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 39–40.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 284–85. Among other things, he argues that the witnessing in 11:3–13 is expanded in the rest of the book, but 12–14 “is primarily a much fuller exposition of the conflict between the forces of evil and the witnessing of the church.” (page 285). Also Buist M. Fanning, *Revelation*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 308.

<sup>10</sup> Sigve K. Tonstad, *Revelation*, PAI (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 38. He remarks that “the central role of chapter 12 for the structure of Revelation [and, consequently, for its interpretation] is widely accepted, but its explanatory potential remains largely untapped.” (page 37).

these assessments are correct, they increase the importance of chaps. 10–14 for one’s understanding of the book. As a matter of fact, an analysis of mission in Revelation 10–14 should provide a picture of the theology of mission in the overall book of Revelation.

### **Justification and Purpose**

A review of literature on the topic has demonstrated that the theology of mission conveyed by the book of Revelation has been a topic broadly neglected in recent scholarship. Even monographs dealing with the subject of mission in the NT have left Revelation out of the discussion or have given it secondary importance. Interestingly, however, several works recognize the importance of Revelation for the biblical theology of mission and go as far as to mention that it contains the last word when it comes to the biblical story of the *Missio Dei*.

Previous dissertations have focused on evangelistic motifs, the mandate of the church, and the destiny of the nations.<sup>12</sup> A dissertation directly addressing the theology of mission in Revelation was defended in 2015.<sup>13</sup> Daniel Louw follows a thematic approach in order to provide a theology of mission in Revelation. He assesses mission in Revelation as it relates to eleven other theological themes: doxology, Christology, pneumatology, biblical cosmology, biblical anthropology, angelology, Satanology, soteriology, eschatology, deaconology, and ecclesiology. However, he provides no inductive study of passages. My dissertation differs in that I investigate what Revelation

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<sup>11</sup> He mentions that, just like Revelation 7, the interlude in 10–11 reflects “the central themes of the book in remarkable ways.” (Fanning, *Revelation*, 308).

<sup>12</sup> See Olutola K. Peters, “The Mandate of the Church in the Apocalypse of John” (PhD diss., McMaster University, 2002); Jon Morales, “Christ, Shepherd of the Nations: The Nations as Narrative Character and Audience in the Apocalypse” (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016).

has to say about mission by doing an exegetical study of selected passages. In fact, this is the first treatment of mission in Revelation through a methodical selection and exegetical study of key passages, relating those passages to the biblical storyline. While there have been efforts to deal with some isolated passages,<sup>14</sup> no one has put the biblical data on the table and summarized the theology of mission in Revelation according to a careful assessment of these data. Accordingly, the purpose of this dissertation is to delineate the theology of mission in the book of Revelation, with a focus on chaps. 10–14.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

This dissertation is a theological study of the mission of God’s people in Revelation. Although mission concepts can be identified throughout the entire book of Revelation, to deal equally with all the passages expressing them would be difficult in one dissertation. Accordingly, I focus on Revelation 10–14. Three limitations of this study can be summarized as follows.

First, the chapters on OT and NT backgrounds to mission in Revelation 10–14 offer a synthesis of the findings of previous works rather than an analysis of biblical texts. Otherwise, it would be necessary to examine more passages than possible in one dissertation. In any case, I seek to interact with the findings by providing my own assessment of them as well as attempting to make a contribution to the discussion.

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<sup>13</sup> Daniel Louw, “Sending in Openbaring” (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, 2015).

<sup>14</sup> For example, Chun Kwang Chung, “The Function of Revelation 1:7 to the Mission to the Nations Motif in the Book of Revelation” (MA thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2016). Later on, a synthesis of this thesis was published as an article: Chun Kwang Chung, “A função de Apocalipse 1:7 na missão às nações no livro de Apocalipse,” *Fides Reformata* 23, no. 2 (2018): 57–75. See also David Aune, “John’s Prophetic Commission and the People of the World,” in *The Church and its Mission in the New Testament and Early Christianity: Essays in Memory of Hans Kvalbein*, ed. David E. Aune and Reidar Hvalvik (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 211–25. See also Bauckham’s extensive treatment of the theme

Second, there is no section on mission in the Intertestamental Judaism Literature as background to mission in Revelation 10–14. This does not mean that I will not be sensitive to that body of literature when exegeting selected passages, but that I will not provide a separate synthesis of previous works that dealt with the topic of mission in that *corpus*. Although it has the potential to shed light on certain mission-oriented texts in the NT,<sup>15</sup> it was preferred to leave it out for the sake of delimitation.

Third, it is beyond the primary purpose of this dissertation to deal with the relevance of Revelation’s theology of mission for contemporary missiology. I hope that missiologists will read the dissertation and draw implications for their theory and practice from it.

### **Methodology**

This theological study of mission in Revelation 10–14 will be performed by means of an exegetical analysis of selected passages (i.e., 10:8–11; 11:1–2; 11:3, 7, 9–10, 13, 15–18; 12:11, 17; 13:9–10; 14:4, 6–11, 12–13, 14–20). The exegesis, however, will be limited to assessing elements of the text related to the topic of mission.<sup>16</sup> A semantic

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“The Conversion of the Nations,” in which he deals with a number of passages (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 211–337).

<sup>15</sup> See Clifford H. Beddel, “Mission in Intertestamental Judaism,” in *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*, ed. William Larkin Jr. and Joel F. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 21–29; Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 55–71.

<sup>16</sup> By “exegesis” I mean focus on linguistic analysis—meaning of words, syntactical relationships, literary form, structure, and the relationship between text and context—with special attention to the OT background, i.e., the MT, LXX, and other OT traditions (see Jon Paulien, “Criteria and the Assessment of Allusions to the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation,” in *Studies in the Book of Revelation*, ed. Steve Moyise (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 114–15) as well as connections to the theme of mission in the rest of the NT traditions.

I am aware that “it is difficult [...] to prove that the author of Revelation had access to any one of them, although it is quite likely that he had access to at least some,” and it is sure that he “was thoroughly familiar with the traditions embodied in the New Testament,” as well as he also understood the “Old

field approach was used to select relevant passages and key terms in Revelation for exegetical analysis. The procedure consisted of two steps: (1) identification of mission terminology; (2) identification of relevant passages and key terms based on the mission terminology. This methodology is applied not only in Revelation 10–14 but also in my Chapter 5, where I deal with the preceding context, i.e., Revelation 1–9, and the following context, i.e., Revelation 15–22.

A semantic field approach was applied by Andreas J. Köstenberger in his *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples According to the Fourth Gospel*<sup>17</sup> and, more recently, by Eckhard J. Schnabel in his two-volume *Early Christian Mission*.<sup>18</sup> By using the term “semantic field,”<sup>19</sup> I indicate that this dissertation does not focus merely on the study of particular words.<sup>20</sup> As Köstenberger observes, “words with similar meanings sustain a relationship with one another as part of a semantic field.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, in tracing a

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Testament concepts in the light of the Christ-event.” See Jon Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets: Literary Allusions and the Interpretation of Revelation 8:7–12*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 11 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1988), 162, 189. As Schnabel puts it, “without the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, there would be no NT writings and no church”; Eckhard J. Schnabel, “Biblical Theology from a NT Perspective,” *JETS* 62, no. 2 (2019): 247. For a brief and recent discussion on the New Testament writings in Revelation, see Külli Tõniste, *The Ending of the Canon: A Canonical and Intertextual Reading of Revelation 21–22*, LNTS 526 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 123–31.

<sup>17</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples According to the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 17–37.

<sup>18</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; Leicester, England: Apollos, 2004), 1:35–40.

<sup>19</sup> For a summary of the impact of modern research on lexical semantics in NT studies, see the chapter on “Lexical Semantics and Lexicography” in Constantine R. Campbell, *Advances in the Study of Greek: New Insights for Reading the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015).

<sup>20</sup> While the word study is “a process that is fundamental to exegesis,” word studies “are also landmines for bad exegesis.” See Wendy L. Widder, “Linguistic Fundamentals,” in *Linguistics & Biblical Exegesis*, ed. Douglas Mangum and Josh Westbury, Lexham Methods Series 2 (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2016), 35. See also D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd ed. (Carlisle: Paternoster; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 17–64.

<sup>21</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 17. As one deals with a semantic field approach, three observations must clearly be kept in mind: (1) The meaning of a word does not limit itself to its root

concept, one must consider that it transcends the “lexical dimension to include also its relation to associated ideas and its theological significance.”<sup>22</sup> By way of example, in this dissertation the semantic field of mission in Revelation will include the word ἅγιος/*saint* in the semantic domain of μάρτυς/*witness*, since the book clearly associates the former with the latter (see, e.g., Rev 17:6).<sup>23</sup> Indeed, these two words are pointing to the same referent. In other words, they refer to the people of God.

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(“fallacy root”; see Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 28–33). Indeed, sometimes its meaning has nothing to do with the root. (2) The context is a preponderant factor to conveying meaning. As a matter of fact, it has priority over the meaning deriving from the inner component of the word. (3) It is necessary to maintain a clear distinction “between words as linguistic units and the concepts associated with them.” See David Alan Black, *Linguistics for Students of New Testament Greek: A Survey of Basic Concepts and Applications* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 123. As to the third point, the following statement is illuminating: “Although words have been used by the biblical writers to express religious meanings, concepts involve the use of far more elaborate structures than individual words. All languages have several ways of expressing a concept, and rarely does a concept consist of only one word. For example, the concept of ‘righteous’ includes the Greek words δίκαιος, ἀγαθός, ἅγιος, καθαρός, καλός, and ὅσιος. A word study of δίκαιος alone, therefore, would hardly be sufficient as a basis for a discussion of the full and complete concept of ‘righteous’ in the New Testament” (Black, *Linguistics for Students*, 123).

<sup>22</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 22. See also Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1989), 131.

<sup>23</sup> In L&N, these terms are obviously placed in different domains. However, “within certain limits, semantic fields can be configured differently according to an author's usage of terms.” See Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 29n39. Osborne punctuates, “none of us ever uses the exact same words to describe our thoughts. Rather, we use synonyms and other phrases to depict our ideas. Therefore, a truly complete picture must cluster semantically related terms and phrases” (Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, rev. and expanded 2nd ed. [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006], 92–93). In addition, since the occurrence of absolute synonyms is a rather rare phenomenon in a certain language (see Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation*, 159), addressing a concept through different words and phrases gives it diverse nuances that otherwise would not be there. When dealing with that concept, the interpreter should consider those nuances as well.

Discourse analysis may also be helpful in that regard. As Stanley E. Porter affirms, the “Semantic-Field Theory notes that words are used in terms of contextual relations, not in isolation.” Stanley E. Porter, *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament: Studies in Tools, Methods, and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 88. Porter remarks that the study of a language, without forgetting the individual parts, must always pay attention to “the larger contextual, semantic, and linguistic frameworks in which language is used,” (Porter, *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, 89), i.e., discourse analysis. For more on discourse, see Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2010). The discourse grammar approach can be very helpful as one exegetes a given passage. It does not replace formal approaches but complements them (Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 5). In his study of mission in the Fourth Gospel, Köstenberger also calls attention to the fact that concepts can come both from the lexeme level and the discourse level. He mentions that scholars interested in the former utilize a static concept-oriented approach, whereas those attracted by the latter apply a dynamic field-oriented approach. The basic difference between the two is that the latter conveys a broader notion of concept that transcends “a term's

A semantic field approach seems to be an adequate method for identifying clusters of mission terminology in that the mission of the church in the NT is reflected in the terms applied by the NT authors to describe her missionary activity and expansion.<sup>24</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel identifies twelve groups of terms, sorted according to subjects.<sup>25</sup> After repeated readings, I have identified in Revelation eleven out of the twelve fields listed by Schnabel. However, after some adjustments, I list nine semantic fields (see below). Those adjustments are due to the fact that Revelation is a piece of literature that differs from everything else in the NT. This will be further explored below in the section “The Semantic Field of Mission in Revelation.”

At first sight, Revelation seems to be pervaded with missionary language. However, given its frequent use of OT and symbolic language, perhaps a semantic field approach is not enough to track everything Revelation has to say about mission. For that reason, paying close attention to the use of OT language is critical for a better result.

### Use of the Old Testament and Identifying It

Genesis 12:1–3 is the foundational text in dealing with a biblical theology of mission, since in the biblical storyline<sup>26</sup> it is the place where God begins to solve the

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lexical dimension to include also its relation to associated ideas and its theological significance” (Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 22). The concepts one can draw from a dynamic field-oriented approach are also labeled as discourse concepts. In order to explain what a discourse concept is, Köstenberger resorts to an example given by Cotterell and Turner using the phrase “Uncle George’s old red bike.” He mentions that the idea expressed by such a phrase “may be referred to simply as ‘the bike.’ In that case, the term ‘the bike’ viewed as a discourse concept should be understood as ‘Uncle George’s old red bike’ with all the connotations previously linked to it.” Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 24.

<sup>24</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 35.

<sup>25</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 36–37.

<sup>26</sup> Some scholars argue that the biblical drama can be summarized in six crucial acts: creation, fall, Israel, Messiah, church, and new creation. This idea is presented in detail by Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding our Place in the Biblical Story*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014). See also Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Message of Lamentations*, BST

problem of sin and rebellion of the human race as described in Gen 3–11.<sup>27</sup> While Gen 3:15 has the first redemptive and hence missionary concept in the Bible in the form of a promise, it is in Genesis 12 where one can see God’s first major act to bring humanity back to him. Genesis 3-11 points to the problem that will be dealt with from Genesis 12 onwards in the canonical record.<sup>28</sup>

Exodus 19:4–6, the calling of Israel, is probably the first place in the OT where one can find an explanation on how the blessing promised to Abraham was to flow from his descendants to all nations of the earth.<sup>29</sup> However, Israel’s failure to accomplish that task gave birth to the calling of a more universal Israel, as one can see, for instance, in Isaiah 40–55.<sup>30</sup> In the biblical story of God’s mission, Genesis 3:15; 12:1–3 and Exodus

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(Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 46–47. N. T. Wright seems to have been the first one to use the metaphor of a drama to refer to the biblical storyline. He argues for a five-act structure: Creation, Fall, Israel, Christ, Church. See N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1992), 139–43.

<sup>27</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 66.

<sup>28</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 195. In the words of William J. Dumbrell, Gen 12:1-3 “is a theological blueprint for the redemptive history of the world, now set in train by the call of Abraham” (William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: An Old Testament Covenant Theology*, rev. ed. (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2013), 66).

<sup>29</sup> W. Ross Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known: The Missionary Heart of the Book of Exodus*, NSBT (Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 89–95. Blackburn sees an allusion to Gen 12:2 in Exod 19:6. See also Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 121.

<sup>30</sup> Beale links Isa 42:6 and 49:6 to Exod 19:6 by contending that, “The contexts of Isa. 42:6 and 49:6 express that Israel should have spread the light of God’s presence throughout the earth, but it did not. Exodus 19:6 says that Israel collectively was to be to God ‘a kingdom of priests and a holy nation’ going out to the nations and being mediators between God and the nations by bearing God’s light of revelation.” See G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 631–32.

In turn, Kaiser contends that Isa 42:6 and 49:6 are “a replication of the promise made through Abraham that ‘in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’” See Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 58. In fact, many scholars argue that Isa 40–55 “represent the supreme expression in the Old Testament of a universalistic concern for the salvation of the gentiles.” James P. Ware, *Paul and the Mission of the Church: Philippians in Ancient Jewish Context* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 72. For others, that passage “envisions only the submission and defeat of the nations and not their conversion or salvation” (Ware, *Paul and the Mission*, 72–73). But, Kaiser has made a strong case for Isa 40–55 as a spiritual mission rather than a political one



19:4–6 are the most fundamental passages when it comes to God’s initiation of solving the problem of sin and conducting the whole creation back toward what he originally intended for it. These passages are reused in later canonical writings such as Isaiah (e.g., 42:6–7; 49:6), in order to keep alive the notion that God’s purpose will be brought to a conclusion no matter what happens.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, as one deals with a biblical theology of

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(see Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 51–63). Thus, it is not surprising that those chapters play a crucial role in the New Testament writings. On this topic, see an insightful discussion in Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 33–59. Passages such as Isa 42:6 and 49:6 are frequently alluded to in the NT as applying to Jesus and the church; see Craig A. Evans, “A Light to the Nations: Isaiah and Mission in Luke,” in *Christian Mission: Old Testament Foundations and New Testament Developments*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia L. Westfall, McMaster New Testament Studies 9 (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010); Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 51–63; David E. Aune and Reidar Hvalvik, eds., *The Church and its Mission in the New Testament and Early Christianity: Essays in Memory of Hans Kvalbein* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 160; Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 114–18, 130, 157–62. See also James A. Meek, *The Gentile Mission in the Old Testament Citations in Acts: Text, Hermeneutic, and Purpose*, LNTS 385 (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 24–53; Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, eds., *Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2005).

The metaphor of light appears further ahead in Isa 60:1–3, which comes from Isa 40–55 (Isa 42:6, 16; 45:7; 49:6; 51:4). See comment on John Goldingay, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 56–66*, ICC (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 252. As a matter of fact, the metaphor of light is recurrent in the book of Isaiah (2:5; 5:20; 9:2 [1]; 10:17; 42:6; 49:6; 51:4). See Larry L. Walker and Elmer A. Martens, *Isaiah, Jeremiah, & Lamentations*, CBC 8 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2005), 258. Also, interestingly, Gary Smith argues that the metaphor of light in Isa 60:1–3 “could legitimately refer to the light reflected by the people of Zion or refer to God himself, the light of Zion. However, this distinction may be a splitting of hairs, for throughout this section God is closely identified with Zion, so its light and glorification are the light and glory from God reflected by his people.” See Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009), 614–15. Similarly, John N. Oswalt comments, “The wonder of this chapter is that the glory of the Lord is to be reflected from Israel. This is the climax of one of the prominent themes of the book”; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 537. Isaiah 60:1–3 is quite possibly alluded to or echoed in Eph 5:14 (see Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 375–76; John Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, BNTC [London: Continuum, 2001], 242) and Rev 21:11, 24 (see Beale, *Revelation*, 1066; Brian K. Blount, *Revelation: A Commentary*, NTL [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013], 385–86; Craig R. Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 38A [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014], 814). For the use of Isa 60:3 in Rev 21:24, see discussion in Beale, *Revelation*, 1094–1101. Beale’s assumption that Rev 21:11, 24 contains allusions to Isa 60:1–3 asks for further investigation. As Morton remarks, Beale tends “to assume that similarity of vocabulary is evidence of textual dependence” (see Morton, *Recent Research on Revelation*, 58). All of these NT passages present missional connotations. See S. M. Baugh, *Ephesians*, EEC (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2015), 434–35; Peter J. Leithart, *Revelation 12–22*, ITC (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 383, 389–400.

<sup>31</sup> For instance, Peter H. W. Lau and Gregory Goswell discuss how Gen 12:1–3 and Exod 19:4–6 affect our understanding of the book of Ruth and how allusions to those passages help us read it as a

mission in Revelation, OT passages such as Genesis 12:1–3 and Exodus 19:4–6, as well as later canonical writings reusing them, must be taken into account. This subject will be further explored in Chapters 3 and 4 as we study the biblical backgrounds to mission in Revelation 10–14.

As Jon Paulien notes, “the ‘Achilles heel’ of any method that depends on determining parallels to other literature is the question of how to be certain concerning the identification of the literature to which the author is alluding.”<sup>32</sup> In his doctoral dissertation, he sought to develop an objective method for determining John’s use of OT passages.<sup>33</sup> Paulien builds upon methods from literary criticism, according to which three types of allusions can be identified in a given text: (1) direct references, i.e., citations or quotations; (2) allusions; (3) echoes.<sup>34</sup> According to him, John’s use of the OT can be referred to as quotations, allusions, and echoes.<sup>35</sup> The presence of direct quotations and allusions must be determined on the basis of both internal and external evidence. Three

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missionary book. See Peter H. W. Lau and Gregory Goswell, *Unceasing Kindness: A Biblical Theology of Ruth*, NSBT (Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016), 142–56.

<sup>32</sup> Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 165.

<sup>33</sup> Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 155–97.

<sup>34</sup> Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 169–75.

<sup>35</sup> The fundamental difference between allusion and echo is one of intention. By using an allusion, the author intends to “point the reader to a particular background source.” (Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 172). As for the echo, it may simply reflect stock language (page 175). Paulien seems to be a little reluctant to apply the term “quotation” to Revelation. He contends that “the term ‘quotation’ [...] can only rarely, if ever, be applied to the Revelator’s use of the OT” (page 179). He affirms that “Quotations involve the selection of significant amounts of wording from a previous passage, sufficient to make it certain that the author had the previous work in mind” (page 170). By asserting that “Only on occasion does John use more than three or four words in the same sequence in which they are found in the Old Testament” (page 179), he seems to imply that a quotation is characterized by the use of more than three or four words in the same sequence as they appear in the OT. Yet, some passages in Revelation use three or more major words from the LXX but not always in the same order: 1:7 (cf. Dan 7:13); 2:27 (cf. Ps 2:8-9); 4:8 (cf. Isa 6:3; Amos 3:13); 6:16 (Hos 10:8); 7:16 (cf. Isa 49:10); 7:17 (cf. Isa 25:8). By and large, it can be said that the amount of words used by John in these passages is sufficient to make it evident that he is quoting certain OT texts, although the words do not appear in the same order or are replaced by synonyms. For instance, in Rev 6:16 John replaces the LXX term *καλύπτω*/hide (cf. Hos 10:8) with *κρύπτω*/hide.

criteria are suggested for weighing internal evidence: verbal parallels,<sup>36</sup> thematic parallels,<sup>37</sup> and structural parallels.<sup>38</sup> In his/her assessment of external evidence, the interpreter must pay attention to John's relationship to the OT source on the basis of sources outside a given OT text.<sup>39</sup> Internal evidence is to be examined first, and external evidence should be used to support the internal evidence.<sup>40</sup>

An allusion can be classified in one of five categories according to its degree of certainty: (1) certain; (2) probable; (3) possible; (4) uncertain; (5) nonallusions.<sup>41</sup> In this work, we will focus on the first three categories. Obviously, there is a dose of subjectivity involved. As every researcher knows, no method is free of shortcomings, which is

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<sup>36</sup> A verbal parallel occurs "whenever at least two words of more than minor significance (articles and minor conjunctions are excluded) are parallel between a passage in Revelation and a passage in the Septuagint or other first-century Greek version" (Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 179–80). The identification is made possible when one places "the text of Revelation side-by-side with the potential source text" (page 180). In this dissertation, I will use as a starting point allusions suggested by commentators as well as other resources such as David A. Jones, *Old Testament Quotations and Allusions in the New Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009) and Craig A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 404–9. However, I will refine my search by building word lists in Logos Bible Software in order to identify shared language in Revelation passages and their supposed OT sources. This procedure is especially helpful when dealing with larger chunks of text.

<sup>37</sup> This occurs when John shares thoughts and themes with the OT (Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 182). The similarity may be identified by the usage of "different Greek words than the LXX" or "only a single word to make the connection" (page 182). Paulien further mentions that "thematic parallels can be found not only in the LXX, but also by comparing the intent of the Greek of Revelation with the Hebrew and Aramaic Old Testament" (page 183). The contexts of the two passages are decisive for confirming the thematic parallel. Examples of thematic parallels can be seen in the use of Gen 19:28 LXX in Rev 9:2; Amos 4:13 in Rev 1:8; and Ezek 9:4 LXX in Rev 9:4 (pages 183–84).

<sup>38</sup> Paulien states, "This sort of parallel is characterized either by a similarity in the ordering of material or by an overall similarity in content" (Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 185). Some examples of this type of parallel can be seen "by comparing Rev 1:12–18 with Dan 7:9–13 and Dan 10; Rev 9:1–11 with Joel 2:1–11; Rev 13 with Dan 3 and 7; Rev 18 with Ezek 26–28; and Rev 19:11–16 with Isa 63:1–6" (page 185). While the structural parallels are considered the strongest ones in that they involve verbal and thematic parallels, the verbal parallels are seen as the weakest evidence for an allusion (page 185). The evidence for an allusion increases as different types of parallels are accumulated.

<sup>39</sup> Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 178.

<sup>40</sup> Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 190–91.

<sup>41</sup> Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 193, 236–293.

evident from the very vastness of the literature on methodologies.<sup>42</sup> A certain amount of subjectivity and other weaknesses mark each one of them. Paulien's method is no exception, as he himself admits.<sup>43</sup> In any case, he seeks to be as objective and consistent as possible,<sup>44</sup> which makes his approach helpful to the present research.

### Structure of the Study

This dissertation is divided into eleven chapters, including the introduction and conclusion. Chapter 2 presents a review of literature in order to acquaint the reader with the scholarship that has been published on mission in Revelation 10–14 in the past three decades and, hence, provide an idea of unexplored fields.

Chapters 3 to 5 focus on biblical backgrounds to mission in Revelation 10–14. Chapter 3 concentrates on the OT background, with special attention to God's covenant with Abraham (Gen 12:1–3)<sup>45</sup> and Israel (Exod 19:4–6),<sup>46</sup> and the reuse of those

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<sup>42</sup> William A. Tooman contends that by the time he wrote his monograph, "there were at least twenty-seven book-length works produced after 1960 on the reuse of Scripture in Revelation. No two accounted for the data using exactly the same terminology or methodology." See William A. Tooman, *Gog of Magog: Reuse of Scripture and Compositional Technique in Ezekiel 38-39* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 15n51. See also Morton, *Recent Research on Revelation*, 54–74.

<sup>43</sup> Paulien, "Criteria and the Assessment of Allusions," 120. By the way, one clear shortcoming regards his "lack of attention to how OT language and themes were developed in subsequent Jewish exegetical tradition, and how that tradition may have impacted on John's usage of the same language and themes" (120). For an overview of John's use of apocalyptic traditions, see Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 38–91. Beale has provided a wide critique of Paulien's approach (see Paulien, "Criteria and the Assessment of Allusions," 120n45, for bibliography). However, his method is not free of difficulties either; see comments by Adela Yarbro Collins in her review of Beale's *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John* in *JBL* 105 (1986): 734–35.

<sup>44</sup> Paulien argues that the lack of objectivity and consistency of some approaches opened room for the divergence of lists of allusions one can see in many recent commentaries on Revelation. He believes that "a major reason why earlier scholars produced such widely diverging lists of allusions in Revelation was the failure to recognize the difference between direct or intentional allusions on the part of the author and echoes, in which OT language and themes are utilized, but no intentional reference to any particular text is made" (Paulien, "Criteria and the Assessment of Allusions," 119). In other words, the failure to clearly establish criteria for determining John's use of OT passages can lead to a misleading exegesis.

<sup>45</sup> See Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 80–81.

passages in later OT passages. Chapter 4 turns toward mission in the NT outside the book of Revelation. When dealing with biblical backgrounds in these two chapters, I lean on the current scholarly discussion; otherwise, such a task would be impossible within the scope of a dissertation. Chapter 5 narrows down the discussion by focusing on the Revelation context of mission outside Revelation 10–14. This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, I deal with the preceding context (chapters 1–9), and in the second I focus on the following context (chapters 15–22). Both sections aim at briefly examining passages conveying mission concepts and analyzing how they can shed light on mission in Revelation 10–14.

Chapters 6 to 10 make up the central part of this dissertation. Each of these chapters provides an exegetical study of selected passages looking at their mission concepts and related themes. Chapter 6 begins with an overview of Revelation 10:1–7 with attention to its proclamation of imminence, “the time will be up” (Rev 10:6).<sup>47</sup> Next, it turns to an exegesis of 10:8–11 and 11:1–2 in order to better understand the command in 10:11, “You must prophesy again,” and related issues. For instance, scholars discuss whether the preposition ἐπί in “about many people and nations and languages and kings” (ESV) should mean “against” (negative) or “about” (neutral). Most interpreters take it as “about,” meaning that the fourfold formula is the topic of John’s prophetic action. Should the translation “to” in “to many peoples, and nations, and languages, and kings” as in *The Passion Translation* (TPT) be discarded? This chapter will revisit this issue and others. Chapter 7 will look at the prophetic mission of the two witnesses with an exegesis of

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<sup>46</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 124–27. Also, Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 80–119.

11:3, 7, 9–10, 13, looking at how the missionary activity of the two witnesses relates to the commission in 10:11 and its expansion and accomplishment in 12–14. Chapter 8 focuses on the theme of opposition to mission and the endurance of the saints with a study of 12:11, 17; 13:9–10; 14:12–13. Chapter 9 begins with an exegesis of 14:4 that aims to show briefly how discipleship relates to mission in Revelation. Next, it examines the three angels’ messages (14:6–13), including discussion of a significant impasse in interpretation of this passage regarding the nature of the gospel proclaimed by the angel: Judgment or good news? Or both? Chapter 9 also analyzes 14:14–20, its connection to the proclamation of the three angels’ messages in 14:6–13, and whether it brings a double narration of judgment or a prophetic description of two different destinies. Chapter 10 offers an exegesis of 11:15–18, seeking to demonstrate how Revelation depicts the completion and triumph of mission.

Finally, Chapter 11 provides a theological synthesis of the whole discussion with a summary and conclusions. It also indicates areas for further research.

### **The Semantic Field of Mission in Revelation**

Terminology is not the only way to communicate a concept.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, meaning can be determined on the basis of semantic field and context.<sup>49</sup> The context has priority when it comes to the meaning of words, albeit one should not disregard the contribution of the word itself.<sup>50</sup> Words are used within a set of interrelationships in which thoughts,

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<sup>47</sup> For this translation of “χρόνος οὐκέτι ἔσται,” see David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, WBC 52B (Dallas: Word, 1998), 568.

<sup>48</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 19.

<sup>49</sup> Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 518–19.

<sup>50</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 19. See his discussion on that matter on pp. 19–26.

ideas, and concepts are expressed by means of synonyms and different phrases and constructions. In this sense, “sending” terminology is to be understood within a broader concept that “may conveniently be termed ‘mission.’”<sup>51</sup> In his research, Köstenberger notices that a study of mission in the Fourth Gospel restricted to “sending” terminology can easily run the risk of missing the essence of John’s teaching on mission,<sup>52</sup> for mission is conveyed by other terms in addition to “sending” terms. Just as in the Fourth Gospel, mission is expressed in Revelation in different ways.<sup>53</sup>

In his thorough investigation of early Christian mission, Eckhard J. Schnabel built a list of NT terms that, albeit not technical for mission, describe missionary activity. They are divided into twelve semantic fields: (1) subjects of missionary work; (2) addressees of missionary work; (3) place of missionary work; (4) sending and position of the missionaries; (5) proclamation by word; (6) content of the proclamation; (7) goal of the proclamation; (8) proclamation by deed; (9) execution of the missionary task; (10) interpretation of missionary work; (11) the effort of missionary work; and (12) misunderstandings.<sup>54</sup>

I have utilized Schnabel’s list with some adjustments. The adjustments were influenced especially by the unique nature of Revelation as a piece of literature that

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<sup>51</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 20.

<sup>52</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 22.

<sup>53</sup> Sending terminology is present in Revelation but not in the missionary sense found, for instance, in John 20:21. The verb ἀποστέλλω/*to send* occurs three times in Revelation, but its object is either an angel (1:1; 22:6) or the Holy Spirit (5:6), never human beings. As to the verb πέμπω/*to send*, it occurs in the sense of “send” twice. The first occurrence refers to sending the book to the seven churches (1:11). The only other occurrence appears in 22:16 and refers to Jesus sending his angel. Thus, the observation regarding the use of ἀποστέλλω also applies here. Besides, although one could argue that somehow these verbs apply to God’s mission, the focus of this dissertation is the mission of God’s people insofar as they participate in the mission of God.

differs from everything else in the NT. After these adjustments, I list nine semantic fields of mission in Revelation, including their elements, as follows: (1) subjects of missionary work (ἀπόστολος/*apostle*, δοῦλοι/*servants*, ἐκκλησία/*church*,<sup>55</sup> μάρτυς/*witness*, οἱ ἅγιοι/*the saints*, ὁ νικῶν/*the overcomer*, προφήται/*prophets*, Ἰσραήλ/*Israel*,<sup>56</sup> φυλή/*tribe*, σύνδουλος/*fellow servant*); (2)<sup>57</sup> addressees of missionary work (ἄνθρωποι/*people*, βασιλεῖς/*kings*, γλῶσσα/*language*, Ἰσραήλ/*Israel*, λαός/*people*, οἱ καθημένοι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς/*those who dwell on the earth*, οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς/*those who dwell on the earth*, and similar phrases, ὄχλος/*multitude*, τὰ ἔθνη/*the nations*, πᾶν ἔθνος/*every nation*, ἔθνη/*nations*, φυλή/*tribe*); (3) place of missionary work (γῆ/*earth*, κόσμος/*world*); (4) activity involving movement from one place to another (ἀποστέλλω/*to send*, ἐξέρχομαι/*to come out*, ἔρχομαι/*to come*, καταβαίνω/*to come down*, πέμπω/*to send*); (5) proclamation by word (εὐαγγελίζω/*to preach the gospel*, κράζω/*to cry out*, λέγω/*to say*, μαρτυρέω/*to*

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<sup>54</sup> For details, see Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1:36–37.

<sup>55</sup> Albeit Schnabel places this term in the semantic field of “goal of the proclamation,” I am also fitting it in here. Stephen Pattemore notes that there are “three different ways in which the people of God are represented in the Apocalypse, as addressees, as audience, and as actors” (Stephen Pattemore, *The People of God in the Apocalypse: Discourse, Structure and Exegesis*, SNTSMS 128 [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 64). Thus, not only the term ἐκκλησία but also other terms referring to God’s people can be placed in more than one field.

<sup>56</sup> Although Schnabel lists this term under the field “addressees,” perhaps in Revelation it could be taken both as addressees and subjects of missionary work (7:4; 21:12).

<sup>57</sup> The number of subjects of missionary activity can increase surprisingly in Revelation given the fact that John utilizes a high number of terms and phrases to refer to God’s people (see Pattemore, *The People of God in the Apocalypse*; Ekkehardt Müller, “Introduction to the Ecclesiology of the Book of Revelation,” in *Pensar la iglesia hoy: Hacia una eclesiología Adventista*, ed. Gerald A. Klingbeil, Martin G. Klingbeil, and Miguel Ángel Núñez, Estudios teológicos presentados durante el IV Simposio Bíblico-Teológico Sudamericano en honor a Raoul Dederen [Entre Ríos, Argentina: Editorial Universidade Adventista del Plata, 2002], 148–54). I am limiting myself to Schnabel’s list of subjects of missionary activity, but adding some words based on their parallelism with missional terms in Revelation. However, it is necessary to be attentive to the multiplicity of terms referring to God’s people. At this point, I am avoiding the inclusion of highly metaphorical words. For instance, the term μετρέω/*to measure* (11:2) could be included as a word indicating accomplishment of a missionary task, since it is closely related to the term προφητεύω/*to prophesy* in 10:11. Several commentators notice that whereas προφητεύω refers to proclamation by word, μετρέω is its counterpart, i.e., proclamation by deed.



*bear witness, προφητεύω/to prophesy*); (6) content of the proclamation (*εὐαγγέλιον/gospel, λόγος/word, μαρτυρία/witness, αἱ ἐντολαὶ τοῦ θεοῦ/the commandments of God, οὐαί/woe*); (7) goal of the proclamation (*ἀκολουθέω/to follow, ἀκούω/to hear, ἐκκλησία/church, θερίζω/to harvest, θερισμός/harvest, μετανοέω/to repent, πίστις/faith, σωτηρία/salvation, τηρέω/to keep, φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεόν/to fear God, δίδοναι δόξαν θεῷ/to give glory to God, προσκυνέω/to worship*); (8) the accomplishment of the missionary work (*ἀναπαύω/to rest, διακονία/service, δικαίωμα/righteous act, ἔργον/work*;<sup>58</sup> *θερίζω/to harvest, θερισμός/harvest, οὐ κοπιᾶω/not to grow weary, κόπος/labor, νικάω/to overcome, πέμπω τὸ δρέπανον/to begin to harvest*<sup>59</sup>); (9) reward for the missionaries (*ἀποδίδωμι/to pay back, δίδωμι/to give, μισθός/reward*).<sup>60</sup> The major function of these semantic fields of mission in this project is to indicate the terms to focus on insofar as an exegesis of the selected passages is performed. In other words, they assist exegesis. Some explanations are necessary at this point.

First, as was expected, some terms show up in more than one semantic field. This is due to the fact that words assume different meanings in different contexts. Second, Schnabel includes *ἐξέρχομαι/to come out* in field #9, i.e., “execution of the missionary task”, and *ἀποστέλλω/to send* in field #4, i.e., “sending and position of the missionaries”. In this project, I follow Köstenberger’s assessment according to which both *ἐξέρχομαι*

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<sup>58</sup> Interestingly, Schnabel includes *ἐργάζομαι/to work* but leaves *ἔργον/work out*. Although *ἐργάζομαι* is broader than *ἔργον* in meaning, both of them appear in the same domain and subdomain in Louw-Nida’s lexicon, along with *κοπιᾶω/to labor* and *κόπος/labor*. See L&N, 514.

<sup>59</sup> This is an idiom, “to throw a sickle”. The meaning is “to begin to harvest” (L&N, 516).

<sup>60</sup> The promises to the churches must also be included here: the tree of life (2:7; cf. 22:14, 19); the crown of life (2:10; cf. 3:11; 12:1); eternal life (2:11; 3:5); the hidden manna (2:17); a white stone (2:17); a new name (2:17; 3:12); authority (2:26); rulership (2:27); the morning star (2:28); white robes (3:5; cf. 6:11; 7:9, 13); and kingship (3:21). Since these promises are a special feature of the seven churches section

and ἀποστέλλω are part of the same semantic field, namely, “activity involving movement from one place to another.” Third, in this study, field #8, i.e., “accomplishment of the missionary task,” encompasses Schnabel’s fields #8, #10, and #11.<sup>61</sup> Fourth, Schnabel’s field #12, “misunderstandings,” was not identified in Revelation. On the other hand, I have added a semantic field not listed by him, which refers to the reward for missionaries. Fifth, the semantic fields of mission in Revelation should also include terms that do not appear in Schnabel’s list given the particularities of Revelation. For instance, the term οἱ ἅγιοι/*the saints* fits into the field “subjects of missionary work.” This will be further explored as the selected passages are studied. As mentioned in the “Methodology” section, the context has priority in deciding which terms convey or do not convey mission concepts. Sixth, since the context has priority in deciding which terms convey mission concepts, not all terms listed by Schnabel necessarily express mission connotations in Revelation.<sup>62</sup> The opposite is also true.

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and this works deals more closely with Revelation 10–14, they will be referred to only when necessary for a better understanding of certain passages.

<sup>61</sup> In this respect, I am following Köstenberger again. Indeed, “activity involving movement from one place to another” and “accomplishment of the missionary task” are the two semantic fields of mission in the Fourth Gospel identified by Köstenberger. Although Köstenberger’s assessment is very helpful, Schnabel’s is more detailed and involves the whole NT. Therefore, while Köstenberger’s list can be used for comparison—especially because it also comes from the Johannine corpus—Schnabel’s list serves as a basis, since the terms come from the entire NT.

<sup>62</sup> This happens because such terms occur in clearly non-missionary contexts. Thus, Ἰουδαῖος/*Jews* (2:9; 3:9); οἰκουμένη/*inhabited world* (3:10; 12:9; 16:14); πόλις/*city* (27x); διδάσκω/*to teach* (2:14, 20); κηρύσσω/*to proclaim* (5:2); λαλέω/*to speak* (12x); ὁμολογέω/*to confess* (3:5); μαρτύριον/*witness* (15:5); ὁδός/*way* (15:3; 16:12); συνάγω/*to gather* (16:14; cf. 16:19; 19:17, 19; 20:8); ἐργάζομαι/*to work* (18:17); θεραπεύω/*to heal* (13:3, 12); ἀπέρχομαι/*to go away* (8x); πρόβατον/*sheep* (18:13); διώκω/*to persecute* (12:13). Some of these terms have no mission connotations in several contexts elsewhere in the NT either. Yet, terms such as οἰκουμένη can assume mission overtones if one considers that in 12:9 and 16:14 the term is applied, as it were, as a reference to the scope of Satan’s mission. In this case, the term would be referring to the opposition of Satan to God’s mission. Likewise, λαλέω may reflect the evil powers’ resistance to mission in 13:5, 11, 15.

Several terms not listed by him do express mission connotations in Revelation.<sup>63</sup> This is an important observation that, if not followed, can render the results misleading. The semantic fields proposed in this dissertation reflect this concern.

### Definition of Mission<sup>64</sup>

While a number of scholars use “sending” terminology as their starting point for a definition of mission,<sup>65</sup> others have arrived at the conclusion that a broader definition is necessary.<sup>66</sup> A biblical definition of mission has to consider not only terminology but also, and especially, the broader context of Scripture, the biblical storyline.<sup>67</sup> As Beale

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<sup>63</sup> Subjects of missionary work: δοῦλοι/servants, ἐκκλησία/church, οἱ ἅγιοι/the saints, ὁ νικῶν/overcomer, προφήται/prophets, Ἰσραήλ/Israel, φυλή/tribe, σύνδουλος/fellow servant; addressees of missionary work: βασιλεῖς/kings, γλῶσσα/language, οἱ καθημένοι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς/those who dwell on the earth, οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς/those who dwell on the earth, and similar phrases, ὄχλος/multitude, πᾶν ἔθνος/every nation, ἔθνη/nations, φυλή/tribe; activity involving movement from one place to another: ἔρχομαι/to come, καταβαίνω/to go down, πέμπω/to send; proclamation by word: κράζω/to cry out, μαρτυρέω/to bear witness, προφητεύω/to prophesy; content of the proclamation: οὐαί/woe; goal of the proclamation: τηρέω/to keep, φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεόν/to fear God, δίδοναι δόξαν θεῷ/to give glory to God, προσκυνέω/to worship; the accomplishment of the missionary work: δικαίωμα/righteous act, ἔργον/work, οὐ κοπιᾶω/not to grow weary, νικάω/to overcome, πέμπω τὸ δρέπανον/to begin to harvest; reward for the missionaries: ἀποδίδωμι/to pay back, δίδωμι/to give, μισθός/reward, and the promises to the churches.

<sup>64</sup> Christopher Wright provides very helpful definitions of the terms “mission,” “missionary,” “missional,” and “missiological” in his *The Mission of God*, 22–25.

<sup>65</sup> See Johannes Nissen, “Testament in Mission: The Use of the New Methodological and Hermeneutical Reflections,” *Mission Studies* 21, no. 2 (2004): 169–70.

<sup>66</sup> In addition, many scholars are of the opinion that, in dealing with a definition of mission, the researcher must allow some space for a certain degree of diversity as far as biblical teaching is concerned (see Johannes Nissen, *New Testament and Mission: Historical and Hermeneutical Perspectives*, 4th ed. (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2007), 18). For instance, Köstenberger states that “a tracing of mission in the entire Bible requires flexibility concerning the definition of mission” (Andreas J. Köstenberger, “The Place of Mission in New Testament Theology: An Attempt to Determine the Significance of Mission within the Scope of the New Testament’s Message as a Whole,” *Missiology* 27, no. 3 (1999): 359). He adds that, for an accurate understanding of such teaching, a “salvation-historical approach to Scripture is imperative” (page 359). Elsewhere, he holds that since Scripture “is ultimately God’s Word, we may legitimately expect to see an underlying logic and unity in the biblical message on this subject” (Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 20).

<sup>67</sup> In that regard, Wright states that “God’s mission is what spans the gap between the curse on the earth of Genesis 3 and the end of the curse in the new creation of Revelation 22” (Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 46). In order for this task to be accomplished, God has commissioned a people in the history of redemption. He called Israel, sent Jesus, and commissioned the church. There is, thus, a sense of unity and continuity from the OT to the NT. See Christopher J. H. Wright, *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1992), 158–75.

puts it, in the OT, God “progressively reestablishes his eschatological new-creational kingdom [...] through promise, covenant, and redemption, *resulting in worldwide commission* to the faithful to advance this kingdom and judgment [...] for the unfaithful, unto his glory.”<sup>68</sup> However, it is in the NT, specifically in the Christ-event, that one finds the launch of the fulfillment of the OT eschatological expectations, “*resulting in worldwide commission* to the faithful to advance this new-creational reign and resulting in judgment for the unbelieving, unto the triune God’s glory.”<sup>69</sup>

This worldwide commission in the NT should, thus, be understood against the background of God’s redemptive plan. Mission, in this sense, refers to God’s initiative to bring humanity back to him *by means of agents divinely commissioned*. In this study of mission in the book of Revelation, Schnabel’s definition as follows will be used as a parameter for analyzing the selected passages.

the activity of a community of faith [in this case, the Christian community] that distinguishes itself from its environment in terms of both religious belief (theology) and social behavior (ethics), that is convinced of the truth claims of its faith, and that actively works to win other people to the content of faith and to the way of life of whose truth and necessity the members of that community are convinced. This definition of “mission” involves a threefold reality: (1) people communicate to people of different faiths a new interpretation of reality—a different, new view of God, humankind and salvation; (2) people communicate a new way of life that replaces, at least partially, the former way of life; (3) people integrate those whom they win over to their faith and way of life into their community.<sup>70</sup>

### **Overview of Revelation 10–14**

The purpose of this section is to present an overview of the issues that will be later explored in the exegetical chapters on Revelation 10–14. Before that, however,

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<sup>68</sup> Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 162–63. Italics added.

<sup>69</sup> Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 163. Italics added.

Chapter 2 will add some details concerning the current status of research related to them, whereas Chapters 3 and 4 will, respectively, search for OT and NT background information. As much as possible, Chapter 5 will further examine the issues while providing the preceding and following contexts of Revelation 10–14. It is expected that such a methodology will shed light on the exegetical study of the selected passages to be addressed in Chapters 6 to 10.

### “You Must Prophesy Again”

Revelation 10 is a turning point in the book of Revelation, especially through its command in 10:11, “You must prophesy again to many peoples and nations and languages and kings.” Scholars agree that this command constitutes the climax of the whole chapter, but there has been some debate concerning the meaning of this commission given to John, as follows:

Where in the book of Revelation does John prophesy again about such persons and groups? Or for that matter, where in the book has he prophesied before? He has narrated a series of visions, but is this what is meant by prophesying? Are his prophecies to be spoken or written? Such questions make this one of the more difficult passages in a difficult book.<sup>71</sup>

Other questions derive from the issues above. Why is it necessary to tell John that he must prophesy again? Did he think that his work was already done? What is the nature of his message? Is it judgment? Good news? In other words, is it a message “against” the nations or “about” the nations or even “to” the nations? A particular interpretation of 10:11 can affect one’s understanding of subsequent passages such as 11:1–2, 3–13; 14:6–

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<sup>70</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 11.

<sup>71</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, *Revelation*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 136–37.

13 and, consequently, 14:14–20. Therefore, Revelation 10 is crucial for the understanding of what comes next in Revelation.

### The Witnessing Motif

Many studies on mission in Revelation focus mainly on the witnessing motif. While this is certainly a useful starting point, a study of witnessing terminology in relation to other themes can reveal different perspectives whereby mission can be seen in Revelation. For instance, little attention has been paid to the relation between the prophetic task of the two witnesses in 11:3–13 and the temple motif in Revelation. The measurement of the temple in 11:1–2 may serve as an intersection between the two topics.<sup>72</sup> The relationship between the witnessing motif and judgment has also been noticed. However, as will be demonstrated in the review of literature, there is still room for further exploration, especially as far as Rev 10–14 is concerned.

Another important issue regards whether the witnessing task should be understood only in terms of setting apart *from* the world or if Revelation does summon people to proclaim a message *to* the world. If it does, where does such a message is described? In Revelation 11 itself? In 12–14? Links between Revelation 10 and 11 have been perceived by most scholars, but how does chap. 11 relate to 12–14, and how does the answer to this question shed light on the previous one, i.e., how is mission in Revelation achieved?

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<sup>72</sup> Although there is no scholarly consensus as to which temple this passage refers to, it is clear that the term *ναός* is associated with the heavenly temple in Revelation. As Beale observes, “without exception *ναός* elsewhere in Revelation refers to the present heavenly temple (7:15; 14:15, 17; 15:5–6, 8; 16:1, 17).” Beale, *Revelation*, 562.

## The Propaganda of God's Enemies: Opposition to Mission

Throughout the book of Revelation, persecution and deceit are utilized by God's enemies to oppose God and his people on earth. The people of God live their lives in the midst of much oppression and hatred (12:11). They follow the model of the slaughtered Lamb, since their task is shaped after the work of Jesus.<sup>73</sup> Although the martyrologic language of Revelation has been widely emphasized in recent scholarship,<sup>74</sup> little attention has been given to the missionary activity of God's people as a factor that likely awakens persecution.<sup>75</sup> If mission in Revelation is reduced to resisting or refusing involvement in imperial worship and the surrounding culture, as a sort of nonverbal testimony, probably there is not much to examine beyond what has been done in recent scholarship.<sup>76</sup> However, if mission in Revelation also encompasses verbal communication, there is still much to be explored.

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<sup>73</sup> Pattemore, *The People of God in the Apocalypse*, 218–19.

<sup>74</sup> Adela Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 111–16; Paul B. Duff, *Who Rides the Beast: Prophetic Rivalry and the Rhetoric of Crisis in the Churches of the Apocalypse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3–16; Mark Bredin, *Jesus, Revolutionary of Peace: A Nonviolent Christology in the Book of Revelation* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2003), 104–55; Ekkehardt Mueller, "Revelation's Perspective on Persecution," in *The Great Controversy and the End of Evil: Biblical and Theological Studies in Honor of Ángel Manuel Rodríguez in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Gerhard Pfandl (Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald, 2015), 251–62; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Jesus, Paul, and the Early Church: Missionary Realities in Historical Contexts: Collected Essays* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 353–73.

Commentators in general have also called attention to the phenomenon of persecution. See, for instance, David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, WBC 52A (Dallas: Word, 1997), lxxxv; Beale, *Revelation*, 12–16; Christopher A. Davis, *Revelation*, College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2000), 64–72; Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, New Testament Commentary 20 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2001), 35–38; Mitchell G. Reddish, *Revelation*, SHBC (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 11–15; John Christopher Thomas and Frank D. Macchia, *Revelation*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 23–26.

<sup>75</sup> As Douglas Webster put it, "every form of mission leads to some form of cross. The very shape of mission is cruciform. We can understand mission only in terms of the Cross" (Douglas Webster, *Yes to Mission* (New York: Seabury, 1966), 102).

<sup>76</sup> This will be discussed in the next chapter, "Mission in Revelation 10–14 in Recent Literature."

A likely signal that the people of God in Revelation are engaged in verbal communication of the gospel as they accomplish their mission is the very notion of counterfeit communication.<sup>77</sup> The Apocalypse warns the reader against a false trinity (12–14), a false seal (13:16–17), and a false city (17–18), to list only a few major forgeries. Of special interest in this dissertation is the emphasis of Revelation 12–14 on the deceptive discourse of the Satanic trinity, represented by the repetition of the term “mouth.” In 12:15–16 the dragon pours out a river from its mouth. In 13:5–6 the sea beast was given a mouth to utter blasphemies. In 13:11 the earth beast “was speaking like a dragon.” It is not surprising that the Revelator refers to the false trinity in 16:13–14 by saying, “And I saw, coming out of the *mouth* of the dragon and out of the *mouth* of the beast and out of the *mouth* of the false prophet three unclean spirits like frogs.” That the term “mouth” in these passages stands for speech—in this case, deceptive speech—is widely recognized by commentators.<sup>78</sup> Robert L. Thomas goes as far as to mention that

The three uses of στόματος (*stomatos*, "mouth") is indicative of a propaganda campaign through which the unholy trinity will lead most to an unconditional commitment to evil in the last days. The influence of the mouth can hardly be overstated, especially in the activity of these three (12:15; 13:6, 12–15; cf. 1:16; 2:16; 11:5; 19:15, 21; Isa. 11:4).<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> A helpful overview of the counterfeit motif in Revelation is presented by Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 376–85.

<sup>78</sup> E.g., Beale, *Revelation*, 831–33; Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 449; Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, 2nd ed., CCGNT (New York: Macmillan, 1906), 204; Koester, *Revelation*, 658; Jürgen Roloff, *A Continental Commentary: The Revelation of John* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 190; Catherine Gunsalus González and Justo L. González, *Revelation*, WeBC (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 106.

<sup>79</sup> Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1995), 264.



A few scholars see the “three unclean spirits like frogs” as a counterfeit of the three angels’ messages (14:6–13).<sup>80</sup> Nonetheless, this is overlooked by most commentators. Revelation 18:2 may be a passage that links 16:13 and 14:6–13, once 18:2 clearly builds upon the second angel’s message (14:8) at the same time that it refers to the three unclean spirits in 16:13. In any case, the topic calls for further investigation. What is clear thus far is that Revelation portrays intense propaganda of the false trinity (12–13; 16:13–14). Would this propaganda be a reaction to the preaching of the gospel (10:7; 14:6)? If yes, how can such a counterfeit of the gospel shed light on the message itself proclaimed by the end-time people of God?

#### The End-Time Preaching: Good News of Salvation or Judgment?

Scholars debate the nature of the eternal gospel proclaimed to “those who sit on the earth” in 14:6. Although most interpreters admit that the gospel is somehow present in the Apocalypse of John, some of them deny that 10:7 (consequently, 10:11) and 14:6 have to do primarily with the announcement of the good news of salvation.<sup>81</sup> They argue that those passages are dealing predominantly with a message of judgment. For instance, Beale mentions that 14:1–5 and 14:6–13 present a change of focus, respectively, from “the redeemed to the unredeemed in order to contrast the destiny of the two.”<sup>82</sup> Jürgen

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<sup>80</sup> R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St John*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1920), 2:47; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 500.

<sup>81</sup> Mounce goes as far as to affirm that the gospel in 14:6 “is not the gospel of God’s redeeming grace in Christ Jesus” (Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], 270). See also Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John: Studies in Introduction with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (New York: Macmillan, 1919), 655; Charles, *Revelation*, 2:12; Robert G. Bratcher and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on the Revelation to John*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 210.

<sup>82</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 747–48. Although he contends that the angel does not proclaim a different gospel, at the same time he affirms that “the angel is a messenger not primarily of grace but of judgment”

Roloff goes a little further by contending that εὐαγγέλιον has nothing to do with the gospel of Christ, and the idea of a world mission leading to the end of the age is absent in Revelation.<sup>83</sup>

Indeed, the term εὐαγγέλιον in 14:6 has been interpreted in different ways. It is taken by some commentators as meaning “good news” only in the sense that it refers to judgment in favor of God’s people,<sup>84</sup> or—still with judgment overtones—the end of the world,<sup>85</sup> the ultimate destruction of evil,<sup>86</sup> or God’s triumph by means of a special and eschatological ministry by angels—not by men—in the last days.<sup>87</sup> It has also been understood as good news in a general sense, i.e., “a message from God,”<sup>88</sup> an “eternally valid message.”<sup>89</sup> At the same time, several scholars admit that 14:6–7 contains an appeal

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(Beale, *Revelation*, 748) as a sort of announcement of punishment against “the evil nations.” Beale utilizes the expression “the evil nations” several times (*Revelation*, 44–45, 47, 775–76, 887) based on his assumption that “Daniel viewed these nations as the main object of punishment” (*Revelation*, 45, 887) and that John is following Daniel’s train of thought.

<sup>83</sup> Roloff, *Revelation*, 174.

<sup>84</sup> Leon Morris, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 172; Charles, *Revelation*, 2:12; John F. Walvoord, *Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 2001), 223; Davis, *Revelation*, 289; M. Eugene Boring, *Revelation*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1989), 169; Joseph L. Trafton, *Reading Revelation: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, Reading the New Testament Series (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 135.

<sup>85</sup> George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 193; See also J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, AB 38 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 236; Charles, *Revelation*, 2:12.

<sup>86</sup> Morris, *Revelation*, 172; Reddish, *Revelation*, 276.

<sup>87</sup> Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus’ Promise to the Nations* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 22–23. Jeremias claims that, “if this is the correct meaning of the saying, then, it did not originally refer to a worldwide mission of the disciples, but to the final fulfilment and the last judgement” (page 22). Jeremias analyzes Rev 14:6 in its correlation with Mark 13:10 (=Matt 24:14). He argues that neither passage refers to human proclamation. For a succinct assessment of this thought, see Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 826.

<sup>88</sup> Bratcher and Hatton, *Revelation*, 210.

<sup>89</sup> Tonstad, *Revelation*, 203. See also Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 534n1.

for repentance and conversion.<sup>90</sup>

Many scholars connect εὐαγγέλιον in 14:6 to judgment because of the imperatives in 14:7 and the warning that “the hour of judgment has come.”<sup>91</sup> Some also build their argument of a different meaning for εὐαγγέλιον in 14:6 on the basis of its anarthrous use. David Aune observes that this is the only place in the NT where εὐαγγέλιον occurs without the article,<sup>92</sup> but he overlooks Romans 1:1.<sup>93</sup> The question is whether one should automatically take εὐαγγέλιον in 14:6 in a different sense because it is not articular. James H. Moulton remarks, “For exegesis, there are few of the finer points of Greek which need more constant attention than this omission of the article when the writer would lay stress on the quality or character of the object.”<sup>94</sup> Osborne follows this line of thought when concluding that here εὐαγγέλιον “does not have to indicate a nonspecific secondary meaning but rather the theological significance of ‘gospel’ as the eternal ‘good

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<sup>90</sup> For instance, Elisabeth S. Fiorenza mentions that “the first angel calls all humanity to conversion by using expressions of early Christian missionary preaching (cf. 1 Thess 1:9f and Acts 14:15ff; 17:24ff)” (Fiorenza, *Revelation*, 89). She further asserts that “according to the Synoptic apocalypse, the Gospel had to be preached to all the nations before the end would come (Mark 13:10; Matt 24:14). This expectation is shared by Revelation.” (page 89). See also Morris, *Revelation*, 172; Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 825. Peter S. Williamson, *Revelation*, CCSS (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 246. For a different opinion, see Osborne, *Revelation*, 534.

<sup>91</sup> In this case, the content of εὐαγγέλιον is merely given by the commands “fear God and give him glory.” However, as Carson observes, it is more likely that 14:7 gives us not the content of εὐαγγέλιον but the reason why one should respond to it (D. A. Carson, “What Is the Gospel?—Revisited,” in *For the Fame of God’s Name: Essays in Honor of John Piper*, ed. Sam Storms and Justin Taylor [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010], 151).

<sup>92</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 825.

<sup>93</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 534. The term εὐαγγέλιον is also anarthrous in 2 Cor 11:4 and Gal 1:6, but in both cases it is qualified by the adjective ἕτερος/*different*.

<sup>94</sup> James Hope Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Prolegomena*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2006), 1:83. For a helpful synthesis of articular and anarthrous use of nouns, see Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 303–5.

news' from God."<sup>95</sup> Despite that, he argues that this "is a very different gospel from the one found elsewhere in the NT, for it does not mention Jesus and his sacrifice for sin."<sup>96</sup>

Perhaps two questions should be formulated in relation to this argument.

First, is it necessary for John to mention Jesus and his sacrifice for sin in 14:6–7 for this eternal gospel to be seen as the one found elsewhere in the NT? John had already referred to the sacrificial death of Jesus several times (1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11; 13:8), in such a way that when hearing the term εὐαγγέλιον in 14:6 the reader could easily link it to those previous passages.

The second question concerns whether the good news of salvation by means of the death and resurrection of Jesus and the announcement of judgment against those who reject God and persecute his people are mutually exclusive or ought to be seen as complementary, two sides of the same coin.<sup>97</sup> The fact is that, despite many voices saying otherwise, a few scholars still hold the idea that εὐαγγέλιον in 14:6 refers to the eternal gospel of Christ.<sup>98</sup>

The search for answers to the questions above can involve other matters intrinsically connected to them: How do the three angels' messages (14:6–13) relate to each other? How does 14:6–13 relate to the previous (14:1–5) and the following section

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<sup>95</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 534n1.

<sup>96</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 534.

<sup>97</sup> This has been pointed out by some scholars. See Leithart, *Revelation*, 94; Craig S. Keener, *Revelation*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 372; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 453; William Barclay, *Revelation*, NDSB (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 2:124; Alan F. Johnson, "Revelation," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 12:541.

<sup>98</sup> John R. Yeatts, *Revelation*, BCBC (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2003), 267. Also, R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1935), 429;

(14:14–20)? What is the identity of the three angels proclaiming those messages? All these issues call for more research.

### The Eschatological Harvest: Double Narration of Judgment or Two Different Destinies?

Following the idea of judgment in 14:6–13, many scholars conclude that 14:14–20 ought to be seen as a twofold narration of judgment upon the wicked<sup>99</sup> rather than the description of two different destinies.<sup>100</sup> Other important issues derive from this debate. How do 14:14–16 and 14:17–20 relate to each other? How does 14:14–20 relate to the adjacent passages, especially to 14:6–13 but also to 15:1–4? The answers to these questions may shed light on how 14:14–20 fits the theology of mission in Revelation.

### Completion and Triumph of Mission: The Eternal Kingdom of the Davidic King

Many scholars hold that Revelation envisions the completion of God’s mission through the ultimate establishment of the eternal kingdom of the Davidic King and the fulfillment of the other covenant promises, but this has not been sufficiently explored in the book. The matter can be illuminated by an exegesis of 11:15–18. One point of interest about this passage is its allusion to the Davidic covenant. Psalm 2 with its royal language

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González and González, *Revelation*, 93; Robert W. Wall, *Revelation*, UBC (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 190.

<sup>99</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, “John and the Future of the Nations,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 12, no. 2 (2002): 262. See also Beale, *Revelation*, 772–73; Morris, *Revelation*, 177–78; Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 843–45; Roloff, *Revelation*, 178.

<sup>100</sup> That is to say, the faithful ones are gathered into the kingdom of God (14:14–16), whereas those who reject God are gathered for destruction (14:17–20). See Lenski, *Revelation*, 446; G. B. Caird, *The Revelation of St. John*, BNTC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1966), 190–91; Ladd, *Revelation*, 199; Henry Alford, *Alford’s Greek Testament: An Exegetical and Critical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Guardian, 1976), 4:690–92; Swete, *Apocalypse*, 186; Ian Paul, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (London: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 255; William Hendriksen, *More than Conquerors: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), 187–88. Three other

has frequently been identified as a very likely background but an echo of God's promise to Abraham cannot be discarded either.<sup>101</sup>

Another point of interest is the rewarding in 11:18. Three questions arise here: (1) What is the nature of this rewarding? It seems to include deliverance and vindication,<sup>102</sup> the salvific benefits,<sup>103</sup> the New Jerusalem and God's presence,<sup>104</sup> and eternal life.<sup>105</sup> Apparently, these are not mutually exclusive but complementary, or even different ways to refer to the same thing. However, does this reward also have mission connotations in the sense that God's people are recompensed for their missionary efforts?<sup>106</sup> (2) What is the relationship between the groups rewarded: the servants, the prophets, the saints, "those who fear your name," the small and great? As Osborne observes, this is highly debated.<sup>107</sup> And, connected to this, (3) how can the identification of these groups and the relationship between them illuminate the discussion on the agents of missionary work, both in this passage and in the book as a whole?

As was mentioned in the introduction to this section, these issues will be addressed in the exegetical chapters on Revelation 10–14 (Chapters 6–10). However,

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different views are also attested in the secondary literature, but they are very unlikely and, hence, there is no need to discuss them. For details, see Osborne, *Revelation*, 549n1.

<sup>101</sup> Tom Wright, *Revelation for Everyone*, For Everyone Bible Study Guides (London: SPCK, 2011), 105; Robert James Utley, *Hope in Hard Times—The Final Curtain: Revelation*, SGC (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2001), 84.

<sup>102</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 615; Osborne, *Revelation*, 445–46; Williamson, *Revelation*, 202.

<sup>103</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 644.

<sup>104</sup> Mounce, *Revelation*, 227.

<sup>105</sup> Robert H. Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 1033; Paige Patterson, *Revelation*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 2012), 255; Blount, *Revelation*, 222.

<sup>106</sup> John R. Yeatts, Robert G. Bratcher and Howard Hatton (*Revelation*, 178) and H. B. Swete (*Apocalypse*, 141) seem to support this idea. See also Yeatts, *Revelation*, 209.

<sup>107</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 446.

more details will be given in the upcoming chapters, which will include, respectively, a literature review, OT and NT backgrounds to mission in Revelation 10–14, and the preceding and following contexts of Revelation 10–14.

## CHAPTER 2

### MISSION IN REVELATION 10–14 IN RECENT LITERATURE

There is relatively little literature on the missionary activity of the early church and the NT theology of mission,<sup>108</sup> despite the increasing interest in the topic in the last few decades,<sup>109</sup> likely explained by the lack of a comprehensive treatment of the theme.<sup>110</sup> When it comes to the contributions of the book of Revelation to a biblical theology of mission, the literature is even scarcer. Revelation presents, as it were, the

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<sup>108</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1:3–8. This is surprising because the NT documents “came into being as the result of a *two-part mission*, first, *the mission of Jesus* sent by God to inaugurate his kingdom with the blessings that it brings to people and to call people to respond to it, *and then the mission of his followers* called to continue his work by proclaiming him as Lord and Savior, and calling people to faith and ongoing commitment to him, as a result of which his church grows.” See I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 34–35. Italics added.

<sup>109</sup> Some of the most recent studies include Scott N. Callaham, *World Mission: Theology, Strategy, and Current Issues* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2019). See the chapters on NT Theology and World Mission as well as Biblical Theology and World Mission (pp. 34–101). See also Aune and Hvalvik, *The Church and its Mission*; Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*; Wright, *The Mission of God*, 501–30; Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*; William J. Larkin Jr. and Joel F. Williams, eds., *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998). Some studies have focused on specific areas of the NT, e.g., R. Geoffrey Harris, *Mission in the Gospels* (London: Epworth, 2004); Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008); and Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, including some works dealing with an assessment of the Second Temple Judaism literature, e.g., Ware, *Paul and the Mission*. Nothing compares, however, to the breathtaking treatment by Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, a two-volume work with almost two thousand pages. According to Köstenberger, “Early Christian Mission is the new mint standard for works on mission in the early church and will remain so for a very long time to come.” See Andreas J. Köstenberger, “Early Christian Mission,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 17, no. 2 (2007): 357–59.

<sup>110</sup> Larkin and Williams, *Mission in the New Testament*, 1.



final chapter of the salvation-historical story.<sup>111</sup> Is Revelation the final chapter of the *Missio Dei*?

This chapter presents a review of literature to acquaint the reader with research on mission in Revelation from the past three decades and, thus, provide a perception of unexplored fields. The present review will mention works discussing mission in Revelation as a whole, instead of focusing only on chapters 10–14. This is due to the fact that previous works dealing with that section of Revelation are quite rare, almost nonexistent. Since even monographs and papers addressing mission in Revelation are scarce, I also consider some works on mission in the NT that contain material from Revelation. However, while dealing with all these works, I will be especially attentive to any discussion linked to passages in Revelation 10–14.

Prior to the 1990s, only a few publications on mission in Revelation appeared, in a sporadic fashion.<sup>112</sup> However, from 1991 onward, there has been increasing interest in the topic, although evident gaps have still been left.

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<sup>111</sup> William J. Dumbrell, *The End of the Beginning: Revelation 21-22 and the Old Testament* (Homebush West, NSW: Lancer, 1985). See also Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 176–77.

<sup>112</sup> The 1970s and 1980s saw virtually no publications on mission Revelation. One important paper was published in 1970: James du Preez, “Mission Perspective in the Book of Revelation,” *EvQ* 42 (1970): 152–67. This paper is a summary of an unpublished dissertation written in Afrikaans and defended at the University of Stellenbosch, possibly in 1967. It is important to observe that the name of the author was printed incorrectly: the actual first name is Jannie rather than James. Unfortunately, I had no access to the dissertation, since it is not available in any database. I contacted the faculty librarian, who kindly sent me a digital copy of the dissertation’s table of contents. Judging by its summary, the dissertation assesses a wide range of short passages in Revelation. Du Preez mentions that the “whole investigation serves to show how much Revelation stresses both the work of God and that of the Church in the coming of the Kingdom” (p. 167). It seems that the dissertation is insightful in many respects. However, almost fifty years have passed since it was defended, and regardless of its contributions, the dissertation is outdated. Besides this work, no relevant publication came up in the 1970s.

The 1980s were more fertile, but the improvement was still very slight. A few papers and essays dealing directly or indirectly with mission in the NT were published, but with no or almost no reference to Revelation. For instance, John J. Vincent, “Pluralism and Mission in the New Testament,” in *Papers on Paul and Other New Testament Authors*, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, *Studia Biblica* 1978 (London:

## The Period from 1990 to 1999

David J. Bosch is certainly a major name when it comes to missiological studies. The appearance of his *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* in 1991 is a landmark.<sup>113</sup> His experience as a missionary and his expertise in the NT contributed to the impact of his book in the field of biblical theology of mission. The work is divided into three parts. Whereas the second and third ones focus, respectively, on historical paradigms of mission and a relevant missiology, the first one turns to NT

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Bloomsbury, 1980); David E. Garland, "Evangelism in the New Testament," *Review & Expositor* 77, no. 4 (1980): 461–71; Frederick W. Norris, "Strategy for Mission in the New Testament," in *Exploring Church Growth*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); Winston F. Crum, "The Mission of the Church in the New Testament and Patristic Writings," *Missiology* 12, no. 1 (1984): 81–85; Burton H. Throckmorton, "Evangelism and Mission in the New Testament," *Prism* 2, no. 1 (1987): 30–41; J. Massynberde Ford, "The Holy Spirit and Mission in the New Testament," *Missiology* 16, no. 4 (1988): 439–53; Christopher Burchard, "Kerygma and Martyria in the New Testament," in *Christian Witness and the Jewish People*, ed. Arne Sovik (Geneva, Switzerland: Lutheran World Federation, 1977). Karl Kertelge, *Mission in Neuen Testament*, Quaestiones Disputatae 93 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Heder, 1982), included no discussion on mission in Revelation. Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller referred to Revelation in *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), but in less than five pages. Kenneth A. Strand published two papers on Revelation in 1981 and 1982 respectively, but although he discussed Rev 11, his concern did not revolve around the witnessing motif but around the identity of the two witnesses. See Kenneth A. Strand, "The Two Witnesses of Revelation 11:3-12," *AUSS* 19, no. 2 (1981): 127–35; Kenneth A. Strand, "The Two Olive Trees of Zechariah 4 and Revelation 11," *AUSS* 20, no. 3 (1982): 257–61.

Smith summarized the status of research on mission in Revelation at the time when he affirmed, "The last book of the Bible is a neglected one." James C. Smith, "Missions in Revelation: Research in Progress," in *Unto the Uttermost: Missions in the Christian Churches / Churches of Christ*, ed. Doug Priest Jr. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1984). Smith defends that Revelation is a missionary book in its self-descriptions ("revelation," "the word of God and the testimony of Jesus," "prophecy," "a written book," "what the Spirit says," "in the Spirit," etc.), themes ("the nature of God," "the idea of covenant," "the concept of kingdom," "form of the commission," "the sweep of mankind," "the dynamics of prayer"), style, structure, and vocabulary (symbols, time and space, internal structure and literary devices). Unfortunately, Smith did not have space to develop these ideas. Accordingly, no section of the essay provides an analysis of passages, and Smith does not relate those self-descriptions, style, structure, themes, and vocabulary of Revelation to the broader background of mission in the Bible in order to make it evident that Revelation is, in fact, a missionary book. Furthermore, there is more to explore in terms of each of the elements he refers to, especially as far as themes and vocabulary are concerned. Another important paper was published in French toward the end of the 1980s: Paulin Poucouta, "La Mission Prophetique de l'Eglise dans l'Apocalypse Johannique," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 110 (1988): 38–57. Poucouta focuses his discussion on the image of the candlestick and the light as metaphors for missionary work. His paper introduces some interesting insights. However, its limitations include brief dialogue with the OT, a somewhat homiletical style, and limited conversation with the secondary literature.

models of mission. In this section, Bosch first provides “a brief overview of the missionary character of the ministry of Jesus and the early church.”<sup>114</sup> Next, he follows the canonical order as he reflects upon mission in the NT—Gospels (focus on Matthew), Luke-Acts, and Paul. Unfortunately, there is nothing on Revelation.

The publication of *The Climax of Prophecy*<sup>115</sup> and *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*<sup>116</sup> by Richard Bauckham in 1993 was another turning point. For the first time in the past three decades, a biblical scholar devoted time to examining the theme of mission in Revelation.<sup>117</sup> The relevance of these publications concerns not only the theology of mission in Revelation, but research on the theology of Revelation itself.<sup>118</sup> Of special interest is Bauckham’s discussion on the nations. Schnabel remarked in 2004, “Richard Bauckham has presented the most extensive discussion on the nations in the book of Revelation.”<sup>119</sup> Bauckham argues that the conversion of the nations as a result of the church witness is at the heart of the book of Revelation.<sup>120</sup> In his assessment of 11:3–

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<sup>113</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991). The success of this publication led Orbis Books to publish a twentieth-anniversary edition in 2011 with the addition of a new concluding chapter by two missiologists.

<sup>114</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 15.

<sup>115</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*.

<sup>116</sup> Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>117</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 238–337; Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 98–104.

<sup>118</sup> See Morton, *Recent Research on Revelation*, 98–101.

<sup>119</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1519. In 2011, Allan J. McNicol undertook a discussion even more extensive and arrived at conclusions similar to Bauckham’s; see Allan J. McNicol, *The Conversion of the Nations in Revelation*, LNTS 438 (London: T&T Clark, 2011).

<sup>120</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 238. Bauckham assesses the occurrences of the term ἔθνη and related vocabulary (e.g., the seven occurrences of the fourfold formula as found in 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:6).

13, 14:14–16, and 15:2–4, he concludes that those passages provide the basis for understanding 21–22 as describing universal salvation.<sup>121</sup> Bauckham maintains that John interprets the OT prophecies concerning the kingdom of God in an universalistic manner.<sup>122</sup> Thus, he believes the nations will be cured of their idolatry by having access to the tree of life.<sup>123</sup> Such a reading has been interpreted by some scholars as a universalism that is implausible.<sup>124</sup> The clear emphasis of Revelation on the impending judgment upon the followers of the beast leaves no room for the idea that all the world will be converted. Only the followers of Jesus will have access to the New Jerusalem.<sup>125</sup>

Two years after the publication of *The Climax of Prophecy*, Donald Senior, without quoting Bauckham, also called attention to the fact that witness theology is a

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<sup>121</sup> Eckhard Schnabel mentions that “most interpreters who find a soteriological universalism in John’s Revelation refer to 21:3, 24–27 and 22:2–3. Bauckham seeks to establish 11:3–13; 14:14–16; and 15:2–4 as passages in previous visions in which John prepares his readers for the final universalistic hope.” Schnabel, “John and the Future,” 246.

<sup>122</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 316.

<sup>123</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 317.

<sup>124</sup> For instance, Marko Jauhiainen observes, “The evidence for the claim that the conversion of the nations is a result of the church *suffering martyrdom* is somewhat scarce. In fact, this view rests almost entirely on a particular reading of Rev. 11:3–13, and especially of v. 13, in which only a small, faithless minority of the city are killed in the earthquake [...]; and if the nations are converted in 11:13, what are we to make of the various references in Revelation to large, ultimately non-repentant groups of God’s enemies.” (Marko Jauhiainen, “ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ἸΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ (Rev 1:1): The Climax of John’s Prophecy?”, *Tyndale Bulletin* 54, no. 1 (2003), 108). See also Beale, *Revelation*, 1098; Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1519; Schnabel, “John and the Future,” 243–71. Later on, the paper “John and the Future of the Nations” was reprinted in Schnabel, *Jesus, Paul, and the Early Church*, 385–413. Schnabel’s main thoughts in this paper will be referred to further ahead.

<sup>125</sup> While Bauckham is right in his perception that much universalistic language pervades Revelation, he seems to assess the data with his universalist presupposition in mind. By universalistic language, I do not mean the theory according to which in the end everyone will be saved, but the idea of totality that appears not infrequently in Revelation. For instance, the fourfold formula for the nations (5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15), the four corners and the four winds of the earth (7:1), etc. It appears that Bauckham is reacting against the majority of interpreters who preceded him, who supposed that the “church’s witness will lead [...] only to the destructive judgment of the nations” (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, xv). Bauckham himself admits that Revelation does not expect “the salvation of each and every human being” (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 313n100). In this sense, the expression “large-scale

central part of the mission perspective in Revelation.<sup>126</sup> He holds that ecclesiology and missiology walk together in the sense that church fulfills its mission by keeping itself separated from the world.<sup>127</sup> Unfortunately, he does not develop this idea. Almost at the same time, Jannie du Preez wrote a paper on Revelation 21:1–8 in which he describes seven dimensions of the church’s mission.<sup>128</sup> He refers sporadically to passages in chapters 10–14, but his main focus is 21:1–8. One can even agree with the dimensions of the church’s mission proposed by du Preez; nevertheless, the lack of a clear methodology to arrive at this conclusion leaves room for more discussion.

Toward the end of the 1990s, four important books on the NT theology of mission were published, but none of them dealt with mission in Revelation directly.<sup>129</sup> William J. Larkin Jr. and Joel F. Williams edited a collection of essays published under the title *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*.<sup>130</sup> In his essay on mission in Revelation, Johnny Miller laments the lack of studies on that topic.<sup>131</sup> He remarks that “in the myriad of studies of Revelation, both scholarly and popular, almost no attention has

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conversion of the nations” as applied by Jon Morales more accurately conveys Bauckham’s theology on the nations in Revelation (Morales, “Christ, Shepherd of the Nations,” 22–28).

<sup>126</sup> Donald Senior, “Correlating Images of Church and Images of Mission in the New Testament,” *Missiology* 23, no 1 (1995): 10–12.

<sup>127</sup> Senior, “Correlating Images of Church,” 11.

<sup>128</sup> 1. Urgent call for everyone to serve God as Creator of heaven and earth; 2. Involvement in God’s renewal of his whole creation; 3. God is proclaimed as Perfecter of creation; 4. Reflection on God’s compassion; 5. The act of doing covenant work for the sake of the kingdom of God; 6. The act of preparing a bride for the heavenly Bridegroom; 7. Praise to God and the Lamb. See Jannie du Preez, “All Things New: Notes on the Church’s Mission in the Light of Revelation 21:1-8,” *Missionalia* 24, no. 3 (1996): 372–82.

<sup>129</sup> An insightful paper was published in 1999 by Andreas J. Köstenberger in which he discusses the place of mission in NT theology, but there is nothing on Revelation, since he focused on the Fourth Gospel (see Köstenberger, “The Place of Mission in New Testament Theology”).

<sup>130</sup> Larkin and Williams, *Mission in the New Testament*.

been paid to its contributions to the theology of mission. It is hoped that more evangelical scholarship will explore the writing in this light.”<sup>132</sup> Since Miller takes time to deal with a few introductory matters—interpretive issues, historical setting, approaches to interpretation—the space to discuss mission in Revelation is extremely short (only seven pages!). In any case, his findings are insightful. He concludes that Revelation does not defend a soteriological universalism. In addition, he affirms that the mission of the church in Revelation must be understood in its relation to Christology,<sup>133</sup> is accomplished in the midst of persecution and suffering,<sup>134</sup> and is the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham.<sup>135</sup>

The second book, Köstenberger’s *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples According to the Fourth Gospel*, turns its attention toward mission in the Gospel of John.<sup>136</sup> While this book does not deal with Revelation, it was the first time in the past three decades that a biblical scholar had applied a linguistic approach in order to select missiological key-terms from a given corpus.<sup>137</sup> Six years later, Eckhard J. Schnabel would also apply a semantic field approach in his *Early Christian Mission*, but to the entire NT.<sup>138</sup> In this dissertation, I too apply a semantic field approach in Revelation in

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<sup>131</sup> Johnny V. Miller, “Mission in Revelation,” in Larkin and Williams, *Mission in the New Testament*, 227–38.

<sup>132</sup> Miller, “Mission in Revelation,” 227.

<sup>133</sup> Miller, “Mission in Revelation,” 232.

<sup>134</sup> Miller, “Mission in Revelation,” 234.

<sup>135</sup> Miller, “Mission in Revelation,” 238.

<sup>136</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*.

<sup>137</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 17–44.

<sup>138</sup> See Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 35–40.

order to select key-passages for analysis (see introduction).

The third book was published in Spanish.<sup>139</sup> It is a collection of essays written by biblical scholars and missiologists mostly from Latin America, but who graduated from universities in different parts of the globe. One essay is especially relevant: “La misión de la iglesia en el apocalipsis,” by Juan Stam.<sup>140</sup> Stam divides his essay into five sections<sup>141</sup> describing mission in Revelation as announcement of good news,<sup>142</sup> discipleship,<sup>143</sup> witness,<sup>144</sup> and resistance.<sup>145</sup> Stam holds that “sending” terminology is not linked to the

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<sup>139</sup> C. René Padilla, *Bases bíblicas de la misión: Perspectivas latinoamericanas* (Buenos Aires: Nueva Creación, 1998). All quotations from this book were translated by the author of this dissertation.

<sup>140</sup> Juan Stam, “La misión de la iglesia en el apocalipsis,” in Padilla, *Bases bíblicas de la misión*, 351–80.

<sup>141</sup> The first section deals with mission as sending. However, for Stam, such a nuance of mission does not exist in Revelation. This explains why I mention that he divides his essay into five sections but I list only four items.

<sup>142</sup> Stam defends that, since forgiveness and justification by faith are not central in Revelation and “there are no references [...] that specifically point to an evangelistic task of the church” (Stam, “La misión de la iglesia,” 353), one is to look for passages referring to the “evangelistic task without using the classic language of the subject” and, broadly speaking, see “how does Revelation understand ‘the good news’, that is, what is the ‘gospel’ of the last book of the Bible” (Stam, “La misión de la iglesia,” 353–54). In any case, he asserts that Revelation understands the gospel in four different ways: (1) The good news of the death and resurrection of the Lamb. (2) The good news of the kingdom. John’s ample use of kingdom terminology makes clear his interest in the nations, and the kingdom terminology expresses a universal or multicultural internationalism that is “a missionary dimension of the book” (Stam, “La misión de la iglesia,” 358). (3) The good news of the Lamb’s victory over his enemies and evil powers. Just as the Lamb overcame, “the goal for the church is to overcome by being faithful unto death.” (Stam, “La misión de la iglesia,” 360) He contends that “nowhere does the goal of ‘growing’ appear in the sense of gaining new members. Not even in light of the catastrophes that are taking place and the fearsome final judgment that is approaching does the concern to rescue the lost really appear. [...] In the final hour, the instruction is ‘come out of her’ (18:4) rather than ‘go in to evangelize her’” (Stam, “La misión de la iglesia,” 360). He mentions that there is an “evangelistic calling,” but such a calling is “to resist the beast unto death” (Stam, “La misión de la iglesia,” 360). (4) The good news of the new creation. Stam affirms that “this aspect [...] is more fundamental for the soteriology of Revelation than the forgiveness of sins of justification by faith” (Stam, “La misión de la iglesia,” 361–62). However, a question one should ask regards whether Revelation is indeed so incipient on justification by faith.

<sup>143</sup> Stam comments that to be a disciple is to be willing to sacrifice one’s own life just as the Lamb did. He observes that the concept of “disciple” in Revelation is akin to Jesus’ teaching on discipleship. Just as in the gospels, mission and discipleship in Revelation are inseparable (Stam, “La misión de la iglesia,” 363–65).

<sup>144</sup> Stam draws his idea on mission as witness from a brief analysis of Rev 10:1–11:13, focusing

Christian mission in Revelation.<sup>146</sup> Although he is right both in observing that Revelation lacks “sending” terminology and in his insistence that, in spite of that, the book still conveys missionary teaching, he does not deal with various other terms, phrases, and themes related to mission. The concept of mission can be present even where “sending” terminology (πέμφο and ἀποστέλλω) is absent.<sup>147</sup> Although Stam admits that the preaching of the gospel is expressed in Revelation, he denies that 10:7 (consequently, 10:11) and 14:6 have to do with it. According to him, those passages are dealing with a message of judgment rather than the good news of salvation. In a footnote, he goes as far as to mention that “Bauckham’s effort to give 14:6 an evangelistic sense is impressive for his erudition, but is not convincing.”<sup>148</sup> While some ideas presented in this essay call for further investigation, especially in regards to its assessment of passages such as 10:7, 14:6, and 13:3–13, Stam’s contribution is still remarkable for associating mission with the gospel, discipleship, witness, and resistance. Nevertheless, the brevity of his essay characterizes it as no more than an overview. There is more to explore concerning the relation of mission to these and other topics.

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on chapter 11. He asserts that “such an important interlude is dedicated to the prophetic mission of God’s people in eschatological times” with “the same character of ‘denunciation’ and ‘announcement’ about the nations typical of the classic prophecy of Israel” (Stam, “La misión de la iglesia,” 369). He summarizes his thought by affirming, “A careful study of the concept of mission as witness in Revelation confirms the following conclusion: the faithful are called to stand up firmly for the truth of the gospel and to risk their lives for the Lamb” (page 372).

<sup>145</sup> By affirming that Revelation conceives mission as resistance, Stam means that the missionary task of the church is not verbal, but that of a prophetic resistance to Roman empire by means of a life of integrity. He claims that John emphasizes this resistance and tenacity by using the term ὑπομονή (Stam, “La misión de la iglesia,” 366–72).

<sup>146</sup> Stam, “La misión de la iglesia,” 351.

<sup>147</sup> This has been demonstrated by Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 18–25.

<sup>148</sup> Stam, “La misión de la iglesia,” 353. He affirms that 3:8 and 6:2 are two passages that could refer to evangelization, but the fact that this is debatable does not allow one to go very far. According to



The fourth book is Johannes Nissen's *New Testament and Mission: Historical and Hermeneutical Perspectives*.<sup>149</sup> Nissen deals with 1 Peter and Revelation in only one brief chapter. Just as Stam, he also sees the Christians' witness in Revelation as a nonverbal activity. It takes place by means of resistance.<sup>150</sup>

### **The Period from 2000 to 2009**

The 2000s were a more fruitful decade for publications on mission in the NT; however, works dealing specifically with mission in Revelation were still very rare. In this section, I will divide my comments into two parts. First, I will focus on two dissertations dealing with Revelation. Next, I will turn to some books, articles, and essays dealing with mission in the NT in order to identify what they convey about mission in Revelation. Again, I will be attentive to any discussions involving passages from Revelation 10–14.

#### Dissertations

The first dissertation was written by Thomas Michael and defended in 2000.<sup>151</sup> His goal was to study “the various evangelistic motifs in the Book of Revelation both critically and analytically and to make an evaluation of their implications for the

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him, one possible passage conveying missionary activity is 11:3–13, which “describes the prophetic mission of the faith community in times of extreme trial” (Stam, “La misión de la iglesia,” 369).

<sup>149</sup> I used the fourth edition printed in 2007, but the book was originally published in 1999.

<sup>150</sup> He claims that in Revelation the call for witness implies not to compromise with the surrounding culture, and that “the prophetic witness [...] is based on two issues: the Christ event and the vision of a new heaven and a new earth” (Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 150).

<sup>151</sup> Thomas Michael, “Evangelistic Motifs in the Book of Revelation: A Critical Analysis of the Book of Revelation with Regard to Its Various Evangelistic Motifs” (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000).

understanding of the book.”<sup>152</sup> Michael selected eleven passages for analysis.<sup>153</sup> Four of them are found in the pericopes dealt with in this dissertation: 10:8–11; 14:6–7; 11:3–4, 13; 14:14–16. The analysis of these passages can be described as short summaries of scholarly opinions and the meaning of words. Furthermore, whereas Michael’s dissertation is more interested in evangelistic motifs, my dissertation is focused on the theology of mission.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Michael, “Evangelistic Motifs,” 2. The author concludes that the major evangelistic motifs in Revelation are as follows: proclamation with an incentive, general invitation to be saved, personal invitation to be saved, commission to write and send, commission to go and prophesy all over the world, preaching of the everlasting gospel to the world, gospel for the harvest, invitation to the kingdom of God, power to witness, time to witness, and final invitation for salvation (Michael, “Evangelistic Motifs,” 203–24).

<sup>153</sup> (1) 1:1–3; (2) 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; (3) 3:20–21; (4) 1:11, 19; (5) 10:8–11; (6) 14:6–7; (7) 14:14–16; (8) 19:9–10; (9) 11:3–4, 13; (10) 16:15; (11) 22:16–17. The criterion for selection is not clear. He mentions that “the principle of selection of the major passages in this research is to identify all the relevant passages with references to the motifs, emphases, and objectives of evangelism” (Michael, “Evangelistic Motifs,” 3). However, he does not mention how relevance is defined. Further ahead, Michael states that “in order to identify evangelistic motifs, first one has to understand its definition.” He then quotes somebody else’s definition of evangelistic motifs as “ideas which indicate a genuine concern of Jesus Christ to save people from their sins, eternal punishment, and separation from God” (Michael, “Evangelistic Motifs,” 3). Unfortunately, the source of this quotation is not given.

<sup>154</sup> Mission is a broader concept encompassing the notion of evangelism. Several scholars argue that there is a distinction between evangelism and mission in that the latter is wider than the former. However, they are inseparable. David Bosch, for instance, argues that “mission is the church sent into the world, to love, to serve, to preach, to teach, to heal, to liberate. [...] Evangelism [...] means enlisting people for the reign of God, liberating them from themselves, their sins, and their entanglements, so that they will be free for God and neighbor. [...] Evangelism, then, is calling people to mission” (Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 411, 418). In turn, Christopher Wright contends that “the Great Commission, along with all the practice of the New Testament church, tells us that there is mission beyond evangelism” (Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 284). For instance, he mentions that Paul did not stop “being a “missionary” when he spent three years teaching the church in Ephesus the whole counsel of God” (page 284). He explains that “Evangelism and teaching/discipling are together integral and essential parts of our mission” (page 284). From Paul’s correspondence with Timothy he concludes that, “for Paul, mission included church nurture as much as church planting” (page 285). Elsewhere, he argues that mission is broader than evangelism in that “God’s mission is what spans the gap between the curse on the earth of Gen 3 and the end of the curse in the new creation of Revelation 22. God’s mission is what brings humanity from being a cacophony of nations divided and scattered in rebellion against God in Genesis 11 to being a choir of nations united and gathered in the worship of God in Revelation 7. God’s mission [is] a vast, comprehensive project of cosmic salvation...” (page 46). Johannes Nissen also defends that mission “should be distinguished from the related term ‘evangelism.’” See Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 17. In endnote 30 on page 20, he comments that “this comprehensive understanding of mission is often defined by the threefold task of the church: witness (*martyria*), service (*diakonia*) and communion (*koinonia*).”

The second dissertation was written by Olutola K. Peters and defended in 2002.<sup>155</sup> His major purpose is to look at the various tasks and responsibilities of the Asian churches as conveyed by the Apocalypse of John.<sup>156</sup> By adopting a preterist or contemporary-historical approach to Revelation, he arrives at the conclusion that “the Apocalypse of John reflects a broad understanding of the functions and tasks of the Church, and that these can be seen as converging under the mandate of the Church to maintain faithful witness to Jesus Christ.”<sup>157</sup> He argues that, while what the church is meant to be and do can be described in a more comprehensive list, three main tasks recur throughout the book: worship, witness, and repentance.<sup>158</sup>

Unfortunately, Peters’s emphasis on the Asian churches prevents him from diving deeper into the relationship of all those tasks with the mission of the church in a broader sense. Indeed, this is not part of his agenda of research. Of special interest, however, are both Peters’s conclusion that the task of witnessing “serves as a primary mandate that embraces the various tasks of the Church in the Apocalypse”<sup>159</sup> and the intersection between witnessing and worship, which, in the words of Ian Boxall, “is an important area

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<sup>155</sup> Peters, “The Mandate of the Church”. This dissertation was published as Olutola K. Peters, *The Mandate of the Church in the Apocalypse of John* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005). Although Peters is not dealing with a biblical theology of mission in Revelation, his dissertation is still relevant for providing a discussion of themes related to it.

<sup>156</sup> Peters, “The Mandate of the Church,” 2. Although he focuses on the Asian churches, he states that this does not imply “that the mandate of the Apocalypse starts and ends with its original recipients.” He adds that “the mandate of the Apocalypse may be applied to a broader audience, the ‘Church Universal’” (Peters, “The Mandate of the Church,” 7).

<sup>157</sup> Peters, “The Mandate of the Church,” 181.

<sup>158</sup> Peters, “The Mandate of the Church,” 51–54.

<sup>159</sup> Peters, “The Mandate of the Church,” 152.

inviting further exploration.”<sup>160</sup> Peters defines faithful witness as willingness to suffering and obedience to God’s commandments. For him, there is no verbal communication. Yet, this is supported by scholars such as Bauckham,<sup>161</sup> Beale,<sup>162</sup> and Stefanovic,<sup>163</sup> to mention only a few. Osborne goes as far as to assert that the evangelistic efforts of the church include verbal witness.<sup>164</sup> Peters helpfully remarks that themes such as worship, witness, and repentance are related to mission. Key-passages to address these themes are found in Revelation 10–14. However, the assessment of passages coming from that pericope is very short, since the major concern of his dissertation is to provide an analysis of the mandate of the church throughout the book. All of these facts leave space for a new dissertation.

### Books, Articles, and Essays

The 2000s opened with a book edited by R. J. Gibson under the title *Ripe for Harvest*.<sup>165</sup> It is a collection of five essays by different scholars,<sup>166</sup> but includes nothing

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<sup>160</sup> Ian Boxall, “The Mandate of the Church in the Apocalypse of John,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 29, no. 5 (2007): 115.

<sup>161</sup> Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 120. Bauckham also states that, “The word ‘witness’ (martyrs) does not yet, in Revelation, carry the technical Christian meaning of ‘martyr’ (one who bears witness by dying for the faith). It does not refer to death itself as witness, but to *verbal witness* to the truth of God (cf. the association of witness with ‘the word of God’: 1:2, 9; 6:9; 20:4; cf. also 12:11) along with living obedience to the commands of God (cf. the association of witness with keeping the commandments: 12:17). But it is strongly implied that faithful witness will incur opposition and lead to death (2:13; 11:7; 12:17)” (72, emphasis supplied).

<sup>162</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press; Leicester: Apollos, 2004), 326. Also, Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 647.

<sup>163</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 336–38.

<sup>164</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 476. Elsewhere, Osborne states that “verbal witness [is] the apex of the Christian task.” See Osborne, “The Mission to the Nations,” 366.

<sup>165</sup> R. J. Gibson, ed., *Ripe for Harvest: Christian Mission in the New Testament and in Our World* (Cumbria: Paternoster, 2000). The reason why this book is mentioned here—although it has nothing on

on Revelation.<sup>167</sup> However, an important book by Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien came up in 2001. The relevance of this book is due to the fact that it treats the theme of mission in Revelation within the framework of a biblical theology of mission in which Revelation has the final word.<sup>168</sup>

Köstenberger and O'Brien contend that the concept of mission in Revelation is primarily related to witnessing.<sup>169</sup> They also recognize that mission in Revelation can be expressed through other themes;<sup>170</sup> yet, they take only one page and a half to mention topics such as the second coming of Christ, endurance in the face of suffering, judgment, and the final gathering of God's people in the New Jerusalem. In their brief evaluation, they conclude that Revelation does not exhort believers to get involved in mission.<sup>171</sup>

This view deserves reconsideration in the light of passages such as 10:11 and 14:6–7.

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mission in Revelation—is because it serves as an example that Revelation is overlooked in works that propose themselves to deal with mission in the NT.

<sup>166</sup> 1) Following Jesus and Fishing for People: Evangelistic Mission in the Third Millennium; 2) Paul, Pluralism, and Preaching: A Study in 1 Corinthians; 3) Models of Mission and the Doctrine of the Spirit; 4) Obstacles and opportunities; and 5) 'Sent for this Purpose': 'Mission' and 'Missiology' and their Search for Meaning.

<sup>167</sup> The lack of reference to Revelation may, perhaps, be explained by the fact that the only section where mission in the NT is addressed (pp. 111–23) focuses on “sending” terminology. Since “sending” terminology is absent in Revelation, there was no reason to address Revelation. It seems that this book conveys the idea that there is mission only where “sending” terminology is used. However, the study of Köstenberger in the gospel of John, *The Missions of Jesus*, and especially the study of Eckhard J. Schnabel on the entire NT, *Early Christian Mission*, have demonstrated that this is not the case.

<sup>168</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 243–49. A second edition has been published very recently: Andreas J. Köstenberger and T. Desmond Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, 2nd ed., NSBT 53 (Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2020). However, no major differences can be perceived in the Revelation material. The second edition will be referred to further ahead as we address the OT and NT backgrounds to mission, respectively chapters 3 and 4, insofar as it differentiates itself from the first edition. For a summary of the updates introduced in the second edition, see Andreas J. Köstenberger, “Reconceiving a Biblical Theology of Mission: Salvation to the Ends of the Earth Revisited,” *Themelios* 45, no. 3 (2020): 528–36.

<sup>169</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 244–45.

<sup>170</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 247.

<sup>171</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 262.

They also contend that mission in Revelation is the result of the fulfilling of God's covenantal promises.<sup>172</sup> Nevertheless, they do not devote time to exegete selected passages so as to demonstrate how that happens. Yet, the work of Köstenberger and O'Brien is worthy of praise, as their initiative opened a window for subsequent dialogue.<sup>173</sup>

In 2002, a paper by Eckhard J. Schnabel heated up the debate on the destiny of the nations in Revelation. Indeed, his paper is an evaluation of Bauchkam's claim of a large-scale conversion of the nations, but Schnabel brings the issue to the other pole of the equation. He does not allow Revelation to give room for an evangelistic activity to win the nations. He argues that, since the preposition ἐπί should mean "against" in 10:11 and Ezekiel's message of judgment is the background of 10:8–10, "the content of the scroll in Revelation 10 does not support the view that John relates to the church a missionary mandate for an evangelistic ministry to the nations."<sup>174</sup> He admits that there is evangelistic witness in 11:3–13, but apparently it should be defined in terms of resistance in the midst of tribulations.<sup>175</sup> In addition, 14:14–20 ought to be seen as a twofold narration of judgment rather than a twofold option in consonance with 14:6–13, i.e., those who repent upon hearing the three angels' messages will be gathered into the kingdom of God (14:14–16) and those who reject their message will be gathered for destruction (14:17–20).

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<sup>172</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 262.

<sup>173</sup> See Christoph Stenschke, "Mission in the New Testament: New Trends in Research," *Missionalia* 31, no. 2 (2003): 355–58.

<sup>174</sup> Schnabel, "John and the Future," 253. The meaning of ἐπί will be discussed in Chapter 6 of this work.

<sup>175</sup> Schnabel, "John and the Future," 256.

In 2004 two books moved the topic a step forward. In *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, G. K. Beale navigates through different disciplines—OT, NT, Hermeneutics, Biblical Theology, and Religious Studies—and his work had a singular impact on the theology of mission. The relationship between temple and mission in Revelation research is a new topic for discussion. In an article presented to the Evangelical Theological Society in 2004, Beale summarized the main points of his book and concluded with the following missiological implication of his findings: “Our task as a Church is to be God's temple, so filled with his presence that we expand and fill the earth with that glorious presence until God finally accomplishes this goal completely at the end of time! This is our common, unified mission.”<sup>176</sup> While no one doubts that Beale's contribution to understanding mission in Revelation is noteworthy, his main concern is with the temple motif rather than mission itself, although they are related. Even when he deals with Revelation 11 his focus is on the temple rather than the witnessing motif. In fact, he devotes more time to Revelation 21–22. Therefore, although his contribution on the relationship between the heavenly temple and mission is remarkable, Revelation 10–14 is still an open avenue for more exploration. As previous studies have demonstrated, the heavenly temple plays a crucial role in Revelation,<sup>177</sup> and its relation to mission ought to be further investigated.

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<sup>176</sup> G. K. Beale, “Eden, the Temple, and the Church's Mission in the New Creation,” *JETS* 48, no. 1 (2005): 31. Beale comes to this conclusion by taking as his starting point the commission given to Adam in Gen 1:28 and the subsequent commission given to Israel. Since both Adam and Israel failed, Jesus came as second Adam, and now he commissions the church to fulfill the original task of filling the earth with God's glory.

<sup>177</sup> E.g., Kenneth A. Strand, “The Eight Basic Visions in the Book of Revelation,” *AUSS* 25, no. 1 (1987): 107–21; Kenneth A. Strand, “The ‘Victorious-Introduction’ Scenes in the Visions in the Book of Revelation,” *AUSS* 25, no. 3 (1987): 267–88. Both articles were reprinted in Frank B. Holbrook, ed., *Symposium on Revelation: Introductory and Exegetical Studies*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 35–72. See further developments of Strand's

The second book is the two-volume monograph by Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, which is certainly a turning point in mission studies. Christoph Stenschke awaited the publication of this work with the expectation that it might “be the standard work on the theme of mission in the New Testament for years to come,”<sup>178</sup> and he was right. According to Köstenberger’s review three years after the release of the English edition,<sup>179</sup> “*Early Christian Mission* is the new mint standard for works on mission in the early church and will remain so for a very long time to come.”<sup>180</sup> Schnabel asserts that although one can find previous research dealing with mission in the NT, “no comprehensive synthesis describes all relevant historical developments and geographical data and presents the significant exegetical evidence combined with theological analyses.”<sup>181</sup> In his colossal work, he seeks to fill this gap by presenting the facts and analyzing the passages from which a theology of mission is to emerge. He assures that “this has not always happened.”<sup>182</sup>

Despite his breathtaking assessment of missionary activity in the early church, Schnabel devotes only seven pages out of his almost two-thousand-page monograph to

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arguments by Richard M. Davidson, “Sanctuary Typology” in Holbrook, *Symposium on Revelation*, 111–16, and Jon Paulien, “Seals and Trumpets: Some Current Discussions,” in Holbrook, *Symposium on Revelation*, 187–88. See also Jon Paulien, “The Role of the Hebrew Cultus, Sanctuary, and Temple in the Plot and Structure of the Book of Revelation,” *AUSS* 33, no. 2 (1995): 247–55. Other scholars also notice the role the introductory sanctuary scenes play in the structure of Revelation. See Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 30–33; Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, xcvi–xcviii, 313. For a summary of the ideas contained in the bibliography above, see Ranko Stefanovic, “Finding Meaning in the Literary Patterns of Revelation,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 13, no. 1 (2002): 32–37.

<sup>178</sup> Stenschke, “Mission in the New Testament,” 383.

<sup>179</sup> The book was published originally in German under the title *Urchristliche Mission* in 2002. The English translation, however, has revisions and expansions of the original work by the author himself.

<sup>180</sup> Köstenberger, “Early Christian Mission,” 359.

<sup>181</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1:6.

<sup>182</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1:7.



discussion of the missionary theology of Revelation.<sup>183</sup> He sees the great multitude in 7:9 as a reverberation of God’s covenant with Abraham.<sup>184</sup> But seven pages is too short a space for him to develop this idea and others.<sup>185</sup> Schnabel further contends that the number twelve in Revelation (twelve tribes, twelve apostles, etc.) stresses the notion of completeness of God’s people,<sup>186</sup> and this implies missionary engagement.<sup>187</sup> He also mentions how central 11:1–14 is for the missionary theology of Revelation. However, the whole discussion is quite brief.

In the second half of the 2000s, two important books appeared, but with almost no consideration of mission in Revelation. In *The Mission of God*, Christopher J. H. Wright provides a survey on biblical data on God’s mission. In chapter 15 he discusses the relationship between God and the nations in the NT mission by surveying the NT material from the Gospels to Revelation. In two paragraphs, he summarizes how Revelation “envisions the completion of God’s mission for the nations and the fulfillment of all his covenant promises.”<sup>188</sup> As one can judge by its subtitle, *Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative*, the book intends to present mission as the Bible’s metanarrative. However, the short space reserved for Revelation is surprising, since he argues that the

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<sup>183</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1514–21.

<sup>184</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1514.

<sup>185</sup> He does not explain how the calling of Abraham and his descendants (Gen 12:1–3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4–5; 28:14)—as well as the development of such passages and their application to Israel (e.g., Exod 1:7; Deut 1:10–11; 7:13; Ps 105:24; 107:38; Isa 51:2–3; Jer 3:16, 18; 23:3; Ezek 16:7; 36:9–12; Hos 1:10) — affect our understanding of the gathering of the nations in Revelation (7:9 and passages such as 21:3, 22–24).

<sup>186</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1516.

<sup>187</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1517.

<sup>188</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 530.

book contains the final chapter of the biblical story.<sup>189</sup> Closing this period, the reprint of *Mission in the New Testament* by Ferdinand Hahn is worth mentioning. It was originally published in 1965 and served as a basis for various subsequent works. However, as was a pattern during the 2000s, the space given to Revelation is very short. It comes down to one reference to 10:7 and references to 14:6 scattered in five different locations in the book.<sup>190</sup>

### **The Period from 2010 to 2019**

The 2010s were a period of increasing interest in the theme of mission in the NT. Several papers and books addressing mission in passages, books, or sections of the NT were published, but still very little material on Revelation. Whereas in the previous section I dealt with dissertations and then with books, articles, and essays, here I will do the opposite by discussing the materials chronologically. Some dissertations appeared toward the second half of the 2010s.

#### **Books, Articles, and Essays**

Several books dealing with mission in the NT were published in the early 2010s. Some of them, however, have no material from Revelation or address issues in the book

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<sup>189</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright argues that the whole Bible can be read with a missional hermeneutic. Accordingly, he assesses both OT and NT passages in order to demonstrate his thesis. Although he recognizes the importance of Revelation when it comes to “achievement of God’s cosmic redemptive mission” (Wright, *The Mission of God*, 356), he does not develop this idea. Elsewhere he mentions that the 144,000 passage in Revelation also alludes to God’s promise to Abraham (Wright, *The Mission of God*, 195, 250–51, 328), but the discussion is very incipient. In fact, it is necessary to recognize that given the large scope of Wright’s work it would be impossible to devote much space to Revelation. In any case, it is still surprising that there is so little.

<sup>190</sup> Ferdinand Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament*, Studies in Biblical Theology 47 (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 39, 57, 67, 71, 142.

only sporadically.<sup>191</sup> A monograph by Allan J. McNicol is worthy of mention for resuming the debate on the destiny of the nations in Revelation.<sup>192</sup> Nevertheless, although McNicol disagrees with some of Bauckham's ideas, he arrives at the same conclusion—the conversion of the nations on a large scale—so an assessment of his ideas would be

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<sup>191</sup> Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia L. Westfall, eds., *Christian Mission: Old Testament Foundations and New Testament Developments*, McMaster New Testament Studies 9 (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010). As one can judge by its subtitle, this book addresses Christian mission with attention to its OT background. However, except for some brief references, Revelation is not included in the discussion, which is surprising given the large amount of OT background in Revelation.

Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010). In the first two chapters, the authors provide a biblical basis for mission. The second chapter, entitled “God and the Nations in the New Testament,” offers a survey from the Gospels to the General Epistles. They do not include a section on Revelation. They only offer a few comments in two paragraphs on the idea that “Revelation [...] graphically depicts the ultimate victory of God over all evil and the establishment of the kingdom in fulness” (53).

Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*. Goheen follows the biblical storyline throughout the first seven chapters of his book. Accordingly, in chapter 2 he emphasizes the importance of Gen 12:1–3 for one's understanding of God's effort to make his name known through Abraham and, consequently, the formation of the nation of Israel and, eschatologically, the new Israel. Since Goheen is following the biblical storyline, once he dealt with Gen 12:1–3 as a starting point of the biblical story of God's mission, he could have explored Revelation as presenting the complete fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. But it is surprising that other NT books, some of them even shorter than Revelation, are given more prominence in his discussion.

Other monographs in this period basically ignored Revelation. This is the case with another book by Michael W. Goheen, *Introducing Christian Mission Today: Scripture, History and Issues* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014). In this work, Goheen quotes Revelation only twice (60, 314–15). Another example is Bruce R. Ashford, ed., *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nations* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011). In the chapter on “New Testament and the Nations” by Keith Whitfield, one can see a section on the nations and the NT Gospels, another section on the nations and the Acts of the Apostles, and another on the nations and the NT epistles, but no section on the nations and Revelation.

A book from this period that deserves to be highlighted is G. K. Beale and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014). It covers nothing new in comparison to Beale's *The Temple and the Church's Mission* (2004), but is, so to speak, a “pastoral” and hence, easier reading of the latter. The comments concerning *The Temple and the Church's Mission* apply here. Beale's *A New Testament Biblical Theology* (2011) is also noteworthy. His proposal of the main storyline of the NT in light of its relation to the proposed storyline of the OT (p. 163) deals with mission-related themes that are illuminating. In any case, there is much repetition of ideas already presented in *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, so that it is not necessary to address them again.

<sup>192</sup> McNicol, *The Conversion of the Nations*.

somewhat redundant.<sup>193</sup>

However, a book edited by Jon C. Laansma, Grant Osborne, and Ray Van Neste<sup>194</sup> contains two essays that would nurture the debate on the nations a bit more. In the first essay, Grant Osborne argues that mission is central to the message of Revelation and serves as a sort of counterpoint to the book's teaching on judgment.<sup>195</sup> The first part of the essay addresses two attitudes of Revelation toward the nations. Osborne points out that some passages describe the nations as being under condemnation, since they reject God to follow the beast and place themselves under its authority. In doing so, they stand as enemies of God's people (11:9; 13:7). Based on 20:1–10, he remarks that Revelation makes it clear that the nations are brought into judgment and describes the destruction of those opposing God.<sup>196</sup> On the other hand, Revelation also centers on God's grace and mercy toward the nations. Drawing upon 1:5d and 5:9, he asserts that God brought redemption to the nations through the blood of Jesus and made it possible for people from all of them to become a kingdom and priests, fulfilling Exodus 19:5–6.<sup>197</sup> Thus, the nations are also a target of God's grace even though they are in rebellion and opposition

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<sup>193</sup> For an assessment of McNicol's major ideas, see Morales, "Christ, Shepherd of the Nations," 28–31.

<sup>194</sup> Jon C. Laansma, Grant Osborne, and Ray Van Neste, eds., *New Testament Theology in Light of the Church's Mission: Essays in Honor of I. Howard Marshall* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011).

<sup>195</sup> Osborne, "The Mission to the Nations," 347. In this essay, Osborne gives a concise and helpful definition of mission as follows: "the proclamation of truth intended to bring about the conversion of people from one worldview to another" (347). He assumes that Revelation conveys such a view on mission.

<sup>196</sup> Osborne, "The Mission to the Nations," 351. He notices that, while this may sound violent to modern ears, "these themes would have offended no one in the ancient world" (Osborne, "The Mission to the Nations," 351). Unfortunately, Osborne does not provide reasoning for this statement. He further asserts that Revelation leaves no doubt as to "the deserved nature of these judgments" (page 351), and this is based on the fact that God is just in his judgments (11:18d; 15:3; 16:5–7).

<sup>197</sup> Osborne, "The Mission to the Nations," 354.

to him. Those who turn to him in repentance are redeemed and included in the people of God.<sup>198</sup>

The second part turns to the meaning and extent of the mission to the nations and how such a task is accomplished. Osborne observes that since judgment is a predominant theme in Revelation, one could doubt whether there is room for mission. He answers this question by arguing that in Revelation God's judgments are founded on his mercy<sup>199</sup> since they are a warning for the opponents to repent. He concludes that, "mission and judgment are interdependent aspects of Revelation."<sup>200</sup> According to him, the idea of repentance comes mostly from 14:6–7. He asserts that this is the key passage for such a discussion, as it summons the earth dwellers to fear God and give him glory. He remarks that this language implies an offer of repentance and is used elsewhere in Revelation to convey reverence and worship as well (1:6; 4:9, 11; 5:12, 13; 7:12; 19:1, 7).

Unfortunately, Osborne does not devote time to more assessments. In fact, an extended list of passages involving "fear" and "glorify" could include 1:6; 4:9, 11; 5:12, 13; 7:12; 11:13, 18; 14:7; 15:4; 16:9; 19:1, 5, 7, but he does not deal with all of them. However, he does refer to the debate concerning whether or not 11:13 indicates a massive conversion of the nations.<sup>201</sup> He believes that 11:13 likely refers to conversion, but this does not

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<sup>198</sup> Osborne, "The Mission to the Nations," 354.

<sup>199</sup> Here, Osborne quotes his commentary on Revelation. See Osborne, *Revelation*, 271. James M. Hamilton Jr. comes to a similar conclusion in assessing the relation between judgment and salvation in Scripture. See James M. Hamilton Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010).

<sup>200</sup> Osborne, "The Mission to the Nations," 357.

<sup>201</sup> Osborne, "The Mission to the Nations," 360–62. According to him, Richard Bauckham and Eckhard Schnabel are the two poles of this debate.

mean a universal conversion.<sup>202</sup> He holds that people from the nations will be saved insofar as they respond to God's offer of mercy.<sup>203</sup> This offer is conveyed by means of judgment, among other things. Osborne's view on the interrelationship between judgment and mission is novel and offers fertile soil for further exploration. Osborne ends his discussion by succinctly highlighting that faithful witness is the means whereby God's mission is accomplished in Revelation.<sup>204</sup>

The second essay was written by Eckhard J. Schnabel.<sup>205</sup> Schnabel addresses the fourfold phrase "every tribe and language and people and nation," which occurs seven times in Revelation with minor variations (5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15). He studies the meaning of the individual terms and arrives at the conclusion that the original readers might have understood them in terms of ethnic, social, and political groups in the cities and villages of Asia Minor and other regions. He sheds light on the universalism debate by holding that the fourfold phrase suggests universality, not universalism.<sup>206</sup> It suggests universality in the sense that "people from all ethnic, linguistic, tribal, civic, political, and social backgrounds need to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ."<sup>207</sup> Although Schnabel's concerns are primarily related to what was expected from missionaries in Asia

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<sup>202</sup> Osborne, "The Mission to the Nations," 361–62.

<sup>203</sup> Osborne, "The Mission to the Nations," 362.

<sup>204</sup> He observes that 11:3–7 is a prominent passage, but is aware that the witness motif pervades Revelation, including other relevant passages such as 10:11, 12:17, and 14:6–7 (Osborne, "The Mission to the Nations," 366).

<sup>205</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, "Early Christian Mission and Christian Identity in the Context of the Ethnic, Social, and Political Affiliations in Revelation," in Laansma, Osborne, and Neste, *New Testament Theology*. Later, the essay was reprinted in Schnabel, *Jesus, Paul, and the Early Church*, 333–52.

<sup>206</sup> Schnabel, "Early Christian Mission and Christian Identity," 385–86.

<sup>207</sup> Schnabel, "Early Christian Mission and Christian Identity," 386.

Minor in John's time, one can further explore how this applies to the church throughout the centuries, culminating with the second coming of Jesus.<sup>208</sup>

Two papers that appeared in the early 2010s should also be mentioned. In the first one, Ekkehardt Mueller addresses the missionary activity in Revelation by focusing on the mission of God, the mission of God's people, and the message to be proclaimed.<sup>209</sup>

Mueller observes that Revelation describes the Godhead as engaged in mission.<sup>210</sup> Also,

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<sup>208</sup> For instance, such an understanding applied to Rev 14:6 can illuminate Jesus' words, "This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη), and *then the end will come*" (Matt 24:14, italics supplied) and "make disciples of all nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη)" (Matt 28:19).

If Schnabel's assessment as to the meanings of the terms making up the fourfold formula is correct, it points out the immensity of the church's task. In other words, to reach the audience represented by the fourfold formula means to take the gospel to "every family clan; [...] every tribe and nation who are distinguished by the languages that they speak; [...] every group connected through cultural bonds and ties to a specific territory, including the populace of the cities and the village people; [...] each group of people united by kingship, culture, and common traditions, including foreigners and members of associations" (Schnabel, "Early Christian Mission and Christian Identity," 386).

<sup>209</sup> Ekkehardt Mueller, "Missão no apocalipse," in *Teologia e metodologia da missão*, ed. Elias Brasil de Souza, VII Simpósio Bíblico Teológico Sul-Americano, 2nd ed. (Cachoeira, BA: Ceplib, 2011), 129–70. Later on, this text was published in English with minor changes. See Ekkehardt Mueller, "Mission in the Book of Revelation," in *Message, Mission and Unity of the Church*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, *Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology 2* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2013), 129–53. For convenience, I am using the English version.

<sup>210</sup> The involvement of God the Father can be seen throughout Revelation (1:1; 10:7, 10–11; 11:3, 10; 22:6), but the book mostly dwells on Jesus and the gospel. Mueller argues that Jesus' commitment to mission is conveyed in different ways. He is presented as the rider on the white horse, the witness, having a two-edged sword coming out of his mouth, and the Word of God. Obviously, Mueller is aware of the debate involving the symbol of the rider on the white horse. An extensive footnote provides a summary of opinions regarding the identity of the rider (Mueller, "Mission in the Book of Revelation," 131n109). He adopts the idea that "the rider on the white horse represents Jesus and the proclamation of the gospel" (131). Mueller argues that all these symbols have missionary connotations. He mentions that the last two symbols are clearly applied to Jesus and are related in the NT, in that it associates the imagery of the sword with the Word of God (Heb 4:12). He also states, "A study of the term 'mouth' in Revelation indicates that the main emphasis is on its use for propaganda and counter-propaganda purposes—for the promotion of the message of evil powers and the message of God" (133). In other words, whereas Jesus acts to accomplish God's mission (1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21; also 11:15; 14:5), the evil forces are engaged in counterpropaganda as a means of resistance to the achievement of mission (9:17–19; 12:15; 13:2, 5, 6; 16:3).

The involvement of the Holy Spirit in God's mission is suggested by passages such as 1:4; 4:5; 5:6 (also 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). Following Osborne, Mueller asserts that those passages extend John's teaching that the Holy Spirit was sent into the world to carry out the mission of the Father and the Son (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7).

God uses the Scriptures (OT and NT), the book of Revelation itself (1:1–3), and the angels (1:1; 3:5; 5:2, 11; 7:2, 11, etc.) to accomplish his salvific plan.

Mueller remarks that the church in Revelation is called to play a major role in God’s mission, and that Revelation uses different images to refer to the church’s missionary activity. God’s people are described as witnesses (1:9; 6:9; 12:17; 19:10), priests (1:6; 5:10; 20:6), apostles and prophets (11:18; 18:20, 24; 22:6, 9), lampstands (Rev 1–3), the remnant<sup>211</sup> (12:17), etc. He calls attention to the important question of the nature of the angels proclaiming the three messages in 14:6–13. Are they heavenly beings or human beings?<sup>212</sup> Mueller suggests that these “angels can stand for human beings.”<sup>213</sup> This is a topic that deserves further consideration, since commentators barely address it.

The final part of Mueller’s essay discusses the relationship between mission and message as well as the results of mission activity. He notes that Revelation often underscores the contrast between false teachings and the divine message. This polarization will be ultimately undone only when God brings sin to an end. Mueller deals with other themes related to mission, but given the brevity of his paper, he is not able to focus on any of them in detail. However, he offers insights for more exploration of topics such as the role of the remnant (12:17), the saints (Rev 13), and the 144,000 (Rev 14) in God’s mission, and the identity of the angels in 14:6–13.

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<sup>211</sup> He observes that “the remnant is particularly prominent in the center of the book,”<sup>211</sup> where they are also identified as saints (Rev 13) and the 144,000 (Rev 14).

<sup>212</sup> Joachim Jeremias, for instance, denies the notion that the angels are human messengers. See Jeremias, *Jesus’ Promise to the Nations*, 22. It seems that Ian Paul is of the same opinion. See Paul, *Revelation*, 248–49.

<sup>213</sup> Mueller, “Mission in the Book of Revelation,” 144.



In the second paper, Dean Flemming suggests a missional reading of the book of Revelation as a hermeneutic procedure.<sup>214</sup> He wonders, “What if, instead of looking for evidence of a ‘theology of mission’ or the presence of ‘missionary texts,’ we approached the entire book of Revelation as a mission text?”<sup>215</sup> According to him, the interpretation of Revelation would be more effective if one read the book in the light of God’s mission.<sup>216</sup> He states that a missional hermeneutic involves two foundational elements: (1) “Scripture as a *witness* to the gracious mission of the triune God” and (2) Scripture “as an *instrument* of the *Missio Dei*.”<sup>217</sup> Therefore, he approaches Revelation accordingly.

In reading Revelation as a witness to God’s mission, Flemming remarks that John points to the climax and triumph of the story told in Scripture as a whole, i.e., the restoration of all things.<sup>218</sup> That comprehensive story is told in Revelation by means of several overlapping, simultaneous, and interconnected stories such as creation, new creation, redemption, judgment, the scope of God’s mission, and God’s mission and the church.<sup>219</sup> At the same time, Revelation is an instrument of God’s mission in the sense that it calls readers to resist the temptation to compromise with the surrounding ideology fomented by the beast, on the one hand, and to demonstrate faithful allegiance to the Lamb, on the other hand. But how is that accomplished? Flemming notes that Revelation

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<sup>214</sup> Dean Flemming, “Revelation and the *Missio Dei*: Toward a Missional Reading of the Apocalypse,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6, no. 2 (2012): 161–77.

<sup>215</sup> Flemming, “Revelation and the *Missio Dei*,” 162.

<sup>216</sup> Flemming, “Revelation and the *Missio Dei*,” 162.

<sup>217</sup> Flemming, “Revelation and the *Missio Dei*,” 162.

<sup>218</sup> Flemming, “Revelation and the *Missio Dei*,” 162.

shapes the missional communities of John's time by inviting them to (1) reimagine the present world from the perspective of heaven and the future; (2) come out of Babylon in the sense of a flight from compromising with idolatry;<sup>220</sup> (3) bear fruitful witness by replicating the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus (11:1–13); (4) witness through worship;<sup>221</sup> and (5) embody the future through a look into the New Jerusalem, since a vision of the future can affect the way one lives in the present.<sup>222</sup> Flemming's paper is very insightful. It brings to the surface many ideas that can be further explored. However, as he himself states in the introduction, "space does not allow a full missional reading of the book of Revelation in this essay."<sup>223</sup> This deserves more attention.

In the second half of the 2010s, several monographs dealt with mission in the NT, but there was still no major work exclusively on Revelation. In his book, *The Heart of Revelation: Understanding the 10 Essential Themes of the Bible's Final Book*, Scott J. Duvall lists mission as one of the major themes in the Apocalypse of John, and reserves one chapter to examine it. He explains several passages and comments that mission is brought into sharp focus in 10:1–11:13. However, the discussion is very succinct, not to mention the homiletical approach and, hence, the lack of deep treatment of the topic.<sup>224</sup> In 2017, an essay by Eckhard J. Schnabel discussed what Revelation has to say about how

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<sup>219</sup> Flemming, "Revelation and the Missio Dei," 163–69.

<sup>220</sup> Flemming, "Revelation and the Missio Dei," 171.

<sup>221</sup> Worship "is the goal of God's mission," "empowers the people of God for missional faithfulness," and "is itself a means of public witness" (Flemming, "Revelation and the Missio Dei," 174–75).

<sup>222</sup> Flemming, "Revelation and the Missio Dei," 169–76.

<sup>223</sup> Flemming, "Revelation and the Missio Dei," 163.

<sup>224</sup> Scott J. Duvall, *The Heart of Revelation: Understanding the 10 Essential Themes of the Bible's Final Book* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 101–18.

the followers of Jesus should respond to persecution and opposition.<sup>225</sup> He concludes that the answer is threefold: the author (1) comforts his readers by reminding them of who they are and the blessings they are granted through Jesus; (2) warns them to remain faithful to God and to Jesus; and (3) expects them to be involved in missionary activity,<sup>226</sup> since he also expects “people who are hostile to God, to Jesus, and to Jesus’ followers to repent and become followers of the Lamb.”<sup>227</sup> Those who do not repent will face judgment.

Towards the end of the 2010s, David E. Aune and Reidar Hvalvik edited a series of essays dealing with the church and its mission in the NT.<sup>228</sup> In one of those essays, Aune examines John’s commission in Revelation 10:8–11. By briefly analyzing the fourfold formula not only in 10:11 but also elsewhere in Revelation, he concludes that those passages reveal that some “of the people of the world will respond to the proclamation of the gospel and become followers of Jesus.”<sup>229</sup> Basically, there is nothing new in this paper. However, it reminds us once again of the missionary tone of 10:8–11. Something to be explored is how 10:8–11 fits into the overall missionary theology of

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<sup>225</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, “Christians, Jews, and Pagans in the Book of Revelation: Persecution, Perseverance, and Purity in the Shadow of the Last Judgment,” in *Interreligious Relations: Biblical Perspectives*, ed. H. Hagelia and M. Zehnder, Proceedings of the Second Norwegian Summer Academy of Biblical Studies (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 201–31. A reprint is also available in Schnabel, *Jesus, Paul, and the Early Church*, 333–52. I read the reprint version.

<sup>226</sup> Schnabel, *Jesus, Paul, and the Early Church*, 373–78.

<sup>227</sup> Schnabel, *Jesus, Paul, and the Early Church*, 377.

<sup>228</sup> Aune and Hvalvik, *The Church and its Mission*. Two other books from the same period can be mentioned, but with no relevance for this dissertation, since they refer to mission in Rev 10–14 in a rather peripheral manner. See Gordon R. Doss, *Introduction to Adventist Mission* (Silver Spring: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2018) and Callaham and Brooks, *World Mission*.

<sup>229</sup> Aune, “John’s Prophetic Commission,” 225.

Revelation and specifically Revelation 10–14, as well as how John’s commission in 10:8–11 is developed in Revelation 11–14.

### Dissertations

Two dissertations dealing with mission in Revelation appeared in the 2010s.<sup>230</sup> The first is an unpublished dissertation written in Afrikaans by Daniel Louw.<sup>231</sup> The length of this work is impressive—566 pages, which indicates the effort to give the theme of mission in Revelation a full treatment. On the other hand, its relatively short bibliography is also noteworthy.<sup>232</sup>

Louw follows Udo Schnelle’s thematic approach<sup>233</sup> with some adjustments. He accepts eight out of the nine themes proposed by Schnelle, and adds four themes. He identifies “twelve theological motifs according to which the theology of Revelation can be meaningfully structured and followed on the basis of the most recent research in New

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<sup>230</sup> Two other dissertations addressed mission in Revelation, but not as their main focus. The first is Keith T. Marriner, “Following the Lamb: An Analysis of the Theme of Discipleship in the Book of Revelation” (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015). Marriner pursued the degree of Doctor of Education and was concerned with the relationship between discipleship, Christian education, and spiritual formation. The second is Gyeongchun Choi, “A Theology of Missional Leadership in Revelation” (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2016). Although leadership and mission may be interwoven, as one can assume from the title, the main focus of this dissertation is leadership. A thesis defended in 2016 also dealt with mission in Revelation, but its main focus was Revelation 1:7. See Chung, “The Function of Revelation 1:7.”

<sup>231</sup> Daniel Louw, “Sending in Openbaring” (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, 2015).

<sup>232</sup> The bibliography is only ten pages long, with a total of 205 works consulted. Furthermore, out of those 205 works, only fifty-seven deal with the book of Revelation (only thirteen commentaries in English). In addition, twelve authors have three or more works quoted in the dissertation, and adding up all these works gives forty-nine, or almost 25% of the total number of works quoted. Obviously, this is not a problem *per se*; nevertheless, given the extended length of the dissertation, this short bibliography may indicate a high level of dependence on a relatively small number of authors.

<sup>233</sup> See Udo Schenelle, *Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 751–72. Beale’s observation on thematic approaches is useful at this point: “the challenge [...] is validating the probability of whether the major themes chosen are in fact the major themes of the NT. The themes chosen according to this approach sometimes are derived from systematic theology” (Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 8).

Testament theology.”<sup>234</sup> This concern with the twelve motifs leaves the impression that the title “Mission in Revelation” does not correspond to what is really done in the dissertation. It seems that Louw is more interested in synthesizing the theological themes of Revelation, and hence he assesses mission as, so to speak, one of its “not-dealt-with” themes, rather than addressing the theme of mission *per se*. Although he mentions that he is “dealing with one theological motif [...], namely mission, but inextricably linked to other theological motifs,”<sup>235</sup> the outline may indicate the opposite, i.e., he is dealing with other theological motifs linked to mission.<sup>236</sup>

Chapter 7 is the only place where the topic of mission is directly addressed. A few passages are brought into discussion, although, as in previous chapters, no inductive study is undertaken. A semantic field of mission in Revelation is provided on the basis of Köstenberger’s work,<sup>237</sup> but there are some limitations. (1) Louw seems to choose some words at the expense of others. (2) He seems to take for granted the idea that those words express missionary activity no matter the context. (3) While he gives preeminence to some words, other ones with missionary connotation are left out, for instance, *εὐαγγελίζω/to preach the gospel*. (4) He does not take synonymous words and concepts into consideration. Accordingly, although Louw’s dissertation addressed the theme of

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<sup>234</sup> Louw, “Sending in Openbaring,” 84–85. In order, the themes are as follows: doxology, Christology, pneumatology, biblical cosmology, biblical anthropology, angelology, Satanology, soteriology, eschatology, deaconology, ecclesiology, missiology.

<sup>235</sup> Louw, “Sending in Openbaring,” 29.

<sup>236</sup> After explaining his methodology in chapter 1, he deals with the twelve motifs mentioned above. Doxology, Christology, and pneumatology are covered in chapter 2, and biblical cosmology, angelology, Satanology, biblical anthropology, soteriology, and eschatology in chapter 3. In chapter 4 he addresses the eschatology of Revelation again in order to discuss the idea that, like everything in the first creation, mission will come to an end. In chapter 5 he deals with deaconology; in chapter 6, ecclesiology; and, finally, missiology in chapter 7.

mission in the book of Revelation, its limitations leave room for another dissertation, not to mention that the adoption of a different methodology is, in itself, enough reason for a new treatment of the topic.<sup>238</sup>

The second dissertation, by Jon Morales, is the most recent treatment of the destiny of the nations in the book of Revelation.<sup>239</sup> Morales evaluates previous positions, grouping them into five different categories,<sup>240</sup> and, by applying a narrative criticism approach, he suggests that “John’s purpose concerning the nations is, from beginning to end, to show that the nations belong to God and to his Christ.”<sup>241</sup> Christ is their shepherd leading them to the New Jerusalem. His shepherding activity includes his death on the cross as well as the testimony of the church. The nations must decide whether or not they will follow the Lamb.<sup>242</sup>

Morales analyzes the nations as a literary character rather than assuming that “the nations” are synonymous with other groups such as “people, earth-dwellers, kings of the earth, mankind, the tribes of the earth.”<sup>243</sup> In this sense, my approach distances itself from

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<sup>237</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 28–31.

<sup>238</sup> Take, as example, two dissertations written almost at the same time and on the same topic—verbal aspect theory in reference to NT Greek: Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament with Reference to Tense and Mood*, Studies in Biblical Greek 1 (New York: Peter Lang, 1989) and Buist M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), which, nevertheless, came to different conclusions, although there were some points of contact between them.

<sup>239</sup> Morales, “Christ, Shepherd of the Nations.” This dissertation has been published recently. See Jon Morales, *Christ, Shepherd of the Nations: The Nations as Narrative Character and Audience in the Apocalypse*, LNTS (London: Bloomsbury, 2019).

<sup>240</sup> Morales, “Christ, Shepherd of the Nations,” 7–43.

<sup>241</sup> Morales, “Christ, Shepherd of the Nations,” xv.

<sup>242</sup> Morales, “Christ, Shepherd of the Nations,” 333. For more details, see pages 328–33.

<sup>243</sup> See Morales, “Christ, Shepherd of the Nations,” 4. Morales goes as far as to mention that “it is a mistake to identify the nations wholesome with John’s other designations for humankind, particularly the

his, since, by applying a semantic field approach, I take into consideration cognate words and phrases when dealing with mission terminology. In addition, my interest lies not only in the nations but also in other terms conveying missionary connotations, especially those

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earth-dwellers” (325). In a footnote, he mentions that “a majority of interpreters make this mistake” (325n14). He argues that, whereas the nations are seen in the new creation, the earth-dwellers “are characterized as those who worship the beast and receive his mark (Rev 13:8, 12, 14; 16:2). The final verse about the earth-dwellers reads, [...] ‘And the dwellers on the earth, whose name is not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will marvel to see the beast because he was and is not and is to come,’ Rev 17:8. When compared to the healing envisioned for the nations, the end of the earth-dwellers is notably different—and tragic” (325). Nevertheless, according to this interpretation, the phrase “those who dwell on the earth” automatically refers to those who are excluded from the New Jerusalem and assumes that the relative clause in 17:8 is non-restrictive. Indeed, Morales seems to take it for granted. But this is debatable. Although the terms “the nations” and “earth-dwellers” may not be synonyms, at least a relationship of hyponymy or hypernymy is very likely in operation here.

First, the relative clause introduced by  $\text{o}\tilde{\nu}$  in 13:8 is restrictive. It is hard to believe that John envisions that “all who dwell on earth will worship” the beast, but only those whose names are not written in the book of life. The expression should be seen as a hyperbole. In addition, the phrase “all who dwell on earth” (13:8) is in contrast to “those who dwell in heaven” (13:6). However, “those who dwell in heaven” “is a reference to God’s people” (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 415), but they are still on earth. Accordingly, “those who dwell on earth” refers to a spiritual condition that can be changed.

Second, the phrase “those who live on earth” in Rev 14:6 is the audience of the eternal gospel and is explained by the phrase “every nation and tribe and language and people,” which should be taken exegetically (see Beale, *Revelation*, 749; Blount, *Revelation*, 272, among others). Morales observes that the word used by John in 14:6 is not  $\text{κατοικέω}$ /*live*, always negative in Revelation, but  $\text{κάθημαι}$ /*reside, live*, which is sometimes positive (e.g., chaps. 4–5; 19:11) and sometimes negative (e.g., 17:1, 3, 9, 15) in Revelation. The fact that John used  $\text{κάθημαι}$  rather than  $\text{κατοικέω}$  in a construction very similar to the one in 13:8 and elsewhere makes it clear that the difference is intentional (contra Pierre Prigent, *Commentary of the Apocalypse of St. John* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001], 439). R. H. Charles raised the hypothesis that a scribe would have replaced  $\text{κατοικοῦντας}$  with  $\text{καθημένους}$  in order to give the phrase a neutral sense (Charles, *Revelation*, 2:13). Nevertheless, as tempting as this hypothesis might be since it has the support of the Alexandrinus codex, as Robert Thomas points out, additional external evidence is weak (Thomas, *Revelation* 8-22, 203). Therefore,  $\text{καθημένους}$  must be the original reading, and Morales is correct both as to his observation that  $\text{κάθημαι}$  is not always negative in Revelation and as to its meaning in 14:6. However, there is a similarity between 14:6 and 13:7–8 that cannot be overlooked. Revelation 14:6 puts the phrases “those who reside on earth” and “every nation and tribe and language and people” in exegetical relationship in the reverse order of 13:7–8. That is to say, whereas the “earth-dwellers” in 13:8 explains the fourfold formula in 13:7, in 14:6 we see the opposite, the fourfold formula explains the “earth-inhabitants.” Morales takes  $\text{καί}$ /*and* as exegetical in 14:6 (p. 233) but ignores that the statement “all who dwell on earth will worship” in 13:8 explains “authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation” in 13:7. In 13:7–8, the phrases “every tribe and people and language and nation” and “all who dwell on earth” are synonymous just like the phrases “authority was given” and “will worship.” So, why can the fourfold formula explain “those who live on earth” in 14:6 but “all who dwell on earth” cannot explain the fourfold formula in 13:7–8?

Third, on the basis of what was said above, the relative clause introduced by the pronoun  $\text{ὧν}$ /*whose* in 17:8 must be restrictive, and, hence, should be translated without commas (see ESV, NIV, CJB, GNB), meaning that those “whose name is not written in the book of life” are the ones who did not accept the proclamation of the eternal gospel of 14:6, and did not repent. Accordingly, to affirm that the

terms applied to God’s people and their missionary work. In other words, while Morales is more focused on the addressees, I am more interested in the agents, the other pole on the balance. Furthermore, while Morales is dealing with the book of Revelation as a whole, my focus is on chapters 10–14.

Morales has provided a fine contribution to the debate on the nations in Revelation. However, perhaps he has exaggerated the difference between the nations and earth-dwellers (see footnote 243). At the same time, he seems to have ignored the relationship between the term “nation” and other terms in the fourfold formula.<sup>244</sup> In addition, as far as the nations are concerned, he also overlooks any possible connections between Revelation, the Synoptic Gospels (e.g., Matt 24:9, 14; 25:32; 28:19; cf. Gal 3:8) and the LXX (e.g., Gen 22:18; Isa 66:18). This may shed light on one’s understanding of the nations in the Apocalypse of John.

Morales observes that most interpreters see Revelation 14:6 as an invitation for people to turn to God in light of the hour of judgment.<sup>245</sup> By and large, however, commentators do not devote sufficient time to assessing the possible connections between passages such as 10:11 and 14:6 and Jesus’ sayings, for instance, in Matthew 24:14 and 28:18–20<sup>246</sup> as well as connections between 10:11 and 14:6 and the theme of

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phrase “those who dwell on the earth” is always negative in Revelation is undeniable, but to hold that it equates with the lost ones is unfair.

<sup>244</sup> In that regard, Schnabel’s essay “Early Christian Mission and Christian Identity in the Context of the Ethnic, Social, and Political Affiliations in Revelation” is illuminating.

<sup>245</sup> Morales, 232n39.

<sup>246</sup> Some commentators have seen connections with Matt 24:14 in Rev 10:11 (Lenski, *Revelation*, 323; Utley, *Hope in Hard Times*, 80) and in Rev 14:6 (Walter A. Elwell, “Revelation,” in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, Baker Reference Library 3 [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995], 1218; Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 2nd ed. [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014], 758; Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 407; Yeatts, *Revelation*, 267; Barclay, *Revelation*, 124; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 453, among others), as well as connections with Matt 28:18–20 in 10:11



judgment. Many have pointed to connections between Revelation 6 and the Synoptic Apocalypse (Matt 24; Mark 13; Luke 21),<sup>247</sup> which indicates that Jesus' sayings were very influential on the composition of Revelation. Accordingly, could John have had in mind Jesus' words in Matthew 28:18–20 as he wrote Revelation 10–11, and Jesus' words in Matthew 24:9 as he wrote Revelation 12–13, and Jesus' words in Matthew 24:14 as he wrote Revelation 14? While this is very hard to prove, one should at least take this matter into account when assessing those chapters in Revelation.<sup>248</sup>

### Conclusion

This review of the literature on mission in Revelation 10–14 in the past three decades has shown that this topic has not been adequately treated in recent scholarship, despite acknowledgment that Revelation contains the last chapter of the biblical story of God's mission. Over that period, there has been an increasing interest in mission in the NT, but only a few works took the text of Revelation more seriously in order to assess its theology of mission. No work has focused directly on mission in Revelation 10–14. For that reason, the discussion above encompassed works that had a broader object, such as mission in the NT (monographs, papers, essays), but included at least one chapter or section on mission in Revelation. In any case, attention was paid to what each of them has to say about passages and issues coming from Revelation 10–14.

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(Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 307; Louis A. Brighton, *Revelation*, Concordia Commentary [St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1999], 271; Lenski, *Revelation*, 323) and in 14:6 (Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Revelation: Christ-Centered Exposition* [Nashville: B&H, 2016], 242; Utley, *Hope in Hard Times*, 102).

<sup>247</sup> E.g., Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 223–26; Beale, *Revelation*, 373–74; Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 415.

<sup>248</sup> As Jon Paulien puts it, “it is difficult [...] to prove that the author of Revelation had access to any one of them [other NT documents], although it is quite likely that he had access to at least some,” and it is sure that he “was thoroughly familiar with the traditions embodied in the New Testament.” See Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 189. He asserts that “in doing exegesis of the Apocalypse, then, we

The assessment of the literature above revealed that most scholarly interest has been concentrated on either the destiny of the nations or the witnessing motif. At the same time, the relationship between mission and themes such as covenant, discipleship, resistance, worship, repentance, judgment, the heavenly temple, etc., has also been noticed. Key-passages to address some of these themes are found in Revelation 10–14. However, except for the debate on the destiny of the nations, other issues have been treated in a very initial way, so that there is much room for further investigation. For instance, Osborne points out that God’s judgments in Revelation are also a means for the accomplishment of mission and, hence, crucial for the theology of mission of the book. Another example is Beale’s emphasis on the heavenly temple and its relation to the church’s mission. Neither theme has been sufficiently explored in Revelation 10–14, despite the fact that crucial passages for both of them are found in that section. For example, Beale deals with Revelation 11 and 21–22, but gives no importance to 11:19, which is seen by some scholars as an introduction to 12–14. Indeed, 11:19 forms an *inclusio* with 15:5–8, which indicates how important the heavenly temple is for the interpretation of 12–14. As a matter of fact, in passages such as 14:6, one can possibly find the convergence of themes such as the heavenly temple, judgment, and mission. But neither Osborne nor Beale explore that passage from this perspective.

Other important issues have come to the surface, such as whether or not Revelation is primarily concerned with mission. Köstenberger and O’Brien do not believe so, but would not 10:11 and 14:6 say otherwise? This deserves further investigation.

Revelation 10:11 may be a key passage for understanding whether or not Revelation is

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should search for the underlying unity between Revelation and the overall New Testament witness. Indeed, it is essential that we do so” (43).

primarily concerned with mission. The issue is related to whether ἐπί should be read as meaning “against” or “about.” There is much disagreement on this matter, and it requires further investigation. A particular interpretation of 10:11 can affect one’s understanding of subsequent passages such as 11:1–2, 3–13; 14:6–13 and, consequently, 14:14–20. Moreover, how does 10:8–11 fit in the overall missionary theology of Revelation and, specifically, in Revelation 11–14? While the relationship between Revelation 10 and 11 is easier to see, it seems that the influence of Revelation 10–11 on Revelation 12–14 from the missionary perspective deserves more clarification.

Other issues involve the role of the remnant (12:17), the saints (Rev 13) and the 144,000 (Rev 14) in God’s mission. Are the 144,000 the targets of the church’s missionary activity (according to Schnabel) or are they the end-time church proclaiming the end-time message to the world? Who are the angels of 14:6–13? Are they heavenly beings or human beings? This is an issue barely addressed by commentators. What is the relationship between 14:6–13 and 14:1–5? Finally, how can Jesus’ sayings, for instance, in Matthew 24:9, 14 and 28:18–20, affect one’s understanding of what is going on in Revelation 10–14?

As mentioned above, whereas many previous works have focused on the destiny of the nations, my concern lies with the people of God as agents of mission. What do they do? Does their witnessing involve verbal communication? What is their message? What is the outcome? These questions encapsulate all the previous ones and require more research. Accordingly, while previous studies are a necessary starting point for our understanding of the mission of God’s people in Revelation 10–14, there is extensive space for a new project such as this dissertation.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE MISSION CONCEPT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

This chapter provides an overview of mission in the OT with the purpose of finding possible backgrounds to mission in Revelation 10–14. Biblical scholarship in recent years has seen increasing trends to what some interpreters have called a missional reading of the Bible or missional hermeneutic.<sup>249</sup> In the words of Christopher Wright, “a

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<sup>249</sup> See Michael W. Goheen, ed., *Reading the Bible Missionally* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016); Shawn B. Redford, *Missiological Hermeneutics: Biblical Interpretation for the Global Church* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012); Wright, *The Mission of God*, 33–69. In *The Mission of God*, Wright develops the ideas of a previous publication (Christopher Wright, “Mission as a Matrix for Hermeneutics and Biblical Theology,” in *Out of Egypt: Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Craig Bartholomew et al. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004], 102–43). A short and somewhat outdated but still helpful resource is James V. Brownson, *Speaking the Truth in Love: New Testament Resources for a Missional Hermeneutic* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998). As a matter of fact, this is an extended and updated version of a homonymous paper published four years earlier: James V. Brownson, “Speaking the Truth in Love: Elements of a Missional Hermeneutic,” *International Review of Mission* 83, no. 330 (1994): 479–504. The publication of a number of significant papers and essays by biblical scholars and missiologists in very recent years is a demonstration of the increasing interest on the topic. See, e.g., Michael D. Barram, “The Bible, Mission, and Social Location: Toward a Missional Hermeneutic,” *Interpretation* 61, no. 1 (2007): 42–58; Michael W. Goheen, “Continuing Steps Towards a Missional Hermeneutic,” *Fideles* 3 (2008): 49–99; Girma Bekele, “The Biblical Narrative of the Missio Dei: Analysis of the Interpretive Framework of David Bosch’s Missional Hermeneutic,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 35, no. 3 (2011): 153–56; Dean Flemming, “Exploring a Missional Reading of Scripture: Philippians as a Case Study,” *EvQ* 83, no. 1 (2011): 3–18; George R. Hunsberger, “Proposals for a Missional Hermeneutic: Mapping a Conversation,” *Missiology* 39, no. 3 (2011): 309–21; Greg McKinzie, “Missional Hermeneutics as Theological Interpretation,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 11, no. 2 (2017): 157–79; Timothy A. van Aarde and Lygunda Li-M., “A Fruitful Missional Exegesis for a Missional Hermeneutic and Missiology,” *In die Skriflig* 51, no. 2 (2017): 1–10; Michael W. Goheen, “A Conversation with N. T. Wright about a Missional Hermeneutic and Public Truth,” *Presbyterion* 45, no. 2 (2019): 8–16; Charles E. Cotherman, “How Do We Discern God’s Activity in Scripture and Our Community?: The Mission Dei and the Missional Hermeneutic,” in *Sent to Flourish: A Guide to Planting and Multiplying Churches*, ed. Len Tang and Charles E. Cotherman (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2019), 7–26. For an extensive list of monographs, articles, and chapters of edited books published in the past five decades that adopted a missional hermeneutic as a method of reading the Bible, see Goheen, *Reading the Bible Missionally*, 330–38.

missional hermeneutic proceeds from the assumption that the whole Bible renders to us the story of God's mission through God's people in their engagement with God's world for the sake of the whole of God's creation."<sup>250</sup> Michael W. Goheen goes so far as to contend that "if we want to hear what God is saying to his people when we read the Scriptures we must employ a missional hermeneutic."<sup>251</sup>

It is not the purpose of this dissertation to enter into the discussion of whether or not Scripture can be read through the lens of a missional hermeneutic.<sup>252</sup> It assumes that it can, and this includes the OT.<sup>253</sup> Obviously, such an assumption must consider mission in

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<sup>250</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 51.

<sup>251</sup> Goheen, "Continuing Steps," 49. As bold as this statement may seem, it is not uttered in a vacuum. Goheen calls attention to a solid conversation between missiologists and biblical scholars on missional hermeneutic. A missional reading of the Bible is defended not only by biblical scholars who have a connection to cross-cultural missions, such as Johannes Blauw, David J. Bosch, and Christopher J. H. Wright, but also by other leading biblical scholars without the same missionary experience, such as N. T. Wright, Richard Bauckham, and Joel Green, among others. See Goheen, *Reading the Bible Missionally*, 14–15.

<sup>252</sup> For a rationale for an affirmative answer to this question, see Wright, *The Mission of God*, 48–63. This dissertation does not assume, however, Wright's contention that God's mission is "the" hermeneutical framework by means of which the whole Scripture is to be read rather than "a" hermeneutical framework through which the whole Scripture can be read, as other scholars before and after him have asserted. See Richard Bauckham, "Mission as Hermeneutic for Scriptural Interpretation," in Goheen, *Reading the Bible Missionally*, 28; and Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Carlisle: Paternoster; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003).

<sup>253</sup> As one deals with mission in the OT, the first question posited by several scholars concerns whether, indeed, the OT communicates a commission. For instance, Eckhard J. Schnabel contends that, while "there is no doubt that non-Israelites could join Israel, [...] there is never a reference to Gen 12:3 as a 'commission' that is fulfilled when non-Israelites join Israel" (Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1:70). A similar opinion is shared by David J. Bosch. He argues that "there is, in the Old Testament, no indication of the believers of the old covenant being sent by God to cross geographical, religious, and social frontiers in order to win others to faith in Yahweh" (Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 17). This explains why he devotes so short a space to the subject (only four out of almost six hundred pages!). For a different view, see Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 15–74, and, similarly, Jiří Moskala, "Mission in the Old Testament," in *Message, Mission, and Unity of the Church*, ed. Angel Manuel Rodriguez, Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology 2 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2013).

This dissertation does not enter into the discussion above, as it is not necessary for its purpose. A missional reading of the OT means that the OT is rich in mission concepts, even though a commission in the sense of sending—i.e., missiological reading—may not be found there. See the difference between the adjectives "missional" and "missiological" in Wright, *The Mission of God*, 24–25.

its broader sense.<sup>254</sup> If mission is conceived in its traditional view of sending only, a missional hermeneutic applied to Scripture as a whole would be not only impossible but also misleading, but if mission has to do with God’s far-reaching project of cosmic salvation, then a missional reading of the Bible as a whole is not only possible but also necessary.

### **Mission in the Pentateuch**

Scholars have pointed to the fact that Scripture moves from creation to new creation in such a way that Genesis 1–2 and Revelation 21–22 form an *inclusio*, a grand envelope overarching the whole Bible.<sup>255</sup> Accordingly, the narrative of creation should be the first text to consider as one deals with mission in the OT.<sup>256</sup>

#### Genesis 1–11

There are several elements in Genesis 1–2 that can be connected to the biblical story of God’s mission. The first two chapters of the Bible indicate God’s lordship and sovereignty over the entire creation. Especially in Genesis 1, one can find the first signs of God’s purpose for his creation.<sup>257</sup> However, Genesis 1:26–28 stands out, since this is

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<sup>254</sup> Goheen, *Reading the Bible Missionally*, 3–4.

<sup>255</sup> C. L. Blomberg, “The Unity and Diversity of Scripture,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 69. For a very recent and helpful discussion on that topic, see Frank Thielman, *The New Creation and the Storyline of Scripture* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2021).

<sup>256</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 25. More than that, “as the biblical metanarrative clearly sets out, our place within God’s purposes has to be understood in the context of God’s original plan for the earth” (T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 314).

<sup>257</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 26.

the passage in which God's plan for humankind emerges for the first time.<sup>258</sup>

As Claus Westermann remarks, the idea that the image and likeness of God point to Adam as God's representative has gained an increasing number of supporters in recent scholarship.<sup>259</sup> Gordon J. Wenham points out that, as such, Adam plays the role of a priest and king.<sup>260</sup> He is a representative on earth of God's sovereignty and rulership.<sup>261</sup> On the basis of ANE backgrounds, Beale brings the discussion to the field of mission by arguing that one major function of Adam was to reflect God's glory<sup>262</sup> in the sense that the command for filling the earth was to be accomplished "not merely with progeny, but with image-bearing progeny who will reflect God's glory and special revelatory presence."<sup>263</sup> As bearers of God's attributes, Adam and Eve were to transmit the knowledge of God to all their descendants in such a way that all the earth would be filled with God's glory (cf. Isa 45:18; Ps 72:19).<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Beale asserts that "Gen. 1:28 has more intertextual connections with the rest of Genesis and the remaining OT books than any other text in Gen. 1–11." Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 58.

<sup>259</sup> Claus Westermann, *A Continental Commentary: Genesis 1–11* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 151. Yet, he objects to this idea. For an answer to Westermann's objections, see Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC 1 (Dallas: Word, 1987), 31. The understanding that the image and likeness of God point to Adam and Eve as representatives of God derives from the study of Gen 1:26–28 against the background of ancient Near East literature, especially that of Egypt and Mesopotamia, in which kings are described as the image and likeness of their gods. See Edward M. Curtis, "Image of God (OT)," *ABD* 3:389–91; E. H. Merrill, "Image of God," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 442. This explains why the language of the commission given to Adam and Eve includes that they must "have dominion" over the creation and "subdue" the earth. A clear difference between the biblical narrative of creation and the ANE literature is that in the Bible, not only the king but every person occupies a distinguished place in creation.

<sup>260</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 30–31, 67.

<sup>261</sup> Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 32.

<sup>262</sup> Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 31, 36. A very helpful summary of humanity's kingly and priestly role against the ANE background can be found in Beale, *Temple and the Church's Mission*, 81–93.

<sup>263</sup> Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 31, 36.

<sup>264</sup> Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 37.

Five elements can be found in the commission given to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28: (1) They were blessed; (2) They were commanded to “be fruitful and multiply,” (3) “fill the earth,” (4) “subdue it,” and (5) “have dominion over . . . the earth.” While the image and likeness of God in Genesis 1:26–27 may likely be the content of the blessing in Genesis 1:28,<sup>265</sup> such a blessing is God’s enablement of Adam and Eve to fulfill the fourfold mandate in the rest of Genesis 1:28. In short, their commission can be summarized in two words: fruitfulness and dominion. Adam and Eve demonstrated dominion by cultivating and keeping the garden, so that Genesis 2:15 is also part of the commission in Genesis 1:28.<sup>266</sup> The focus of Genesis, however, lies on the blessing of fruitfulness and its fulfillment,<sup>267</sup> since Adam weakened his ability to subdue the earth as a consequence of his failure.

Genesis 3–11 plays a critical role in the account of the origins. In general lines, that section describes a process of un-creation.<sup>268</sup> Genesis 3 introduces the theme of idolatry,<sup>269</sup> which will be dealt with in the rest of the Scriptures.<sup>270</sup> The theme of idolatry

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<sup>265</sup> Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 30.

<sup>266</sup> Beale builds a strong case on this topic by arguing that Adam’s task of subduing and having dominion included subjecting the serpent, thereby preventing “unclean things” from contaminating his “temple” (Gen 2:15). However, rather than ruling over the serpent, Adam and Eve were subdued by it. See Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 34–36, and *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 66–70. He states, “When Adam failed to guard the temple by sinning and letting in a foul serpent to defile the sanctuary, he lost his priestly role” (Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 70).

<sup>267</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 33.

<sup>268</sup> James E. Smith, *The Pentateuch*, 2nd ed., Old Testament Survey Series (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1993), 36.

<sup>269</sup> See G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 127–35.

<sup>270</sup> For a recent biblical theology of idolatry, see Richard Lints, *Identity and Idolatry: The Image of God and Its Inversion*, ed. D. A. Carson, NSBT 36 (Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015).



is important for understanding the biblical theology of mission.<sup>271</sup> Idolatry and mission are related insofar as the latter confronts the former.<sup>272</sup> Confronting idolatry is necessary because it twists the distinction between God and his creation.<sup>273</sup> Wright argues that Adam and Eve became idolaters insofar as they assumed for themselves the prerogative of defining good and evil according to the suggestion of the serpent in Genesis 3:5. They acted as they were gods.<sup>274</sup> Since the image of God in humanity is what enables us to accomplish the commission received from God (Gen 1:28; 2:15) and that image became tarnished as a result of human failure, the *missio Dei*, therefore, involves the restoration, at the end, of the primeval *Imago Dei* in humans. In the words of Wright, “Since God’s mission is to restore creation to its full original purpose of bringing all glory to God himself and thereby to enable all creation to enjoy the fullness of blessing that he desires for it, God battles against all forms of idolatry and calls us to join him in that conflict.”<sup>275</sup>

Interestingly, the punishment of the serpent includes being wounded on the head (Gen 3:15). Many scholars take this passage as one possible background for the fatal wound on one of the heads of the leopard-like beast of Revelation 13:3.<sup>276</sup> While it is

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<sup>271</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 136–87. See also pt. 1, especially chap. 4, “Mission and the Gods,” in Christopher J. H. Wright, “*Here are Your Gods*”: *Faithful Discipleship in Idolatrous Times* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020).

<sup>272</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 179–87.

<sup>273</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 187. See also Lints, *Identity and Idolatry*, 31–34.

<sup>274</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 164. Rather than being satisfied with having been created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:28), Adam and Eve gave in to the tempter’s suggestion by desiring to be like gods (Gen 3:5), without realizing that what the serpent had promised was only a caricature of that which they already had.

<sup>275</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 188.

<sup>276</sup> E.g., G. K. Beale, *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 231; G. K. Beale and Sean M McDonough, “Revelation,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids; Nottingham: Baker

hard to think that the mortal wound of the beast is to be seen as the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15, perhaps John sees it as a part of it.<sup>277</sup> In any case, it has been broadly recognized that the evil triumvirate in Revelation 12–13 appears as a counterfeit of the Trinity. As Christopher A. Davis puts it, “playing god has been the agenda of Satan—and the essence of sin—from the beginning.”<sup>278</sup> Revelation 13 is massive evidence that idolatry is Satan’s response to the sovereignty of the true God. Accordingly, Revelation 14 and its reference to the preaching of the everlasting gospel should be interpreted in the broader context of the biblical theology of idolatry. Indeed, commentators have paid attention to the OT background of Revelation 12–14. However, it seems that Genesis 3 has not been considered enough, at least as far as Revelation 13 is concerned. A question to be asked, then, is what role does Genesis 3 and its reference to primeval idolatry play in the interpretation of Revelation 13? And, consequently, how does Revelation 14 show God’s strategy to bring the entire creation back to its primordial condition?

While Genesis 3–11 sets up the problem of sin, Genesis 12:1–3 is the place where God begins to solve it. In a particular sense, the disastrous effects of the fall encompassed the breakdown of the relationship between God and man (Gen 3), death and universal destruction (Gen 4–9), and the dispersion of the nations (Gen 10–11). However, there are also hints of reversal of the conditions produced by the fall. First, Genesis 3:15 brings the

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Academic; Apollos, 2007), 1146; Gwyn Pugh, “Commentary on the Book of Revelation,” in 1, 2, 3 John & Revelation, ed. Robert E. Picirilli, First Edition., RHBC (Nashville: Randall House, 2010), 332; J. Ramsey Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, vol. 7, GNTE (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 145.

<sup>277</sup> The partial defeat of the dragon in 12:9 hints that his allies in chapter 13 will also be defeated. The defeat of the dragon is seen in a progressive manner in Revelation until its climax in chapter 20. The same seems to be true in relation to his allies. If John really alludes to Gen 3:15 in 12:9, 17, (see Gordon H. Johnston, “Appendix: Messiah and Genesis 3:15,” in *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel’s King* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2012), 467-470), perhaps he still has that passage in mind in 13:3.

promise that the serpent would be defeated. Several Christian scholars have referred to that passage as the *protoevangelium*.<sup>279</sup> Second, the language of Genesis 9:1–7 points to a kind of new creation.<sup>280</sup> Third, God’s promise to Abraham that through his “seed” “all families of the earth will be blessed” (12:1–3) is the turning point in Genesis’s account and the place in Scripture where God’s grand project of cosmic salvation is set in motion for the first time.<sup>281</sup> It is not possible to emphasize enough the importance of this passage for the biblical theology of mission. While time and space to discuss its relevance are limited, a few considerations are necessary.

### Genesis 12:1–3

Genesis 12:1–3 is a central passage when it comes to a biblical theology of mission. The number of works dealing with it is massive,<sup>282</sup> which illustrates that it is impossible to exhaust its significance. This passage occupies a strategic position in the book of Genesis. Whereas Genesis 10–11 presents the dispersion of the nations after the tower of Babel, Genesis 12:1–3 lays the ground for their regathering to be possible again. One rationale for this statement is that three times in Genesis 10 (“The Table of the

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<sup>278</sup> Davis, *Revelation*, 279.

<sup>279</sup> See Herbert W. Bateman IV, Darrell L. Bock, and Gordon H. Johnston, *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel’s King* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2012), 471–72. This book makes clear that, although at first the context may not pinpoint a messianic connotation, in the end, insofar as revelation unfolds in the rest of the canonical record, Gen 3:15 can be seen as the first prophecy of the Messiah (see pp. 459–72).

<sup>280</sup> Remarkably, God’s words to Noah in Genesis 9:9–13 demonstrate his intention to fulfill the original purpose for the whole creation.

<sup>281</sup> Kaiser claims that Gen 1–11 presents three crises that God faces by making three promises. The first crisis has to do with the fall; God promises the “seed” of the woman (Gen 3:15). The second crisis is the flood, which God faces by promising to “dwell in the tents of Shem” (Gen 9:27), namely, his descendants or “seed.” The third crisis is the tower of Babel, which God tackles by calling Abraham and promising to bless his “seed” (Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 16–17).

Nations”), the dispersion of the peoples is represented by a fourfold division: *lands* (אֲרָצוֹת), *languages* (לְשׁוֹנוֹת), *families* (מִשְׁפָּחוֹת), and *nations* (גוֹיִם) (vv. 5, 20, 31).<sup>283</sup> The promise to Abraham is, then, an announcement that such a reversal will take place. It is interpreted in the later canonical record as the gospel preached in advance (e.g., Gal 3:8).

Remarkably, the characters from Adam to Noah make up a ten-member genealogy (Gen 5:1–32) and that from Noah’s son Shem to Abraham there is also a ten-member genealogy (Gen 11:10–26); thus, Genesis shows a connection between the story of Adam and the story of Abraham.<sup>284</sup> Similarly, connections between Adam and Israel are also important for understanding eschatology and mission.<sup>285</sup> All of this suggests that a better understanding of the biblical theology of mission must begin with the narrative of creation, and that Adam functions as a pattern for the description of later characters and their commission.<sup>286</sup> In turn, it seems that Abraham figures as a link between Adam and Israel.<sup>287</sup> This suggests that God’s original intention for his creation would be

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<sup>282</sup> See, for instance, the extensive bibliography in Redford, *Missiological Hermeneutics*, 12n4.

<sup>283</sup> This fourfold division of the peoples is a possible background for the fourfold audience occurring seven times in Revelation (5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15). If this is correct, the reference to the fourfold audience in Rev 10:11 and 14:6 may suggest that the preaching of the eternal gospel is the means by which the reversal of Gen 10–11 is made possible.

<sup>284</sup> James Hamilton, “The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 58, no. 2 (2007): 255. See also Shubert Spero, “Ten Generations from Adam to Noah Versus Ten Generations from Noah to Abraham,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (2011): 165–68.

<sup>285</sup> William J. Dumbrell, “Genesis 2:1-17: A Foreshadowing of the New Creation,” in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Scott J. Hafemann (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2002), 61. This view is shared by various other scholars. For instance, Postell claims that “Adam’s failure to ‘conquer’ (Gen 1:28) the seditious inhabitant of the land (the serpent), his temptation and violation of the commandments, and his exile from the garden is Israel’s story *en nuce*.” Seth D. Postell, *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1–3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2012), 3. For a more recent and Christian treatment of the subject, see Benjamin L. Gladd, *From Adam and Israel to the Church: A Biblical Theology of the People of God*, ESBT (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), 1–74.

<sup>286</sup> See Beale’s pervasive discussion on this topic in *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 30–87.

<sup>287</sup> Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*

accomplished through the “seed” of Abraham (cf. Gal 3:7-8).

Scholars debate the syntactic relationship between the clauses that make up God’s pronouncement to Abraham in Gen 12:1–3, especially those introduced respectively by  $\text{הָלַךְ}$  (from  $\text{הָלַךְ}$ , “go,” v. 1) and  $\text{הָיָה}$  (from  $\text{הָיָה}$ , “be,” v. 2d). There is no doubt that  $\text{הָלַךְ}$  functions as an imperative. However, although  $\text{הָיָה}$  is imperative in form (“be a blessing”), it has been treated as an imperfect (“you *will be* a blessing”), as in LEB, NIV, GW, CSB, HCSB, NCV, NLT, or “you shall be a blessing” in NASB. The usual explanation is that imperatives have a purpose or consequence meaning after cohortatives (cf.  $\text{הָלַךְ}$ ).<sup>288</sup> This idea of purpose or consequence can be seen through the usage of a purpose conjunction (“so that”) in ESV, ISV, NABRE, NET, RSV, RSVCE, NRSV, GNB. Some, however, take  $\text{הָיָה}$  as an imperative not only in form, but also in function (e.g., JPS1917; ERV).<sup>289</sup> Whatever the case may be, the result is that Abraham would be

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(Bellingham: Lexham, 2015), 156–62. See Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 275. See also William David Reburn and Euan McG. Fry, *A Handbook on Genesis*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1998), 273; Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 205; J. Gerald Janzen, *Abraham and All the Families of the Earth: A Commentary on the Book of Genesis 12–50*, ITC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Edinburgh: Handsel, 1993), 17–18.

God’s promise to Abraham is conveyed in the language of a new creation, so that he is portrayed as another Adam. See Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *God’s Kingdom through God’s Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 94. Furthermore, Beale observes, “Some commentators have noticed that Adam’s commission was passed on to Noah, to Abraham, and on to his descendants” (Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 46) and “The same commission repeatedly given to the patriarchs is restated numerous times in subsequent OT books to Israel and eschatological Israel” (47). For discussion and assessments of key-passages, see Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 93–121. A shorter version of that discussion with minor revisions is also available in Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 46–58.

The book of Genesis is made up of two major sections (1–11 and 12–50). Adam is the main character in the first section whereas Abraham is the main character of the second. Thus, Abraham is the link that connects the two major sections of Genesis (Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 27)

<sup>288</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 275. A similar explanation is that in constructions with two imperatives, the second imperative is attached to the first in a cause-and-effect relationship. See Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 371. Either way, it seems clear that the imperative does not lose its imperatival force.

<sup>289</sup> Wright argues that the two imperatives in Gen 12:1–3 divide up the passage into two halves.

a blessing by becoming a blessing—as it were, the embodiment of the blessing—and for him to become a blessing, he should first “go.”

The nuance of the verbal form נִבְרַךְ (bless) in 12:3c is disputed. The stem is a niph'al, so that both a passive sense (“will be blessed”)<sup>290</sup> and a reflexive sense (“bless themselves”)<sup>291</sup> are possible. Wenham has also argued for a middle sense, “They will find a blessing.”<sup>292</sup> A balanced position seems to be taking נִבְרַךְ as reflexive while recognizing its passive nuance.<sup>293</sup> In any case, what is in evidence is the involvement of Abram.<sup>294</sup> The emphasis of the entire passage is expressed by the words from the root בֵּרַךְ (*brk*), *bless* and *blessing*. They occur five times in Genesis 12:1–3, connecting this passage not only to the primeval history (1:28; 5:2; 9:1)<sup>295</sup> but also to the narrative of the

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Each imperative introduces one half. He further states, “After each imperative follow three subordinate clauses that elucidate the implications of fulfilling the commands” (Wright, *The Mission of God*, 201).

<sup>290</sup> For arguments, see Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 19–20; Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 117–18; and Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 374–76. For a longer discussion on the syntax of Gen 12:3 resulting in a defense of the passive voice, see Keith N. Grüneberg, *Abraham, Blessing and the Nations: A Philological and Exegetical Study of Genesis 12:3 in Its Narrative Context* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003).

<sup>291</sup> For arguments, see Wells, *God’s Holy People*, 203–4.

<sup>292</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 277–78.

<sup>293</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 217–18. Also, Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 30–31. While arguing for the middle nuance, Wenham agrees that “if a reflexive ‘bless themselves’ is preferred here, it would also carry the implications of a middle or passive” (Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 278). Claus Westermann seems to arrive at the same conclusion. See Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 152. At this point, one should ask what difference it makes in practical terms. Christopher Wright explains, The act of blessing oneself, or counting oneself blessed, by (the name of) Abraham indicates that one knows the source of the blessing. To know Abraham as a model of blessing and to seek to be blessed as he was must surely include knowing the God of Abraham and seeking blessing from that God and not to other gods. Now actually, a person may “be blessed” (in the passive sense) without necessarily knowing or acknowledging the source of the blessing. [...] But a person cannot intentionally and specifically invoke blessing in the name of Abraham without acknowledging the source of Abraham’s blessing, namely, Abraham’s God. There is thus what we might call a confessional dimension to the anticipated blessing of the nations. They will be blessed as they come to acknowledge the God of Abraham and “bless themselves” in and through him.” (Wright, *The Mission of God*, 218).

<sup>294</sup> Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 117.

<sup>295</sup> Other elements also link this narrative to the creation account. See Waltke and Fredricks,

patriarchs (24:1; 26:3; 35:9; 39:5),<sup>296</sup> through whom the promise would be kept on track (22:18; 26:4). Interestingly, the verb *bless* occurs five times in Genesis 1–11 to indicate God’s blessing upon creation.<sup>297</sup> At the same time, the five occurrences of the root בָּרַךְ (*brk*) in Genesis 12:1–3 contrast to the five occurrences of the term “curse,” which is used to describe the spread of sin in Genesis 3–11 (cf. 3:14, 17; 4:11; 5:29; 9:25).<sup>298</sup> Waltke argues that those connections link Abraham’s blessing to the creation account but also anticipate “the blessings and curses attending the Mosaic covenant (cf. Lev 26; Deut 28).”<sup>299</sup>

While in Genesis 12:1, Abraham receives both a command to go out of his land and a promise that he would be given another land, in Genesis 12:2–3 the aspects of God’s blessing upon him are conveyed by means of seven statements.<sup>300</sup> Michael W. Goheen observes that those seven statements represent two main goals. The first one

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*Genesis*, 203; Jacques B. Doukhan, *Genesis*, SDA International Bible Commentary (Nampa: Pacific, 2016), 198.

<sup>296</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 275.

<sup>297</sup> God blessed the animals (1:22), Adam and Eve (1:28; 5:2), the Sabbath (2:3), and Noah (9:1). The root בָּרַךְ (*brk*) also occurs in 9:26, but there God is the object of Noah’s praise.

<sup>298</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 29.

<sup>299</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 203. This is an important feature of Genesis 12:1–3, since, as will be explored later, it points to God’s covenant presence in the midst of Israel while they keep themselves as a holy nation (Exod 19:4–6). As the narratives of the patriarchs seem to indicate, God’s presence is ultimately the very content of the blessing (17:7–8; 26:3; 31:3). See Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 76–79. For further details on the so-called accompaniment formula, see Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 55–57, 390–91. The blessing has also been identified with progeny and material wealth—see K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, NAC 1B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 113; Reyburn and Fry, *A Handbook on Genesis*, 273—and, obviously, this is correct. Nevertheless, ultimately, it is “God with you” that brings all the benefits announced in the book of Genesis and the rest of Scripture.

<sup>300</sup> (1) I will make you a great nation; (2) I will bless you; (3) I will make your name great; (4) Be a blessing; (5) I will bless those who bless you; (6) I will curse those who curse you; (7) All families of the earth will be blessed in you. For details, see Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 371–76; Andrew E. Steinmann, *Genesis*, TOTC (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), 144–46. For the view of six statements and their arrangement, see Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, The New Cambridge Bible Commentary (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 131–33.

relates to Abraham becoming a great nation, whereas the second one has to do with this great nation becoming a blessing to all other nations.<sup>301</sup> Wenham argues that there is a progressive buildup in Genesis 12:2–3 in such a way that the pronouncement “All families of the earth will be blessed in you” represents the climax of the passage,<sup>302</sup> and the concern of Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch then turns to how that promise would be accomplished. This sentence points to God’s project of salvation extended to all nations of the earth by means of the “seed” of Abraham (cf. Gen 22:18), the same “seed” of the woman of Genesis 3:15.<sup>303</sup>

As seen above, the verbs that reflect Abraham’s actions (“go” and “be”) play a crucial role in the narrative. Interestingly, although the verb *הלך*/*go* pervades the stories of Abraham throughout Genesis 12–22, it occurs mostly in 12:1–9 (5 times) and 22:1–19 (7 times), the two extremes of that section.<sup>304</sup> It is noteworthy that Genesis 12:1 with its reference to God’s command, “Go out from your land,” is a flashback to the preceding

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<sup>301</sup> Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 30. For a useful commentary on the idea of a threefold promise, namely, offspring, land, and universal blessing, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *Covenant and God’s Purpose for the World*, Short Studies in Biblical Theology (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017), 43–46. This contrasts with the previous narrative in that, while the builders of the Tower of Babel wanted to build a *city* and make a *name* for themselves, by their efforts but without success (11:3–4, 8–9), God would make Abraham a *great nation* and a *great name*.

<sup>302</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 278. Also, Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 74. Although not all scholars agree that the themes of Gen 12:2–3 develop progressively, it seems there is a consensus that 12:3c is the high point of the passage (see Jo Bailey Wells, *God’s Holy People: A Theme in Biblical Theology* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000], 195). The fact that this is the seventh clause in this heptad sequence is hardly a coincidence. It is also significant that the imperative “be a blessing” lies precisely in the center of that sequence, meaning that it is a focus of interest. J. Gerald Janzen also sees a heptad pattern in the number of actions performed by God and Abraham. He observes that Gen 12:1–3 presents a total of eight primary verbs. Two of them refer to Abraham’s actions (“go” and “be”) and five of them refer to God’s actions (“make,” “bless,” “make great,” “bless,” and “curse”). One of them refers to the action of others (“bless themselves”). He concludes that since “God’s and Abram’s actions together add up to seven, [...] this numerical pattern [...] suggests that the completion of God’s purposes calls for divine-human ‘synergism’ or ‘working together.’” Janzen, *Abraham and All the Families of the Earth*, 18–19.

<sup>303</sup> See Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 19–20. Also, Doukhan, *Genesis*, 200.



passage (Gen 11:31–32)<sup>305</sup> in which Terah took his son Abraham and the rest of his family and “went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan” (Gen 11:31). Therefore, Genesis 12:1 does not introduce a fully new narrative.<sup>306</sup> Indeed, Genesis 12 completes the story introduced by chapter 11, in that, although Terah and his family left Ur of the Chaldeans heading toward Canaan, only Abraham in fact went on to Canaan (cf. Gen 11:31–32 and 12:4). One observation is important at this point. Ur of the Chaldeans is commonly identified as a city located in the region of Babylon,<sup>307</sup> which, in turn, is theologically associated with the incident of the tower of Babel (Gen 11). Therefore, the call to Abraham is, in a sense, a call to come out of Babylon.

#### Exodus 19:4–6

The covenant at Sinai should not be seen as a new arrangement but an expansion of God’s covenant with Abraham.<sup>308</sup> The promise made to Abraham began to be fulfilled in the nation of Israel.<sup>309</sup> This is suggested by Exodus 1:7, the language of which reiterates the blessing of fruitfulness given to Adam (Gen 1:28), Abraham (Gen 12:2–3;

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<sup>304</sup> Doukhan, *Genesis*, 195. This suggests that the whole section is oriented by the idea of “going”.

<sup>305</sup> Doukhan, *Genesis*, 197.

<sup>306</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 274.

<sup>307</sup> D. J. Wiseman, “Chaldea, Chaldeans,” *NBD*<sup>3</sup>, 180; also Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “Chaldea, Chaldeans,” in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 422.

<sup>308</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 327. See also Kevin Chen, “The Mosaic Covenant,” in *A Handbook on the Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, ed. Craig A. Evans and David Mashkin (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2019), 19–20. Even the Davidic covenant is not a separate covenant phase. It is within the covenant at Sinai, giving a dynasty to a king, just as in Numbers 25:13 God gives a dynasty to Phinehas as high priest. He is another kind of functionary within the covenant that was ratified at Sinai.

<sup>309</sup> For a summary on this topic, see Oren R. Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land: The Land Promise in God’s Redemptive Plan*, NSBT (Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 61–86.

18:18; 22:18), Isaac (Gen 26:4), and Jacob (Gen 28:14).<sup>310</sup> Genesis 47:27 with its reference to fruitfulness and multiplication seems to function as a transition from the account of the origins to the narrative of the emergence and establishment of Israel as a nation.<sup>311</sup> The missionary impulse of the book of Exodus has been recently highlighted by W. Ross Blackburn. He claims that “the Lord’s missionary commitment to make himself known to the nations is the central theological concern of Exodus.”<sup>312</sup> Blackburn has provided a fine contribution in that respect. Our attention, however, will focus on his assessment of Exodus 19–24, especially 19:4–6, in conversation with that of other scholars.

Exodus 19:4–6 is to be understood in its immediate context of Egyptian deliverance and Sinai.<sup>313</sup> Those two narratives lay the foundation for a better understanding of the relationship between God’s generosity and God’s righteousness, the gospel and the law, or, simply put, what “God has done for his people” (Exod 1-18) and what he “calls his people to do” (Exod 19-24).<sup>314</sup> It is remarkable that Exodus 19:4–6 is

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<sup>310</sup> The language of Exodus 1:7 is also reminiscent of God’s promise to Jacob in Ge 35:10–11, where the change of name from Jacob to Israel is mentioned for the second time (cf. Gen 32:28) and the idea of fruitfulness and multiplication is set side by side with the promise that a nation and kings would go out from Jacob’s loins (cf. also Gen 48:3–4).

<sup>311</sup> Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 48–49. Gen 47:27 looks backward to the promise in 35:11 (also 28:3–4) but also forward to the fulfillment (Gen 48:3–4; Exod 1:7). Interestingly, the term “Israel” occurs for the first time in Gen 32:28, when God changes Jacob’s name to Israel, and, then, this name is repeated frequently in the second half of the book of Genesis (forty-two times). Very likely, this is a way to prepare the reader for the transition from the history of the patriarchs to that of the nation of Israel.

<sup>312</sup> Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 15.

<sup>313</sup> Peter C. Craigie argues that Israel was, as it were, in covenantal relationship with Pharaoh. However, “in the Exodus, the power of the suzerain was broken; the pharaoh, the god-king of Egypt, was defeated and therefore lost his right to be Israel’s suzerain lord; the Lord had conquered the pharaoh and therefore ruled as King over Israel (Exod. 15:18). As their deliverer, God had claimed the right to call for his people’s obedient commitment to him in the covenant.” See Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 83.

<sup>314</sup> Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 86. Law is always given in a covenant framework

placed between the two narratives. This suggests that the relationship between gospel and law can be seen in the fact that through his law God makes himself known to the nations (cf. Deut 4:5-8). In that connection, Blackburn argues that “the means by which Israel carried out her missionary calling as a priestly nation was through keeping the law.”<sup>315</sup> But how does that happen and what of God is known through his law? The answers can be found in Exodus 19:4–6 insofar as this passage introduces the law. Blackburn remarks that this passage has been recognized by most scholars as “a poetic summary of covenant theology, [...] an intentional summary of the entire Pentateuch,” the way through which one can approach the entire book of Exodus, the most programmatic speech for Israelite faith which is “crucial to understanding the OT as a whole,” and the very mission statement of Israel.<sup>316</sup>

Exodus 19:4 is introduced with a reminder of God’s judgment upon the Egyptians,<sup>317</sup> the altogether passive nature of Israel’s role in the exodus event, and God’s act of bringing Israel to himself. This relationship between God and Israel is defined with certain roles in Exodus 19:5–6 and provides the grounds for Israel’s commission. Israel

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of grace that God has already provided.

<sup>315</sup> Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 210.

<sup>316</sup> Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 87. Christopher Wright highlights that Exod 19:4–6 “is as pivotal in the book of Exodus as Genesis 12:1–3 is in Genesis” (Wright, *The Mission of God*, 224). He further mentions that “since the exodus itself had been explicitly motivated by God’s faithfulness to his promise to Abraham (Ex 2:24; 6:6-8), the full weight of that great theme in Genesis is echoed here. The universality of God’s ultimate purpose for all the earth is not lost sight of” (224). In fact, the relevance of this passage for the later canonical record can be seen through its reverberations in passages such as Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18–19; 28:9–10; Isa 61:6; Jer 13:11; 33:8–9; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:5–6; 5:10.

<sup>317</sup> Christopher Wright highlights that even God’s judgments upon the Egyptians are a means for him to make himself known (see Exod 7:5, 17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 16; 12:12; 14:4, 25). See Wright, *The Mission of God*, 92–95. God even mentions that by means of those judgments he would proclaim his “name in all the earth” (Exod 9:16).

ought to be a treasured possession, a priestly kingdom, and a holy nation. A brief explanation of each one of these terms is necessary.

The term “treasured possession” translates the Hebrew noun *הַגְּלוּלָה*, which pinpoints Israel’s election among other nations. When contending that Israel is a treasured possession, the passage is not affirming that Israel is God’s only possession, but emphasizing its value<sup>318</sup> and distinctiveness<sup>319</sup> in God’s project of salvation, as the rest of the passage makes clear.<sup>320</sup>

The term “priestly kingdom” or “kingdom of priests” translates the phrase *מְמַלְכֵת כֹּהֲנִים* (Exod 19:6), which occurs only once in the Hebrew Bible and has given rise to much discussion on account of its grammatical ambiguity.<sup>321</sup> Blackburn claims that the best way to deal with this expression is by taking it as a parallel to “holy nation”.<sup>322</sup> He

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<sup>318</sup> Thomas B. Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 436–37.

<sup>319</sup> Sarah Shectman et al., “Themes and Perspectives in Torah: Creation, Kinship, and Covenant,” in *The Old Testament and Apocrypha*, Fortress Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014), 158–59.

<sup>320</sup> According to Blackburn, “the implication is that Israel’s status as a treasured possession is not only an end in itself, but also a means to a further end that has in view all peoples of the earth” (Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 89; also Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 22). Various scholars have called attention to the fact that this missional impulse of Exod 19:4–6 can be traced back to Gen 12:1–3, since Exod 19:4–6 reflects God’s concern about blessing all the nations of the earth. See, e.g., Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 1:384–85; William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 19–40: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 2A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 159.

<sup>321</sup> See especially John A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19:6* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004); Wells, *God’s Holy People*, 27–57. John I. Durham observes that not only modern interpreters but also ancient versions dispute the meaning of this phrase. He also provides a short summary of the different proposals. See John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3 (Dallas: Word, 1987), 262–63. In turn, Walter Kaiser Jr. argues for the translations “kings and priests” (Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 23) or “kingly priests”; Walter Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 107–10.

<sup>322</sup> Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 90. In that regard, Brevard S. Childs points out that there is some scholarly consensus that the two phrases are in linguistic parallelism. See Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 342.

argues that the meaning of Israel's priesthood is threefold. Israel was supposed to (1) represent God to the nations and (2) the nations before God. As a representative of both parts, (3) Israel ought to be a channel by means of which a relationship between God and the nations would be possible.<sup>323</sup>

The term "holy nation," from the Hebrew *שִׁדְרֵי יִג*, is a *hapax legomenon*. Blackburn calls attention to the fact that *יִג* is a political term as opposed to the more general term *עַם* ("people"), meaning that Israel is presented as a nation among the others.<sup>324</sup> Despite this similarity, Israel is distinguished from the other nations in that it is identified as *שִׁדְרֵי* ("holy"). By being a holy nation, Israel should make God's character known to the nations.<sup>325</sup> For Blackburn, this is true most of all in regard to the Sabbath. By keeping the Sabbath, Israel would give to the idea of imitating God (cf. Gen 2:2–3; Exod 20:11; 31:17) its highest expression in such a way that "the Sabbath stands as a sign that the whole law is lived in imitation of God."<sup>326</sup> In this way, Israel should represent him to the nations.<sup>327</sup>

Scholars highlight that Israel's special role of making God known pervades both the OT and NT. For instance, William Dumbrell goes so far as to mention that "the history of Israel from this point on is in reality merely a commentary upon the degree of

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<sup>323</sup> Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 92.

<sup>324</sup> See also John L. Mackay, *Exodus*, MC (Fearn, Ross-shire, Great Britain: Mentor, 2001), 328.

<sup>325</sup> Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 95. Blackburn remarks that sanctification is "at the heart of the purpose of the covenant ceremony" (page 96). He states that this "is confirmed in the ratification of the covenant in 24:3–8" (page 95; see arguments through pages 95–99).

<sup>326</sup> Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 101.

<sup>327</sup> Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 102.

fidelity with which Israel adhered to this Sinai-given vocation.”<sup>328</sup> As Durham puts it, “it is this special role, indeed, that weaves the Book of Exodus so completely into the canonical fabric begun with Genesis and ended only with Revelation.”<sup>329</sup> It appears that, just as with the theme of the blessing promised to Abraham,<sup>330</sup> the theme of exodus also becomes increasingly frequent in the rest of the OT era,<sup>331</sup> flowing, ultimately, to the NT writings.

### **Mission in the Prophets**<sup>332</sup>

In this section, we will see that since Israel failed to obey the stipulations of the covenant, now the prophets point to an eschatological Israel that would fulfill God’s original intention for the whole creation. This and other mission-related themes will be considered as follows.

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<sup>328</sup> Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 113.

<sup>329</sup> Durham, *Exodus*, xxiii. See also Köstenberger and Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 30–37.

<sup>330</sup> Jeremy M. Kimble and Ched Spellman, *Invitation to Biblical Theology: Exploring the Shape, Storyline, and Themes of Scripture*, Invitation to Theological Studies Series (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2020), 400.

<sup>331</sup> See, for instance, the missional impulse of the book of Deuteronomy as addressed by Mark Glanville, “A Missional Reading of Deuteronomy,” in Goheen, *Reading the Bible Missionally*, 124–50.

<sup>332</sup> I am following the Hebrew Bible arrangement, namely, Law, Prophets, and Writings, while surveying mission in the OT. This arrangement is followed by various other works applying a biblical-theology approach. See, for instance, Kimble and Spellman, *Invitation to Biblical Theology*, and various OT introductions: R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969); Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977); House, *Old Testament Theology*; House, Paul R. and Mitchell, Eric, *Old Testament Survey*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007); Jason S. DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Author Really Cared About: A Survey of Jesus’ Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2013); John Goldingay, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: Exploring Text, Approaches and Issues* (London: SPCK, 2016); cf. also Barry L. Bandstra, *Reading the Old Testament: Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. Fourth Edition (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2009). For a helpful survey on the unity of the Hebrew Bible, see David Noel Freedman, *The University of the Hebrew Bible* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1991). Freedman argues that the Hebrew Bible is not “a heterogenous collection of writings [...] but [...] a deliberate assemblage conceived and organized by a single mind or by a small group of people” (page 1).

## Former Prophets

The narrative of Joshua-Kings continues the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham that he would be given a land. The people conquered Canaan, and the rest from enemies anticipated in Deuteronomy (cf. 3:20; 12:9–11; 25:19)<sup>333</sup> is now achieved in Joshua (cf. 11:23; 14:15; 21:44–45; 22:4; 23:1), although Judges shows that it did not last long. Even in Joshua the rest is partial (e.g., 13:1, 6–7; 15:63; 24:4–13).<sup>334</sup> Bruce K. Waltke puts the matter in terms of already-not-yet language, in the NT fashion. He argues that Isaiah envisioned the ultimate fulfillment of that rest in the messianic age (cf. Isa 11:12–16).<sup>335</sup> As the canon unfolds, it becomes increasingly clear that the fulfillment of God’s promise of a land is reserved to the future.<sup>336</sup> God’s covenant with David provides more insights into that future.

God’s covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7 echoes God’s promises to Abraham (Gen 12:1–3) and the covenant with Israel (Exod 19:4–6).<sup>337</sup> Gordon J. Wenham points out that God’s promises to Abraham has echoes of royal ideology.<sup>338</sup> Indeed, the narrative from Genesis to Kings revolves around two dominating themes, namely, the

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<sup>333</sup> In that sense, the *qatal* form of נָתַן/*give* in the sentence “you will bless Yahweh your God because of the good land that he *has given* to you” (Deut 8:10) is to be interpreted as a prophetic perfect. See John Peter Lange, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Deuteronomy* (Bellingham: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 214.

<sup>334</sup> For details, see Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 87–90.

<sup>335</sup> Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 525.

<sup>336</sup> Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 89.

<sup>337</sup> I refer to God’s promises to Abraham rather than to God’s covenant with Abraham in Gen 12:1–3 because the term “covenant” will appear only in Gen 15 and 17, although, as Thomas R. Schreiner observes, “it is fitting to include the promises first enunciated in chapter 12 under the scope of the Abrahamic covenant” (Schreiner, *Covenant*, 43). Interestingly, the term “covenant” does not occur in 2 Sam 7 either.

establishment of Israel as a nation and the coming of a royal deliverer.<sup>339</sup> In that connection, Exodus 19:4–6 serves as a link between Genesis 12:1–3 and 2 Samuel 7, which, in turn, indicates that God’s plan to make himself known to the nations is continued by means of David’s “seed” (2 Sam 7:12). The already-and-not-yet language present in the narrative of Joshua is still in operation here (cf. 2 Sam 7:1, 11), which causes the canonical reader to keep waiting for the complete fulfillment of God’s promises in the future. This occurs because 2 Samuel 7 not only makes clear that God’s intention to make himself known is still in motion, but also points to the fact that he will ultimately rule over the nations of the world (vv. 12-13, 16, 19). This background is crucial for a better understanding of Revelation 11:15–18.

Despite some differences between the Davidic and Sinaitic covenants,<sup>340</sup> there are many similarities that connect one to the other.<sup>341</sup> Likewise, the Davidic covenant also has connections to God’s promises to Abraham, i.e., land, offspring, and universal blessing (Gen 12:1–3). Brian J. Kinzel observes that God’s promise to David is conveyed by means of nine specific elements,<sup>342</sup> some of which echo the blessings promised to

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<sup>338</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 275.

<sup>339</sup> T. D. Alexander, “Genesis to Kings,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 119.

<sup>340</sup> See Jon D. Levenson, “The Davidic Covenant and Its Modern Interpreters,” *CBQ* 41, no. 2 (1979): 205–19.

<sup>341</sup> Michael D. Guinan, “Davidic Covenant,” *ABD* 2:71. As a matter of fact, the covenant with David is within the Sinaitic covenant, with no separate ritual ratification or covenant stipulations. Köstenberger and O’Brien remark that (1) “The fortunes of David are closely interwoven with the unfolding history of Israel (vv. 6–16)”;

(2) “The promises given to David are as Israel’s representative”;

(3) “The sonship terms previously applied to Israel (Exod 4:22) are now predicated of David” (2 Sam 7:14); and (4) “The goal of the exodus, namely, rest in the Promised Land, is to be achieved fully through David” (Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 39).

<sup>342</sup> 1. “Yahweh’s choice of David” (7:8–9a); 2. “A great name for David” (7:9b) just as he promised to Abraham; 3. “A place for God’s people” (7:10a); 4. “Rest and peace from all enemies” (7:10b–



Abraham. First, like Abraham (Gen 12:2), David was promised a “great name” (2 Sam 7:9b). The fact that no one but Abraham and David has received such a promise makes clear that this is not accidental.<sup>343</sup> Second, like Abraham (e.g., Gen 22:17–18), David was promised “offspring” (2 Sam 7:12). David’s descendant would build a “house” for God’s name (2 Sam 7:13a), and his kingdom would be established forever (2 Sam 7:13b). Indeed, the “house,” the kingdom, and the throne should endure forever (2 Sam 7:16). Furthermore, just as Abraham was promised a land (Gen 12:1), David was promised a “place” for God’s people (2 Sam 7:10).<sup>344</sup> In addition, “the promise that David and his seed would be kings” fulfills “the even more ancient Abrahamic Covenant blessing that the patriarchs would be fathers of kings (Gen 17:6, 16; 35:11).”<sup>345</sup> This is plainly seen in Genesis 49:10, where the great-grandson of Abraham was given the promise of a ruler coming from Judah.<sup>346</sup>

Other connections may also be seen from David’s answer to God’s promises (2 Sam 7:18–29). Especially relevant is the repetition of words from the root בָּרַךְ (“bless”) in 2 Samuel 7:29, which possibly echoes the repetition of words derived from the same

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11); 5. “A ‘house’ [dynasty] for David” (7:11); 6. “A descendant who will build a ‘house’ [temple] for Yahweh” (7:12–13a); 7. “A descendant whose kingdom will be established forever” (7:13b); 8. “A father-son relationship with David’s descendants (7:14); 9. “Permanent mercy that includes an eternal house, kingdom, and throne” (7:15–16). See Brian J. Kinzel, “The Davidic Covenant,” in *A Handbook on the Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, ed. Craig A. Evans and David Mishkin (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2019), 23–24.

<sup>343</sup> Robert D. Bergen, *I, 2 Samuel*, NAC 7 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 339.

<sup>344</sup> The actual meaning of “place” is disputed. Scholars debate whether it should signify “place of worship” (see P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, AB 9 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 203) or be taken as a reference to the land of Canaan. The latter is maintained by most interpreters (David A. Hubbard et al., “Editorial Preface,” in *2 Samuel*, WBC 11 (Dallas: Word, 1989), 121). If their assessment is correct, then this is another connection between David and Abraham.

<sup>345</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, “2 Samuel,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985), 1:464.

root in Genesis 12:1–3. Walter Kaiser Jr. has also called attention to the repetitive usage of the compound name “Adonai Yahweh,” which occurs five times in 2 Samuel 7:18–19, 22, 28–29 and twice in Genesis 15:2, 8. This compound name occurs only seven times elsewhere (Deut 3:24; 9:26; Josh 7:7; Judg 6:22; 16:28; 1 Kgs 2:26; 8:53). This repetition in 2 Samuel 7 and Genesis is hardly accidental. It points to the close relationship between the covenants with Abraham and David.<sup>347</sup> According to Dumbrell, this phenomenon suggests that the author of 2 Samuel tells the story regarding the David covenant with the theological significance of the Abrahamic covenant in mind.<sup>348</sup> As noticed above, the language of 2 Samuel 7 indicates that the promises to Abraham would be fulfilled through a son of David.<sup>349</sup>

In short, the promises to David refer to an eternal dynasty (2 Sam 7:13, 16) that should reach global dimensions. This seems to be implicit from David’s understanding of the implications of God’s covenant with him, “this is instruction (תּוֹרָה) for mankind” (2 Sam 7:19). At this point, one may ask about the nature of the offspring promised in 2 Samuel 7. In a sense, it seems to be adequate to take Solomon as the fulfillment of that prophecy, as one can imply from 1 Kings 1–2,<sup>350</sup> and especially 1 Kings 4:20–21, 24.<sup>351</sup> On the other hand, several times the narrative of 1–2 Kings connects God’s dealings with

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<sup>346</sup> Merrill, *2 Samuel*, 464. For more details, see Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 892.

<sup>347</sup> Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 26.

<sup>348</sup> Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 227.

<sup>349</sup> This is widely recognized by scholars. See, e.g., Schreiner, *Covenant and God’s Purpose*, 75. See also Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 39–40; Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 334–35, 338–40, 343.

<sup>350</sup> Gwilym H. Jones, *The Nathan Narratives*, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 59.

<sup>351</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner states that “the promise of land made to Abraham seems to have been

his people to the promise of universal blessing made to Abraham (1 Kgs 4:20–21, 24; 8:22–53; 18:36; 2 Kgs 13:23).<sup>352</sup> As emphasized by Walter Brueggemann, the idea that the throne of David “shall be established forever” (2 Sam 7:16) seems to go beyond Solomon.<sup>353</sup> And David did not miss the point. His statement that that oracle was instruction for all humankind makes this quite clear. He came to the acknowledgement that by means of his “seed” the promise to Abraham that all the nations of the earth would be blessed should be fulfilled.<sup>354</sup>

As it appears, the Davidic covenant and the Abrahamic covenant are associated. Accordingly, it may be helpful to take that fact into consideration insofar as those covenants are referred to in the subsequent canonical record and, particularly, in John’s usage of Davidic-covenant language in Revelation 10–14. As Robert D. Bergen reminds us, several promises to David transcend his own time. They would be fulfilled in a distant future (cf. Isa 9:7; 16:5; Jer 23:5–6; 33:15–16).<sup>355</sup>

### Latter Prophets

From the perspective of a mission theology, the latter prophets seem not to introduce new topics but to develop them. In other words, they recapitulate themes previously treated by preceding biblical traditions and then delineate missiological

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fulfilled in its entirety in 1 Kings 4:21.” See Schreiner, *Covenant and God’s Purpose*, 45.

<sup>352</sup> I. W. Provan, “Kings,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 185.

<sup>353</sup> For details, see Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 255–56.

<sup>354</sup> Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 27.

<sup>355</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 339.

implications on the basis of them.<sup>356</sup> Their perceptions are dual in the sense that they look backward—i.e., to the creation and failure of Adam, the appearance of Adam-like figures (e.g., Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), and the rise and fall of Israel as a corporate Adam<sup>357</sup>—at the same time as they point forward, to God’s promises of future restoration. They explore the significance of past events, but simultaneously look beyond them to the promise of a new exodus, so that past events provide a model for describing a complete and eschatological restoration. Accordingly, the future envisions not only a new exodus and return from exile, but also a “new David, new covenant, new Eden, new creation” as well as “the renewed experience of God’s presence and the renewed relationship with him.”<sup>358</sup> Since this is a large section in the Hebrew Bible to be covered, I will make some comments in a rather brief manner, by focusing first on the major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel) and then on the twelve from Hosea to Malachi.

## Major Prophets

By and large, the theme of the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations is a topic addressed in Isaiah (2:2–4; 60–62) that has missiological reverberations in the NT, especially in Revelation. As one reads the book of Isaiah from end to end, it is possible to observe a transition from the old Jerusalem to the New Jerusalem in such a way that the

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<sup>356</sup> Roseni Santos Roque, “Towards an Old Testament Theology of Mission” (MA thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1989), 168, 190–93. Stephen G. Dempster says that “the latter prophets provide commentary on the grand narrative from creation to exile” (Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson, NSBT 15 (Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 191).

<sup>357</sup> I owe this term to Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 56. Beale has used this term extensively. For a synthesis, see G. K. Beale and Benjamin L. Gladd, *The Story Retold: A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2020), 8-13.

<sup>358</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology*, NSBT (Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 41, 45.

Jerusalem motif plays a major role in the theology of the book.<sup>359</sup> Remarkably, the New Jerusalem motif encompasses other theological themes such as creation (Isa 65:18), so that the Jerusalem that figures in the final chapters of Isaiah is new (Isa 65:17), not in the sense of being renovated from the old one, but re-created out of nothing.<sup>360</sup>

Nevertheless, more specifically, the book of Isaiah very often recovers the language of universal blessing with echoes of the promises made to Abraham (2:1–4; 11:10; 12:4; 19:16–25; 41:8–9;<sup>361</sup> 42:6–7; 45:22–23; 49:6, 22; 52:15; 55:4–5; 56:3–8; 60).<sup>362</sup> Likewise, commentators have identified allusions to God’s covenant with David<sup>363</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> Jerusalem is portrayed in Isaiah “as the centre of the new creation” (35:1–10; 65:17–18). See Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 41.

<sup>360</sup> H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Isaiah*, The Pulpit Commentary 2 (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1910), 473. The reference to “heavens” and “earth” as the object of *אֶרֶץ/ create* indicates that this is an allusion to Gen 1:1, where God creates out of nothing. Furthermore, the adjective *שָׁמַיִם* in “new heavens” and “new earth” points to an utterly new beginning (Gary Edward Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use of Old Testament: A Book-by-Book Guide* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2021), 252). The reference to predatory animals being harmless (Isa 11:6-8; 65:25) points to a new creation. Yet, Isa 65:20 is still in the present age, with death. Thus, the idea of predatory animals being portrayed as harmless cannot be interpreted in a literal way. The language is hyperbolic pointing to a state of blessedness with the removal of the covenant curses, more precisely the removal of the curse of predatory animals thereby providing a sense of security and peace for humans in the Messiah rulership (Joshua J. van Ee, “Wolf and Lamb as Hyperbolic Blessing: Reassessing Creational Connections in Isaiah 11:6-8,” *JBL* 137, no. 2 (2018): 319-37). In Revelation, John seems to apply Isaiah 65–66 in typological terms to refer to an eschatological reality marked by the absence of death in an atmosphere of complete harmony in the age to come. For a helpful survey on biblical typology applied to Revelation, see Richard M. Davidson, “Sanctuary Typology” in Holbrook, *Symposium on Revelation*, 99-130.

<sup>361</sup> John Goldingay argues that the whole chapter 41 of Isaiah is Abraham-oriented. He claims that it is evidence of the way people were using the story of Abraham and reflecting on it to understand their past, present, and future. See John Goldingay, “You are Abraham’s Offspring, My Friend: Abraham in Isaiah 41,” in *He Swore an Oath: Biblical Themes from Genesis 12–50*, ed. R. S. Hess, Gordon J. Wenham, and Philip E. Satterthwaite (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 29–54.

<sup>362</sup> See Schreiner, *Covenant and God’s Purpose*, 46; Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 74–75. All of these passages are recognized by commentators as alluding to God’s promises to Abraham. With respect to Isa 19:45–25, Christopher Wright goes as far as to mention, “Personally, I find this one of the most breathtaking pronouncements of any prophet, and certainly one of the missiologically most significant texts in the Old Testament” (Wright, *Mission of God*, 236; see also pages 491–93). For more details on the passages mentioned above, see J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 20 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 58, 294–95, 329–30, 420–25; J. A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 312, 366, 493–99; Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1–39*, NAC (Nashville: B & H, 2007), 130–31; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 190–91, 294–95, 379–80; John Goldingay and

as well as to the exodus<sup>364</sup> in such a way that the content of Isaiah conveys a message of judgment mingled with hope in the future fulfillment of all God's covenantal promises. However, a major concentration of missional content can be found in the second half, chapters 40–66, especially 40–55. In the words of Christopher Wright, Isaiah 40–55 brings “the most glorious and sustained vision of future hope and blessing” found in the OT as well as “an explosion of color to the promise of God to Abraham.”<sup>365</sup> In that section, one can find the expression of a new future, a new exodus, a new revelation of God, a new hope for the nations, and a new figure to embody Israel.<sup>366</sup>

Isaiah 40–55 is also very well-known for containing the so-called “Servant Songs” (cf. 42:1–9; 49:1–6; 50:4–9; 52:13–53:12).<sup>367</sup> There is agreement that these songs

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David Payne, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40–55*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 166.

<sup>363</sup> See, e.g., Andrew T. Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom: A Thematic–Theological Approach*, NSBT (Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016); see also John Goldingay, *The Theology of the Book of Isaiah* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 139–42; Marvin A. Sweeney, “The Reconceptualization of the Davidic Covenant in Isaiah,” in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah: Festschrift Willem A. M. Beuken*, ed. J. Van Ruiten & M. Vervenne (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 41–61.

<sup>364</sup> It has been widely recognized among Christian scholars that the return from the exile (Isa 40–66) is described as a second exodus at the same time that it points to an even greater and eschatological exodus. For a rather recent examination of the matter, see L. Michael Morales, *Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption*, ESBT (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2020), 121–47. The book of Revelation resumes this theme dealt with in Isaiah and moves it a step forward; indeed, the ultimate step.

<sup>365</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Old Testament in Seven Sentences: A Small Introduction to a Vast Topic* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), 126–27.

<sup>366</sup> See Wright, *The Old Testament in Seven Sentences*, 127. James Chukwuma Okoye protests against such a highly missional understanding of the book of Isaiah. He argues that Isa 40–55 “does not present a coherent doctrine of mission.” According to him, “the central concern seems to be recognition of the universal might and rule of Yahweh and the consequent rejection of idols as nothings.” James Chukwuma Okoye, *Israel and the Nations: A Mission Theology of the Old Testament* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 142. However, the book of Isaiah may not present a coherent doctrine of mission merely because its major concern, as Okoye himself recognizes, is not to introduce a doctrine of mission. In addition, it is worth pointing out that both the sovereignty of God and the nothingness of idols are mission-related themes and a *sine qua non* condition for a better understanding of a biblical theology of mission.

<sup>367</sup> Scholars debate whether the Servant Songs point to corporate or individualized aspects. The literature on the topic is massive. See the bibliography in John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, rev. ed., WBC

pinpoint the mission of God’s Servant.<sup>368</sup> In that connection, Isaiah 40–55 envisions the mission of the Messiah as well as that of the renewed Israel, which replicates or imitates the mission of the Messiah.<sup>369</sup> The importance of this passage for the NT theology of mission cannot be overstated. Richard Bauckham has pointed out its relevance when contending that “no part of the Old Testament was more important” to the NT writers.<sup>370</sup>

It is noteworthy, as claimed by Bauckham, that early Christians took the term “gospel” from Isaiah 40–66 (cf. 40:9; 41:27; 52:7; 60:6; 61:1).<sup>371</sup> Christopher Wright goes as far as to mention that Isaiah 52:7a (“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news”) is one of the seven sentences with which one can

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25 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 650–52. Watts further states, “This massive bibliography includes only a part of the literary production that indicates the attention being paid to the servant theme in Isaiah 40–55. The phrase ‘servant of YHWH’ appears elsewhere in the OT, but nowhere else is it used with the same concentrated emphasis.” A scholarly article summarizing some opinions is John G. F. Wilks, “The Suffering Servant and Personhood,” *EvQ* 77, no. 3 (2005): 195–210. See also R. T. France, “Servant of the Lord,” *NBD*<sup>3</sup> 1082; R. K. Harrison, “Servant of the Lord,” in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 4:422–23; Allen C. Myers, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 928. A general observation is that inside the Servant Songs (42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–9; 52:13–53:12), the Servant is an individual, whereas, outside the Servant Songs, there are places where God’s servant refers to the nation (44:1–2, 21; 45:4; 48:20). However, while in the Second Servant Song, Isa 49:3 relates the servant to Israel. Taking the data as they are, a balanced position seems to be seeing the matter not as an either-or but a both-and relationship. John N. Oswalt explains, “God continues to call his people to be his servants in order that the world may know him as he is. But that is only possible because the Servant has redeemed us and thereby made us the evidence of God’s true nature. Thus the answer to the question of the Servant’s identity is a resounding ‘both-and.’ On the one hand, the Servant is the people of God. But on the other hand, the Servant is the One who incarnates servanthood and Godhood, who shows us the nature of servanthood and in so doing enables us to become that servant.” See Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39*, 52. To use the words of Walter Kaiser Jr., the term may be pointing to “an individual as well as to the whole group that the individual represents” (Kaiser, *Missions in the Old Testament*, 56. See brief discussion on pages 56–58).

<sup>368</sup> This is quite noticeable in the NT, since the Gospels and letters very often address the Christ-event and refer to the mission of the infant church with Isa 40–55 in mind.

<sup>369</sup> Scholars have also recognized that the Servant is distinct from Israel in several passages. See Jacques B. Doukhan, *On the Way to Emmaus: Five Major Messianic Prophecies Explained* (Clarksville, MD: Lederer Books, 2012), 132; See also Kaiser, *Missions in the Old Testament*, 57.

<sup>370</sup> Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 33.

<sup>371</sup> Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 34. In all these passages, the term “good news” translates the Hebrew בשר, which, in turn, was translated in the Septuagint for the Greek εὐαγγελίζω.

summarize the entire OT.<sup>372</sup> In 40:9–11, the content of the good news (or gospel) is expressed in the phrase “Behold your God” (40:9). Verses 10–11 develop this idea by emphasizing God’s sovereign power (40:10) and his guidance as a Shepherd of his people (40:11). Isaiah 40:11 is the introduction of a passage that highlights God’s greatness (40:12–31), which is evident in the fact that he is the incomparable Lord of creation (40:12–20), Lord over creation (40:21–26), and the dependable Lord (40:27–31).<sup>373</sup> In that connection, Isaiah 40 brings to the surface the idea that God confronts the gods (40:18–20). This topic is recurrent in Isaiah 40–55 (cf. 41:21–24; 42:8; 44:9–20; 46:1–2; 47:8–10). God reacts to idolatry by expressing his great deeds (e.g., 44:21; 46:9a), employing irony concerning the folly of idolatry (e.g., 46:1–2), exerting judgments against idolatrous nations (e.g., 13:1–22), upholding his love and assuring his presence and promises before Israel (e.g., 43:4; 54:8, 10), appealing to the intellect through questions such as those found in 40:18, 25; 46:5, and, finally, asserting that he is unique, supreme, sovereign, and absolute (41:4; 42:8; 43:13; 44:6, 8; 45:5–6, 21–23; 46:9–11; 48:12–13).<sup>374</sup>

This emphasis on monotheism is crucial for mission. Since God wants to be known and worshiped by his whole creation, monotheism and mission walk together.<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Wright, *The Old Testament in Seven Sentences*, 119–39. Paul captured the missiological nuance of that sentence in Rom 10:15 (see, in addition, possible allusions to Isa 52:7 in Acts 10:36; Eph 2:17; 6:16, all of them with strong missiological connotations).

<sup>373</sup> For details, see Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 56–75.

<sup>374</sup> For more details, see George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1972), 125–27.

<sup>375</sup> Wright, *Mission of God*, 136.



Biblical mission is monotheistic<sup>376</sup> in that it summons all people to worship this one living God. Genesis 3–11 indicates that idolatry stained the image of God in humanity inasmuch as it faded the glory of God.<sup>377</sup> Thus, “God’s mission includes the restoration of people to that true image of God, of which his own Son, Jesus, is the perfect model.”<sup>378</sup> This is ultimately a confrontation between the one living God and Babylon, which is portrayed in Isaiah and Jeremiah as the archetypal rebellious nation. In Isaiah 47:8–10, Babylon pronounces words that should be uttered by no one else but God. Such an outrageous pretension serves as the background for the pompousness of the mystical Babylon in Revelation 18, as well as the cause of her doom (vv. 5–8; cf. Rev 14:8).

Israel has also adhered to idolatry repeatedly in its history. In fact, a problem frequently addressed in the OT is Israel’s failure to fulfill its function in the covenant and its stipulations by being unfaithful to its commission and following other gods. For that reason, just as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel also envisioned a restored Israel after the exile, a remnant that would cause God’s mission to move forward. Jeremiah 4:1–2 summarizes this idea by focusing on Israel’s failure and the consequent need to repent and return to the mission as well as on God’s intention to extend the covenantal blessing promised to Abraham to all the nations through his people.<sup>379</sup> Jeremiah’s concern with

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<sup>376</sup> Wright, *Mission of God*, 136.

<sup>377</sup> Wright, *Mission of God*, 172.

<sup>378</sup> Wright, *Mission of God*, 424. Paul grasped that picture of mission when expressing his belief that the gospel of Christ was God’s means to restore God’s image in humanity (2 Cor 5:17).

<sup>379</sup> Christopher Wright remarks that, as a result of Israel’s repentance, “We might have expected Jeremiah to say something like, ‘Then God will have mercy on his people and spare them the threatened judgment.’ But it is almost as if Jeremiah skips over that as too obvious to mention [...], and lifts our eyes to a much wider horizon, reminding us of the very reason why Israel existed in the world at all, namely, to be the vehicle of God’s blessing other nations.” See Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Message of Jeremiah: Grace in the End*, BST (Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 88–89; see also Wright, *Mission*

the formation of the new Israel is best visualized in 31:31–34, which presents a prophecy of the new covenant.<sup>380</sup>

Jeremiah 31:31–34 is within a section of Jeremiah known as the book of consolation (30–33), the last section of which presents a message of future restoration by means of the governance of the Davidic king (33:14–26; cf. also 23:5–6). God’s plan of salvation extended to the whole world can be seen in the very calling of Jeremiah as a “prophet to the nations” (1:5; also 1:10).<sup>381</sup> Especially striking is God’s statement in Jeremiah 12:16 that “if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my

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*of God*, 241. Several commentators saw here an allusion to Gen 12:1–3: e.g., Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 21A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 326; F. B. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, NAC 16 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 79; Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 49; J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 213. If this is correct, it follows that Israel is seen in this passage as the instrument by which God’s promise to Abraham would be fulfilled. Elsewhere, Wright states that “the prophets [...] focus most of the time on Israel in relationship with God, but when their vision widens to the nations and the earth, the results are sometimes stunning, and the echoes of Abraham are unmistakable. [...] These are the kind of texts that feed the New Testament theology of mission to the nations.” Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 74.

<sup>380</sup> For a discussion on how the new covenant relates to the OT covenants, see Skip MacCarty, *In Granite or Ingrained?: What the Old and New Covenants Reveal about the Gospel, the Law, and the Sabbath* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2007), 27–73. MacCarty argues that “all the covenants, including the Sinai covenant, were encoded with the same grace-based, gospel-bearing, faith-inducing, mission-directed DNA markers as the new covenant” (57). See also Wright, *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament*, 77–102.

Only after the new Israel is formed “will the Gentiles be incorporated into the new people, as other OT passages make clear (e.g., Isa 2:2–4).” See Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 43. Actually, in both Isaiah 2:2–4—paralleled in Micah 4:1–3—and other Isaianic passages (11:10; 12:4; 19:16–25; 45:22–23; 49:22; 55:5; 56:3–8; 60; 66:18–21) one can find a strong centripetal pull that draws the Gentiles to God at his temple in Jerusalem. It is not surprising that towards the end of Isaiah one observes the portrayal of a gathering of people from all nations and tongues coming to Jerusalem to see God’s glory (Isa 66:18) brought “as an offering to the Lord” (Isa 66:20). Some of them would be taken even “for Priests and for Levites” (Isa 66:21).

<sup>381</sup> Although, as observed by Terence E. Fretheim, this may not be “a call to ‘mission work’ among the nations, but a commission to proclaim a word to Israel that will catch up the future of other nations,” (Terence E. Fretheim, *Jeremiah*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 50), as Fretheim himself recognizes, other passages in Jeremiah indicate that the future of the nations would depend on their response to God’s offer of salvation (12:14–17; 16:19–21; 18:7–10; 25:9–32; 46–51).

name, [...] then they shall be built up in the midst of my people.” In other words, God intended the nations to be integrated in Israel’s identity.<sup>382</sup>

As in Isaiah and Jeremiah, in Ezekiel God would reach the nations by means of Israel’s ministry. Israel ought to shine as a light among the nations, as one can infer from Ezekiel 5:5, “This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the center of the nations, with countries all around her.”<sup>383</sup> This statement possibly has God’s promises to Abraham and David as its theological background<sup>384</sup> and, at the same time, it points to Israel’s election and the missionary responsibilities deriving from it (Exod 19:5–6).<sup>385</sup>

Ezekiel also underscores that God’s mission would be fulfilled by means of a new Israel within the new covenant. Although the term “new covenant” is a *hapax legomenon* in the OT, occurring only in Jeremiah 31:31, it is also referred to in Ezekiel by means of the terms “everlasting covenant” (Ezek 16:60; 37:26; cf. also Isa 55:3; 61:8; Jer 32:40; 50:5) and “covenant of peace” (Ezek 34:25; 37:26; cf. also Isa 54:10).<sup>386</sup> Whereas the first half of Ezekiel focuses on the destruction of Jerusalem (Ezek 1–32), the second half brings a message of hope in the future restoration (Ezek 33–48). It abounds in covenantal

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<sup>382</sup> They are offered “the same hope of restoration and establishment on exactly the same conditions (repentance and true worship) that Jeremiah elsewhere held out to Israel.” Wright, *Mission of God*, 351, also 489.

<sup>383</sup> The idea possibly goes beyond cartography, since “when we draw on the wider theology of the Old Testament tradition of Yahweh’s dealings with the nations of humanity as a whole and the role of Israel within that tradition, we can see that the point of Israel’s centrality is not merely geographical but theological and, in a sense, missiological” (Christopher Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel: A New Heart and a New Spirit*, BST [Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press, 2001], 87). See also Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 175.

<sup>384</sup> Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, 87–88.

<sup>385</sup> Lamar Eugene Cooper, *Ezekiel*, NAC 17 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 102. The centrality of Jerusalem is not a theme originally addressed by the major prophets. It is rooted in Deut 12:11 and was also envisioned by Solomon in his dedication of the temple (1 Kgs 8:41–43). Accordingly, what is announced by the major prophets is an ancient plan of God.

language (e.g., 34:25; 37:26–27), with allusions to God’s covenant with Adam (e.g., 36:10–11; cf. Gen 1:26–28), Abraham (e.g., 33:23; 34:26; cf. Gen 12:1–3), Israel (36:12, 28; 37:27–28; cf. Exod 19:5), and David (e.g., 33:23; 34:23–24; 37:24–27; cf. 2 Sam 7).<sup>387</sup> In a sense, all these allusions point to the coming of the messianic king and his kingdom. All of this will take place by means of a “covenant of peace” (34:25; 37:26), “an everlasting covenant” (37:26), in which God himself will constitute a flock and be their shepherd (34:11–12, 15–16) by shepherding them through the messianic king (34:23–24; 37:24). Also, God will cleanse Israel from idolatry (36:25; 37:23), give it a new heart (36:26), shed his spirit upon it (36:27a), and cause it to obey his statutes (36:27b).

The fact that the Davidic king in 37:15–28 is viewed as the *one* shepherd (v. 24) who will rule forever (v. 25; cf. also 26 and 28) as *one* king (v. 22) over *one* nation (v. 22) is vital for an understanding of the prophecy of the valley of dry bones (37:1–14) and the missionary impulse of chapter 37 in particular and the book of Ezekiel in general. Ezekiel 37 is divided up into two parts. The first one deals with the restoration of Israel in terms of re-creation (37:1–14). The second one, as it were, develops the first section and deals with the historical effects of such re-creation (37:15–28): i.e., *one* shepherd (v. 24), *one* king (v. 22), and *one* nation (v. 22) that will finally be God’s treasured possession (vv. 23, 27; cf. Exod 19:5). Interestingly, these sections end in similar and, yet, very different ways. That is to say, they are similar in that both of them conclude with a reference to the acknowledgment that God is the Lord. Yet, while at the end of the first

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<sup>386</sup> Kimble and Spellman, *Invitation to Biblical Theology*, 299.

<sup>387</sup> For more details, see Wright, *Mission of God*, 351.

part, the ultimate goal of Israel's restoration is "You shall know that I am the Lord" (37:14), at the end of the second part, the ultimate goal is "The nations will know that I am the Lord" (37:28). Although the text does not affirm it directly, the parallelism between 37:14 and 37:28 suggests that Israel must know God and live in covenantal relationship with him so that it might become a channel through which the nations come to the knowledge of the true one God.

Ezekiel 34–37 is likely the OT background lying behind the contention of the Johannine Jesus that he is the good shepherd (John 10:11) who has other sheep outside Israel that must be brought to the fold so that "there will be one flock, one shepherd" (John 10:16).<sup>388</sup> It is also likely that John had the same OT passage in mind when envisioning the Lamb as the shepherd of a countless multitude from every nation (Rev 7:9, 17). The missionary importance of Ezekiel 34–37<sup>389</sup> for John can also be seen through a clear allusion to Ezekiel 37:5, 10 in Revelation 11:11.

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<sup>388</sup> Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, 314.

<sup>389</sup> Ezekiel 36:23 (cf. 37:23) is particularly important in that it likely alludes to Exod 19:5–6, with an eschatological flavor (Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 96-7). By being a holy "nation", the ideal Israel would show God's holiness to the nations thereby drawing their attention to him. In that sense, Israel ought to be an inclusive people by allotting the Gentiles an inheritance among them (Eze 47:22–23). More than that, the Gentiles were to be considered "as native-born children of Israel" (Eze 47:22). While Eze 40–48, in general, focuses on God's dwelling with Israel in a new temple, Eze 47:22–23, in particular, shows that aliens would inherit the land with them in the future. Scholars agree that the vision of the New Temple in Eze 40–48 provides a model for John's description of the New Jerusalem in Rev 21–22 (For a helpful list of parallels between Eze 37–48 and Rev 20–22, see Hans K. LaRondelle, *Light for the Last Days: Jesus' End-Time Prophecies Made Plain in the Book of Revelation*, ed. David C. Jarnes (Bradenton, FL: First Impressions, 2013), 102-3). Just as God dwells with Israelites and non-Israelites in a new temple (Eze 40–48), in the New Jerusalem God and the Lamb dwell with all humankind (Rev 21:3). Along with Isa 66:18–21, Eze 47:22–23 indicates that inclusiveness is a crucial aspect of mission. This aspect of inclusiveness can also be seen in Isa 56:1–8, which envisions future salvation for foreigners and eunuchs. The prophet Isaiah was surely aware of the exclusion of eunuchs and foreigners in God's assembly (Deut 23:1–8). Thus, Isaiah 56:1–8 indicates that salvation transcends the restrictions of civil laws (Edward Young, *40–66*, vol. 3 of *The Book of Isaiah: The English Text, with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 391).

## Minor Prophets

The twelve minor prophets, to a greater or lesser degree, also address the themes mentioned above. Scholars have pointed to various allusions to and/or echoes of God's promise to Abraham (Hos 1:10–11; 2:23; 4:7, 10; 14:5–7; Joel 2:28; Amos 3:2; 9:11–12, 15; Obad 1:1; Jonah 1:1–4:11; Mic 4:1–5, 7; 5:2–15; 7:20; Zeph 2:8–11; 3:9–10, 19–20; Hag 2:7, 19; Zech 2:4, 11; 8:13, 22–23; 10:8; 14:17; Mal 1:1–5, 11; and 3:12),<sup>390</sup> as well as God's covenant with Israel (Hos 2:1, 23b; 3:3; 4:4–19; 6:7; 8:1; 11:1; 13:4–5,<sup>391</sup> Joel 2:17; Amos 2:10; 3:1–2; Mic 1–2; 6:4; 7:15; Hag 2:4–5; Zech 8:7–8; Mal 2:10; 3:17; 4:4) and David (Hos 3:5; 11:4; Amos 9:11–15; Mic 5:1–6; Hab 3:13; Hag 2:20–23; Zech 3:8; 6:12–15 [cf. Jer 23:5; 33:15]; 9:9–10; 12:7–8, 10; 13:1). To a great extent, the minor prophets make use of covenantal language to expose Israel's infidelity, as one can easily see, for instance, from Hosea 1:10–11. One accusation is that “the more they increased [cf. Exod 1:7], the more they sinned against” Yahweh (Hos 4:7).

Accordingly, on the one hand, the Twelve paint a tragic picture of Israel's failure in fulfilling the commission to be a priestly nation. On the other hand, they also envision a new covenant<sup>392</sup> (Hos 2:18–23; Mic 7:18–20; Zech 13:9) between God and a renewed Israel (Hos 14:4–7; Joel 2:25–32; 3:1; Amos 9:14–15; Obad 1:17–21; Mic 2:12–13; 4:1–

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<sup>390</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, for instance, contends that “the theme of universal blessing is prominent” throughout the Hebrew Bible, including the minor prophets. See Schreiner, *Covenant and God's Purpose*, 46.

<sup>391</sup> The language of Hosea is highly covenantal from end to end. One evidence is Hosea's metaphorical usage of the imagery of the marriage between Yahweh and Israel. Israel is portrayed as an adulterous wife so as to describe her unfaithfulness to God's requirements. For a brief discussion on that topic, see J. Andrew Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 50–59. In his commentary, Dearman highlights that the covenantal language in Hosea makes evident Israel's failure in its priestly role as a nation (e.g., 4:4–19).

<sup>392</sup> The term “covenant” occurs in Hos 2:18 but not in Mic 7:18–20 and Zech 13:9. However, the fact that all these passages are future-oriented indicates that they refer to the new covenant.

13; Zeph 3:13, 17–20; Hag 2:8–9; Zech 1:16–17; 2:5. 9–10; 8:3, 7–8; Mal 4:2–6) by means of whom God’s name will be known among the nations (Hab 2:14; Zeph 2:11; 3:9–10, 15; Hag 2:7; Zech 2:11–12; 14:7–9, 16; Mal 1:5, 11), to the ends of the earth (Mic 5:4; Zech 9:10). In addition, Jerusalem is depicted as the center of the world (Mic 4:1–3; cf. Isa 2:2–4; also Mic 5:7–8; Zech 2:11; 8:20–23; 14:8–9, 16–21) into which the nations flow in pilgrimage (Mic 4:2; Hag 2:7; Zech 2:1–13; 8:21–22; 14:6). However, just as in Ezekiel 38–40 and Revelation 16–22, before a new creation is described, first God confronts evil and destroys it (e.g., Joel 3; Obad 1:16–21; Zeph 2:4–3:20; Zech 12–14). In this manner, the books of the minor prophets reveal that God’s original plan for his creation and his intention to make himself known to the nations by means of his people are still in motion. This is also true in the Writings, as one can see in the brief discussion below.

### **Mission in the Writings**

The Writings are not as uniform as the other parts of the Hebrew Bible,<sup>393</sup> and yet one can find a unifying idea binding all the books together.<sup>394</sup> They underscore that “life in the land will be blessed for those who delight in the Torah and kiss the anointed king, in whose hearts are the highways to Zion.”<sup>395</sup> At the same time, they also look prospectively into the future, to the coming of the messianic king, the establishment of his kingdom, and God’s final victory over evil.

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<sup>393</sup> Rolf Rendtorff, *The Canonical Hebrew Bible: A Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. David E. Orton (Leiderdorp: Deo, 2005), 315.

<sup>394</sup> Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation*, 350.

<sup>395</sup> Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation*, 350.

Broadly speaking, the book of Psalms opens the section with a message that the kingdom of God is breaking into the world.<sup>396</sup> The book of Ruth reminds the reader that God’s covenantal promises are in the process of being fulfilled (Ruth 4:18–22).<sup>397</sup> The book of Daniel reveals that God leads his people under ferocious persecution, confronts idolatry and evil, and annihilates it before ultimately establishing his everlasting kingdom. The book of Ezra-Nehemiah concerns “the restoration of the postexilic Jewish community to a position of covenant purity and faithfulness so that it might take up and perpetuate its God–given privilege and task of mediating his salvific intentions to the whole world.”<sup>398</sup> Similarly, from a missional standpoint, the book of Chronicles is intended to demonstrate both God’s love and purpose for the entire world<sup>399</sup> and “his intention to effect salvation through his servant people Israel under the messianic leadership of David’s royal offspring.”<sup>400</sup> Since time and space do not permit a broader treatment of mission in the Writings, we will briefly focus on the books of Psalms and Daniel. An additional reason for doing so is that, to a greater or lesser degree, the Psalter deals with themes that are also addressed in the rest of the Writings, in such a way that it serves as a sort of introduction to that part of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>401</sup> As for Daniel, it will

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<sup>396</sup> Waltke with Yu, *An Old Testament Theology*, 870.

<sup>397</sup> For a very helpful discussion on that topic, see the chapter “Ruth and God’s Mission” in Lau and Goswell, *Unceasing Kindness*, 141–56.

<sup>398</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, Mark Rooker, and Michael A. Grisanti, *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011), 353.

<sup>399</sup> This is evident from the genealogies in the beginning of the book.

<sup>400</sup> Merrill, Rooker, and Grisanti, *The World and the Word*, 341.

<sup>401</sup> Paul R. House states that “Psalms is a perfect book to begin the Writings [...]. Psalms probes the depths of suffering and discusses the origins and applications of wisdom, topics that occupy Job and Proverbs, the next two books in the canon. It also emphasizes the importance of the Davidic covenant, the career of Solomon, the struggle for meaning in life, the pain of exile and the challenge of renewing true



be addressed a little bit more due to its importance for the interpretation of the Apocalypse of John.

The book of Psalms is pervaded with allusions to and/or echoes of God's covenantal promises.<sup>402</sup> Indeed, "covenant is a concept which ties together many strands of the theology of the Psalms,"<sup>403</sup> including its theology of mission. The universal blessing promised to Abraham is alluded to in Ps 22:27; 67:6–7; 96:7 (cf. also 22:27; 72:17; 115:12; and 128).<sup>404</sup> An allusion to God's covenant with Israel lies in the background of Psalm 135:4.<sup>405</sup> Furthermore, the exodus is often depicted in the Psalms and in the Prophets as a model of redemption.<sup>406</sup> There are also several references to

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worship in the land after the exile. Thus a theological orientation for Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles is apparent in Psalms. These books have specific theological contributions of their own, but their canonical role is also to supplement ideas already introduced in Psalms and earlier texts." See Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 402–3. A canonical evidence for the fact that the book of Psalms introduces or serves as a summary of the Writings is the tripartite division of the Hebrew Bible as offered by Jesus in Luke 24:44.

<sup>402</sup> See Allan Harman, *Psalms: A Mentor Commentary*, MC 1–2 (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Mentor, 2011), 43–47. Paul R. House states that "all the major events of Israelite history—creation, the life of Abraham, the exodus, the conquest, the monarchy, the exile, the return to the land" are mentioned in the book of Psalms. See House, *Old Testament Theology*, 402.

<sup>403</sup> Tremper Longman III, *How to Read the Psalms* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1988), 57.

<sup>404</sup> Mark Futato argues that the blessing for the nations is, in fact, a pervasive theme throughout books 2 to 5 of the Psalms (there is a general agreement that the book of Psalms is divided up into five books). See Mark D. Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook*, Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2007), 103–16.

<sup>405</sup> The idea that God possesses not only Israel but also the earth and all in it can be further seen in Ps 24:1 and 50:12. A few scholars see echoes of Exod 19:4–6 in those passages. Allan Harman also sees allusions to the Sinaitic covenant in 81:1–16; 86:5; 99:7; 103:7; 105:23–4; 106:1–33; 114; 135:4, 8–9. See Harman, *Psalms*, 44.

<sup>406</sup> Bryan D. Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing a Biblical Motif* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018), 121–48. L. Michael Morales goes as far as to mention that in the Scripture, "and even in the Psalms, the influence of the exodus is found well beyond any references to the historical exodus out of Egypt; rather, the recurring pattern of suffering and glory—of dying and rising, of being drawn out of the waters of Sheol—found in the psalms, is an exodus pattern." See Morales, *Exodus Old and New*, xii. For an insightful study on the Exodus motif in the Prophets, see Friedbert Ninow, "Indicators of Typology Within the Old Testament: The Exodus Motif" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2000), 186–298.

God's covenant with David.<sup>407</sup> As a matter of fact, many scholars argue that, along with Psalm 1, Psalm 2—which is a Messianic psalm—provides the lens through which the entire book ought to be read, as a sort of overview.<sup>408</sup>

Despite objections by some scholars,<sup>409</sup> most scholars have seen the missional nature of the Psalter in several ways.<sup>410</sup> Many psalms revolve around God's awesome deeds and their proclamation among the nations.<sup>411</sup> More than that, all the earth is summoned to worship the God of Israel and acknowledge his greatness (66:1–9; 68:32; 96:1–2, 7–9; 98:4; 100:1–2). It is not accidental that the collection ends with the following thought, “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!” (Ps 150:6). Scholars have also pointed out that the structure of the book of Psalms is framed, as it were, to move from lament to praise in such a way that the concluding section—Ps 146–150—

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<sup>407</sup> John H. Walton postulates that the book of Psalms is organized so as to form a structure that echoes and celebrates God's covenant with David; see John H. Walton, “A Cantata about the Davidic Covenant,” *JETS* 34, no. 1 (1991): 21–31. By the analogy of a cantata, Walton means that “many of the pieces may not have been composed specifically for the cantata. Rather, compositions created for other reasons at other times have been woven together into a secondary framework in order to address a particular subject” (24). Similarly, W. Creighton Marlowe uses the term “music of missions.” See W. Creighton Marlowe, “Music of Missions: Themes of Cross-Cultural Outreach in the Psalms,” *Missiology* 26, no. 4 (1998): 445–56. If this assessment is correct, it is possible to contend that, from the compiler's standpoint, the book of Psalms is, as it were, a reflection upon 2 Sam 7. If this is also true, it follows that God's covenantal promises to David are the most prominent in the book.

<sup>408</sup> Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 72–95.

<sup>409</sup> For a short summary of some objections, see Michael London, “The Psalms as Mission,” *Restoration Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (2002): 165–75.

<sup>410</sup> The very fact that the Lukan Jesus highlighted its missionary tone (Luke 24:44, 46–47) may suggest that Jesus himself and the early Christians read the worship of Israel as foreseeing the proclamation of the gospel by the church. This does not mean that every detail mentioned in Luke 24:46–47 is to be found in all three parts of the Hebrew Bible, but the text does not indicate anything otherwise either. In any case, it is clear that Jesus interpreted his mission in the light of OT prophecies. See Mark J. Boda, “Declare His Glory among the Nations: The Psalter as Missional Collection,” in Porter and Westfall, *Christian Mission: Old Testament Foundations*, 13–14.

<sup>411</sup> See e.g., 9:1–2, 11–12; 18:49–50; 26:6–7; 40:1–3, 9–10; 51:13–15; 57:9; 71:14–18, 22–24; 75:1; 79:13; 96:1–10; 105:1–3; 108:1–3; 145:1–7. W. Creighton Marlowe observes that many expressions in the book of Psalms reflect “God's concern that Israel reach out to the nations in fulfilling its privilege and purpose as a light to the nations” (Marlowe, “Music of Missions,” 446). He concludes that those

constitutes a true explosion of praise.<sup>412</sup> Such praise—especially when one moves toward the end of the collection—is based upon the hope in the coming of the Messianic king and the establishment of his kingdom.<sup>413</sup>

The theology of mission of Psalms can also be perceived through other themes addressed in the collection, such as the Zion motif, monotheism, and law. The Zion motif is prominent throughout the book. As elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, Jerusalem is the center of the universe<sup>414</sup> and the place into where the nations flow to worship the God of Israel. Monotheism pervades the entire book.<sup>415</sup> God is viewed as the Creator (33:6–9), Owner (24:1; 89:11), Ruler (33:10–11), Judge (33:13–15), Revealer (33:4; 119:160), Lover (145:9), Savior (36:6), Leader (67:4), and Reconciler (46:8–10).<sup>416</sup> Furthermore, whereas Yahweh is the Creator of heaven and earth, the gods of the nations are worthless (96:5; 97:6–7; 115:4–8, 15) and “the work of human hands” (115:4; 135:15). Thus, the Lord is “exalted far above all gods” (97:9; 135:5).

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expressions “explicitly reinforce this divine purpose for Israel and thus, implicitly for the church” (452).

<sup>412</sup> See Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981).

<sup>413</sup> See Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 80–95. Alan Ludwig argues that, in consonance with the rest of the OT, the theology of mission of Psalms is worship-centered. In fact, he claims that doxology, worship, and Messiah are the three features that characterize the missionary tone of the book. See Alan Ludwig, “Mission in the Psalms,” *Logia* 23, no. 3 (2014): 11–19.

<sup>414</sup> This is evident by manifold references to Zion (38x), “holy mountain” (7x), “holy place” (1x), “holy temple” (3x in Ps 5:7; 79:1; 138:2; the phrase also appears in 11:4 but it is disputed whether it is a reference to the temple in Jerusalem or the heavenly temple), Jerusalem (17x), “city of God/’Elohim” (2x), “city of our God/’Elohim” (2x), “city of the great king” (1x), “city of the Lord/Yahweh” (2x), “city of the Lord/Yahweh of hosts” (1x), “house of God/’Elohim” (3x), “house of the Lord/Yahweh” (8x), “house of our God” (1x), “house of my God” (1x), “house of the Lord/Yahweh our God” (1x), “courts of our God.” For a summary of the theological significance of the Zion motif, see W. A. VanGemeren, “Mountain Imagery,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove: IVP Academic; Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 483.

<sup>415</sup> House, *Old Testament Theology*, 407. As seen above, monotheism is also especially prominent in Isa 40–66 (e.g., 42:8; 43:10–12; 44:6, 8; 45:5–6, 14, 18, 21–22; 46:9)

<sup>416</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 104.

Connected to the idea above is the book's teaching of the law. In a clear allusion to the introduction to the Decalogue in Exodus 20,<sup>417</sup> Psalm 81:9–10 states, "There shall be no strange god among you; you shall not bow down to a foreign god. I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt." Alan Harman observes that although several psalms focus on God's law, three of them stand out: Psalms 1, 19, and 119.<sup>418</sup> It is noteworthy that Psalm 1 shows up on that list since, as was mentioned above, it is widely recognized in current biblical research that Psalms 1 and 2 provide an introduction of the whole collection and set the way one should read it. Blackburn laments that "modern biblical scholarship has not always appreciated the blessing of the law as expressed by the psalmist."<sup>419</sup> When discussing the relationship between law and mission,<sup>420</sup> he argues that God makes himself known by means of his law insofar as his people live in imitation of the Lord by keeping his commandments, thereby drawing attention to him as well as representing him to the world.<sup>421</sup>

All of the topics above—covenant, worship, monotheism, and Zion motif—can shed light on the theology of mission of the book of Revelation. These topics will be explored in the exegetical chapters, especially those dealing with Revelation 13–14. For now, it can be said that the idea in Psalms that hope is based upon the coming of the Messianic King and the establishment of his kingdom sets the ground for a strong

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<sup>417</sup> See Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, WBC 20 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 324.

<sup>418</sup> Harman, *Psalms*, 76–78.

<sup>419</sup> Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 84. Although he is referring to Ps 119, this applies to other psalms.

<sup>420</sup> Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 83–119.

<sup>421</sup> Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 102–3. This idea can also be clearly seen in Deut 4:6. By keeping the law, Israel would be "in the sight of the peoples [...] a wise and understanding people".

connection between Psalms and the book of Daniel. Brian P. Irwin argues that Daniel provides an important background to the NT mission, i.e., the identity of God's people as members of the kingdom of God.<sup>422</sup> Particularly, Daniel gives the basis for understanding not only Jesus' announcement that the kingdom of heaven has arrived<sup>423</sup> but also how to live in it as God's people through times of vulnerability and persecution.<sup>424</sup> The book makes it clear that the faithfulness of God's people can lead even a pagan king to acknowledge God's sovereignty.<sup>425</sup> In that connection, Nebuchadnezzar recognizes, "truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings" (Dan 2:47; cf. 2:21). Right before this statement, Daniel had affirmed the reality of the kingdom of God, "a kingdom that shall never be destroyed" (Dan 2:44a), for this kingdom itself will destroy the kingdoms of the world (Dan 2:44b-45; cf. 2:35).

In the first half of Daniel, earthly rulers not only recognize the reality of the kingdom of God but also the dominion of its ruler (4:3, 34; 6:26) in such a way that the kingdoms of this world gradually give room to the ever-expanding kingdom of God.<sup>426</sup> In chapter 3, after the episode in the fiery furnace, Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego with an expression of praise, "Blessed be" (v. 28). In chapter 4, the one in crisis is not a follower of Yahweh but Nebuchadnezzar himself.

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This would be possible because God would be near to them whenever they would call upon him (Deut 6:7).

<sup>422</sup> Brian P. Irwin, "The Book of Daniel and the Roots of New Testament Mission," in Porter and Westfall, *Christian Mission: Old Testament Foundations*, 42-63.

<sup>423</sup> Irwin, "Daniel and the Roots of New Testament Mission," 43.

<sup>424</sup> Irwin, "Daniel and the Roots of New Testament Mission," 45.

<sup>425</sup> Irwin argues that there is a crisis/vindication/royal acknowledgment of God/promotion pattern taking place from chapter 2 through chapter six of Daniel. For details, see Irwin, "Daniel and the Roots of New Testament Mission," 48-53.

<sup>426</sup> Irwin, "Daniel and the Roots of New Testament Mission," 50.

Upon being restored to reason after a time of insanity, he acknowledges the reality of God’s everlasting dominion by saying that “his kingdom endures from generation to generation” (v. 34). He, then, praises, extols, and honors the King of heaven (v. 37). The phrase “I *blessed* the Most High” in verse 34 is likely reminiscent of “*blessed* be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego” in 3:28 and “*blessed* be the name of God” in 2:20 (cf. 2:19).<sup>427</sup> This may suggest that, after his reason returned to him (v. 34), Nebuchadnezzar remembered the faithfulness of Daniel and his three friends, which may have influenced his attitude of blessing, praising, and honoring God.<sup>428</sup> In any case, chapter 4 shows that God rules over the earthly kings and that they must acknowledge the reality of his kingship. Evidence of this is given in chapter 5 as Belshazzar is deposed for not recognizing the Lord of heaven (vv. 22–24). Thus, God reinstates Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 4 and deposes Belshazzar in chapter 5. He is in charge of human affairs! He controls human history and is working on expanding his kingdom. Irwin claims that the growing nature of the kingdom of God becomes even more explicit in chapter 6 insofar as Darius not only acknowledges God’s power to save (v. 27) but also makes a decree for people of all nations to fear the God of Daniel (vv. 26–27).<sup>429</sup>

The data above suggest an increasing awareness of God’s kingdom as one moves from one end to the other of Daniel. Indeed, the kingdom of God in Daniel is symbolized by a stone that expands until becoming a great mountain that fills the whole earth (Dan

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<sup>427</sup> Daniel 2:19, 20; 3:28 and 4:34 have the only four occurrences of בָּרַךְ/*bless* in the book of Daniel.

<sup>428</sup> The fact that only Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar bless (בָּרַךְ, 2:19-20; 3:28; 4:34) and praise (שָׁבַח, 2:23; 4:34, 37) God in the book enhances this idea.

<sup>429</sup> For more details on this overview of Daniel 2-6, see Irwin, “Daniel and the Roots of New Testament Mission,” 50-3.

2:35). The first half of the book (1–6) prepares the reader for the message of the second half (7–12), i.e., “the kingdom of God does exist and will someday be acknowledged by all.”<sup>430</sup> This ever-expanding awareness of the kingdom of God is perceived in the kingdom parables in the Synoptics.<sup>431</sup> But, it seems that it is in Revelation 11:15 that one can see a full grasp of what Daniel 2:44 speaks about the kingdom of God, “a kingdom that shall never be destroyed” and “shall stand forever”.

The data above indicate that the book of Daniel illustrates God’s salvific purpose for the human race. This theme has been explored by Sung Ik Kim in his dissertation on mission in the book of Daniel.<sup>432</sup> Kim argues that mission can be seen in various ways throughout the book of Daniel.<sup>433</sup> In Daniel 4:27, Nebuchadnezzar is exhorted to break off his sins.<sup>434</sup> The verb “break off” (פָּרַק) conveys the idea of repentance.<sup>435</sup> The king ought to demonstrate repentance “by practicing righteousness [and] showing mercy to the

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<sup>430</sup> Irwin, “Daniel and the Roots of New Testament Mission,” 56.

<sup>431</sup> Irwin, “Daniel and the Roots of New Testament Mission,” 58-60. For instance, in Matthew 13:31-32 the kingdom of heaven is likened to a grain of mustard seed that grows until becoming “larger than all the garden plants” (v. 32). Irwin comments that the terms δένδρον/*tree*, τοῖς κλάδοις αὐτοῦ/*its branches*, and πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ/*birds of heaven* “appear together in the LXX only in Daniel 4 where they are part of the vision of the tree that represents Nebuchadnezzar.” (Irwin, “Daniel and the Roots of New Testament Mission,” 59). Indeed, the connections between the parable of the mustard seed (Matt 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19) and Daniel 4 have been observed by many scholars.

<sup>432</sup> Sung Ik Kim, “Proclamation in Cross-Cultural Context: Missiological Implications of the Book of Daniel (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2005).

<sup>433</sup> Kim argues that God’s salvific purposes appear in Daniel related to the following themes: justice, the Son of Man, covenant, God’s fame, the Messiah, and wisdom. See Kim, “Proclamation in Cross-Cultural Context,” 48-76. Although the relation of these themes with the biblical theology of mission can be deepened, one can find in Kim’s dissertation a very helpful starting point.

<sup>434</sup> The Aramaic term פָּרַק/*break off, remove, discontinue* (see Hoogendyk, ed., *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible*, s. v. פָּרַק) is a *hapax legomenon* that expresses the idea of stopping doing something “with the focus on the ending of a state”. See James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Aramaic* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), s. v. פָּרַק.

<sup>435</sup> Miller, *Daniel*, 138; Smith, *The Major Prophets*, 557.

oppressed”, which indicates that God’s salvific plan included not only the monarch but also other people.

Daniel 7 presents the apocalyptic figure of the Son of Man, whose dominion will reach universal proportions (vv. 13–14). Connected to this is the judgment scene with its twofold result: vindication of the saints and condemnation of the little horn with the consequent transfer of its dominion to God’s people. The phrase “Son of man” provides the title most used by Jesus to refer to himself and his mission.<sup>436</sup> He applies this title in statements relating to his ministry (e.g., Matt 13:37), suffering (e.g., Matt 17:12, 22; 20:18; Mark 8:31; 9:12; Luke 9:22), death (e.g., Matt 12:40; 26:2), resurrection (Matt 17:9; Mark 9:9), ascension (e.g., Luke 22:69), and second coming (Matt 13:41; Mark 13:26). In a summarizing statement, Jesus defines his mission by saying that “the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10; cf. Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; John 3:13-15). The image of the Son of Man in Daniel also provides an important background to Revelation 1:7, 13 and 14:14. In addition, the judgment scene in Daniel 7 is tantamount to the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:9–14. Before the Son of Man and the saints receive the kingdom, a judgment must take place. This judgment in Daniel 7–8 is important for understanding the relation between judgment and mission in Revelation 14:6–7. This idea will be explored in the Revelation chapters of this dissertation, especially Chapters 6 and 7.

Daniel 9—with its highly covenantal language<sup>437</sup> and allusions to the Exodus

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<sup>436</sup> Brandon D. Crowe, *The Last Adam: A Theology of the Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 23-53. Craig A. Evans comments that Daniel 7 has various other themes that inform Jesus’ understanding of his mission. See Craig A. Evans, *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew–Luke* (Colorado Springs: David C Cook, 2003), 89.

<sup>437</sup> See “covenant” (vv. 4, 27), “love” (v. 4), “keep” (v. 4), “commandments” (vv. 4, 5), “sin” (vv.



story (v. 15)—indicates that God’s salvific plan is an old one. Particularly important is God’s agenda for Israel in Daniel 9:24, which Jesus fulfilled by the end of the “seventy weeks” (Mark 1:15; cf. Dan 9:25).<sup>438</sup> Accordingly, when read from the lens of Jesus’ statement in Mark 1:15<sup>439</sup> (“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel”), Daniel 9:24 is, as it were, the preaching of the gospel beforehand to Daniel by the angel Gabriel, just like God preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham (cf. Gal 3:8). As part of an explanation to Daniel 8:9–14,<sup>440</sup> Daniel 9:24–27 is also important for our discussion of Revelation further ahead.

### Conclusion

By and large, it can be said that mission in the OT is closely related to other theological themes such as creation, covenant, idolatry, and new creation. God’s original plan for creation as a whole and particularly for humankind was, so to speak, delayed with the entrance of sin (Gen 3–11). God, then, elected Israel to exert the function of a priestly nation (Exod 19:4–6) by being a light for the other nations (Isa 42:6; 49:6; 60:3).

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5, 8, 11, 15, 16, 20, 24).

<sup>438</sup> Frank B. Holbrook, ed., *Symposium on Revelation: Introductory and Exegetical Studies, Book I*, DARCOM 6 (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 175. While nearly all modern commentators overlook that the time mentioned by Jesus in Mark 1:15 refers to the seventy weeks, this seemed to be the consensus in 19th-century scholarship (e.g., John J. Owen, *Commentary on Matthew and Mark* (New York: Leavitt & Allen, 1864), 418; John H. Godwin, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark: A New Translation with Critical Notes and Doctrinal Lessons* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1869), 6; J. R. Major, ed., *The Gospel according to St. Mark in the Original Greek: With a Digest of Notes from Various Commentators* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1871), 4. See also H. A. Ironside, *Expository Notes on the Gospel of Mark* (Neptune: Loizeaux Brothers, 1948), 22 and Ellen Gould White, *The Desire of Ages* (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898), 233.

<sup>439</sup> Thomas R. Shepherd, “Mark,” in Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, ed., *Andrews Bible Commentary: Old Testament* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2020), 1042–46.

<sup>440</sup> Since there is no vision in Daniel 9, the vision referred to in verse 23 is that one described in Daniel 8. Thus, the explanation provided in 9:24–27 refers to 8:13–14. See Rodríguez, ed., *Andrews Bible Commentary: Old Testament*, 1047–51.

God's promises to Abraham (Gen 12:1–3) and their ratification in the form of a covenant (Gen 15) were his first acts in the process of reverting the damage caused by the fall. Indeed, the OT presents the calling of Abraham as the “kickoff” for the rise of Israel as a great nation (cf. Gen 47:27 and Exod 1:7). The sacred record, however, is the history of Israel's constant failures, rebellion, and idolatry, on the one hand, and God's renewal of his covenantal promises of a glorious future for the whole creation, on the other hand. In that connection, God makes a covenant with David and promises that the Messianic king would come through his seed (2 Sam 7).

The Prophets and the Writings envisioned the coming of the Messianic King and a time when Israel would be restored and renewed, in such a manner that it would finally fulfill the commission of being a witness to the ends of the earth by proclaiming God's name among the nations. Jesus himself perceived his mission in consonance with this overarching teaching found in the OT. At the same time, he molded the thought of the disciples on the basis of that missional theology, as one will see in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE MISSION CONCEPT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The NT is a missionary document.<sup>441</sup> Its purpose “emerges from the entire missional agenda of the early church.”<sup>442</sup> At the same time, it looks beyond the early church by envisaging a mission carried out by its readers as they pass on its message until the task is fully accomplished.<sup>443</sup> The book of Revelation is the place where one can find a glimpse of the accomplishment of God’s overarching project of cosmic salvation. With that in view, this chapter aims at providing a general survey of mission in the NT other than the book of Revelation in order to find possible backgrounds to mission in Revelation 10–14.

#### **Mission in Matthew**

Scholars have emphasized the importance of Matthew’s Gospel for understanding

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<sup>441</sup> While this statement used to be welcomed only by missiologists, an increasing number of biblical scholars have adhered to that idea. See, e.g., N. T. Wright, “Reading the New Testament Missionally,” in Goheen, *Reading the Bible Missionally*, 175–93. I. Howard Marshall speaks of the NT in terms of an essentially missionary theology (see Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 34–37). For a somewhat outdated but still very helpful discussion on the NT as a missionary document, see Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 15–55.

<sup>442</sup> Wright, “Reading the New Testament Missionally,” 176.

<sup>443</sup> See Wright, *New Testament and the People*, 341–464; also N. T. Wright, *Scripture and the Authority of God* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2005).

the biblical theology of mission and the universal mission of the NT church.<sup>444</sup> A major contribution of Matthew is that it was shaped by the OT prophecies in such a manner that God's redemptive plan as introduced in the OT provides the lens through which one ought to read it.<sup>445</sup> The role of key OT passages can be seen through the so-called fulfillment formulae.<sup>446</sup> Jesus is portrayed as the One in whom the OT prophecies and their fulfillment meet.

### The Book of Genealogy

The Gospel of Matthew opens with the statement, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt 1:1). It is surprising that some treatments of mission in the First Gospel have left this introductory phrase and even the whole infancy narrative (Matt 1–2) out of discussion. The genealogy presents the history of Israel in a very condensed fashion and depicts Jesus as the climax and fulfillment of the OT promises (2:2–17).<sup>447</sup> In a sense, the introductory statement contains that history

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<sup>444</sup> See, for instance, Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 87; Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 233.

<sup>445</sup> According to Bitrus A. Sarma, this has long been recognized by Matthew scholars but not deeply addressed. He laments that, despite its importance, the issue has been treated only in a scattered fashion in publications dealing with mission in the NT. He fills this gap by providing a fine and recent monograph on this topic. See Bitrus A. Sarma, *Hermeneutics of Mission in Matthew: Israel and the Nations in the Interpretative Framework of Matthew's Gospel* (Carlisle: Langham Monographs, 2015). Sarma argues that Matthew is "a narrative of God's salvific purpose" (12).

<sup>446</sup> 1:22–23; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14–16; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17–21; 13:14–15, 34–35; 21:4–5; 26:54, 56; 27:9–10. For more details, see Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 241. Interestingly, those quotations have no parallel in the other synoptics. In addition to that, various other OT quotations connect the life of Jesus with the OT story.

<sup>447</sup> See R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 28–40. Mervyn Eloff insightfully observes that between the lines of this genealogy, there is an exile-restoration pattern that will be later explored in the narratives of Jesus' words and deeds. He explains that Jesus "brought an end to the exile for those who come to him, become his disciples and thus find rest for their souls (cf. Matt. 11:28–30). This restoration opens the door for the worldwide spread of the kingdom, so that, at the consummation of the kingdom, those who share in the kingdom may indeed include people from east and west (cf. Matt. 8:11). But it also implies that those who reject Jesus and the rest he offers must

in a nutshell. In fact, Matthew 1:1 announces the author's Christological view of history<sup>448</sup> in at least two ways.

First, the phrase “book of genealogy”—or “book of Genesis” (βίβλος γενέσεως)—intentionally alludes to the book of Genesis,<sup>449</sup> generally speaking, and particularly the LXX of Genesis 2:4 and 5:1.<sup>450</sup> It is noteworthy that the phrase βίβλος γενέσεως occurs only three times in the canonical record and that the other two occurrences appear in the book of Genesis. Genesis 2:4 is a sort of springboard passage providing a summary of the creation account in Genesis 1:1–2:3 at the same time that it serves as a title for the subsequent material (2:5–4:26).<sup>451</sup> By alluding to the creation account, Matthew suggests that in Jesus humankind finds a new beginning. Thus, he interprets the Christ-event as inaugurating the new creation. In turn, Genesis 5:1 focuses

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necessarily remain “in exile”—a reality graphically portrayed by Jesus' prediction of another destruction of the temple. And if their rejection of Jesus remains to the end, then it implies a final exile from the kingdom of God, an exile from which there is no return (Matt. 8:12; cf. Isa. 66:24).” See Mervyn Eloff, “Ἀπό ... Ἔως and Salvation History in Matthew's Gospel,” in *Built Upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and John Nolland (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 107.

<sup>448</sup> For an insightful overview on salvation history in Matthew, see Senior and Stuhlmueller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 238–46.

<sup>449</sup> W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr. state that “the title of the first book of the OT in the LXX had already been fixed as ‘Genesis’ by the time of Matthew.” See W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, ICC (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 1:151. Also, Barclay Moon Newman and Philip C. Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 8.

<sup>450</sup> This has been observed by various commentators. See D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 8:61; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 34; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary on Matthew 1–7*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2007), 69.

<sup>451</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 55. Although it seems that Wenham does not reject source theory completely, this does not mean that he adheres to the idea that the first half of Gen 2:4 goes with 1:1–2:3 whereas the second half goes with 2:5–4:26. The fact that Gen 2:4 clearly contains a chiasmic structure does not allow one to divide it up. Gen 2:4 is linked to Gen 1:1–2:3 in that it shares vocabulary with it (see also K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 190). For different interpretations, see, for instance, Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 151–52; Allen Ross and John N. Oswalt, *Genesis, Exodus*, CBC 1 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 42.

on the figure of Adam and the book of his generations. Interestingly, while the LXX has the term βιβλος/*book* both in Genesis 2:4<sup>452</sup> and 5:1, the MT has סֵפֶר/*book* only in Genesis 5:1.<sup>453</sup> This may suggest that, while Matthew had both Genesis 2:4 and 5:1 in mind, his major interest was Genesis 5:1. Beale must be right when stating that “since Matthew is narrating a genealogy of Jesus, it is likely that the Gen 5:1 reference is uppermost in mind”.<sup>454</sup> If this assessment is correct, it hints that Matthew presents Jesus as the last Adam. The fulfillment of God’s ancient plan for humankind is on the move.<sup>455</sup>

Secondly, the threefold title—Messiah, son of David, and son of Abraham—is reminiscent of God’s covenantal promises. Although in many contexts the term Χριστός can be interpreted merely as a part of the name Jesus (e.g., Matt 27:17),<sup>456</sup> scholars agree that this is not the case in Matthew 1:1.<sup>457</sup> This is confirmed, respectively, by Matthew’s allusion to God’s covenant with David (2 Sam 7) and the promise to Abraham of an offspring by means of whom an innumerable multitude would be formed (Gen 12:1–3; cf. also Gen 15).<sup>458</sup> In short, Matthew emphasizes that the son of Joseph and Mary is the

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<sup>452</sup> The addition of βιβλος/*book* in Gen 2:4 (LXX) must be the result of a contextual exegesis. The translator must have added such a term in Gen 2:4 influenced by the usage of סֵפֶר in the MT of Gen 5:1.

<sup>453</sup> Gordon J. Wenham observes that a heading like the one in Gen 5:1 also appears in Gen 2:4 and 6:9 in order to introduce a new section. However, only 5:1 mentions a book. See Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 125.

<sup>454</sup> Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 389.

<sup>455</sup> Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 9.

<sup>456</sup> See L&N, 542, 831.

<sup>457</sup> See David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 56–57.

<sup>458</sup> Donald A. Hagner observes a chiasmic *inclusio* in 1:1–17, i.e., Christ, David, Abraham (v. 1), Abraham, David, Christ (v. 17). See Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, WBC 33A (Dallas: Word, 1993), 5. This chiasmic structure can also be seen in a different way: Christ, David, Abraham (v. 1), Abraham (v. 2), David (v. 6), Christ (v. 16). For details, see David Turner and Darrell L. Bock, *Matthew and Mark*, CBC 11 (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2005), 34; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:168. As Craig S. Keener remarks, “In this genealogy Matthew explicitly emphasizes Jesus’ descent from David and Abraham.” See

long-awaited Messiah (1:1, 16). At the same time, Matthew 1:1 points forward in that it announces important themes that will be developed throughout the book.<sup>459</sup> Since it is not possible to assess all of them, the rest of this section will first focus on an overview of important scenes in the narrative, then turn toward two passages that are crucial for understanding Matthew's missionary theology: 10:1–42 and 28:16–20.

Matthew interprets several events in Jesus' life in terms of Israel/Christ typology.<sup>460</sup> He is depicted as the Ideal Israel. The story of Jesus is linked to persons, events, and places in the OT that are seen as adumbrations of the future mission of the Messiah. Thus, the flight to Egypt (2:13–15), Herod's command to kill all infants two years old or under (2:16–18), the return from Egypt (2:19–23), and Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (4:1–11)<sup>461</sup> reflect exodus typology and recapitulate the history of

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Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 73.

<sup>459</sup> Turner, *Matthew*, 56. John D. Harvey observes that each one of these three titles in Matt 1:1 “introduces a major theme in Matthew’s gospel.” See John D. Harvey, “Mission in Matthew,” in *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*, ed. William J. Larkin Jr. and Joel F. Williams, American Society of Missiology (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998), 124. In a sense, perhaps, it could be said that Matt 1:1 provides an introduction of the major themes of the NT. If, roughly speaking, the NT is about Jesus, so, taken in its canonical spot, the threefold title in Matt 1:1 serves as an introduction to the NT as a whole. That the entire NT focuses on the person of Jesus can be argued on the basis of passages such as Matt 1:1; Mark 1:1; Luke 1:1–4; John 1:1; Acts 1:1–2; Heb 1:1–2; 1 John 1:1–4; Rev 1:1. In addition, virtually all the NT Letters begin with a reference to Jesus no matter what their major concerns are. The readers are always reminded that the one writing the document is a servant (Rom 1:1; Phil 1:1; Titus 1:1; Jam 1:1; 2 Pet 1:1), an apostle (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1; 1 Pet 1:1; 2 Pet 1:1), or a prisoner (Phlm 1:1) of Jesus Christ.

<sup>460</sup> See Carson, “Matthew,” 111. See especially the section on typology in Matthew by J. Knox Chamblin, *Matthew: A Mentor Commentary* (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Mentor, 2010), 123–29.

<sup>461</sup> Various interpreters see a link between Jesus' baptism (3:3–17) and the narrative of Israel's exodus from Egypt. For instance, Davies and Allison emphasize that, “Like the Israel of old, the Son comes out of the waters to enter the desert and suffer temptation” (Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:344–45; see also Joel Kennedy, *The Recapitulation of Israel: Use of Israel's History in Matthew 1:1–4:11* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 175–84). Sarma argues that the wilderness is a prominent motif in Matthew and is connected “with the salvific purpose of God” (Sarma, *Hermeneutics of Mission in Matthew*, 130). He further observes that in Isa 40:3–5; 42:16 and 43:19 “the Lord is depicted as one who prepares a way for his people through the wilderness and leads them to their new Zion” (130n273). In addition, it has been widely recognized that the Gospel of Matthew is structured around Jesus' five major discourses so as to bring to one's mind the five books making up the Pentateuch.

Israel.<sup>462</sup> A major difference is that, whereas Israel fails in fulfilling its mission to be a light to the nations, Jesus is faithful to his calling (4:16). The very structure of Matthew can be a further indication of the author's Israel/Christ typology. B. W. Bacon proposed that the book follows a fivefold narrative-and-discourse arrangement corresponding to the Pentateuch, so that Jesus is portrayed as a new Moses leading a new Israel.<sup>463</sup> While this theory has been popularized among scholars since the publication of Bacon's *Studies in Matthew* and is still welcome in many circles,<sup>464</sup> it has been defied in recent scholarship.<sup>465</sup> The main argument against this theory consists in that an outline of Matthew is not as clear as one would like it to be. A balanced view seems to be that by W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr. They concur that "Matthew's gospel does feature five major discourses" albeit its "architectonic grandeur does not appear to derive from a clear blueprint".<sup>466</sup> In turn, even reacting negatively to Bacon's theory, R. H. Gundry admits that the fivefold structure of the Pentateuch, the books of Psalms, and other Jewish works "supports the fivefold arrangement in Matthew".<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>462</sup> Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 34. This has been argued recently by Kennedy, *The Recapitulation of Israel*. Although he deals with Matthew 1-4 only, he suggests that recapitulation of Israel's history also occurs elsewhere in the Gospel. He points out passages such as 11:2-15; 12:38-42; 17:1-13; 21:33-43; 23:29-36 but does not exclude other minor passages (Kennedy, *The Recapitulation of Israel*, 228).

<sup>463</sup> Benjamin W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1930), 165-249.

<sup>464</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 3.

<sup>465</sup> E.g., France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 3; Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 3; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*, Second Edition. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 11; Quarles, *A Theology of Matthew*, 12-13; D. A. Carson argues that "Moses typology is very weak in this Gospel and the links between the five discourses and the five books of Moses minimal" (see Carson, "Matthew," 50).

<sup>466</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:61.

<sup>467</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*, 11.



## The Sermon on the Mount

As seen above, the narratives of Jesus' baptism and temptation are reminiscent of Israel's exodus from Egypt and subsequent experience in the wilderness, which bring to one's mind events mentioned in Exodus 1–18. On the other hand, Jesus' ascent to the mountain (5:1) and his discourse in 5:3–7:27 present manifold connections with Exodus 19–24. The fact that Jesus went up on the mountain and taught his disciples (5:1–2) is reminiscent of Moses' ascent to God (Exod 19:3) on Mount Sinai (Exod 19:1–2, 20) to give the law to Israel (Exod 20:1–17). Now, Jesus reunites the disciples, a new Israel,<sup>468</sup> gives them an interpretation of the law,<sup>469</sup> and makes clear their mission: “you are the light of the world [...], let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matt 5:14, 16). In the manner of the OT, those two passages have a centripetal force in that others are to be drawn to God by the community's holy life.<sup>470</sup>

The parallelism with the metaphor of salt indicates that if the disciples do not accomplish what they are supposed to do, i.e., bear witness about God and his kingdom,<sup>471</sup> they are as useless as salt that loses its taste or a lamp under a basket. While the general theme of the Sermon on the Mount is disputed,<sup>472</sup> several interpreters hold that it revolves around discipleship: that is, it provides the ethical basis for the disciple's

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<sup>468</sup> The fact that the disciples represent a new Israel is accepted by most scholars. See Charles L. Quarles, *A Theology of Matthew: Jesus Revealed as Deliverer, King, and Incarnate Creator*, Explorations in Biblical Theology (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2013), 107.

<sup>469</sup> For details, see Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 160.

<sup>470</sup> Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 28.

<sup>471</sup> Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 99.

<sup>472</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 160. Keener mentions that there is a great range of views; in

life in the kingdom of God.<sup>473</sup> The Sermon informs the readers that the kingdom of God has arrived<sup>474</sup> and invites them not only to live in it but also to testify about it.<sup>475</sup>

### The Mission of the Twelve

Jesus' discourse on the mission of the twelve is recorded in Matthew 10. This chapter falls naturally into three parts, each one concluding with a "truly-I-say-to-you" saying: (1) The twelve and their charge (vv. 1-15); (2) Jesus' warning about persecution (vv. 16-23); (3) The meaning of discipleship (vv. 24-42).<sup>476</sup> The major importance of this discourse is that, while it refers to a short-term missionary activity, it is a model for the future mission of the church.<sup>477</sup> As such, it is a sort of prototype of the mission to all nations. The disciples must be seen as a new Israel,<sup>478</sup> a picture of the eschatological

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fact, "more than thirty-six discrete views exist, depending on how one counts them" (160).

<sup>473</sup> See, e.g., R. T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC 1 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 111.

<sup>474</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 90–91.

<sup>475</sup> In that connection, even the Lord's Prayer contains a missionary impulse in the sense that for the words "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (6:10) to be fulfilled in full, mission is necessary! Craig Blomberg comments that this statement "expresses the desire that the acknowledgment of God's reign and the accomplishment of his purposes take place in this world even as they already do in God's throne room." See Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC 22 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 119. Likewise, D. J. Bosch affirms that the Lord's Prayer "is the heart of the Sermon just as the Decalogue is the heart and center of the Torah" (Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 67).

<sup>476</sup> This arrangement is followed by the The New American Standard Bible (NASB).

<sup>477</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1:293. This is especially seen through the eschatological tone of verses 17-23. For details, see Carson, "Matthew," 242.

<sup>478</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1:270. Schnabel argues that this is symbolized by the number twelve. He adds that the symbolism is clear from the fact that "the disciples were not physical descendants of the twelve Israelite tribes, and... 'Israel' consisted only of two or two and a half tribes (Juda, Benjamin, the priests from Levi)" (Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1:34). Bosch states that "for Matthew the first disciples are prototypes for the church. The term thus expands to include the 'disciples' of Matthew's own time. His gospel is known, and for a very good reason, as the gospel of the church. [...] In the final analysis, therefore, there is, for Matthew, no break, no discontinuity between the history of Jesus and the era of the church" (Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 74).

restoration of God's people.<sup>479</sup> The idea that the Twelve are a symbol of Israel may serve as a possible background for the twelve parts of the New Jerusalem in Revelation.

References to rejection (10:11–16),<sup>480</sup> persecution (10:17–20, 23–33), and division (10:21–22, 34–39) also pervade Jesus' discourse on mission. The cost to pay is high (10:38–39; cf. 16:24–26), but there are also rewards (10:32–33, 42–44; cf. 16:27 and 19:27–30). Also, the hardships involved in the task should not cause the disciples to fear. The word of encouragement, “do not fear” (10:26, 28, 31), is reminiscent of numerous OT passages in which the absence of fear is associated with God's abiding presence (e.g., Gen 15:1; 26:24; Deut 3:22; 20:1; 31:6, 8; Josh 1:9; Ps 23:4; 27:1; Isa 41:10, 13–14; 43:1–2, 5; Jer 30:10; 42:11; 46:27–28). Thus, 10:26–31 anticipates Jesus' promise in 28:20, “I am with you always.” As a matter of fact, one can infer from 10:19–20 that the disciples could always count on the presence of the Spirit.<sup>481</sup>

### The Eschatological Discourse

This section contains passages that call for special attention given their importance for the missionary teaching of Matthew. They concern both the end (24:14) and the scope (“all the nations”; 24:14, 32) of the missionary work.<sup>482</sup> However, the task

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<sup>479</sup> Carson, “Matthew,” 236, 426.

<sup>480</sup> One should notice that rejection is deemed very negatively (cf. 10:15). Senior and Stuhlmüller explain, “Because Jesus Christ is considered the embodiment of God's saving acts and, therefore, *the* turning point in salvation history, response to Jesus and his message is also crucial.” See Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 243.

<sup>481</sup> Interestingly, the sayings recorded in Matt 10:19–20 (cf. Luke 12:11–12) appear in Mark in the Apocalyptic section (13:11), right after the information that “the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations” (13:10). This implies that before the end of history, the gospel will be preached in the midst of persecution but in the power of the Spirit.

<sup>482</sup> John D. Harvey argues that Matthew conceived salvation history as divided up into four periods: (1) the time of the OT prophets proclaiming that God's covenantal promises would be fulfilled in the Messiah; (2) the time of fulfillment of the OT promises in the ministry, atoning death, and resurrection

is accomplished in the midst of hatred and persecution (24:9). The end will come only when “this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations” (24:14).<sup>483</sup> The phrase “the gospel of the kingdom” is a peculiarity of Matthew (4:23; 9:35; 24:14). Although this is not the first time that the author refers to it, it is the first time that he relates it to the end. The phrase connects 4:23 and 9:35—which are critical for understanding Jesus’ threefold mission in Matthew: teaching, proclamation, and healing<sup>484</sup>—to 24:14. In 4:23 and 9:35,<sup>485</sup> the gospel of the kingdom is the object of Jesus’ κήρυγμα/*proclamation*, whereas in 24:14 it is the object

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of Jesus; (3) the time between the first and second coming, which is a time for mission; and (4) the time of consummation at the return of Jesus (see Harvey, “Mission in Matthew,” 122–36). The Prophetic Discourse points to the fourth period.

<sup>483</sup> When dealing with the “end” in Matt 24:14 (cf. vv 6, 13, 14) the interpreter must consider a debated issue regarding the chapter as a whole, namely, do the events portrayed in there concern the destruction of Jerusalem or the end of the world? A close attention to the flow of the narrative seems to indicate that the events in 24:1-20 are to be interpreted as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem (see Francis D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 5: 495-500; also, Richard M. Davidson, “This Generation Shall not Pass” (Matt 24:34): Failed or Fulfilled Prophecy?, in *The cosmic battle for planet earth: essays in honor of Norman R. Gulley*, eds. Ron du Preez and Jiri Moskala (Berrien Springs: Andrews University, 2003), 307-28 and France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 909. Accordingly, the preaching of the gospel “throughout the whole world” as mentioned in 24:14 must be interpreted as referring to the first century. Paul’s statement in Col 1:23 that the gospel “has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven” points to the fulfillment of that prophecy in the apostolic age (cf. 1:5-6; Rom 1:8; 10:18; 16:26). However, “Paul’s declaration was true in a limited sense only [...]. The complete fulfillment of this prediction of our Lord is yet to be realized” (Nichol, *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 5:498. In that regard, Richard M. Davidson argues that the destruction of Jerusalem functions as a type of the end of the world (for details, see Davidson, “This Generation,” 325-27).

<sup>484</sup> Bosch states that this “unique phrase [...] underlines the inherent universal and missionary character of the kingdom ministry of Jesus” (Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 71).

<sup>485</sup> The clear parallelism between 4:23 and 9:35 makes clear that the author meant these two passages to form an *inclusio* including two major portions, 5–7 and 8–9. This has led various interpreters to conclude that the Sermon on the Mount and the miracles reported in 8–9 are interconnected, thereby conveying the notion that “Jesus is not only Messiah in word (chs. 5–7) but is also Messiah at work in his miraculous deeds (chs. 8–9)”; see Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 356–57. Davies and Allison claim that in framing chapters 5–9, this *inclusio* indicates that “the sermon on the mount contains ‘the gospel of the kingdom’” (Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:414). Robert J. Utley goes a little further by contending that such an arrangement is not accidental. He holds that the miraculous deeds in 8–9 are meant to confirm Jesus’ words in 5–7. Robert James Utley, *The First Christian Primer: Matthew*, SGC 9 (Marshall: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 72.

of the church's κήρυγμα (cf. 10:7),<sup>486</sup> which suggests that the church is called to reproduce Jesus' mission. The genitive in the phrase τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας/*the gospel of the kingdom* is very likely objective,<sup>487</sup> meaning “the good news *about* the kingdom.” Accordingly, Matthew emphasizes that in Jesus the kingdom of God has been inaugurated (4:17; cf. also 10:7) and through the mission of the church it will be brought to its consummation (24:14; see footnote 483). In the canonical record, this theme is further explored in Revelation 10–14.

The scope of the missionary task is emphasized through the phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη/*all nations*. This will be further explored below in the Great Commission section (28:19). For now, it is sufficient to mention that out of the four occurrences of this phrase in the Gospel of Matthew, three appear in the Prophetic Discourse (24:9, 14; 25:32). Furthermore, universal language is also conveyed by the phrase ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ/*in the whole inhabited earth* (Matt 24:14, LEB; cf. also 26:13 and Col 1:23<sup>488</sup>). The use of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη/*all the nations* in 24:9 also conveys the notion that the accomplishment of the preaching of the gospel to all nations will be accompanied by a persecution of global dimensions. This will be explored in Revelation 13.

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<sup>486</sup> The church is implied as the agent of the passive voice (cf. 26:13).

<sup>487</sup> D. A. Carson argues that κηρύσσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας/*proclaim the gospel of the kingdom* in Matthew 4:23; 9:35 (cf. 24:14) corresponds to εὐαγγελίζω τὴν βασιλείαν/*preach the good news of the kingdom* in Luke 8:1, where “kingdom” is used as direct object of “preach the good news.” See Carson, “Matthew,” 121–22.

<sup>488</sup> “The principal stress of the passage is upon the fact that the gospel the Colossians had heard is the same as that preached in all parts where the gospel has penetrated. Paul does not mean that the gospel has gone everywhere in the absolute sense”. See Francis D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 7: 195. Similarly, David W. Pao states that “the focus is on the universal claim of the gospel rather than its individual distributive reception” (David W. Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 110). Besides, from Rom 15:24 one can imply that Paul intended to preach the gospel in Spain. However, “his arrest and imprisonment intervened so that his plans were not carried out” (Nichol, *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:195).

## The Great Commission

Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller contend that “taken together the discourse of chapter 10 and the final commission of chapter 28 [...] synthesize the mission theology of Matthew.”<sup>489</sup> However, there are elements in 28:16–20 that are absent in 10:1–47 such as the idea of making disciples,<sup>490</sup> so that the so-called Great Commission assumes a place of prominence in Matthew’s theology of mission.<sup>491</sup> It “provides the unifying climax of the entire Gospel’s teaching on mission that is anticipated in many ways throughout Matthew’s narrative.”<sup>492</sup> David J. Bosch goes a little further by arguing that 28:16–20 is “the key to Matthew’s understanding of the mission and ministry of Jesus.”<sup>493</sup> In turn, Robert H. Gundry states that one can find in 28:16–20 “a compendium of important Matthean themes.”<sup>494</sup> In a sentence, one can detect in 28:16–20 elements of “enthronement, covenant renewal, and

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<sup>489</sup> Senior and Stuhlmueller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 252.

<sup>490</sup> Senior and Stuhlmueller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 250–52.

<sup>491</sup> In current scholarship, many scholars agree that, in a sense, all the topics addressed in the Gospel of Matthew are gathered in 28:16–20. See Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 57. See also bibliography on Harvey, “Mission in Matthew,” 128n28. For a more recent discussion of the topic in its relation to mission, see Craig S. Keener, “Matthew’s Missiology: Making Disciples of the Nations (Matthew 28:19–20),” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 12, no. 1 (2009): 3–20. This article is also now available in Craig S. Keener, *For All Peoples: A Biblical Theology of Missions in the Gospels and Acts* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2020), 1–20.

<sup>492</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 87.

<sup>493</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 60 (see also page 80). Elsewhere, he affirms that this is, perhaps, “the most Matthean [passage] in the entire gospel: virtually every word or expression used in these verses is peculiar to the author of the first gospel” (57).

<sup>494</sup> Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 593. Gundry summarizes the themes as follows, “Jesus as the greater Moses, the deity of Jesus, the authority of his commands, the trinitarian associations of baptism, the danger of doubt among disciples, the teaching ministry of disciples, discipleship as keeping Jesus’ law, the presence of Jesus with his disciples, and the directing of Christian hope to the consummation. Paramount among these themes, however, is the mission to all the nations.” (page 593). Although one theme or another on the list may be an object of debate, there seems to be agreement regarding most of them.

commissioning.”<sup>495</sup> Some elements in 28:16–20 deserve further consideration. First, the place of meeting is Galilee (28:16a; cf. also vv. 7, 10).<sup>496</sup> David P. Scaer remarks that “this concentration on Galilee belongs to Matthew’s purpose of having the gospel preached among the Gentiles.”<sup>497</sup>

Second, the reference to the mountain (28:16b).<sup>498</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien underscore the importance of the mountain motif within Matthew’s theology of mission. They postulate that Matthew’s references to mountains throughout the Gospel form a chiasmic structure wherein the mountain of commission (28:16–20) corresponds to the mountain of temptation (4:8–10).<sup>499</sup> If this is correct, such an arrangement highlights both Jesus’ faithfulness to his calling and his authority, since, whereas in 4:8–10 he was

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<sup>495</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 102.

<sup>496</sup> Luke emphasizes Jerusalem (cf. Luke 24:13, 18, 33, 47, 52).

<sup>497</sup> David P. Scaer, “The Relation of Matthew 28:16–20 to the Rest of the Gospel,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 55 (1991): 250–51. Scaer further remarks Matthew’s use of Isa 9:1–2 in 4:15 and calls attention to the fact that both in 4:15 and 28:19 the evangelist uses the same Greek word (ἔθνη) albeit it is translated differently in various English versions, i.e., “Gentiles” in 4:15 and “nations” in 28:19. He argues that the evangelist wanted the reader to establish a connection between both passages (see page 251). Interestingly, the prophecy regarding “Galilee of the nations” in Isa 9:1–2 leads to the messianic prophecy in Isa 9:6–7. Various scholars relate the “gloom” in 9:1 to the conquest of the Galilee region by the Assyrians (cf. 2 Kgs 15:29, e.g., Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39*, 239; Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12, A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 394–395). Matthew shows that Jesus came to turn its darkness into light (4:15) and this becomes a paradigm of the disciples’ mission after Jesus’ resurrection (28:19).

<sup>498</sup> Scholars debate whether the mountain in 28:16 is an actual geographical place or merely a theological symbol within the framework of Zion motif; see Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary: The Churchbook* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 2:807. A major obstacle to the Zion interpretation is the absence of verbal contacts with the OT passages dealing with the eschatological pilgrimage to Zion. Moreover, whereas in the OT “the nations—centripetally—assemble on Mount Zion, here the disciples—centrifugally—are sent away from the mountain” (Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, 620). If that were the case, one could establish connections between Matt 28:16–20 and Rev 14:1–5. But this seems not to be the case.

<sup>499</sup> See Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 98.

offered authority on earth, in 28:16–20 he is being given authority in heaven and on earth.<sup>500</sup>

Third, the theme of Jesus’ authority is likely built upon a covenantal background. Jesus has full authority over all creation (Matt 28:18).<sup>501</sup> In 28:16–20, mission is the proclamation of the sovereign lordship of Christ over the universe. This imagery provides a possible background to Revelation 11:15–19.

Fourth, in Matthew, mission has both a centripetal (“let your light shine before others,” 5:16) and a centrifugal force, “Going” (28:19).<sup>502</sup> While in 5:16 people are

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<sup>500</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 78.

<sup>501</sup> Scaer argues that “this passage can with good reason refer to Jesus in almost Pauline terms as the one in whom heaven and earth have their completion, the new Adam in which God establishes His new creation (Col 1:15–16).” Scaer, “The Relation of Matthew,” 253. In that regard, Benjamin L. Gladd states that the Great Commission “is very much a part of the original commission of Genesis 1:28” (Gladd, *From Adam and Israel*, 99). Similarly, Beale observes that the Adamic commission “was reiterated by Christ in Matt 28:18–20” (Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 931). He further mentions that “the church’s task of fulfilling the Adamic commission to fill the earth with God’s presence includes filling it with the light of God’s truth” (page 931). This is now possible because Jesus recovered the dominion that Adam had lost. This brings to mind the idea of kingship and enthronement.

By and large, Adam Christology in the Gospels is seen with suspicion by NT scholars (Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 23–4). Yet, many of them see in the Gospels a portrait of Jesus as the ideal and last Adam. As far as Matthew is concerned, a few reasons listed by Brandon D. Crowe can be summarized. First, the allusion to Gen 5:1 in Matt 1:1 can be an indication that, in addition to Abraham and David, Matthew also has Adam in mind in his portrayal of Jesus, in such a way that this allusion to Gen 5:1 in Matthew’s genealogy is, as it were, tantamount to the phrase “the son of Adam” (Luke 3:38) in Luke’s genealogy. Second, Jesus’ abundant usage of the title “the son of man” is very likely reminiscent of Dan 7:13–14 (see especially Matt 26:64), where the son of man appears to be an Adam-like figure (see Joel Marcus, “The Son of Man as Son of Adam,” *Revue Biblique* 110, no. 1 (2003): 38–61 and Joel Marcus, “The Son of Man as Son of Adam. Part II,” *Revue Biblique* 110, no. 3 (2003): 370–86). By extension, one should also see the Son of Man in Matthew in Adamic terms. Third, Jesus’ statement in 28:18, “all authority... has been given to me” (ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία) is reminiscent of “to him was given dominion” (ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία) in Dan 7:14 (LXX). The authority of the son of man provides the Adamic imagery with which one can see the authority of Jesus. Crowe lists other connections but they are less convincing (Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 23–54. For a discussion on Jesus as the Last Adam in the Gospels, see also Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 381–437).

<sup>502</sup> The Greek word translated as the imperative “go” is the participial form πορευθέντες. While “going” is a more literal rendering, most English versions adopt the imperatival idea. This is also followed by a number of commentators, some of which justify their decision on the basis of Daniel Wallace’s explanation regarding the use of attendant circumstance participles in the NT (see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 645). In short, an attendant circumstance participle is an aorist participle that precedes—



attracted by the “light” of the disciples and seem to come to them, in 28:19 the disciples go to the nations.

Fifth, 28:16–20 specifies the task of the church, i.e., “Make disciples.” The term οὖν/*therefore* in 28:19 indicates that Jesus’ authority is the basis upon which this mandate is founded. The one who was sent (10:40) now is the sender (28:19). John D. Harvey highlights that this missionary task “differs considerably from that assigned in the other

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both in time and in order—the main verb, which, in turn, usually appears in the imperative or indicative mood. As it were, the attendant circumstance participle “copies” the mood of the main verb (Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 640-645). Wallace argues that πορευθέντες is to be read as an attendant circumstance and, hence, it should be translated as an imperative.

While this assessment is accepted by some commentators (e.g., Chamblin, *Matthew*, 1489; Wilkins, *Matthew*, 951), it has been called into question in very recent scholarship on the basis of advances in Linguistics applied to NT studies. Steve Runge argues that some grammatical approaches try to understand Greek according to an English framework. He states that “We label an adverbial participle used in a context where we would expect an imperative in English as an “imperative participle.” Although such labeling does describe the usage to some extent, it tells us little about why the Greek writer would use such a form or about the specific effect that it achieves” (Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 4). A major problem is that “The participle is used much more widely and diversely in Greek than in English” (Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 243), and, for that reason, “The participle is one of those areas where it is imperative to think about Greek as Greek” (Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 243). The participle πορευθέντες provides background information and, as such, it plays a supportive role by calling the reader’s attention to the main action of the sentence “make disciples” (Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 251).

Stanley E. Porter goes a little further when criticizing Wallace’s contention that “to turn πορευθέντες into an adverbial participle is to turn the Great Commission into the Great Suggestion!” (Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 645). He argues that “there are several problems with this explanation” (Porter, *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, 244; for details, see pages 244-246). He asserts that while Wallace is correct as to the fact that the action of “going” precedes the action of “making disciples” and that the two actions are somehow coordinated, Wallace fails to draw the right conclusions from the data (for details, see Porter, *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, 245). Following Steven E. Runge, Porter insists that πορευθέντες is circumstantial and that translation “is another issue entirely” (Porter, *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, 245). In other words, it is not the case that the translation “go” is precisely wrong but that it can confuse the less informed reader. The confusion lies in that the average reader will not know which term is the most important for the understanding of the passage, whether “go” or “make disciples”. If πορευθέντες has any imperatival force, it consists in that without “going” there is no “make disciples” (Porter, *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, 245). This is likely what Porter means by “circumstantial”; in other words, πορευθέντες (“going”) provides the circumstance for μαθητεύσατε (make disciples”) to take place. In that sense, πορευθέντες cannot be labeled, for instance, as instrumental, for it does not provide the means by which μαθητεύσατε can be accomplished. Rather, it is the “event” without which μαθητεύσατε is not possible. Again, as Porter remarks, translation is another matter of debate. In short, Porter defends that “going” is a better translation than “go” because it does not cause the reader to confuse what is the main action, whether “go” or “make disciples”. The indispensability of “going”, i.e., that without “going” there is no “make disciples”, must be explained in preaching and teaching. Perhaps, one way to say it is that “going” is a lifestyle that must be put into practice by Jesus’ followers, something like: “Whatever you go, make disciples”.

synoptics, where the emphasis is on the proclamation of the gospel (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47).”<sup>503</sup> This becomes even more striking as one considers that the disciple-making process encompasses two major activities: baptizing and teaching (28:19–20). These terms translate, respectively, two present participles, namely, βαπτίζοντες and διδάσκοντες. As any intermediate Greek student will know, participles that follow the main verb elaborate its action by providing clarification.<sup>504</sup> These two participles are identified by some as indicating the means by which the main action is accomplished,<sup>505</sup> and this seems to be the best option.<sup>506</sup> They explain how disciples are made.<sup>507</sup>

Sixth, 28:16–20 underscores the scope of the mission task: “all nations” (v. 19). Interestingly, universality language abounds in this passage: “all authority” (v. 18), “all nations” (v. 19), “all things” (v. 20), “all days = always” (v. 20). Christopher Wright

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<sup>503</sup> Harvey, “Mission in Matthew,” 131.

<sup>504</sup> Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 262. Runge asserts that these participles have basically the same function both in Greek and in English and, thus, they are easier to translate.

<sup>505</sup> Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 645. Also, R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 1178; Chamblin, *Matthew*, 1494.

<sup>506</sup> So France, *Matthew*, 1115. Others suggest that, along with πορευθέντες, βαπτίζοντες and διδάσκοντες have imperatival force (Turner, *Matthew*, 689n3; Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 886; Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 886.). But this is unlikely. The fact is that the syntactical relationship between these participles and the main verb is not too easy to determine. There is no καί — or any other particles — connecting the participles to each other or connecting them to the main verb. As Steven Runge asserts, “The use of asyndeton indicates that the writer chose not to make a relation explicit” (Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 22). However, based on the context, they are very likely instrumental.

<sup>507</sup> At first reading, it may sound somewhat legalistic to think about teaching rather than proclamation of forgiveness of sins. Why is the “preaching” terminology seen in chapter 10 absent in 28:16–20? Bosch explains that, in Matthew, “teaching is by no means a merely intellectual enterprise [...]; it is a call for a concrete decision to follow him [Jesus] and to submit to God’s will [...] as revealed in Jesus’ ministry and teaching” (Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 66). Therefore, “teaching and preaching appear nearly synonymous” (Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:415). Besides, mentioning forgiveness of sins is unnecessary for two reasons. First, this is implied in the reference to baptism. As Bosch points out, in Paul’s language baptism includes to be “dead to sin and alive to God in Christ” (Rom 6:11; Bosh, *Transforming Mission*, 79). In Matt 3:11, baptism seems to imply repentance. Second, forgiveness of sins is mentioned several times throughout the Gospel (1:21; 6:12, 14; 9:2, 5–6; 12:31; 26:28), so that in 28:16–20 baptism seems to encompass forgiveness and imply it. Hence, Matthew’s choice of vocabulary conveys theological intentions: mission is not completed until the listeners of the gospel become radical followers of

refers to the Great Commission as “a Christological mutation of the original Abrahamic commission—‘Go... and be a blessing ... and all nations on earth will be blessed through you.’”<sup>508</sup> In the introduction, Matthew identifies Jesus as the Messiah, son of David, son of Abraham (1:1). Now, as the Seed of Abraham, Jesus commissions the church to go and make disciples.<sup>509</sup>

Seventh, 28:16–20 fits mission within an eschatological background.

Köstenberger and O’Brien state that “together with 10:23 and 24:14 [cf. also 25:32], the concluding commission of 28:16–20 also places the Christian mission firmly within an eschatological framework: mission is the church’s primary task between Christ’s first coming and his return.”<sup>510</sup>

Eighth, 28:16–20 highlights Jesus’ abiding presence in the manner of the *I-am-with-you* formula often found in the OT (e.g., Gen 26:24; Exod 3:12; Josh 1:5, 9; Isa 41:10; 43:5, etc.). It is frequently associated with God’s call to service (e.g., Exod 3:12; Josh 1:5–6; Judg 6:16)<sup>511</sup> and has also the purpose to take away fear (Gen 26:24; Josh 1:5–6, 9; Isa 41:10; 43:5, etc). Jesus’ assurance of his presence in 28:20 forms an *inclusio* with 1:23 (cf. also 18:20), which highlights his deity.<sup>512</sup> Jesus identifies himself with

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Christ by receiving baptism as a gift of grace (to die to sin) and obeying Jesus’ teachings (to live for God).

<sup>508</sup> Wright, *Mission of God*, 243.

<sup>509</sup> The proclamation of the gospel to all nations, thereby including Gentiles in the covenant people, is the means by which the blessing promised to Abraham is to be fulfilled (Adna, “The Mission to Israel,” 45).

<sup>510</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 108. See also Harris, *Mission in the Gospels*, 49–52.

<sup>511</sup> France, *Matthew*, 422. Köstenberger and O’Brien call attention to the fact that, whereas in the commissioning narratives of the OT God addresses individuals, here Jesus addresses a group of people. See Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 102.

<sup>512</sup> For an extensive discussion on this *inclusio*, see Edward Sri, *God with Us: Encountering Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew* (Steubenville: Emmaus Road, 2019).

Yahweh in the OT. Matthew ends his book more focused on Christ's attributes than on the disciples' commission.<sup>513</sup> Seen from this perspective, the *I-am-with-you* formula is more than an encouragement, it is an equipment for mission.<sup>514</sup>

### Mission in Mark

Mission is a neglected topic in Marcan research.<sup>515</sup> In fact, scholars debate whether there is mission in the Second Gospel.<sup>516</sup> However, an increasing number of scholars recognize the importance of Mark for a theology of mission. Eckhard J. Schnabel goes as far as to state that "Mark is aware of his 'missionary and catechetical responsibility' for the Christian church."<sup>517</sup> Quoting Rudolf Pesch, he assures us, "The entire book of Mark is a missionary book."<sup>518</sup> Recent studies have demonstrated that Mark's Christology is essential for understanding his theology of mission. Two major themes have been emphasized. On the one hand, the mission of Jesus is presented in

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<sup>513</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 432.

<sup>514</sup> France, *Matthew*, 422.

<sup>515</sup> Joel F. Williams, "Mission in Mark," in Larkin and Williams, *Mission in the New Testament*, 141; Donald Senior, "The Struggle to Be Universal: Mission as Vantage Point for New Testament Investigation," *CBQ* 46 (1984): 66–74. Perhaps part of such an indifference is due to the fact that the Gospel of Mark has become the object of more attention only in recent decades. In fact, it has been studied more in the past few decades "than during the previous eighteen centuries" (Jesper Svartvik, *Mark and Mission: Mk 7:1-23 in its Narrative and Historical Contexts*, New Testament Series 32 [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2000], 1).

<sup>516</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 72.

<sup>517</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1496.

<sup>518</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1496. This can be seen in the fact that "much of the material in Mark's gospel on mission has parallels to the teaching found in the other gospels" (Williams, "Mission in Mark," 141). In addition, throughout his gospel Mark mentions several agents and their mission: prophets (12:2–5); John (1:2–3; 11:32); the Son (12:6–11; 9:37; 1:38; 2:17; 10:45); disciples (1:17; 3:14–15; 6:7–13); angels (13:27; 4:29). For more details, see Williams, "Mission in Mark," 141–42. Nissen makes a similar statement when contending that the Gospel of Mark as a whole "can be seen as a Great Commission" (Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 38).

connection with the Servant of Isaiah.<sup>519</sup> On the other hand, the mission of Jesus was marked by suffering.<sup>520</sup> Thus, Mark's missionary teaching has been referred to as "the discipleship of the cross."<sup>521</sup> These two approaches—the Isaianic Servant and the discipleship of the cross—are not exclusive but complementary: two sides of the same coin.

### Jesus' Mission as the Isaianic Servant of the Lord

Köstenberger and O'Brien remark that Mark shares crucial themes with Isaiah: a forerunner (Mark 1:2–3; cf. Isa 40:3); the rejection of one's message (Mark 4:12; 7:6–7; 12:1, 10–11; cf. Isa 6:9–10; 29:13); suffering (Mark 9:12; 14:60–61; 15:4–5; cf. Isa 53:3, 7); all nations (Mark 11:7; cf. Isa 56:7).<sup>522</sup> Joel Marcus goes even further. In his study of Mark's use of the OT, he labels the Second Gospel as "The Gospel According to Isaiah,"<sup>523</sup> and argues that the superscription "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God" (1:1) is better explained against the background of Isaianic themes.<sup>524</sup> If, as maintained by several scholars,<sup>525</sup> this superscription serves as an

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<sup>519</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 82.

<sup>520</sup> Williams, "Mission in Mark," 137.

<sup>521</sup> Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 37.

<sup>522</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 82. Also, James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 15.

<sup>523</sup> Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 12. For a treatment of the Second Gospel from an Isaianic perspective, see R. E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark*, Biblical Studies Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1997). See also Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 18–20

<sup>524</sup> Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 12–47.

<sup>525</sup> Kim Huat Tan, *Mark: A New Covenant Commentary*, New Covenant Commentary Series (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2015), 12; Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 141; Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 23–26; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids:

announcement of the content of the book as a whole—i.e., the good news about Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection<sup>526</sup> as well as its repercussions: the establishment of God’s kingdom and salvation—it follows that Isaianic themes pervade the entire Gospel and shed light on its interpretation.<sup>527</sup> This can be seen in Mark’s emphasis on both (1) the proclamation of the gospel and (2) Jesus’ suffering and atoning death. These two elements belong indissolubly together.<sup>528</sup>

### **The Proclamation of the Gospel**

The proclamation of the gospel in the whole world is a noticeable theme in Mark. In fact, Mark’s emphasis on it is seen in the high number of occurrences of κηρύσσω/*to proclaim* in comparison to the other gospels: Mark (14x), Matthew (9x), Luke (9x), John (no occurrence). While the verb εὐαγγελίζω/*to preach the gospel* is absent,<sup>529</sup> the noun εὐαγγέλιον/*gospel* is also prominent: Mark (8x), Matthew (4x), Luke (no occurrence), John (no occurrence).

Mark 1:14–15 is a key passage for understanding Mark’s missionary theology.<sup>530</sup>

It presents the arrival of the kingdom as the keynote of Jesus’ preaching.<sup>531</sup> This passage

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Eerdmans, 2002), 51; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark’s Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 21. For a different opinion, see Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 38; Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, BNTC (London: Continuum, 1991), 33; William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 42.

<sup>526</sup> Although a subjective reading of the genitive Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ is possible, the objective reading is preferable. See France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 53.

<sup>527</sup> This seems to be argued by Robert Stein when contending that 1:1–13, which presents critical linkages to Isaiah, “serves as the lens through which all of Mark is to be viewed and prepare the reader for the story of Jesus of Nazareth found in 1:14–16:8” (Stein, *Mark*, 38).

<sup>528</sup> Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament*, 118.

<sup>529</sup> It occurs eleven times in the Gospels: ten times in Luke and once in Matthew.

<sup>530</sup> Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 38.

is linked to 1:1 by the repetition of the noun εὐαγγέλιον. Such a connection indicates that 1:14–15 introduces the beginning of Jesus’ ministry proper.<sup>532</sup> Scholars have pointed to echoes of Isaiah 40–66.<sup>533</sup> Passages such as Isaiah 52:7 and 61:1 appear frequently in the list of possible OT backgrounds. Jesus is portrayed as the one who proclaims the good news about the kingdom of God as predicted by the prophets.<sup>534</sup> That the reality of the kingdom of God has broken through into the world is seen not only in Jesus’ words (1:14–15; cf. 4:11, 26, 30; 9:1; 10:14–15, 23–25; 12:34) but also in Jesus’ powerful deeds.<sup>535</sup>

### **Jesus’ Suffering and Atoning Death**

It is not possible to overemphasize the centrality of the cross in Mark’s narrative.<sup>536</sup> Three predictions of Jesus’ death highlight its necessity (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34). In 8:31 Mark comments, “The Son of Man *must*/δεῖ suffer..., be rejected..., be

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<sup>531</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 213.

<sup>532</sup> Watts, *Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark*, 99.

<sup>533</sup> E.g., H. B. Swete comments that there was such a yearning expectation for the coming of God’s kingdom that when saying: “The kingdom of God is at hand” (1:15), probably Jesus found the phrase ready and took it from Isa 56:1 (cf. also 40:9–10; 52:7; and 61:6). See Henry Barclay Swete, ed., *The Gospel According to St. Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indices*, Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament (London: MacMillan, 1898), 13. See also Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 64.

<sup>534</sup> Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, WBC 34A (Dallas: Word, 1989), 43. Also, Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 45. Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 82. See also Watts, *Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark*, 96–9, 167–69. Interestingly, the LXX uses εὐαγγελίζομαι in 40:9; 52:7, and 61:1.

<sup>535</sup> Thus, for instance, the exorcism in 1:21–25, the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law and many others in 1:29–34, the cleansing of a leper in 1:40–45, and the healing of a paralytic in 2:1–11 are all signals of the arrival of God’s kingdom as announced in 1:14–15 (Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 213). At the same time, they are likely reminiscent of Isaianic passages such as 26:19; 29:18–19; 35:5–6; 61:1 (cf. Matt 11:4–5; Luke 7:19).

<sup>536</sup> This has insightfully been explored by Peter G. Bolt, *The Cross from a Distance: Atonement in Mark’s Gospel*, NSBT (Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 48.

killed, and rise again.” Although *δεῖ/it is necessary* does not occur in 9:31 and 10:33–34, its usage in 8:31 sets the tone whereby one should read the second and third predictions. As a matter of fact, it indicates what ought to be expected as one reads the second half of Mark. Mark 8:31 is a key passage for understanding four themes closely related to mission in the Second Gospel: suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection. It shows that Jesus viewed his death as the fulfilling of God’s redemptive plan as envisioned in the OT prophecies, especially those from Isaiah 40–55.<sup>537</sup>

The three predictions in the central section reach their climax in 10:45,<sup>538</sup> which says, “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom

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<sup>537</sup> Gary M. Burge states, “in Isaiah’s thinking, loss and suffering can be a vehicle for salvation.” Gary M. Burge, *The New Testament in Seven Sentences: A Small Introduction to a Vast Topic* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), 51. It is intriguing that Mark names rejection along with Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection. This is evidence of the level of importance he gives to the rejection motif in his Gospel. For more details, see Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 221. Ironically, while the leaders of Israel deliver Jesus to death and mock him as he hangs on the cross (15:30–32), the Gentile centurion confesses him as “the Son of God” (15:39). Senior and Stuhlmüller argue that this episode with the centurion points to Mark’s openness to the Gentiles. They go on by affirming that “the openness to the Gentiles is paradoxically tied to the rejection of Jesus” by the Jews (Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 223. For more details, see pages 221–25).

Attached to the themes of rejection of Jesus’ authority and openness to the Gentiles is Jesus’ attitude toward the temple. Only the Marcan Jesus quotes the final part of Isaiah 56:7, “My house shall be a house of prayer for all nations” (Mark 11:17; cf. Matt 21:13; Luke 19:46). Interestingly, in Mark the cleansing of the temple (11:15–19), including the quotation in 11:17, is surrounded by the stages in the curse of the fig tree (11:12–14, 20–25), which serves as a parable of the fate of the temple. Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, WBC 34B (Dallas: Word, 2001), 160. The central importance of this theme in 11:1–16:8 is clear from the fact that it is resumed in 13:2 and 15:38. In addition, as Senior and Stuhlmüller put it, “Chapters 11–13 all take place in the setting of the temple, and some key episodes in the passion narrative (cf. especially 14:58 and 15:38–39) complete the temple motif” (Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 223). By predicting the destruction of the temple, Jesus made it clear that the temple in Jerusalem would be replaced by an “eschatological house of prayer” that would finally be a “house of prayer” for all nations. This would be the end of the particularism of Jewish worship (Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 78–79) and “a signal of a new locus of worship open to the Gentiles” (Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 223). Also, Hans K. LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible: A Biblical-Contextual Approach* (Bradenton: First Impressions, 2007), 233.

<sup>538</sup> Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 290. See also Douglas R. A. Hare, *Mark*, WeBC (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 130.



for many.”<sup>539</sup> For most Marcan scholars, “the concepts of ‘service’ and ‘giving one’s life as a ransom’ are best understood against the background of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53.”<sup>540</sup> This passage provides the lens through which one is to see the mission of Jesus and that of the church in the Gospel of Mark. For Mark, Jesus’ death and the proclamation of the gospel are inseparable, since “the cross is the paradoxical turning point in salvation history.”<sup>541</sup>

### The Discipleship of the Cross

In her study of Christology and discipleship in Mark, Suzanne W. Henderson has concluded that discipleship in that Gospel is to be seen as “participation in Jesus’ Christological mission.”<sup>542</sup> She argues that “Mark’s Jesus forges a relationship with his followers that is characterized by both presence and practice”<sup>543</sup> insofar as the disciples are called to be “with him” (e.g., 3:14) in order to be instructed and, consequently, put into practice those teachings, thereby continuing Jesus’ own practice. Indeed, the close relationship between Christology and discipleship has been seen as integral to Mark’s theology.<sup>544</sup> As has been observed by various scholars, Mark portrays Jesus as always in

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<sup>539</sup> This verse can be seen as the Gospel of Mark in a nutshell; see Robert James Utley, *The Gospel according to Peter: Mark and I & II Peter*, SGC 2 (Marshall: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 122. It provides a summary of Jesus’ mission as the Suffering Servant, who proclaims the good news of God’s kingdom (1:1–8:26) and gives his life as a ransom (11:1–16:8).

<sup>540</sup> Tan, *Mark*, 144. Yet, as observed by Craig Evans (following Davies and Allison), “Mark 10:45 is not a translation of any portion of Isa 52:13–53:12 [...]; it is a summary of the task of the Servant.” See Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, 121.

<sup>541</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 227.

<sup>542</sup> Suzanne W. Henderson, *Christology and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*, Society for New Testament Studies (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 241.

<sup>543</sup> Henderson, *Christology and Discipleship*, 4.

<sup>544</sup> See Hans F. Bayer, *A Theology of Mark: The Dynamic between Christology and Authentic*

association with his disciples,<sup>545</sup> thereby involving them in his mission.<sup>546</sup> Thus calling, discipleship, and mission are inseparable.<sup>547</sup>

Jesus' mission has implications for the mission of his followers in that "the activities of Jesus' followers—preaching the gospel (3:14; 6:12; 13:10; 14:9) casting out demons (3:15; 6:7, 13), healing (6:13), teaching (6:30), and serving (15:41)—all have a precedent in the prior work of Jesus."<sup>548</sup> More than that, the very suffering of Jesus is a hint that the disciples' mission would be an enterprise developed under persecution and trials. Jesus' way from Galilee to Jerusalem is his way to the cross.<sup>549</sup> Jesus' way to the cross serves as a model for the disciples.<sup>550</sup> Their paths include suffering and even death. Discipleship in Mark is a discipleship of the cross (8:34).

Johannes Nissen helpfully observes that this perspective of the discipleship of the cross can correct the unrealistic optimism that may characterize some missionary initiatives.<sup>551</sup> The church has been called to bear witness in a world that is indifferent and even hostile, so that, not infrequently, mission occurs in a context of persecution and hardships. The followers of Christ are willing to leave something behind: nets (1:18), father (1:20), the tax office (2:14), a mantle (10:50–52), and family members (10:29). Discipleship can demand willingness to give up one's possessions (10:21–22). Indeed,

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*Discipleship* (Phillipsburg: P & R, 2012).

<sup>545</sup> Henderson, *Christology and Discipleship*, 3.

<sup>546</sup> See Henderson's discussion on 3:13–15; 4:1–34; 6:7–13; 6:30–44. Henderson, *Christology and Discipleship*, 66–203.

<sup>547</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 36.

<sup>548</sup> Williams, "Mission in Mark," 145.

<sup>549</sup> Bolt, *The Cross from a Distance*, 49.

<sup>550</sup> Williams, "Mission in Mark," 145.

one's wealth may become an obstacle to true discipleship.<sup>552</sup> On the other hand, discipleship is a rewarding enterprise (8:35; 10:29–30). Yet, even an eventual reward in this life is mingled “with persecutions” (10:30). In a nutshell, those who accept the calling to follow Christ are called to a life of service, suffering, and sacrifice (10:35–45). Dietrich Bonhoeffer summarized this thought in words worthy to be transcribed in full:

The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is dying of the old man which is the result of this encounter with Christ. As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death—we give over our lives to death. Thus it begins; the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise god-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.<sup>553</sup>

It is not surprising that the universal mission in 13:10, “the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations,” takes place within a setting of imprisonment, trial, harassment, persecution, opposition, and hatred (13:9–13). The followers of Jesus are to bear witness before the political and religious powers of the earth (13:9).

The fact that Mark 13 establishes a connection between the destruction of the temple (vv. 1–2) and the Prophetic Discourse (vv. 5–37) puts mission within an eschatological backdrop. Accordingly, “The time frame for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel extends from the death and resurrection of Jesus [cf. 15:38<sup>554</sup>] until his

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<sup>551</sup> Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 44.

<sup>552</sup> Timothy J. Geddert, *Mark*, BCBC (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001), 242–43.

<sup>553</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1979), 99.

<sup>554</sup> From a theological viewpoint, the destruction of the temple is connected to Jesus' death (15:37–38). Although the destruction of the temple takes place decades after the death of Jesus, the fact that the event in 15:38 is connected with Jesus' death in 15:37 is evidence that that event put in motion the prophecy of the destruction of the temple in 13:2. The physical destruction was a matter of time. From the NT perspective, at Jesus' death the temple loses its religious function as the place of the typical service (Matt 27:51) and, therefore, is doomed to destruction.

second coming.”<sup>555</sup> Just as *it is necessary* (δεῖ) for the Son of Man to suffer..., be rejected..., be killed..., and rise again (8:31), also *it is necessary* (δεῖ) for the gospel to be preached to all nations (13:10). The Son of Man will come only after this task is fully accomplished (13:26–27).

A unique feature of the Gospel of Mark related to the topic of mission is the lack of a Great Commission text, if one adopts the short ending reading (at 16:8). In fact, most scholars are convinced that the longer ending (16:9–20) is not the original reading.<sup>556</sup> That being the case, what are the implications for the mission theology of Mark? Intriguingly, he becomes the only Evangelist not to report a post-Resurrection commission (Matt 28:18–20; Luke 24:46–49; John 20:21–23; cf. also Acts 1:8). Yet, an increasing number of scholars adhere to the opinion that Mark intentionally ended his Gospel at 16:8.<sup>557</sup> If that is the case, it raises another question: what is behind this intention? Joel F. Williams speculates that the absence of a post-Resurrection commission highlights (1) “the continuing significance of Jesus’ pre-resurrection commissions”; (2) “the demands that Jesus places on ‘anyone’ or ‘whoever’”; and (3) “Jesus’ absence during the present age,” which “serves to increase the significance of Jesus’ second coming.”<sup>558</sup> In turn, Johannes Nissen claims that the abrupt ending is “Mark’s device to get the readers involved in the story. It has been an invitation to

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<sup>555</sup> Williams, “Mission in Mark,” 144.

<sup>556</sup> See the summary of internal and external evidence for the shorter ending as well as an explanation for the rise of the longer ending in Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, United Bible Societies, 4th ed. (London: United Bible Societies, 1994), 102–6.

<sup>557</sup> Tan, *Mark*, 222.

<sup>558</sup> Williams, “Mission in Mark,” 148.

discipleship and to mission.”<sup>559</sup> In other words, “we are in fact characters in the very story we thought we were reading.”<sup>560</sup>

In turn, Thomas R. Shepherd argues that the interpretation above is in accordance with what he labels as the revelation/secret motif that runs throughout the Gospel of Mark (e.g., 1:24-25, 44-45; 4:22; 5:1-20; 7:31-37; 16:8). Shepherd argues that, while Mark scholars, in general, have referred to the so-called Messianic Secret (a.k.a. secrecy motif), this label does not make justice to the data altogether. He adds that, albeit it is true that Jesus asked people to keep silent about his identity and miracles, almost always the secrecy is followed by revelation. Thus, he concludes that it is better to label this phenomenon in Mark as the revelation/secret motif.<sup>561</sup> This motif in Mark reveals that the gospel cannot remain in secret, which makes the end at 16:8 to be very odd since it conveys quite the opposite of what happened throughout the book, that is, Jesus asked people to keep silent about his identity and miracles but they disobey and tell people about him. Now, Jesus asked the women at the tomb to go and tell (16:7) but they disobey and say “nothing to anyone” (16:8). Shepherd concludes, “it seems that the Evangelist is driving home the point that the reader must go and tell.”<sup>562</sup>

What is clear, based on 1:1–16:8, is that “Mark’s definition of the church’s

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<sup>559</sup> Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 43–44.

<sup>560</sup> Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 45. For a different opinion, see Tan, *Mark*, 222-23. He considers this theory very speculative. He claims that “either Mark could not complete his Gospel because of extenuating circumstances, or that the original ending was lost as an early stage” (page 223). But this is speculative too.

<sup>561</sup> Shepherd, “Mark,” 1290, 1333.

<sup>562</sup> Shepherd, “Mark,” 1333.

mission becomes a recital of Jesus' life."<sup>563</sup> The followers of Jesus are called to emulate their Master by preaching, healing, teaching, suffering, and even dying in the course of their missionary task.

### **Mission in Luke**

The importance of Luke's two-volume work for the NT theology of mission cannot be overstated. While the NT teaching on mission mostly derives from the story of Jesus and the disciples as told in the Gospels, Luke deserves highlighting, since he wrote not only a Gospel, but also the book of Acts. Most scholars agree that salvation is the central theological theme in both works.<sup>564</sup> Hahn adds that salvation is taken to the world through the universal mission of the church, so that mission is also central to Luke's theology.<sup>565</sup> In short, Luke's conception of mission has to do with proclaiming the salvation brought to humankind through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

David Bosch reports that in current scholarship it is broadly accepted that "the writing of the Book of Acts was not an afterthought but that, from the outset, Luke intended to write two volumes."<sup>566</sup> Indeed, it appears quite evident that there is a consistent progression of thought as one moves from the Gospel to Acts. While Luke's Gospel mostly focuses on the story of Jesus and the salvation he brings, the book of Acts gives continuity to that story by concentrating on the apostles' task of proclaiming salvation to the ends of the earth.

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<sup>563</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 217.

<sup>564</sup> D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 323.

<sup>565</sup> Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament*, 129, 136.

<sup>566</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 88.

## The Gospel of Luke: The Story of Jesus and the Salvation He Brings

Scholars remark that, while mission pervades the entire Gospel of Luke,<sup>567</sup> two passages are crucial for the understanding of his theology of mission: 4:16–30 and 24:44–49. Special attention, however, must be given to 24:44–49. This passage has been called the Lukan Great Commission and a sort of synthesis of the whole book. As in the Gospel of Matthew, Luke’s version of the Great Commission provides the lens through which the whole Gospel can be read. It reflects, “in a nutshell, Luke’s entire understanding of the Christian mission.”<sup>568</sup> The idea that Luke 24:44–49 is a sort of summary of Luke’s understanding of mission may be sweeping at first sight. But, as one will see below, these aspects encompass several other mission-related themes in Luke, such as Jesus’ healing ministry, his care for the weak, poor, women, and children, etc. The major aspects of Luke’s mission theology identified in this passage can be summarized as follows: (1) fulfillment of OT promises; (2) suffering; (3) task; (4) response; (5) scope; (6) the significance of Jerusalem; (7) the witnesses; (8) the role of the Holy Spirit. To a greater or lesser degree, these themes are addressed throughout the Gospel of Luke.

### **Fulfillment of Old Testament Promises**

Luke 24:44 presents the Christ-event as having been foretold in the OT. In 24:45 Luke implies that the disciples’ blindness to understand the OT prophecies that characterized the pre-Resurrection period (9:45; 18:34) now is dissipated (24:25, 27,

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<sup>567</sup> Jason S. Sexton, “Reading the Parables Theologically to Read them Missionally: Test Cases from the Early Galilean Parables in Luke’s Gospel,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 40, no. 3 (2013): 166–67.

<sup>568</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 91.

32).<sup>569</sup> The formula “thus it is written” controls all that is said in 24:46–47, thereby showing that Jesus’ passion and resurrection as well as the proclamation of “repentance for the forgiveness of sins” are all part of God’s plan and now integrate the history of salvation. This passage indicates that telling the story of Jesus’ death and resurrection and the proclamation of forgiveness of sins belong inseparably to each other.

The infancy narratives set the tone for this reading of the entire Gospel and even the book of Acts.<sup>570</sup> The references to the OT scriptures in Luke 1–2 indicate that God’s plan of salvation is brought to fulfillment in the person of Jesus, and continues “to unfold in the history of the early church.”<sup>571</sup> This is evident from the prologue itself, in which Luke situates Jesus’ birth against the background of important political figures, thereby implying that the stories he is about to tell “will have worldwide repercussions.”<sup>572</sup> The emphasis on the announcement of salvation is clear by the repetitive use of the root σωτήρ (i.e., σωτηρία, 1:69, 71, 77; σωτήρ, 1:47; 2:11; and σωτήριος, 2:30). Furthermore, the references to Abraham (1:55, 73; cf. 3:34) and the house of David (1:27, 69; 2:4; cf. 3:31) indicate that Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s covenantal promises in the OT, to whom the throne of David will be given forever (1:32–33). In Jesus, God’s purpose found in 2 Sam 7:12–16 is fulfilled.<sup>573</sup> Finally, Israel would be restored and serve God “in

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<sup>569</sup> For more details, see Darrell L. Bock, *9:51–24:53*, vol. 2 of *Luke*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 1937–38.

<sup>570</sup> The importance of the infancy stories cannot be underestimated. Köstenberger and O’Brien remark that “these narratives not only introduce many of the key themes in Luke’s two-volume work; they also establish continuity with the OT, survey what will happen in the course of Luke-Acts and provide a framework of interpretation for the subsequent events.” See Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 112.

<sup>571</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 111.

<sup>572</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 260.

<sup>573</sup> Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 127.



holiness and righteousness” (Luke 1:74–75) thereby fulfilling her covenant mandate (Exod 19:5–6).<sup>574</sup> But this Israel has been redefined to include “those who fear” God (Luke 1:50–54).<sup>575</sup> The act of God in sending Jesus (9:48; 10:16; cf. 4:43)<sup>576</sup> is, therefore, seen as the concretization of God’s program of salvation. In fact, Jesus’ first coming was necessary for salvation to break through into the world (9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 24:7, 26, 44; cf. also 19:5) according to the OT Scriptures (22:37; 24:44; cf. also 4:21). This takes us to the next aspect.

### **Suffering**

Luke 24:46 mentions that “the Christ should suffer” (παθεῖν τὸν Χριστὸν). The term παθεῖν is the first of a series of three infinitives (παθεῖν/*suffer*, ἀναστῆναι/*rise*, and κηρυχθῆναι/*proclaim*) revealing God’s plan of salvation.<sup>577</sup> The first two have Jesus as their subject. Luke describes Jesus’s journey to Jerusalem as a journey leading to suffering and death (see 9:51; 13:33; 17:25; 18:31–34).<sup>578</sup> Jesus’ death and resurrection are the *sine qua non* conditions for the plan of salvation to be accomplished (24:7, 26). There is a sense of necessity: Jesus must suffer!<sup>579</sup> As in Mark, in Luke this is also true

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<sup>574</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 62–63.

<sup>575</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 112.

<sup>576</sup> In all these passages, the Greek verb for “send” is ἀποστέλλω, which is cognate with the noun ἀπόστολος/*apostle*. Jesus is portrayed in Luke as an apostle, a missionary.

<sup>577</sup> Bock, *9:51–24:53*, 1938.

<sup>578</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 121.

<sup>579</sup> Interestingly, a number of manuscripts include ἔδει/*it was necessary* in Luke 26:46. This is likely due to a harmonization with Luke 24:26, which has similar phraseology and the infinitives παθεῖν/*suffer* and εἰσελθεῖν/*enter* are introduced by ἔδει.

regarding the disciples.<sup>580</sup> They must suffer too. While this is more evident in Acts, where “the journey of the church-in-mission parallels that of Jesus to Jerusalem,”<sup>581</sup> there are visible hints in the Gospel of Luke.<sup>582</sup> The disciples are called to face persecution, imprisonment, and even death (21:12, 16) in the course of their missionary efforts. This takes us to the next aspect.

### **Task**

The third infinitive in the threefold series in Luke 24:46-47 (*παθεῖν/suffer*, *ἀναστῆναι/rise*, and *κηρυχθῆναι/proclaim*) provides the task to be accomplished by Jesus’ followers, which is a kerygmatic one, i.e., proclamation of the forgiveness of sins. The fact that *κηρυχθῆναι* is grammatically coordinate with the previous two infinitives suggests that the “forgiveness of sins” is possible only by means of Jesus’ death and resurrection, in such a manner that those two events must not be dissociated from the church’s *kerygma*.

Luke shows that the disciples’ task of proclaiming the “forgiveness of sins” is closely related to the ministry of their Master. In 4:18 Jesus identifies himself as the Anointed One with Isaianic phraseology (Isa 61:1–2), who was sent to proclaim “liberty to the captives” and “the year of the Lord’s favor” (4:18; cf. 7:22). These are the first words of Jesus in the Third Gospel. This statement is within the second most crucial passage for understanding Luke’s theology of mission. Nissen goes so far as to hold that

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<sup>580</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 121.

<sup>581</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 121.

<sup>582</sup> A helpful discussion on Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem and its relation to the church’s mission is undertaken by Reinhard Feldmeier, “Ecclesia Peregrinans: Luke’s Concept of a Missionary Church,” in Aune and Hvalvik, *The Church and Its Mission*, 99–111.

4:16–30 exerts almost the same function as Matthew 28:18–20.<sup>583</sup> Just as 24:44–49, 4:16–30 is also referred to as a summary of the missionary theology of the Third Gospel.<sup>584</sup> As such, it is a sort of introduction to the public ministry of Jesus.<sup>585</sup> In short, Jesus’ ministry is summarized in 4:18–19 essentially as a kerygmatic ministry (εὐαγγελίζω/*to preach the good news*, 1x; κηρύσσω/*to proclaim*, 2x). It is not surprising that the Lukan Jesus identifies the reason he was sent as the necessity (δεῖ) of preaching the good news (εὐαγγελίζω) of the kingdom of God (4:43; cf. 9:11; 16:16). In 4:44 Luke comments that Jesus “was preaching (κηρύσσω) in the synagogues”. In 20:1 Jesus is preaching the gospel (εὐαγγελίζω) in the temple. In Luke’s usage, κηρύσσω and εὐαγγελίζω are likely interchangeable terms,<sup>586</sup> usually referring to the public announcement of the gospel (cf. 8:1).

The disciples’ task is also seen as one of proclamation. In 3:3 (cf. also 1:77) John the Baptist proclaims (κηρύσσω) “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” in anticipation of the coming cleansing and forgiveness (24:47) as well as the future reception of the Spirit;<sup>587</sup> and in 3:18 “he preached good news (εὐαγγελίζω) to the people. In 8:39 a man cleansed from demons proclaims (κηρύσσω) what Jesus did for him. In 9:2 Jesus sends the disciples to “proclaim (κηρύσσω) the kingdom of God,” then they preach the gospel (εὐαγγελίζω, 9:6). In 10:1–24, Jesus sends the seventy-two. The Sent One

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<sup>583</sup> Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 50.

<sup>584</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 89.

<sup>585</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 89. Also, see discussion in Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 52–55.

<sup>586</sup> I. Howard Marshall argues that the two terms in 8:1 form a hendiadys. See I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 316.

<sup>587</sup> Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 135–36.

(4:43) becomes the Sender (9:2; 10:1). This implies that the mission of the twelve replicates the mission of Jesus and is an integral part of it.<sup>588</sup> These passages anticipate the commission found in 24:47.

## Response

Darrell L. Bock observes that “both the desired response (‘repentance’) and its effect (‘forgiveness’) are noted” in the content of proclamation in 24:47.<sup>589</sup> He refers to Luke as “a theologian of repentance” because of the importance Luke gives to the concept carried by the noun *μετάνοια/repentance* and the verb *μετανοέω/to repent*.<sup>590</sup> He argues that repentance in 24:44–47 is very close to the Hebrew sense that “repentance is a reorientation, a total shift of perspective from where one was before repenting.”<sup>591</sup> This results in “a real—even a radical—change in the life of the believer, which carries with it moral responsibilities that distinguish Christians from ‘outsiders’ while at the same time, stressing their obligation to those ‘outsiders.’”<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>588</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 119.

<sup>589</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 621.

<sup>590</sup> For details, see Darrell L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God’s Promised Program Realized for All Nations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 262–65.

<sup>591</sup> Bock, *Theology of Luke and Acts*, 262. Bock affirms that the concept of repentance is illustrated by Luke through some stories throughout his Gospel. The concept is introduced in 3:3 (see response in 3:10–14) and is developed in passages such as 5:30–32; 15:11–32; 18:9–14, where, respectively, Luke presents three portraits of repentance: (1) “the physician calling the sick to repent” (2) “the prodigal son returning to his father,” who, “pleading no rights, [...] simply seeks his father’s mercy” (Bock, *Theology of Luke and Acts*, 264); and, similarly, (3) the tax collector relying uniquely on God’s mercy once he recognizes his sinful life (page 265). These stories show that repentance is not an emotion but a change of perspective. It “involves turning to and embracing God in faith” (Bock, 9:51–24:53, 1940). Bock argues that, for Luke, a true answer to salvation is multidimensional and can be summarized in three key terms: repentance, turning, and faith. For details, see Bock, *Theology of Luke and Acts*, 262–68. For a broader discussion, involving other NT writings, see Darrell L. Bock, *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel: Reclaiming the Gospel as Good News* (Nashville: B&H, 2010), chap. 6.

<sup>592</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 117.

## Scope

As in Matthew (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη/*all nations*, 28:19), Luke also highlights the universal scope of the post-Resurrection mission. Scholars have suggested that there is likely a connection between πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in 24:47 and the phrase “light for the nations” in Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6 (cf. also 51:4).<sup>593</sup> At the same time, the idea that πάντα τὰ ἔθνη may also allude to God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:2–3 seems to be commonplace among NT scholars.<sup>594</sup>

There are, throughout the Gospel, manifold hints of a universal mission. In the infancy narrative Jesus is portrayed as salvation “in the presence of all peoples” (2:31) and a light for revelation to the Gentiles” (2:32). The genealogy of Jesus in Luke presents traces of universality, emphasizing the wide-reaching nature of the significance of Jesus, not only for the seed of Abraham but for the human race as a whole.<sup>595</sup> In his programmatic statement of his mission (4:18–19), Jesus includes the poor, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed in his target audience. In a word, Jesus announces that he

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<sup>593</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 126; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 906; Bock, 9:51–24:53, 1940; Allison A. Trites and William J. Larkin, *The Gospel of Luke and Acts*, CBC (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2006), 324; Walter L. Liefeld, “Luke,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 8:1057.

<sup>594</sup> E.g., Bock, *Luke*, 621; Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 735–36; N. T. Wright, *Luke for Everyone* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 301. Commentaries on Matthew go in the same direction. See, e.g., Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:683; Carson, “Matthew,” 596; France, *Matthew*, 1114n29; Gundry, *Matthew*, 595, among others. As in Matthew and Mark, in Luke “Jesus did not inaugurate a full-blown universal mission during the course of his earthly ministry. His own mission, together with that of the twelve and the seventy-two, was to Israel” (Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 126). However, “the evangelist clearly signals the universal potential of the Jesus-event” (Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 260).

<sup>595</sup> See Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 161. Darrell L. Bock states that “the introduction of the genealogy right before the commencement of his ministry serves to highlight the scope of Jesus’ concern for humans. It points to his universal perspective.” Darrell L. Bock, 1:1–9:50, vol. 1 of *Luke*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 360.

will minister to the outcasts and the powerless,<sup>596</sup> tax collectors and sinners, the poor, women and children, and the Gentiles (4:24–27).<sup>597</sup> Luke emphasizes this fact by using the table of fellowship as a literary motif (e.g., 5:29–32; 7:34, 36–50; 14:15–24; 15:1–2; 19:1–18; 22:19–20; 24:13–35, 41–43).<sup>598</sup> He portrays Jesus as sharing the table of fellowship with marginalized people.<sup>599</sup> In Luke 10, the mission of the seventy-two is seen by various scholars as a foreshadowing<sup>600</sup> of the future mission to the nations.<sup>601</sup> In 13:28–30 and 14:23–24, in connection with the table of fellowship motif, Gentiles are

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<sup>596</sup> This is a major theme in Luke’s Gospel. For a brief overview, see Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 221. Johannes Nissen remarks that the concept of jubilee permeates not only this passage but the entire Gospel. He argues that this theme in Luke is mission-oriented. See Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 50–54. For a different opinion, see Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 157.

<sup>597</sup> Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 132–33. In fact, this passage reveals that God is not “only the God of Israel but also, and equally, the God of the Gentiles” (Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 89). Senior and Stuhlmüller mention that “although Jesus the prophet does minister within Israel, the style of his ministry retains the limitless potential announced at Nazareth” (Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 261). Accordingly, Luke portrays Jesus as having dealings with tax collectors and sinners (5:27–32), women (8:2–3; 23:49, 55), the Gentile centurion (7:1–10), Samaritans (10:25–37), lepers (5:12–15), etc. All of this is a foretaste of the future universal mission. In addition, it has been widely noted that Jesus left Isa 61:2b out of his quotation in Luke 4:19 likely because of his emphasis on salvation open to Gentiles. For a helpful discussion on that topic, see Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 108–113.

<sup>598</sup> For details, see Dennis E. Smith, “Table Fellowship as a Literary Motif in the Gospel of Luke,” *JBL* 196, no. 4 (1987): 613–38.

<sup>599</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller suggest that Luke uses the meal motif as a resource for “asserting that the outcasts are as capable of a genuine response to God’s offer of salvation as the ‘invited guests’ of Israel” (Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 265). They add that outcasts and even Gentiles can “respond better than insiders” (265). Cf. Luke 7:1–10, 42–50; 11:29–32; 17:11–19; 18:9–14; 19:3–15, 29–37; 21:1–4.

<sup>600</sup> John Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, WBC 35B (Dallas: Word, 1993), 549. For a different opinion, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X–XXIV: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB 28A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 846.

<sup>601</sup> This idea is partly based on the assumption that the mission of the seventy-two alludes to the table of the nations in Genesis 10 (LXX). According to this view, the seventy-two in Luke 10 represent the seventy-two nations in the LXX of Gen 10 (70 in the MT). In fact, many manuscripts of Luke read seventy rather than seventy-two. Unfortunately, it is hard to make a decision between the two readings, since the external evidence is balanced and the internal evidence is ambiguous (Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 127). Yet, the manuscript evidence seems to favor the reading “seventy-two” (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 127). In any case, whether one chooses 72 or 70, it seems that the idea is that of “one for each nation of the world” (Stein, *Luke*, 304).

invited to take part in God's salvation. Furthermore, unlike Matthew and Mark, Luke has several references to Jesus' encounters with Samaritans, all of them reported in the section where Luke describes Jesus' move from Galilee to Jerusalem (9:51–19:27),<sup>602</sup> which can be seen as a sort of anticipation of Acts 1:8. That section contains the summary statement "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (19:10).<sup>603</sup> Thus, while a universal mission takes place only after Jesus' resurrection and return to the Father, that mission is grounded in Jesus' story and, hence, the reference to it in 24:47 is not a novelty but the unfolding of God's project of salvation.

### **The Significance of Jerusalem**

Luke 24:47 introduces a theme that will be developed in Acts, "beginning from Jerusalem" (cf. Acts 1:8). The position of Jerusalem in salvation history cannot be sufficiently emphasized. Remarkably, while the OT mostly portrays a movement of the Gentiles *to* Jerusalem, the NT describes a movement of the church beginning *from* Jerusalem. There might be here an allusion to Isaiah 2:2–3, where Mount Zion in Jerusalem is portrayed as "a point of convergence and departing."<sup>604</sup> The Synoptic

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<sup>602</sup> Bosch observes that "Mark gives no reference to Samaritans or Samaria, whereas Matthew records only Jesus' prohibition to enter any Samaritan town (10:5). See Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 90.

<sup>603</sup> Interestingly, this statement is made in the context of the story of Jesus' meal in Zacchaeus' house. The statement is made right after Jesus says, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham" (19:9). Zacchaeus is said to be a "son of Abraham" not merely for "his being racially a descendant of Abraham" (Stein, *Luke*, 469) but because of his response of faith (Bock, *9:51–24:53*, 1523). Accordingly, all those responding with faith are considered "children of Abraham." As a matter of fact, in the context of the Gospel of Luke, "the lost" includes the Gentiles (Bock, *9:51–24:53*, 1523; Stein, *Luke*, 469). Sharon H. Ringe comments, "Because of his political and economic role as a chief tax collector, Zacchaeus has never been in a position to consider membership in the people of God something on which he can presume [...]. In fact, some would say that his profession has made him the equivalent of a Gentile. Suddenly his membership in the chosen people is reinstated." See Sharon H. Ringe, *Luke*, WeBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 233.

<sup>604</sup> François Bovon, *Luke 3: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28–24:53*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. James Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 396. Also, Marshall, *The Gospel*

Gospels show Jesus' movement from Galilee to Jerusalem, and depict Jerusalem as the place of Jesus' passion. But, now, Jerusalem is not only the place of rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection, but also the place from where the gospel flows to the ends of the earth.<sup>605</sup> The expression "beginning with Jerusalem" likely implies that "the Christian mission was to commence [...] with the Jews themselves."<sup>606</sup> It is a hint that "all nations" includes Israel. In the words of Köstenberger and O'Brien, "the disciples' mission begins at Jerusalem because, in the first instance, it is the mission of the Servant to Israel, and then through a restored Israel to the ends of the earth."<sup>607</sup> They further state that "the mission given to the disciples to fulfill is that of the prophetic 'servant' of Isaiah 49:6,"<sup>608</sup> i.e., "to be a light for the nations".

### **The Witnesses**

This is another theme that is further developed in Acts but introduced in the Gospel.<sup>609</sup> In 24:48, the Lukan Jesus says, "You are witnesses of these things" (cf. 24:46–47). Also worthy of mention is Luke's reference to witnessing in the context of persecution, "This will be your opportunity to bear witness" (21:13). While this is less explicit in Mark (13:9–10), Luke makes it completely explicit by using the verb

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*of Luke*, 906.

<sup>605</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien observe that "the expression 'beginning at Jerusalem' alludes to the restored Zion of Isaiah, from which the word of the Lord will go forth (Isa 2:3) bringing justice and peace for all the nations" (Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 126).

<sup>606</sup> Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 906.

<sup>607</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 126.

<sup>608</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 127.

<sup>609</sup> Bock, *9:51–24:53*, 1941–42.



ἀποβαίνω (21:13), which very likely has a resultative sense in that passage,<sup>610</sup> meaning that persecution will result in an occasion for testimony.<sup>611</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller argue that the witnessing motif in Luke-Acts provides “the link between the history of Jesus and the history of the church,”<sup>612</sup> as one can clearly see in Luke’s second volume. As D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo notice, “perhaps Luke’s most fundamental purpose in the Book of Acts is to help Christians answer the question ‘Who are we?’”<sup>613</sup>

### **The Role of the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit plays a fundamental role in Luke’s two-volume work. No other evangelist gives such an extensive treatment of this subject as Luke.<sup>614</sup> Luke wants to make it evident that the ministry of Jesus inaugurates the age of the Spirit and that the Spirit comes in order to continue the work of Jesus (cf. 24:49; Acts 1:4–5).<sup>615</sup> More than that, Luke constantly links the missionary activities of the church with the actions of the Spirit.<sup>616</sup>

Graham A. Cole argues that the key events in Jesus’ ministry provide the basis for a better understanding of the person and work of the Spirit.<sup>617</sup> This was envisioned by the

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<sup>610</sup> See Franco Montanari, “ἀποβαίνω,” *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); BDAG, 107.

<sup>611</sup> For a non-missionary interpretation, see Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 768.

<sup>612</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 259.

<sup>613</sup> Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 325.

<sup>614</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 268. David Bosch adds, “In Mark and Matthew the Spirit is [...] rarely linked with mission.” Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 113.

<sup>615</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 259.

<sup>616</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 259.

<sup>617</sup> Graham A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 149.

OT in passages such as Isaiah 11:1–2 and 42:1 (cf. 61:1), where, respectively, the Branch of Jesse and the Servant of the Lord are linked to the Spirit.<sup>618</sup> In Luke’s Gospel, therefore, the precursor (1:15, 17, 41, 67, 80), the conception (1:35), the birth (2:25–27), the baptism (3:22; cf. 3:16), and the temptation (4:1; cf. 4:14) of Jesus are all connected to the Spirit.<sup>619</sup> Indeed, from 4:18 it is possible to imply that the earthly ministry of Jesus as a whole had the imprint of the Spirit. In short, Luke uses the Spirit motif in order to authenticate the identity of Jesus as the Messiah as well as his mission (4:14, 18; cf. Isa 61:1–2).<sup>620</sup> In Acts, the theme of the Spirit is used to underscore the church’s close connection to Jesus and its own mission.<sup>621</sup>

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<sup>618</sup> Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 149.

<sup>619</sup> It is somewhat puzzling that, after so many manifestations of the Spirit in the first half of Luke’s Gospel, there is an apparent silence in the second half as far as the Spirit is concerned. The Spirit is mentioned in 12:12 for the last time. Although, on the basis of Acts 1:4–5, there is a broad understanding that Luke 24:49 is a reference to the Holy Spirit, he is not mentioned directly. For a brief discussion on that, see Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit—in Biblical Teaching, through the Centuries, and Today* (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 2013), 37–40. Perhaps, Luke is more interested in dwelling more extensively on the theme of the Spirit when dealing with the post-Resurrection mission in the book of Acts.

<sup>620</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 268.

<sup>621</sup> Before advancing to the book of Acts, it is worth mentioning that, in contrast to other Synoptics, Luke describes the sending of the twelve (9:1–6) and the seventy(-two) (10:1–24). Here, as well, the number twelve is reminiscent of the twelve tribes of Israel and, hence, a symbol of Israel, now represented by Jesus’ messianic community. There is a close relationship between the instructions to the seventy(-two) and those to the twelve. As a matter of fact, “The sending of the seventy(-two) [...] further extends the mission of Jesus and that of the twelve” (Köstenberger and Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends*, 112), in a species of expansion movement towards the universal mission of the church that increases insofar as one reaches the end of the book (24:46–49) and moves to Luke’s second volume (Acts 1:8). In that regard, the following observation is quite helpful:

“Beyond the mission of the seventy(-two) to Israel, the Lukan narrative provides the reader with glimpses of the church’s universal mission in the book of Acts. The number seventy-two [...] may hark back to the seventy-two nations in the table of nations in Genesis 10, which, in turn, forms the background to Acts 2. Their commission to serve as labourers in God’s harvest and to gather his people against the backdrop of impending divine judgment (Luke 10:1, 3), likewise, foreshadows the early church’s mission and message throughout the Acts narrative. [...] The acceptance or rejection of Jesus and his message about God’s kingdom [...] continues to reverberate through Acts. Finally, Jesus’ instructions to his followers to shake the dust off their feet in the face of their rejection by Israel (vv. 10–12) anticipate similar occasions in Paul’s and Barnabas’ mission (Acts 13:46–51)” (Köstenberger and Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends*, 114–15). In a sentence, the mission of the seventy(-two) anticipates “the early church’s mission in the book of Acts” (Köstenberger and Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends*, 112n33).

## The Book of Acts: Salvation to the Ends of the Earth

To a greater or lesser degree, all the topics discussed above are also present in the book of Acts.<sup>622</sup> Some of them, however, are given more prominent roles, such as the scope of the church's mission, the significance of Jerusalem, the witnessing motif, and the role of the Holy Spirit.<sup>623</sup> These four elements are present in Acts 1:8, which functions as a sort of counterpart to Luke 24:44–49.<sup>624</sup> They form a chiasmic structure with the four last elements in Luke 24:44–49. This is better visualized in a diagram as follows:

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<sup>622</sup> Luke 24:44–49 is still a key passage for understanding what is going on in Acts. Senior and Stuhlmüller remark that this passage “synthetizes Luke’s theology of the gospel and propels the reader into the follow-up account of Acts” (Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 256). They refer to it as containing “the fibers of Luke’s mission theology [...] binding this two-volume work together” (259).

<sup>623</sup> The first four elements discussed in the Gospel section can be seen throughout the book of Acts. The fulfillment of the OT Scripture is highlighted several times in passages that portray Jesus’ ministry, death, and resurrection as part of God’s plan (2:23, 31; 3:18; 4:25; 13:23, 27–29, 33–37; 17:3; 26:23). Likewise, the apostolic ministry is presented against the background of OT Scripture (2:16–18). In that connection, Paul, who, as it were, assumes the centre stage from 13 onwards and becomes a paradigmatic figure, continues the mission of Jesus as “a light for the Gentiles” (13:47; cf. Isa 49:6). For a detailed study on the importance of the OT for the understanding of the missionary teaching of Acts, see Meek, *The Gentile Mission*.

Acts also has much to say about suffering. For instance, as a paradigmatic figure, Paul should suffer just like his Master (9:16; cf. 26:23). Jesus’ suffering is mentioned a few other times in the book (1:3; 3:18; 17:3). The manifold references to persecution, hatred, and other hardships remind the reader that, not infrequently, witnessing takes place in the midst of suffering. See Alan J. Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke’s Account of God’s Unfolding Plan*, NSBT (Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 54–67.

That the task of proclaiming the gospel is a major theme in Acts can be seen by means of manifold occurrences of proclamation language (*keryssō*, 8:5; 9:20; 10:42; 19:13; 20:25; 28:31; *euangelizō*, 5:42; 8:4, 12, 25, 35, 40; 10:36; 11:20; 13:32; 14:7, 15, 21; 15:35; 16:10; 17:18; cf. also 15:7). As a matter of fact, there is more on the proclamation of God’s kingdom in Acts than one may realize at first sight. See Volker Gäckle, “The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God in Acts,” in Aune and Hvalvik, *The Church and Its Mission*, 113–27.

Similarly, a response to proclamation is also required. Thus, reverberations of “repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 24:47) can be heard throughout Luke’s second volume (2:38; 3:19, 26; 5:31; 8:22; 10:43; 11:18; 13:38; 17:30; 20:21; 26:18, 20).

<sup>624</sup> Craig S. Keener refers to the author’s usage of the material from Luke 24 in Acts 1 in terms of recapitulation. For details, see Craig S. Keener, *Introduction and 1:1–2:47*, vol. 1 of *Acts: An Exegetical*

- A. To all nations (Luke 24:47)
  - B. Beginning from Jerusalem (Luke 24:47)
    - C. You are witnesses of these things (Luke 24:48)
      - D. The promise of the Father (Luke 24:49)
        - D'. When the Holy Spirit has come (Acts 1:8)
          - C'. You will be my witnesses (Acts 1:8)
            - B'. In Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria (Acts 1:8)
              - A'. To the end of the earth (Acts 1:8)

This probably suggests that, while the themes introduced in Luke 24:44–49 are also present in Acts, Luke’s second volume spends more time developing those mentioned above.<sup>625</sup> We will briefly turn toward these topics.

## The Holy Spirit

Scholars widely recognize the centrality of the Holy Spirit in both Luke and Acts. As far as Acts is concerned, there is a general agreement that Luke emphasizes the empowering of witnesses for mission as the primary activity of the Spirit,<sup>626</sup> so much so that some have suggested that the book should be referred to as “Acts of the Holy Spirit” rather than “Acts of the Apostles.”<sup>627</sup> Thus, for Luke, pneumatology and mission belong

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*Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 647–49.

<sup>625</sup> Obviously, I am aware that Luke deals with many other theological themes in his two-volume work. For a very helpful and recent treatment of the major theological themes, see Bock, *Theology of Luke and Acts*, 97–427.

<sup>626</sup> Keener, *Introduction and 1:1–2:47*, 689. For a discussion on the importance of Acts 1–2 to understand the centrality of the Spirit in the book of Acts, see Craig S. Keener, “Power of Pentecost: Luke’s Missiology,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 12, no. 1 (2009): 47–73. This paper is also now available in Keener, *For All Peoples*, 47–72. See also the newly published book by Patrick Schreiner, *The Mission of the Triune God: A Theology of Acts*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Brian S. Rosner, New Testament Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022), 65–78.

<sup>627</sup> William J. Larkin Jr., “Mission in Acts,” in Larkin and Williams, *Mission in the New Testament*, 174.

together. The close connection between these two topics is his distinctive contribution to the NT theology of mission.<sup>628</sup>

From the outset, Luke makes clear that the risen Christ will act in the church through the Spirit (1:2). But what specifically does he do? The answer is that he does many things.<sup>629</sup> The Spirit pervades every aspect of the church's life and ministry.<sup>630</sup> In being filled with the Spirit, the disciples repeat a pattern that was modeled by Jesus' relationship with the Spirit in the Gospel (3:22; 4:1, 14, 18–19). Like Jesus, they initiate their mission only after receiving the power of the Spirit (Acts 1:4–8; 2:1–13; cf. Luke 3:16; 24:49).<sup>631</sup> The work of Jesus continues through his witnesses empowered by the Spirit. More than that, the outpouring of the Spirit is the signal on earth of the Lordship of Jesus (1:8; 2:33).

### **The Witnesses**

Although the commission in Acts 1:8 is addressed to the Twelve, it becomes a paradigm for other witnesses.<sup>632</sup> Witnessing is a major theme in Acts<sup>633</sup> and is rooted in OT passages that establish a connection between the restoration of Israel and the task of

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<sup>628</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 114.

<sup>629</sup> Darrell L. Bock summarizes his acts as follows: He is the giver of dreams and visions (2:17; 7:55–56). He gives revelatory words and inspires Scripture (1:2; 1:16; 4:25; 7:51; 28:25). He gives wisdom and discernment (Luke 21:15; Acts 5:3; 6:3, 5, 10; 9:31; 13:9; 16:18). He leads into praise for what God has done (Luke 1:67; Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6). He leads into witness (Acts 1:4, 8; 4:8, 31; 5:32; 6:10; 9:17), as well as teaching (9:31; 13:52). In sum, the Spirit directs the new community in the new life as he clothes it with power from on high (Luke 24:49). See Bock, *Theology of Luke and Acts*, 226.

<sup>630</sup> Walter L. Liefeld, *Interpreting the Book of Acts*, Guides to New Testament Exegesis 4 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 84.

<sup>631</sup> Larkin, "Mission in Acts," 158.

<sup>632</sup> Keener, *Introduction and 1:1–2:47*, 689, 696.

<sup>633</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and*

witnessing to the nations.<sup>634</sup> Peter G. Bolt observes that the replacement of Judas with Matthias (1:12–26) “indicates that the number of witnesses must be twelve,”<sup>635</sup> since this number is a symbol of all Israel.<sup>636</sup> In fact, it brings to mind the twelve tribes and, hence, the restoration of Israel. It is remarkable that the narrative of the substitution of Judas immediately precedes that of Pentecost. The twelve apostles represent a renewed and true Israel, whereas, on the other hand, the audience in 2:5, 14, 36 is representative of “all Israel.”<sup>637</sup> The coming of the Spirit enabled the apostles to spread the gospel (1:8) as witnesses of Jesus’ death, resurrection, and exaltation (2:29–33; cf. 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 10:39–43). Therefore, Acts 2 is the place where one can find the gathering of a renewed Israel and the start of its mission as a light to the nations (cf. Isa 49:6; Acts 1:8).<sup>638</sup>

The fact that the gift of the Spirit would be available for generations to come until the return of Christ (2:38–39) is an indication that the witnessing task was by no means restricted to the apostles.<sup>639</sup> For instance, Stephen is portrayed as “a man full of faith and

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*Commentary*, AB 31 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 206.

<sup>634</sup> Cf. e.g., Isa 43:1–12. See Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 130. For more on backgrounds to “witness” in Acts 1:8, see Keener, *Introduction and 1:1–2:47*, 692.

<sup>635</sup> Peter G. Bolt, “Mission and Witness,” in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 198.

<sup>636</sup> Paul W. Walaskay, *Acts*, WeBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 31.

<sup>637</sup> David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 129.

<sup>638</sup> In accordance with the OT Scripture, the book of Acts shows that, first, it is necessary to restore Israel in order for it to fulfill its covenantal commission. In both the OT and NT, mission precedes the “church.” As Christopher Wright puts it, “It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission—God’s mission” (Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 24).

<sup>639</sup> Paul is also portrayed as a witness (e.g., 22:15–18), but it appears that Acts sees no difference between Paul and the other apostles as far as level of apostleship is concerned. See Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 405.

of the Holy Spirit” (6:5; cf. 6:8) and as a “witness” (22:20).<sup>640</sup> Acts indicates that witnessing is the task of the whole church, including each member of it.<sup>641</sup> Associated to this is the close relation between witnessing and the word of God<sup>642</sup> (8:25; cf. 18:5). While not explicitly mentioned, it is implied on the basis of the larger context of Acts that the increase of the word of God (6:7; 12:24; 13:49; 19:20) is connected with the testimony of the apostles.

### **The Significance of Jerusalem**

The city of Jerusalem plays a central role both geographically and theologically in Luke-Acts.<sup>643</sup> While in the Gospel “the story of Jesus led *to* Jerusalem,” in Acts “the story of the church led *from* Jerusalem.”<sup>644</sup> The centrality of Jerusalem in the missionary

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<sup>640</sup> The meaning of the Greek term *martys* in this passage is disputed. Although some argue for a transitional sense—i.e., not merely “witness” but not yet specifically “martyr” (see Thomas Ethelbert Page, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament [London: Macmillan, 1897], 228; Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Hermeneia [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987], 188; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 605)—others defend the view that it still means “witness” (see John Peter Lange, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Acts* [Bellingham: Logos Bible Software, 2008], 400). Accordingly, while the original audience might have perceived a martyriological sense in the term, at the same it must have evoked the broad sense of “witness” as in previous occurrences in the book of Acts.

<sup>641</sup> William J. Larkin Jr., *Acts*, IVP New Testament Commentary Series 5 (Westmont: IVP Academic, 1995), 41. In fact, “the story in Acts shows that much of the actual mission work is done by people other than the twelve apostles. But his nuclear group authorizes the Gentile mission and monitors it” (Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 267).

<sup>642</sup> Carson and Moo remark that the power of the word of God is “an easily overlooked yet vital theme in Acts” (Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 324). They add, “For all Luke’s emphasis on the importance of apostolic preaching, [...] he makes clear that it is only as they are faithful witnesses to the Word that spiritual transformation takes place” (324).

<sup>643</sup> The importance of Jerusalem in Luke-Acts can be seen in the very number of times the author employs the term. Luke uses the indeclinable Ἱερουσαλημ sixty-three times (thirty-six in Acts and twenty-seven in Luke) out of seventy-seven occurrences in the NT. In turn, the declinable Ἱεροσόλυμα occurs sixty-two times in the NT, four times in Luke, and twenty-two times in Acts. Taking both the indeclinable Ἱερουσαλημ and the declinable Ἱεροσόλυμα together, the book of Acts is responsible for over 40 percent of all references to Jerusalem in the NT.

<sup>644</sup> John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC 26 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 86. For more on that, see James D. G. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, vol. 2 of *Christianity in the Making* (Grand Rapids:

activity of the church in Acts can be clearly seen in passages such as 1:4, 8; 8:14–15; 9:27–29; 11:1–2; and 15:2.<sup>645</sup> Those passages show that Jerusalem is not only the place where the Christian church begins, it is also the place of its first doctrinal decisions, organizational patterns, and elaboration of its basic self-definition.<sup>646</sup> The significance of Jerusalem can be seen more deeply in at least two ways, as follows.

First, the relationship between Jerusalem and the temple. Noticeably, the temple is crucial for understanding the importance of Jerusalem.<sup>647</sup> The temple—and by extension the city of Jerusalem—was the place of the very dwelling of God on earth. Thus, the temple motif in Acts is important for understanding its missionary theology.<sup>648</sup> From the OT perspective, the temple is, as it were, a bridge between heaven and earth, since it is the place where the glory of God manifests itself (e.g., Exod 40:34–38; 1 Kgs 8; Isa 6; Ezek 40–48). N. T. Wright argues that this narrative of a “bridge” between heaven and earth is present in Acts by means of a temple theology that runs throughout the entire book but finds its starting point in Acts 1–2, especially the Pentecost narrative. Wright states that with Jesus’ ascension, “heaven and earth have come together completely and forever.”<sup>649</sup> He further adds, “if the ascension shows us that a bit of earth now resides in

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Eerdmans, 2009).

<sup>645</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Reading the New Testament Series (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), xxii.

<sup>646</sup> Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 88.

<sup>647</sup> The temple occupied around a fourth of the entire city (Skarsaune, *In the Shadow*, 88.). N. T. Wright notes, Jerusalem “was not so much a city with a temple in it; more like a temple with a small city around it” (Wright, *New Testament and the People*, 225).

<sup>648</sup> The connection between the temple and a biblical theology of mission has been highlighted by Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*.

<sup>649</sup> Wright, “Reading the New Testament Missionally,” 182.



heaven, Pentecost shows us that we now have the breath of heaven on earth.”<sup>650</sup> The age of the Spirit set the stage for the reversion of Babel and the scattering of the nations deriving from it (Gen 10–11). Wright further states that “in this way Acts 1–2 begins the story of the early church within the narrative arc of temple theology.”<sup>651</sup>

Second, the emphasis on Jerusalem highlights the universal nature of the Christian mission. John Nolland observes that the view that Luke gradually moves the focus from “a successful Jewish mission in Jerusalem in the early chapters” onto Gentiles in the late chapters, “with Acts 28:28 marking the final transition [...] collides sharply with 21:20 which refreshes the readers’ awareness of the successful Jerusalem mission.”<sup>652</sup> Furthermore, passages such as 13:46; 18:6; 19:8–9; 28:28 indicate that a Jewish mission continues along with the Gentile mission,<sup>653</sup> even increasing (9:31). For that reason, as Craig Keener remarks, “universal mission” is a more accurate term than “Gentile mission.”<sup>654</sup>

## **The Scope**

Roughly speaking, while the Gospel of Luke focuses on Jesus’ crucifixion as an event rooted in God’s plan of salvation as envisaged in the OT, the book of Acts focuses

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<sup>650</sup> Wright, “Reading the New Testament Missionally,” 182.

<sup>651</sup> Wright, “Reading the New Testament Missionally,” 182. Wright argues that “nearly all the real pressure points in Acts are about temples” (182). For details, see 182–85.

<sup>652</sup> John Nolland, “Salvation-History and Eschatology,” in Marshall and Peterson, *Witness to the Gospel*, 80.

<sup>653</sup> For more on that, see Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 91–98; also 115.

<sup>654</sup> Keener, *Introduction and 1:1–2:47*, 697. Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall argue that Luke’s purpose in Acts “is to show how the Jewish mission provided the basis and justification for Paul’s mission to the Gentiles, demonstrating that Paul and his mission were in continuity with not only the mission of Jesus, but the Jewish mission that was centered in Jerusalem.” See Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall, “A Cord of Three Strands: Mission in Acts,” in Porter and Westfall, *Christian Mission*, 132.

on the universal mission as part of the same plan.<sup>655</sup> The scope foreseen in Luke 24:47 is now put into operation throughout Luke's second volume, as announced in 1:8, which, in turn, serves as a rough table of contents of the entire book of Acts.

The universal nature of mission in Acts can be seen through the very outset. The covenantal language in early chapters, such as allusions to Abraham (3:25; cf. Gen 12:3) and David (2:30, 34–35; cf. 2 Sam 7:12–13; Ps 110:1),<sup>656</sup> is evidence that a universal mission is envisioned in God's covenantal promises in the OT, according to which the kingdom of the Messiah would assume global proportions. One can see a centripetal movement, “*from every nation under heaven*” (2:5),<sup>657</sup> with a centrifugal flavor, “I will pour out my Spirit on *all flesh*” (2:17).<sup>658</sup> Indeed, as in Acts 2, the Spirit is granted to Gentiles insofar as they receive the word of God through the apostles (8:14–17; also

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<sup>655</sup> As a matter of fact, according to Carson and Moo, the cross (2:23; 13:27) and “the inclusion of Gentiles in the people of God (e.g., 10:1–16; 13:47; 15:15–18)” are two critical elements in Acts. See Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 323. See also Stephen J. Strauss, “The Purpose of Acts and the Mission of God,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 169 (2012): 443–64.

<sup>656</sup> The quotation of Ps 110:1 in Acts 2:34–35 shows the relevance of the Davidic covenant for the early Christian understanding of Jesus. “It significantly shaped earliest Christology. Christology, in turn, provided the foundation for early Christian mission,” according to Alexander Stewart and Alex Costea, “Psalm 110:1: A Neglected Theological Foundation for Mission in the New Testament,” *Jurnal teologic* 18, no. 1 (2019): 58. Furthermore, “the way that the New Testament retrieves Psalms 2, 8, and 110 illuminates the theme of Israel's king as the one through whom the Abrahamic promise of the inheritance of the land is extended to the whole world” (Wright, “Reading the New Testament Missionally,” 178).

<sup>657</sup> The impact on mission of that gathering in Acts 2 has been underscored by several scholars. For instance, Christoph Stenschke states that “Acts 2:9–11 lists fifteen regions or ethnic groups. In this way, all of Israel is present to witness the coming of God's eschatological Spirit on Israel gathered and restored in Jesus and the community of his disciples. The many people who come to faith that day will have included Diaspora Jews (including proselytes) who live in the city or who came as pilgrims for the Jewish feast of Pentecost. As they return to their places of residence they spread the good news. From its very beginning the church contains people with different geographical and cultural backgrounds.” See Christoph Stenschke, “Migration and Mission in the Book of Acts,” in Aune and Hvalvik, *The Church and Its Mission*, 164–65.

<sup>658</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien speak in terms of reorientation as one moves from the OT to the New Testament, i.e., from a centripetal to a centrifugal focus; they argue there is a biblical justification for the new orientation. For more details, see Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 135–137.

10:44–48; 11:15–18; 19:1–7). Now, “*everyone* who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (2:21).

Still connected with covenantal language is the growth terminology in Acts (e.g., *αὐξάνω/increase*; *πληθύνω/multiply*; *προστίθημι/add*). Luke reports that both the word of God (e.g., 6:7; 12:24; cf. also 13:49; 19:20) and the number of followers (2:41, 47; 5:14; 6:1, 7; 9:31) increased and multiplied.<sup>659</sup> Luke’s emphasis on growth language makes clear that the apostles took seriously the idea of spreading the gospel “to the ends of the earth” (1:8). Also, the idea of growth brings to mind the notion of fruitfulness and multiplication as conveyed in OT passages such as Genesis 1:28; 9:1, 7; 12:2–3; 17:2, 6, 8; 22:17–18; 26:4, 24; 28:3–4; 35:11–12; 47:27; 48:3; Exodus 1:7, 12, 20; Leviticus 26:9; Deuteronomy 7:13; 30:16; Isaiah 51:2; Jeremiah 3:16; 23:3; Ezekiel 36:10–11; and Hosea 1:10. Thus, what is taking place in Acts is the historical fulfillment of God’s ancient plan of salvation reaching the ends of the earth.<sup>660</sup> Even passages with a Jewish focus have a universal extent (e.g., 3:25; 5:31–32; 10:36; 26:23).<sup>661</sup> Nevertheless, an

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<sup>659</sup> Larkin argues that this growth in Acts is both *quantitative* (2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7; 9:31; 13:43; 14:1; 17:4, 12; 18:10; 19:26; 21:20) and *qualitative*. It is qualitative in the sense that “not only was there a solid response to the gospel of faith and endurance (2:47; 4:4; 8:12; 9:42; 14:27; 16:34; 18:8; cf. 11:23; 13:43; 14:23), but there was also a fruitfulness in the lives of the repentant leading to holiness (11:18; 19:18–19; 26:20), joy (8:8, 39; 13:48; 16:34), unity (2:46; 4:24, 32; 5:12), and mutual care (2:42–47; 4:32–37; 11:27–30; 16:16, 33–34)” (Larkin, “Mission in Acts,” 184). Accordingly, “a convert is enfolded into the Christian community, which results in consequences that are corporate as well” (Larkin, “Mission in Acts,” 184). In other words, growth can only happen within an environment with a sharpened sense of community.

<sup>660</sup> Indeed, as G. K. Beale remarks, OT hopes and promises pervade the entire book (Acts 1:3–11, 22; 3:15, 26; 4:2, 10, 33; 5:30–31; 7:55–56; 9:3–6; 10:40–41; 13:30–37; 17:31–32; 22:6–11; 25:19; 26:6–18, 22–23). See Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 137–38. On the numerical growth as a possible echo of God’s covenantal promises, see Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, SGC 3B (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 94; Trites and Larkin, *The Gospel of Luke and Acts*, 428.

<sup>661</sup> Larkin, “Mission in Acts,” 174.

issue that has puzzled many interpreters is the open-ended conclusion of Acts.<sup>662</sup> Some speculate that “the book seeks to draw the readers in to identify with the powerful advance of the gospel of salvation, and to include them in the continuing task of spreading this word.”<sup>663</sup> Therefore, this open-endedness would be “a reminder of an unfinished task and encouragement to all of us as readers to be committed to the ongoing *missio Dei*.”<sup>664</sup> In this sense, Acts is similar to Mark. As Darrell Bock puts it, “the church is still preaching the word.”<sup>665</sup>

### Mission in John

Mission has a central role in John’s theology.<sup>666</sup> Here, I will deal with the Gospel only. The letters will be briefly discussed further ahead, and, since the focus of this dissertation is mission in Revelation, that book is not included either in the ensuing discussion. As follows, three major aspects of the missionary theology in the Fourth Gospel will be briefly examined, namely, the mission of Jesus, the mission of the Spirit, and the mission of Jesus’ followers.

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<sup>662</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 156. Köstenberger and O’Brien mention that “The ends of the earth are never reached in Acts. The mission goal is never completed. It remains open. [...] The apostolic testimony did not reach the ends of the earth with Paul’s arrival in Rome” (131, 157).

<sup>663</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 157.

<sup>664</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 157. See also Brian S. Rosner, “The Progress of the Word,” in Marshall and Peterson, *Witness to the Gospel*, 233; William H. Willimon, *Acts*, Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox, 1988), 192.

<sup>665</sup> Darrell Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 758.

<sup>666</sup> See Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1502–14; see also 1502n43 and 1512n89–90 for additional bibliography. For a lengthy study on the Gospel of John, see Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 45–198. Although some scholars wonder whether the Gospel of John is really concerned about mission, it seems there is an increasing understanding that the answer is yes. For details, see Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 280–96; Martin Erdmann, “Mission in John’s Gospel and Letters,” in Larkin and Williams, *Mission in the New Testament*, 207–26; Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 203–26; Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 75–97; D. A. Carson, “The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel: John 20:31 Reconsidered,” *JBL* 104, no. 4 (1987): 639–51. For a summary of scholarly

## The Mission of Jesus

Andreas J. Köstenberger has shown that the mission of Jesus plays a crucial role in John's missionary theology. He argues that what Jesus does cannot be dissociated from who he is. The divinity<sup>667</sup> of Jesus and his humanity<sup>668</sup> are crucial elements of John's teaching, without which a broader comprehension of Jesus' deeds and their relation to his mission is not possible. Thus, Jesus' human and divine attributes qualify him "for a unique mission."<sup>669</sup> Furthermore, a better understanding of Jesus' mission sheds light on the way one ought to see the disciples' mission and, consequently, the mission of the church.

Köstenberger observes that Jesus' signs and works depicted in the Fourth Gospel have the goal of revealing what kind of Messiah Jesus is. The signs are never applied to the disciples' mission. The reason for this is that they foreshadow Jesus' death and resurrection,<sup>670</sup> and, thus, reveal Jesus' unique identity as the Messiah sent by God<sup>671</sup> and

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opinions see Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 5–16.

<sup>667</sup> In that connection, the Fourth Gospel emphasizes (1) Jesus' preexistence (1:1, 14, 18; 15, 30; 3:17; 4:34; 5:23–24, 30, 36–38, 43; 6:14, 46; 7:28–29; 8:58; 9:33, 39; 10:10; 11:27; 12:46; 15:22; 16:27–28; 17:5, 8, 24; 18:37); (2) acknowledgment (6:68; 11:3, 12, 21, 27, 32; 13:6, 9, 25, 36; 45:5, 8, 22; 21:16, 17, 20, 21) and worship (9:38; 20:28) of Jesus as Lord; (3) Jesus' claim of divinity (5:17–18; 10:30; "I Am" sayings); (4) Jesus' uniqueness and unique sonship (1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; cf. 1:34, 49; 3:17, 18, 35, 36; 5:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26; 5:25; 6:40; 8:35, 36; 10:36; 11:4, 27; 14:13; 17:1; 19:7; 20:31); and (5) Jesus' Messiahship (1:41; 4:25, 29; 7:26, 27, 31, 41, 42; 9:22 10:24; 11:27; 12:34). For details, see Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 46–50.

<sup>668</sup> Jesus' human attributes are evident in 4:6–7; 11:35; 19:28, 30, 38–42, with human designations such as "teacher" (1:38, 49; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8; 13:13–14; 20:16); sir (4:11, 15, 49; 5:7; 11:34, 39); and "man" (4:29; 5:12; 7:46; 8:40; 9:11, 16, 24; 10:33; 11:47, 50; 14:5; 18:14, 17, 29; see also the title "Son of Man" in 1:51; 3:13, 14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23, 24; 13:31). For details, see Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 50–51.

<sup>669</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 46. For a helpful summary on the relationship between Christology and mission in John, see Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 283–86.

<sup>670</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 54, 72. Köstenberger rejects the idea that the crucifixion, the resurrection, or the miraculous catch of fish can be considered as an additional sign completing a seven-element list of signs. Rather, he suggests that the cleansing of the temple (2:14–17) must be included in the list. One of his arguments is that the signs are located in the first half (1–12), whereas the second half (13–

His true representative.<sup>672</sup> While an overlap between signs and works must be admitted (6:30; 9:3–4, 16), an important distinction is that, whereas “signs” are related to Jesus’ mission only, John allows a few exceptions in which “works” can also refer to the disciples’ mission.<sup>673</sup> If Köstenberger’s assessment that the cross itself is not a “sign” but the event the signs point to is correct, paradoxically, the cross becomes the *Grand Momentum* of Jesus’ glory — the vehicle *par excellence* through which Jesus’ glory is revealed.<sup>674</sup> His “theology of the cross may be particularly designed to make as palatable as possible for his readers the notion of a crucified Messiah.”<sup>675</sup>

In order to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah (20:30–31),<sup>676</sup> John presents him as the Sent Son,<sup>677</sup> the Coming and Returning One,<sup>678</sup> and the eschatological Shepherd-

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21) revolves around the counterpart of the signs: that is to say, they focus on Jesus’ death and resurrection. For details and other arguments, see pages 54–72. While scholars in general acknowledge six signs (Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 56), the idea of a seventh sign is controversial. By and large, those who see a sevenfold list argue for the resurrection of Lazarus as the seventh item (Köstenberger, *John*, 321; Morris, *John*, 473; Brown, *John*, 430).

<sup>671</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 62.

<sup>672</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 73.

<sup>673</sup> See 14:12; cf. 3:19–21; 6:27–30; 8:39–41. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 72.

<sup>674</sup> Indeed, many scholars have interpreted Jesus’ request in 17:1, “glorify your Son” (cf. 12:23) in relation to Jesus’ death on the cross. However, since Jesus’ request also included “glorify me in your own presence with the glory *that I had with you before the world existed*” (17:5, emphasis added), his exaltation is also in view. Jesus’ death and exaltation cannot be separated. See D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), 554.

<sup>675</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 80.

<sup>676</sup> Köstenberger observes that innumerable passages in John utilize mission terminology in relation to Jesus in order to indicate messianic expectations that are finally fulfilled in him (20:31). See Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 94–96. Two puzzling, interconnected questions related to mission arise from the reading of 20:31: (1) Does “you” in “you may believe” refer to believers or non-believers? (2) Should one read πιστεύω/*believe* as a present subjunctive (“you may continue to believe,” i.e., addressing believers) or as an aorist subjunctive (“you may come to believe,” i.e., addressing non-believers)? Advocates of both views present reasonable arguments. Those who tend to see the Fourth Gospel as having an evangelistic intent support the reading of πιστεύω as an aorist subjunctive, “you may come to believe,” e.g., Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 755–56. As important as these issues may be to the study of mission in the Gospel of John, there is no time or space to address them here. Furthermore, even if the “believers” view is correct, this does not

Teacher.<sup>679</sup> These tasks summarize the mission of Jesus in the Gospel of John.<sup>680</sup> Some “coming” passages are connected with a purpose statement.<sup>681</sup> Thus, Jesus came to offer abundant life (10:10);<sup>682</sup> to be the light of the world (12:46; cf. 1:9; 8:12; 9:5);<sup>683</sup> “to save the world” (12:47; cf. 3:17; 1 John 4:14); “to bear witness to the truth” (18:37);<sup>684</sup> and also for judgment (9:39).<sup>685</sup> The depiction of Jesus as the Shepherd-Teacher becomes

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mean that the Fourth Gospel does not have a missionary impulse. It only means that this Gospel is not an evangelistic document itself. However, it is missionary in that it shows that Jesus involved his followers into his own mission and envisioned their future engagement to mission after his death and resurrection..

<sup>677</sup> The references are too many. In addition, besides the verbs ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω, other terms relate to sending language in the Fourth Gospel. For details, see Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 96–121.

<sup>678</sup> Köstenberger identifies four different kinds of references to coming-and-returning language: (1) “coming into the world” (1:9; 3:19; 9:39; 12:46; 16:28; and 18:37); (2) “come” without the prepositional phrase “into the world” (10:10; 12:47; 15:22); (3) “come” in parallelism to sending (6:38; 7:28–29); (4) coming and going together or one of them implied (7:35; 8:14, 21–22; 13:1, 3, 33; 14:2, 3, 12, 28; 16:7, 28; 17:11, 13). Also, John develops “coming and going” terminology by using descent-ascent language, which, in turn, is associated with Jesus as the Son of Man (3:13; 6:62) and the Bread of Life (6:33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58). For more, see Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 121–30 and Leon Morris, *Jesus Is the Christ: Studies in the Theology of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 102–4. Morris remarks that no other NT writer is as interested in this concept of mission as John. Likewise, John is the NT writer who most emphasizes God’s love for humankind as his propelling motivation for sending the Son (3:16; 1 John 4:9–11). For details, see Erdmann, “Mission in John’s Gospel,” 216–18.

<sup>679</sup> Chap. 10; 11:51–52. Other relevant passages include 1:37–43; chap. 15; 21:15–23. However, this portrayal pervades the book from end to end (Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 140). Köstenberger argues that without this dimension, “a discussion and understanding of the Fourth Gospel’s presentation of Jesus’ mission remains incomplete” (134).

<sup>680</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 138.

<sup>681</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 123.

<sup>682</sup> Martin Erdmann notices that “John seems to characterize most frequently the saving purpose of Christ’s mission as the giving of life, which appears like a refrain throughout his gospel” (3:16; 5:24–25; 6:57; 10:10; 11:25–26; 17:2; 20:31; also 1 John 2:25; 3:14; 4:9; 5:11–13). See Erdmann, “Mission in John’s Gospel,” 213.

<sup>683</sup> This is also an important motif in John. For a brief discussion on the importance of the concept of light to John’s missionary theology, see Morris, *Jesus Is the Christ*, 111–13.

<sup>684</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller remark that “testimony” is a major feature of John’s Christology. See Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 285.

<sup>685</sup> Jesus’ statement in 9:39, “For judgment I came into this world” does not contradict what he says in 3:17 (cf. 12:47; 8:15), “God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world” (NASB). Indeed, Jesus came to save the world (3:17; 12:47). But judgment naturally results from his coming (Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*, UBS Handbook

clear as one sees that an integral part of his mission was (1) to call others to follow him (1:37; 8:12; 10:4, 5, 27; 12:26; 21:19–23); (2) to gather and bring other sheep to “this fold” (10:16a; cf. 11:52), so that “there will be one flock, one shepherd” (10:16b);<sup>686</sup> (3) to call followers to gather his eschatological harvest (10:16; cf. 4:34–38; 14:12; 17:20; 20:21–23; 21:15–19)<sup>687</sup> thereby connecting the disciples’ mission to his own mission. This portrayal of Jesus’ mission intends to lead readers to believe<sup>688</sup> and glorify God<sup>689</sup> by engaging in the mission that has been ascribed to them.<sup>690</sup> Thus, the earth will be filled with God’s glory by means of the universal mission<sup>691</sup> of the church in the power of the Spirit.

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Series [New York: United Bible Societies, 1993], 319), since “saving some entails condemning others” (Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 377).

<sup>686</sup> It is Jesus’ death that provides the means through which that would be possible (12:24; cf. 10:11, 15, 17). R. T. France argues that Jesus utilizes the shepherd imagery from the OT in the self-portrayal of his Messianic mission. R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament: His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 103–10.

<sup>687</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 133–38; Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 203–4.

<sup>688</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 139.

<sup>689</sup> Erdmann, “Mission in John’s Gospel,” 213. For details, see pages 213–15. See also Thomas R. Schreiner, “A Biblical Theology of the Glory of God,” in Storms and Taylor, *For the Fame of God’s Name*, 229–30.

<sup>690</sup> Erdmann, “Mission in John’s Gospel,” 215.

<sup>691</sup> While the expression πάντα τὰ ἔθνη/all the nations does not occur in John as in the Synoptics, this does not mean that John does not allude to the universal scope of mission. Universal language pervades the Gospel as a whole. In 1:9 (NKJV), Jesus is “the true light which gives light to every man.” In 6:40, “everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life” (cf. 11:26). The idea that “whoever believes” in Jesus has eternal life pervades the entire Gospel (3:15–16; 11:26; 3:36; 5:24; 6:47; 6:35; 7:38; 11:25; also 4:14; 6:37, 54, 56, 57, 58; 8:12; and 12:25). Jesus is the Savior of the world (4:42; cf. 3:17; 12:47). Jesus died not only for Israel but also to gather those “who are scattered abroad (11:51–52). He has “other sheep” (10:16). However, in using universal language, John does not mean that every human being will be saved. Salvation is open to all but will be granted only to those who believe in Jesus as the Way, Truth, and Life, the only access to the Father (14:6). For details, see Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 283–86.



## The Mission of the Spirit

As Luke (Luke 24:48–49; Acts 1:8), John also connects the mission of the church with the work of the Spirit (John 16:8–10).<sup>692</sup> Also, one can find the promise of the Spirit in various passages in John conveying temple theology (7:37–39; chaps. 13–17).<sup>693</sup> John’s teaching concerning the Spirit is parallel to that in the Synoptics in various aspects.<sup>694</sup> On the other hand, John’s references to the Spirit as Paraclete (παράκλητος, 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) and Spirit of truth (14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 4:6; cf. 1 John 5:6) are unique. This terminology is a particular feature of the farewell discourse (John 14–16), where Jesus focuses on what the Spirit will do in the church after Jesus’ resurrection.<sup>695</sup>

There is no consensus in the literature as to the meaning of παράκλητος.<sup>696</sup> It is accepted, however, that it is a verbal adjective from παρακαλέω, with a passive sense.<sup>697</sup> With caution, one should notice the idea of nearness originating from the preposition παρά.<sup>698</sup> Therefore, to say the least, παράκλητος simply means “called to be near” or “called to stand beside.”<sup>699</sup> However, one can be called to be near for a number of

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<sup>692</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1508.

<sup>693</sup> Wright, “Reading the New Testament Missionally,” 186. For details, see pages 185–93.

<sup>694</sup> John indicates that Jesus receives the Spirit in the beginning of his ministry (1:33; cf. Matt 3:11, 13–17; Mark 1:8–11; Luke 3:16, 21–22) and the disciples, after Jesus’ resurrection (John 20:22; cf. 7:38–39).

<sup>695</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 286–87.

<sup>696</sup> *EDNT*, 3:29.

<sup>697</sup> *BDAG*, 766; *EDNT*, 3:28.

<sup>698</sup> Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 627–28.

<sup>699</sup> Silva, *New International Dictionary*, 628.

purposes, such as helping, teaching, advocating, guiding, and comforting, to list a few.<sup>700</sup>

It is possible that John uses the term precisely because of its range of meanings,<sup>701</sup> for the Spirit does all these things (e.g., 14:26; 16:13). The Spirit continues the work of Jesus in that he does for the church what Jesus did for the disciples,<sup>702</sup> as below.

Table 1. The Spirit and Christ

The Spirit	Christ
“...he [the Father] will give you another <i>Parakletos</i> , to be <b>with you</b> ( <i>meth’hymōn</i> ) forever” (author’s translation) John 14:16; cf. 14:17	“and he remained there <b>with them</b> ( <i>met’autōn</i> ) “yet a little while I am <b>with you</b> ( <i>meth’hymōn</i> )” John 3:22; 13:33; cf. Matt 28:20
“he will <b>give</b> you another <i>Parakletos</i> .” John 14:16	he <b>gave</b> his only Son” John 3:16
“Whom the Father will <b>send</b> in my name” John 14:26	“Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who <b>sent</b> him.” <sup>703</sup> John 5:23 (and many others)
“he will <b>teach</b> you all things” John 14:26	“Jesus went up into the temple and began <b>teaching</b> ” John 7:14 (cf. 8:2)
“When the <i>Parakletos</i> <b>comes</b> ( <i>erchomai</i> ), .... who <b>comes from</b> ( <i>ekporeuomai</i> ) the Father...” (author’s translation) John 15:26	“ <b>I came from</b> ( <i>exerchomai</i> ) the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving ( <i>poreuomai</i> ) the world and going to the Father) John 16:28
“he will <b>bear witness about me</b> ” John 15:26 <sup>704</sup>	“ <b>I am the one who bears witness about myself</b> ” <sup>705</sup> John 8:18a
“he will <b>guide</b> you into all the truth”	“for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth”

<sup>700</sup> See L&N, 141.

<sup>701</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 287.

<sup>702</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 287.

<sup>703</sup> The Son is also portrayed as sending the Spirit (16:7; 15:26). This shows the close connection between The Father and the Son in the Fourth Gospel.

<sup>704</sup> Interestingly, the Παράκλητος is further portrayed in this passage as the Spirit of truth. In 18:37, Jesus bears witness to the truth.

<sup>705</sup> In the Fourth Gospel, the Father (5:32; 8:18b) and the Spirit (15:26) bear witness about the Son (15:26), and Jesus bears testimony about himself (5:31; 8:14, 18a).

John 16:13	John 18:37
“when he comes, he will <i>convict</i> ( <i>elenchō</i> ) the world concerning <u>sin</u> and <u>righteousness</u> and <u>judgment</u> ”	“If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been <u>guilty of sin</u> , but now they have <u>no excuse for their sin</u> ”.
John 16:8	John 15:22 <sup>706</sup>

The data above<sup>707</sup> suggest that the Spirit continues the work that Jesus started on earth. This is evident by John’s use of the term παράκλητος to refer to the Holy Spirit. He is the One *called to be near* for the purpose of teaching, bearing witness, guiding, convincing, etc., just as Jesus did. The postulation that John applies the term παράκλητος for the sake of its polysemous nature is very plausible. Furthermore, the Spirit not only continues the work of Jesus but also acts as a linkage between Jesus and the church.<sup>708</sup>

The term “Spirit of truth” enhances the parallels between the work of Jesus and that of the Spirit. First, this term is used twice as an explanation for the term παράκλητος (14:16–17; 15:26). Second, the terminology of 15:26 resembles that of 14:6. As Leon

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<sup>706</sup> As J. Ramsey Michaels observes, “to convict the world concerning sin” is “what Jesus himself has done” (Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 833). The Fourth Gospel contains various passages dealing with the “conviction of the world concerning sin (3:19–21, 5:28 f., 38–47, 8:21 ff., 34–47, 9:41, 14:27, 15:18–24); righteousness (5:30, 7:18, 7:24, 8:28, 8:46, 8:50, 8:54, 12:32, 14:31, 18:37); and judgment (12:31, 14:30, 17:15)” (Brooke Foss Westcott and Arthur Westcott, eds., *The Gospel according to St. John Introduction and Notes on the Authorized Version*, CCGNT (London: J. Murray, 1908), 228). To a lesser or greater extent, all these passages are descriptions of Jesus’ mission. Interestingly, in the Psalms of Solomon, a Davidic figure is portrayed with a phraseology very close to that of John 16:8. The similarities between the two passages are noteworthy: “See, O Lord, and raise up their king for them, a **son of David**... to **reprove** (ἐλέγχω) sinners.... And he will gather a holy people whom he will lead in righteousness, and he will judge tribes of the people sanctified by the Lord its God.” (Ps Sol 17:23, 27–28, LES (cf. v. 41).

<sup>707</sup> Also Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 965.

<sup>708</sup> This becomes clear by the usage of the expression “another Παράκλητος” (14:16), which suggests that Jesus acted as, as it were, the first Παράκλητος during his earthly ministry. Although παράκλητος is applied to Jesus in 1 John 2:1, it seems to have a more specific meaning there. See *EDNT*, 3:28. That the Spirit has the function of being a linkage between another member of the Godhead and the church is also evident in 1 John 4:12–13 (cf. also 3:24). The text in 4:13 is clear that the Father is the subject of “he *abides* in us” once this is the natural conclusion from 4:12. However, while most scholars affirm that this is also the case in 3:24, especially on the basis of 4:12–13, the possibility that Jesus is the subject cannot be discharged. See Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John: Translated, with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, AB 30 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 465.

Morris observes, “The verb ‘guide’ (ὁδηγέω, here only in John) is connected with the word for ‘way’ (ὁδός); just as Jesus is the Way, so he is the Truth (14:6) to whom the Spirit of truth leads people.”<sup>709</sup> Consequently, the Spirit has a revelatory function, which is described in terms of teaching and reminding (14:26). Very likely the two ideas form a unit—teaching by reminding—in that “what is meant is a later recollection of the message of Jesus (cf. 2:22; 12:16; 16:4),”<sup>710</sup> likely meaning inspiration of the Scripture. Thus, there is no new teaching, only reminding of Jesus’ teaching.

Finally, Jesus’ statement that his followers would do “greater works than these” (14:12e) is to be interpreted in light of its immediate context, “because I am going to the Father” (14:12f; cf. 16:7) as well as the broader context of chapters 14–16. In other words, “greater works than these” would be possible through the power of the Spirit. Therefore, more than simply replacing the presence of Christ, the Spirit intensifies it.<sup>711</sup> As one can infer from 20:21–23, this intensification results in power for the church to fulfill its missionary call.<sup>712</sup> In reading John 14–16 from this perspective, one can agree with N. T. Wright’s contention that the farewell discourse is “a preparation for the mission to the world.”<sup>713</sup>

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<sup>709</sup> Morris, *Jesus Is the Christ*, 157. The two statements also share the verb “to come” and the noun “Father.”

<sup>710</sup> *EDNT*, 3:28.

<sup>711</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 287. Senior and Stuhlmüller further state that “there is little doubt that this intensification of the power and presence of the risen Christ in the community through the presence of the Spirit-Paraclete is linked to the church’s missionary experience” (287).

<sup>712</sup> Dunn goes as far as to state, “It is not so much the case of where Jesus is there is the kingdom, as where the Spirit is there is the kingdom.” James Dunn, “Spirit and Kingdom,” *Expository Times* 82 (1970–71): 38.

<sup>713</sup> Wright, “Reading the Bible Missionally,” 186.

## The Mission of Jesus' Followers

In John, both the mission of the Spirit and that of Jesus' followers must be understood in reference to the mission of Jesus himself. The mission of Jesus is continued through the body of believers in the power of the Spirit. The tasks of harvesting, bearing fruit, and witnessing are all seen as an extension of Jesus' mission. In this manner, the disciples reap that for which they did not labor as the ones sent by Jesus (4:38); they prove to be Jesus' disciples by bearing much fruit (15:8); they bear witness because they have been with Jesus from the beginning (15:27); and they will do "greater works" because of the abiding presence of Jesus through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (14:12–13).<sup>714</sup> The opposite is also true: the more fully the disciples abide in Jesus, the more they understand and fulfill their own role in mission (John 15).<sup>715</sup>

Two key passages for understanding the church's mission in the Fourth Gospel are 14:12 and 20:21–23. However, before turning toward these passages, a brief comment on the missionary agents is necessary. Although the term ἐκκλησία/*church* does not occur in the gospel of John, the fourth evangelist applies corporate metaphors such as "flock" (chap. 10) and "vine" to refer to Jesus' messianic community.<sup>716</sup> In addition, while John does not obliterate the function of Jesus' first disciples, he widens the concept of μαθητής/*disciple* to include a larger group not limited by time and space (8:31; 13:35;

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<sup>714</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 141.

<sup>715</sup> For an insightful discussion on that respect, see Michael J. Gordon, *Abide and Go: Missional Theosis in the Gospel of John* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2018). In abiding in Jesus, the "disciples participate in the divine love and life, and therefore in the life-giving mission of God" (Gordon, *Abide and Go*, 27).

<sup>716</sup> "These metaphors transfer descriptions of OT Israel to the group of Jesus' followers, thus marking an important salvation-historical development." Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 143. See also p. 161.

15:8; 17).<sup>717</sup> Therefore, as the reader moves toward the end of the gospel, physical seeing is no longer a *sine qua non* condition for witnessing or believing (20:29),<sup>718</sup> in such a manner that Jesus' missionary assignments to his first disciples (4:38; 17:18; 20:21) are applicable to every believer from that point onwards (cf. 14:12).<sup>719</sup>

The first key passage has been an object of much debate for centuries. After all, what did Jesus mean by "greater works than these" (14:12e)? How could one possibly perform mightier works than those performed by Jesus? Indeed, scholars seem to be far from consensus on the matter.<sup>720</sup> An overall explanation regards the success that would mark the disciples' missionary activities. The fact is that Jesus provides the grounds upon which those greater works are made possible in the end of 14:2, "because I am going to the Father," which is evidence that they take place after Jesus' death and exaltation. Thus, as D. A. Carson puts it, the greater works are connected to "the new eschatological age"

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<sup>717</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 149.

<sup>718</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 150–52. The fact that non-eyewitnesses can share in the same fellowship as those who saw, heard, and touched the earthly Jesus seems to be sharpened in 1 John 1:1–4. Although some scholars deny that by "we" John did not mean eyewitnesses (for arguments, see Brown, *The Epistles of John*, 158–61; also 193–94, 356–58, 498–99, 522–25, 724), there are good reasons to believe that this is the case. See Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester: Apollos, 2000), 61).

<sup>719</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 152.

<sup>720</sup> The suggestions include: (1) no geographical or temporal limitations (Newman and Nida, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*, 462); (2) emphasis on the mighty works of conversion as those portrayed in the book of Acts (Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 574); (3) that which was done by Peter (at Pentecost) and Paul (through his journeys) after Jesus ascended into heaven once the Spirit was now available (Frédéric Louis Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of John: With a Critical Introduction*, trans. S. Taylor [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1900], 3:138–39); (4) more people receiving the benefit of Jesus' death (J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 780); (5) the conversion of the Gentiles (William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, New Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1953–2001], 2:273); (6) "the conveying to people of the spiritual realities of which the works of Jesus are 'signs'" (George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC 36 [Dallas: Word, 1999], 254); (7) the disciples' works are based on the work Jesus completed on the cross (Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 433). Not all of these suggestions are mutually exclusive.

and “the power of the eschatological Spirit.”<sup>721</sup> In short, the emphasis is not so much “on the marvelous character of the ‘greater works’” but on “their eschatological character.”<sup>722</sup> They concern what Jesus’ followers would do in the power of the Spirit throughout the Christian era until the return of Christ.

The second key passage (20:21–23) develops 14:12 in that while the latter implies “a distinction between the time before and the time after Jesus’ glorification and return to the Father,”<sup>723</sup> the former presupposes “Jesus’ completed work (cf. 17:4), *i.e.*, his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension (cf. 20:17, 19–20).<sup>724</sup> John 20:21–23 is one of three instances in which sending terminology is applied to the disciples (cf. 4:38; 17:18). In 4:38 the disciples are sent to harvest,<sup>725</sup> but this is only an anticipation of 20:21, since Jesus’ actual sending of the disciples will not take place until his death and resurrection.<sup>726</sup> Köstenberger argues that the harvest language in 4:38 is tantamount to bearing fruit in 15:16. Both have evangelistic connotations.<sup>727</sup> However, John 17:18 and 20:21 move the matter a step forward once the usage of the adverb *καθώς*/*just as* establishes a connection between Jesus’ having been sent by the Father and Jesus’ sending of the disciples (cf. 6:57; 15:9). Jesus’ relationship with the Father becomes a model for Jesus’ relationship with the disciples. More than that, Jesus’ obedience to the commission he received from the Father becomes a model to be followed by Jesus’

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<sup>721</sup> Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 496.

<sup>722</sup> Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 633.

<sup>723</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 180.

<sup>724</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 180.

<sup>725</sup> For details, see Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 180–84.

<sup>726</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 181, 184.

disciples. The mission of Jesus is the basis upon which the mission of Jesus' followers is grounded.<sup>728</sup> In a sense, ultimately, the disciples do not have a separate mission, but continue Jesus' mission.

Despite the similarities between 17:18 and 20:21, one can also learn from the differences. While 17:18 focuses more on the process of sending, in 20:21 it is the relationship between the sender and the sent one that is being highlighted.<sup>729</sup> In 17:18 the prepositional phrase "into the world" has its counterpart in 17:16, "they are not of the world." This indicates that before being sent into the world, the disciples must be set apart from the world.<sup>730</sup> While building upon 17:18, the message of 20:21 underscores the authority and legitimation with which Jesus invested the disciples.<sup>731</sup> This happens by means of the Spirit. As in the farewell discourse, here the Spirit is closely related to the mission of the church (20:22). He is the empowerment that makes the disciples' future mission possible (20:23).<sup>732</sup> Thus, the disciples are Jesus' agents (cf. 13:20) as they fulfill their mission through the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>733</sup>

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<sup>727</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 184–85.

<sup>728</sup> See Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1505.

<sup>729</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 187.

<sup>730</sup> This is confirmed in 17:17, "Sanctify them in the truth" (emphasis added). Köstenberger calls attention to the repetition of ἀγιάζω in 17:16–19 and καθάρως in 13:8–14; 15:3 (Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 187).

<sup>731</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 190.

<sup>732</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 643. Also Richard Bauckham, "The Fourth Gospel as the Testimony of the Beloved Disciple," in Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser, *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 127. Bauckham states that the catch of fish in the conclusion of John's gospel symbolizes "the coming mission of the church" (128).

<sup>733</sup> Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 1014.



To summarize the discussion above, the mission of Jesus, the mission of the Holy Spirit, and the mission of the church are inseparable elements.<sup>734</sup> Indeed, they are integral parts of only one mission: the mission of God.<sup>735</sup> The church is summoned to proclaim forgiveness of sins, made available to humankind by means of Jesus' atoning death on the cross, in the power of the Spirit for the glory of God.

### **Mission in Paul**

Paul can be appropriately understood only if one first sees him as the missionary Paul.<sup>736</sup> In fact, it is widely acknowledged that Paul's writings "reflect some of the basic themes he had employed in his missionary preaching."<sup>737</sup> His Christology is the key element for understanding his mission theology.<sup>738</sup> Senior and StuhlmueLLer remark that "we touch a conviction so basic to Paul's thought and so multiple in its expression that it is perceptible in practically every paragraph of his correspondence."<sup>739</sup> This will be briefly explored as follows.

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<sup>734</sup> Just as Matt 28:16–20 and Luke 24:44–49 are climactic passages bringing their respective gospels to a conclusion and, at the same time, providing a sort of summary of the entire previous presentation, it seems that John 20:21–22 plays the same role in the Fourth Gospel; see Craig S. Keener, "Sent Like Jesus: Johannine Missiology," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 12, no. 1 (2009): 21–45. This paper is also now available in Keener, *For All Peoples*, 21–46.

<sup>735</sup> Senior and StuhlmueLLer notice that "the Father, alone, is not sent. He is the origin and the goal of all the testimony of the Gospel." Senior and StuhlmueLLer, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 292.

<sup>736</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 170.

<sup>737</sup> Senior and StuhlmueLLer, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 185.

<sup>738</sup> Senior and StuhlmueLLer, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 173.

<sup>739</sup> Senior and StuhlmueLLer, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 173. For more details, see also pages 173–75. In this dissertation, the thirteen epistles making up the Pauline *corpus* are considered to be authentic and, hence, taken into account in this section. If Carson and Moo's assessment that "pseudonymity is not attested in the New Testament" (Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 350) is correct, all the Pauline corpus is to be considered whatever the theological theme is. For more details on Carson and Moo's arguments, see pages 337–50.

## Paul's Conversion<sup>740</sup> and Calling: The Apostle to the Gentiles<sup>741</sup>

By and large, Paul's experience on the road to Damascus is seen as the starting point for the study of his theology.<sup>742</sup> The encounter with the risen Christ shaped his thought and influenced altogether his perspective on mission. While a description of the event itself can be found only in Acts (9:1–20; 22:1–21; 26:12–23), Paul alludes to it a few times in his letters (Gal 1:11–17; 1 Cor 9:1–2; 15:8–11).<sup>743</sup> In the Pauline corpus, Galatians 1:11–17 seems to be the most decisive passage when it comes to how radical the experience on the road to Damascus was. In defending his apostleship, Paul states that the authenticity of his calling traces back to a “revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:12) rather than a sort of hand-me-down commission (1:16b–17a). He makes clear that some circumstances in his previous life were an obstacle for him to respond to the gospel in a positive way (1:13–14).<sup>744</sup> But he is aware that God<sup>745</sup> set him apart before he was born (lit., “from my mother’s womb”) and called him to proclaim Christ among the Gentiles (1:15–16). The expression “was pleased to reveal” (εὐδόκησεν... ἀποκαλύψαι) in 1:15–16 points to God’s initiative. The fact that the language of 1:15 echoes that of the calling of

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<sup>740</sup> For some scholars, conversion language should not be applied to Paul's experience on the road to Damascus. However, Paul's experience there is too radical an event not to be considered a conversion. For a brief discussion on this topic, see Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 125–29.

<sup>741</sup> For a discussion on Paul's idea of conversion and calling, see Stephen J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 43–210.

<sup>742</sup> See, e.g., Schnelle, *Theology of the New Testament*, 239–41.

<sup>743</sup> Some scholars also refer to 2 Cor 4:6, but the passage is disputed. For arguments in favor of an allusion to the Damascus road event, see Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology*, trans. Eugene Boring (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 87–97.

<sup>744</sup> Timothy George, *Galatians*, NAC 30 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 113.

<sup>745</sup> God is certainly the subject of the participles ἀφορίσας and καλέσας (cf. 1:6; 2:8; 3:5; and 5:8). See Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 30.

OT prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah makes this point even clearer.<sup>746</sup> As Schnelle remarks, “Paul himself thus becomes an integral element in God’s plan of salvation.”<sup>747</sup>

Paul emphasizes the visionary nature of his experience on the Damascus road in 1 Corinthians 15:8. It is more than a mere vision, but an actual appearance of the risen Christ. Paul lists himself among others to whom Christ appeared after his resurrection (1 Cor 15:1–7).<sup>748</sup> Although not explicitly mentioned, it is implied that that encounter resulted in his calling to be an apostle (1 Cor 15:9–11). In 9:1–2 he uses the same term translated as “appeared” in 15:5–8 (ὀράω). The questions in 9:1 are rhetorical, “[...] Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen (ὀράω) Jesus our Lord? [...]” They demand an emphatic and positive answer,<sup>749</sup> “Obviously, yes!” As in 15:8, also here Paul sees his experience on the Damascus road as a resurrection appearance.<sup>750</sup> In addition, these two passages show that, for Paul, the encounter with the risen Christ and his calling to be an apostle were closely connected.<sup>751</sup> It is clear from Galatians 1:16 that Paul saw his place in God’s redemptive plan, including his commission to the Gentiles, as linked to his

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<sup>746</sup> See Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 69–70; James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, BNTC (London: Continuum, 1993), 62–68. For a slightly different opinion, see J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 155–59. Martyn agrees that OT narratives background Paul’s statement but, rather than comparing himself to OT prophets, Paul focuses on God’s plan of calling him to preach among the Gentiles as, so to speak, the fulfillment of an ancient project.

<sup>747</sup> Schnelle, *Theology of the New Testament*, 240.

<sup>748</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 732.

<sup>749</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 394. First Corinthians 9:1 presents four questions in Greek introduced, respectively, by the negatives οὐκ, οὐκ, οὐχί, and οὐ. Οὐκ and οὐχί are variations of οὐ, and all of them demand an affirmative answer.

<sup>750</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 394.

<sup>751</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 166.

encounter with the risen Christ.<sup>752</sup> However, Paul's self-understanding of his apostleship is also expressed in several other passages.<sup>753</sup>

Indeed, throughout his letters Paul identifies himself by the term "apostle,"<sup>754</sup> usually followed by the genitive phrase "of Jesus Christ." In Romans 1:1 and Titus 1:1 the concept of "apostle" is connected to the notion of a "servant" (cf. also 2 Cor 4:5; Gal 1:10; Phil 1:1).<sup>755</sup> By the way, several commentators believe that Paul uses "servant" in connection with the phrase "servant of Yahweh" in the OT.<sup>756</sup> In light of Acts 13:47, it is also possible that in employing the term "servant" Paul had in mind Isaianic passages such as 42:6 and 49:6.<sup>757</sup> If that assessment is correct, it enhances the idea that in

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<sup>752</sup> However, very likely this does not mean that he "grasped everything about his calling to be a missionary or the nature of his worldwide mission" from that experience only (Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 163). In his testimony before Agrippa, he says he was "not disobedient to the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19), but his convictions must have grown and his understanding of his missionary task must have deepened as he "reflected further on the Old Testament Scriptures in relation to his mission within the purposes of God." See Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 163, 163n9. See also Appendix A, "When Was Paul Commissioned to Go to the Gentiles?" in P. T. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 22–25.

<sup>753</sup> A better grasp of Paul's self-understanding of his apostleship is not a matter of lesser importance. As Schnelle argues, "We can only understand Paul's letters, his missionary work, and the conflicts involved in it when we recognize that the apostle's self-understanding was the driving force of his life." See Schnelle, *Apostle Paul*, 158.

<sup>754</sup> See Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1; Titus 1:1; see also 1 Cor 4:9; 9:5; 12:28–29; 15:7, 9; Gal 1:17, 19; Eph 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; 1 Thess 2:7, where Paul presents himself as a collaborator with the other apostles. For more on Paul's use of the term "apostle," see Don N. Howell Jr., "Mission in Paul's Epistles: Genesis, Pattern, and Dynamics," in Larkin and Williams, *Mission in the New Testament*, 65–67.

<sup>755</sup> Don N. Howell Jr. states that δοῦλος/*servant* forms "a kind of a conceptual hendiadys with 'apostle'" (Howell, "Mission in Paul's Epistles," 69). This is doubtful, since in that type of construction the two terms are usually linked by καί ("and"). In any case, it is clear that the two terms are closely related. See Ian Christopher Levy et al., eds., *The Letter to the Romans*, trans. Ian Christopher Levy, Philip D. W. Krey, and Thomas Ryan, *The Bible in Medieval Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 66–68.

<sup>756</sup> E.g., Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT 6 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 32; Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, NAC 27 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 59–60; Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1973), 6; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, WBC 38A (Dallas: Word, 1988), 8.

<sup>757</sup> See Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 162;

Galatians 1:15 Paul compares himself to OT prophets such as Jeremiah and Isaiah. No wonder that he declares himself to be an imitator of Christ (1 Cor 11:1). Indeed, he is “a servant of Christ”! (Rom 1:1; Gal 1:10; Phil 1:1).

In Romans 11:13 (cf. also 15:16), Paul identifies himself as an “apostle to the Gentiles.”<sup>758</sup> In Galatians 3:14 (cf. 3:8–9) this is tantamount to sharing the blessing of Abraham. Other relevant passages revealing his self-understanding of his missionary work are 1 Corinthians 3:10–15; 9:19–23; 15:1–11; 2 Corinthians 2:14–16; 4:7–15; Romans 1:1–5, 14; 10:14–21; 15:15–21; Ephesians 3:1–13; and Colossians 1:24–29.<sup>759</sup> These passages provide details on his apostleship among Gentiles. Romans 1:1–5 and Ephesians 3:1–13 deserve further mention since, along with Galatians 1:15–16, they clearly situate Paul’s ministry within God’s plan of salvation.<sup>760</sup> The gospel he proclaimed was “promised [by God] beforehand through his prophets” (v. 2; cf. Gal 3:8, 13–14). The language of Romans 1:3–4 is reminiscent of God’s covenant with David (2 Sam 7; cf. also Ps 2:7). It is through Jesus, the Davidic King, that Paul received his apostleship “to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations” (Rom 1:5).

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and especially Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 8. For a recent study on the influence of Isa 40–55 on Paul’s missionary theology, see Ware, *Paul and the Mission*, 57–159.

<sup>758</sup> David J. Bosch observes that by “apostle to the Gentiles” Paul did not mean that he was turning his back on his own people, but only that in his ministry “the mission to Gentiles rather than to Jews has the highest priority” (Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 145; also 154–65). See also Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 185–91; Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 32, 215–20.

<sup>759</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, “Paul’s Missionary Strategy: Goals, Methods, and Realities,” in Porter and Westfall, *Christian Mission*, 156. Also, Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 164–67.

<sup>760</sup> Don N. Howell Jr. helpfully observes that Paul’s missiology is theocentric and that this is especially true in his letter to the Romans. God is portrayed as the one who plans, administers, and consummates our redemption. For details, see Don N. Howell Jr., “Mission in Paul’s Epistles: Theological Bearings,” in Larkin and Williams, *Mission in the New Testament*, 92–116.

Similarly, in Ephesians 3 Paul's ministry to the Gentiles (v. 8) is seen within the context of "the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God" (v. 9), according to God's "eternal purpose" realized in Christ (v. 9). In 3:1 Paul states that the mystery of God (cf. 1:9) was made known to him by revelation. He is a steward of God's grace (3:2). The term "mystery" abounds in this passage (vv. 3, 4, 9; and implied in 6), and is defined by Paul as the fact that now "the Gentiles are *fellow* heirs (συγκληρονόμα), *fellow* members of the body (σῶσωμα), and *fellow* sharers (συμμέτοχα) of the promise in Christ [...]" (3:6, my translation), meaning that the Gentiles, along with the Jews, are part of God's people in fulfillment of an ancient divine project.<sup>761</sup>

In 1 Timothy 2:7 and 2 Timothy 1:11, in addition to "apostle," Paul uses the nouns κήρυξ/*proclaimer*<sup>762</sup> and διδάσκαλος/*teacher* to refer to further aspects of his apostolic ministry. These are not different offices but integral parts of his apostleship.<sup>763</sup> Paul's apostleship and other major features of his missionary activity will be briefly discussed in the following section.

### Major Features of Paul's Missionary Theology

David J. Bosch states that Paul "is unparalleled in the profound way in which he

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<sup>761</sup> For more on mission in Ephesians, see Senior and Stuhlmueller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 199–207. Also, Wright, "Reading the New Testament Missionally," 189–90; Roy E. Ciampa, "Missio Dei and Imitatio Dei in Ephesians," in Laansma, Osborne, and Neste, *New Testament Theology*, 229–43.

<sup>762</sup> The meaning of κήρυξ in this passage is disputed.

<sup>763</sup> George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1992), 125. Also, Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 188. Interestingly, both in 1 Tim 2:7 and in 2 Tim 1:11 the terms "preacher," "apostle," and "teacher" occur in the same order. I. Howard Marshall postulates that the reason why "preacher" precedes "apostle" is because "the importance of preaching is being stressed. Possibly the apostolic task is conceived as being concerned more broadly with the establishment of a church after the initial preaching." See I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 434.

presents a universal Christian missionary vision.”<sup>764</sup> Thus, any study of his missionary theology is to be considered no more than an *only-at-the-beginning* treatment. With that in mind, below is a short summary of four major features of Paul’s missionary thought: task, message, response, and scope.<sup>765</sup>

## Task

Don N. Howell Jr. comments that Romans is the letter where one can find “the defining charter of Paul’s mission.”<sup>766</sup> Its introduction contains Paul’s task in a nutshell, “set apart for the gospel of God” (1:1; cf. Gal 2:7; 1 Thess 2:4).<sup>767</sup> Still in the introduction (1:1–17), he states, “I am eager to *preach the gospel*” (v. 15) and “I am not ashamed of the *gospel*” (v. 16).<sup>768</sup> The implication is that the phrase “set apart for the gospel” means “to preach the gospel.” In 15:16, Paul defines his ministry as a “priestly service of the gospel of God.” He fulfills “the ministry of the gospel of Christ” (v. 19) by preaching the

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<sup>764</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 170. Also, Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 161.

<sup>765</sup> The material in this section comes from the letters, not considering the book of Acts. For a valuable assessment of the missionary teaching of Paul’s letters in dialogue with the book of Acts, see Köstenberger and Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 151–95.

<sup>766</sup> Howell, “Mission in Paul’s Epistles,” 92. He mentions that “if the Pauline letters could be compared to the Himalaya Mountains, then the epistle to the Romans is Mt. Everest” (92). In turn, N. T. Wright observes that while “the Western church has rightly seen that Romans is a great missionary document,” it has often narrowed its missionary implications (Wright, “Reading the New Testament Missionally,” 191). At the heart of that letter is God’s covenant purpose. For more details, see Wright, “Reading the New Testament Missionally,” 191–92.

<sup>767</sup> For an overview of Paul’s missionary task throughout his letters, see Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 123–54.

<sup>768</sup> Paul Barnett argues that Rom 1:1 and 1:16-17 form an *inclusio* that calls attention to the central idea in Rom 1:1-17, namely, the gospel of God (see especially vv. 1, 9, 15, and 17). Paul Barnett, *Romans: The Revelation of God’s Righteousness*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Scotland: Christian Focus, 2003), 36.

gospel (v. 20). In short, Paul’s fundamental task of his apostleship is that of proclamation (cf. 1 Cor 15:17).<sup>769</sup>

The fact that Paul is portrayed as the agent of verbs of proclamation various times in his letters indicates that evangelism was an integral part of his mission.<sup>770</sup> In 1 Corinthians 9:19–23, he describes himself as a soul winner, trying to win as many people as possible. Clearly, his apostolic work involved not only evangelism but also a process of (1) planting churches (1 Cor 3:6–8; 9:7, 10, 11; cf. Rom 15:20; 1 Cor 3:10; 4:15; 2 Cor 11:2);<sup>771</sup> (2) nurturing them by providing pastoral care (e.g., 1 Cor 4:14; 2 Cor 11:28; 1 Thess 2:10–12)<sup>772</sup> and teaching (1 Cor 4:17; Col 1:28);<sup>773</sup> and (3) preparing them for mission,<sup>774</sup> which was also part of his teaching<sup>775</sup> and discipleship practice.<sup>776</sup> All of this

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<sup>769</sup> Howell remarks that Romans 1:15 and 15:14–33 form an *inclusio* that identifies Paul’s missionary agenda and frames “the articulation of the gospel, the constitution of his mission” (Howell, “Mission in Paul’s Epistles,” 93). For a diagram of “the parallelism and overlap of information between the two sections,” see John E. Toews, *Romans*, BCBC (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2004), 45. In turn, Ferdinand Hahn holds that Romans 15 contains “the basic ideas of the Pauline view of the mission” (Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament*, 107).

<sup>770</sup> See εὐαγγελίζω/*to preach the good news* in 1 Cor 1:17; 9:16, 18; 15:1–2; 2 Cor 11:7; Gal 1:8, 16, 23; 4:13; Eph 3:8; κηρύσσω/*to proclaim* in Rom 10:8; 1 Cor 1:23; 9:27; 15:11, 12; 2 Cor 4:5; 11:4; Gal 2:2; 5:11; 1 Thess 2:9; κήρυγμα/*proclamation* in Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 1:21; 2:4; 15:14; 2 Tim 4:17; Titus 1:3.

<sup>771</sup> Those passages reveal that, in addition to the metaphor of planting, Paul also applies the ideas of laying foundations, giving birth, and betrothing. See Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 180.

<sup>772</sup> The very letters Paul wrote to the churches can be seen as a pastoral practice.

<sup>773</sup> Schnabel remarks that Paul’s instructions to the churches involved theological and ethical aspects as well as other matters concerning the life of the church. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 236–41.

<sup>774</sup> See Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 248–55. Schnabel observes, “The New Testament sources do not state explicitly that Paul surrounded himself with a circle of coworkers for the express purpose of preparing them for missionary service. This is a plausible assumption, however, as they did not simply carry out menial tasks: they were involved in the same type of activities that Paul focused on” (248).

<sup>775</sup> Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 244.

<sup>776</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Romans*, IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 390.



is seen as a “priestly service” (Rom 15:16).<sup>777</sup>

## Message

In Paul, task and message are as inseparable as two faces of the same coin. If, in a word, proclamation is his task, the gospel is the message and content of his proclamation (e.g., 2 Thess 2:2, 4, 8–9).<sup>778</sup> His message was visibly impacted by his conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was the long-awaited Messiah and, hence, that the messianic age had already begun. Indeed, it is not possible to properly appreciate his emphasis on the cross of Christ (e.g., 1 Cor 1:18; Gal 6:14) without considering that his apocalyptic view of history—as made up of two ages, the present age and the age to come—was shaped by his encounter with the risen Christ on the Damascus road.<sup>779</sup> The age to come has been inaugurated by means of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.<sup>780</sup> In Christ, the Kingdom of God has broken through in the world (2 Cor 5:17; 6:2).<sup>781</sup>

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<sup>777</sup> John E. Toews sees here a possible echo of Isa 52:15. With that in mind, he concludes that “Paul sees his mission [...] as completing the mission of the Servant by taking the gospel to the nations.” See Toews, *Romans*, 353. This is not unlikely since, as Allison demonstrates, “the tradition stemming from Jesus well served the apostle in his roles as pastor, theologian, and missionary.” See Dale C. Allison Jr., “The Pauline Epistles and the Synoptic Gospels: The Pattern of the Parallels,” *New Testament Studies* 28 (1982): 25.

<sup>778</sup> See Anthony C. Thiselton, “Paul’s Missionary Preaching in 1 Thessalonians 2:1–16, With an Apocalyptic Addition from 2 Thessalonians,” in Laansma, Osborne, and Neste, *New Testament Theology*, 265–75.

<sup>779</sup> As a trained rabbi (Phil 3:4–6), Paul was used to conceiving of the present age as dominated by sin, evil, and death, whereas in the age to come, God would return to Israel and establish his kingdom (see Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 204–7. Furthermore, Senior and Stuhlmüller mention that the Jews “expected the fate of the Gentiles to be decided in the messianic age” (Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 177). Accordingly, Paul’s “belief that the messianic age had dawned could only have fortified his call to be apostle to the Gentiles” (Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 177).

<sup>780</sup> David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves, and E. Randolph Richards, *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction to His World, Letters and Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic; Nottingham: Apollos, 2007), 136.

<sup>781</sup> In Jewish tradition, the final age was supposed “to be an age of the Spirit” (Senior and

Paul uses a variety of terms to refer to his message: the *λόγος/word* of God (Rom 9:6; 1 Cor 14:36; Col 1:25; 1 Thess 2:13; 1 Tim 4:5; 2 Tim 2:9; Titus 2:5), the *λόγος* of Christ (Col 3:16; 1 Tim 6:3), the *λόγος* of/from the Lord (1 Thess 1:8; 4:15; 2 Thess 3:1; 1 Tim 6:3), the *λόγος/message* of the cross (1 Cor 1:18), the *ῥῆμα/utterance* of God (Eph 6:17), the *ῥῆμα* of Christ (Rom 10:17), the *εὐαγγέλιον/gospel* of God (Rom 1:1; 15:16; 1 Thess 2:2, 8, 9), the *εὐαγγέλιον* of his Son (Rom 1:9), the *εὐαγγέλιον* of Christ (Rom 15:19; 1 Cor 9:12; 2 Cor 2:12; 9:13; 10:14; Gal 1:17; Phil 1:27; 1 Thess 3:2), the *εὐαγγέλιον* of the glory of the blessed God (1 Tim 1:11) the *εὐαγγέλιον* of the glory of Christ (2 Cor 4:4; cf. 2 Thess 2:14), the *εὐαγγέλιον* of the Lord Jesus (2 Thess 1:8), my *εὐαγγέλιον* (Rom 2:16; 16:25; 2 Tim 2:8; cf. 2 Cor 4:3; 1 Thess 1:5; 2 Thess 2:14), the *κήρυγμα/preaching* of Jesus Christ (Rom 16:25; cf. 2 Cor 1:19; 4:5; 11:4) the *μυστήριον/mystery* of God (1 Cor 4:1), the *μυστήριον* of Christ (Eph 3:4; Col 4:3; cf. 1:27; 2:2), the *μυστήριον* of the gospel (Eph 6:19).<sup>782</sup> Howell is likely right when observing that “in each case θεοῦ is a genitive of origin or source, whereas χριστοῦ or its equivalent is an objective genitive.”<sup>783</sup> Indeed, Paul applies the terms “Jesus,” “Christ,” or personal pronouns referring to him as the objects of verbs of proclamation (κηρύσσω, 1 Cor 1:23; 2 Cor 11:4; cf. 2 Cor 1:19; εὐαγγελίζω, Gal 1:16). Passages such as 1 Corinthians 2:2 and 15:3–4 enhance this idea. Thus, Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection are the content of Paul’s proclamation.<sup>784</sup>

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StuhlmueLLer, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 178). See Eze 11:19; 36:26–27; Joel 2:28–32. Accordingly, the fact that the Spirit was active was evidence for Paul that “the messianic age had dawned” (page 177).

<sup>782</sup> For details, see Howell, “Mission in Paul’s Epistles: Genesis, Patterns, and Dynamics,” 70.

<sup>783</sup> Howell, “Mission in Paul’s Epistles,” 70.

<sup>784</sup> Howell, “Mission in Paul’s Epistles,” 70–71. Stanley E. Porter challenges this traditional view

## Response

The purpose of Paul's proclamation was the conversion of individuals.<sup>785</sup> His letters contain appeals for people to respond to God's offer of salvation in faith and repentance (Rom 2:4; 2 Cor 7:9–10; 12:21; 2 Tim 2:25).<sup>786</sup> While in these passages, Paul applies the concept of repentance deriving from the noun *μετάνοια/repentance* and the verb *μετανοέω/to repent*, elsewhere he describes conversion as a “turning” (*ἐπιστρέφω*,<sup>787</sup> 2 Cor 3:16; 1 Thess 1:9; Gal 4:9). Conversion is further depicted in Galatians 4:9 as “to come to know God” or “to be known by God.”<sup>788</sup>

Paul also refers to conversion by applying reconciliation language. As Douglas J. Moo notes, reconciliation has two facets: Jesus' accomplishment on the cross and its result in the heart of the believer.<sup>789</sup> For that reason, various reconciliation passages abound in references to Jesus' death on the cross (e.g., Rom 5:9–11; 2 Cor 5:11–21; Eph 2:16; Col 1:19–23).<sup>790</sup> Therefore, conversion can be seen as turning from enmity to

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by asserting that reconciliation is the theme at the heart of Paul's evangelism and that 2 Cor 5:20 is the passage that provides the content and message of his preaching. See Stanley E. Porter, “The Content and Message of Paul's Missionary Teaching,” in Porter and Westfall, *Christian Mission*, 135.

<sup>785</sup> Howell, “Mission in Paul's Epistles,” 71.

<sup>786</sup> While repentance is connected with the forgiveness of sins in Acts (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 26:18, 20), the connection is not explicit in the Pauline Epistles, though a few passages refer to forgiveness (Rom 4:7; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; 2:13; 3:13). Scholars have noticed the lack of repentance and forgiveness terminology in the Pauline Epistles; Paul R. H. Gundry postulates that, since repentance and forgiveness were prominent in Palestinian Judaism and were seen as the result of both divine grace and human work, Paul avoided applying language that might be misinterpreted. See Paul R. H. Gundry, “Grace, Works, and Staying Saved,” *Biblica* 66, no. 1 (1985): 1–38.

<sup>787</sup> The verb *ἐπιστρέφω* is the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew *שׁוּב* 201 times in the LXX. The verb *שׁוּב* is frequently used in the OT to convey the idea of repentance.

<sup>788</sup> See Senior and Stuhlmueller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 186. Schnabel comments that the phrase “demonstration of the Spirit and of power” in 1 Cor 2:4 (cf. 1 Thess 1:15) refers to conversion. See Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 227 and Schnabel, “Paul's Missionary Strategy,” 182.

<sup>789</sup> Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 311.

<sup>790</sup> Porter, “The Content and Message,” 150. David Michael Stanley argues that in Col 1 Paul

friendship with God (Rom 5:10). It is likely that Paul's conversion provides the background "for the development of the concept of reconciliation."<sup>791</sup> If this assessment is correct, it may suggest that Paul's use of reconciliation language, *inter alia*, is due to his desire for his listeners to experience a powerful conversion just as he did.<sup>792</sup> In that regard, a brief note ought to be made concerning the role of the Spirit in that process. For Paul, conversion begins with the proclamation that is performed in the power of the Spirit (1 Thess 1:5–6; cf. Rom 15:18–19).<sup>793</sup> Accordingly, the Spirit guides the entire process: preaching, hearing, conversion, and growth in Christ including the enablement of the church for mission through the spiritual gifts.<sup>794</sup>

## Scope

In Romans 1:5 (cf. v. 14) Paul defines the scope of his mission as "all the

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"develops the theme of reconciliation in terms of the conversion of the Colossians from paganism." See David Michael Stanley, *Christ's Resurrection in Pauline Soteriology*, *Analecta Biblica* 13 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1961), 208.

<sup>791</sup> Robert Jewett and Roy David Kotansky, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2006), 366, 693n58.

<sup>792</sup> Obviously, the experience of conversion of Paul is unique in that he had an encounter with the risen Christ. However, Paul was conscious that the conversion of Gentiles was not a small thing. First, they were immersed in idolatry. That is why Paul's preaching included an appeal to turn "from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess 1:9). A key passage for that teaching is Rom 1:18–32. Senior and Stuhlmüller comment that the idolatry of the Gentiles "was not limited to their worship of idols but included a broader sense of allegiance to anything that was false. Thus, conversion from 'idols' to the 'true and living God' described the *total transformation* that was the goal of Paul's preaching, deliverance of all humanity from bondage to sin and death and acceptance of the Lordship of Christ" (Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 186; emphasis added). Also, to become a Christian, to confess allegiance to Christ, at that time meant to face "insult, physical assaults, public disgrace, imprisonment and confiscation of goods"; see David Arthur deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods and Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 779. Not infrequently, reproaches and tribulation were part of the daily life of Christians (Heb 10:32–34). See David Arthur deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 2–5. Accordingly, conversion in NT times was a powerful transformation.

<sup>793</sup> See Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 849, 853, 864.

<sup>794</sup> For more details and biblical references, see Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 864–95.

nations.”<sup>795</sup> This is possibly reminiscent of biblical passages such as Genesis 18:8; 22:18; 26:4, and, therefore, an echo of God’s covenant with Abraham.<sup>796</sup> If Paul was well acquainted with Jesus’ teachings—and there are good reasons to believe so<sup>797</sup>—this would also echo the teachings of Jesus conveyed, for instance, in Matthew 24:14; 28:19, Mark 13:10, and Luke 24:47, that the gospel would be proclaimed to all the nations. The universal claim of the gospel (e.g., Rom 1:16; Eph 1:3–23) demands a universal mission reaching all human beings<sup>798</sup>

### A Model for Believers

David J. Bosch observes that Paul extended “his vision and image of mission to his fellow-workers and to the churches he has founded.”<sup>799</sup> He asserts that “there can be no doubt that Paul expects his readers to emulate him.”<sup>800</sup> Passages such as 1 Corinthians

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<sup>795</sup> The sense of ἔθνος in the prepositional phrase *en pasin tois ethnesin* (Rom 1:5) is disputed, i.e., “among all the nations” or “among all the Gentiles.” Most scholars argue that “Gentiles” is preferable to “nations.” Whatever the meaning is, it does not affect the sense of universal scope of the gospel, which as James Dunn remarks, is emphasized by the term *πᾶσιν/all*. See Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 18.

<sup>796</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 28. Schreiner goes so far as to mention that “now that worldwide blessing [of Abraham] has become a reality through the Pauline mission” (28).

<sup>797</sup> An overview of the major reasons is given by Dale C. Allison. The reasons include: Six explicit references to words of Jesus (1 Cor 7:10-11; 7:25; 9:14; 11:23-26; 14:37; 1 Thess 4:15-17); Echoes of the Synoptic tradition (e.g., Rom 12:14/Matt 5:44; Luke 6:27-28, among several other examples; Paul’s references to Jesus’ life and ministry; Paul’s relationship with eye-witnesses and bearers of the Jesus tradition [Gal 2:9], among others). For details, see Allison, “Pauline Epistles and the Synoptic Gospels,” 1–32.

<sup>798</sup> Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament*, 100. See also Senior and Stuhlmuehler, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 199–207.

<sup>799</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 171.

<sup>800</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 171. Based on that conclusion, Bosch identifies six characteristics of the Pauline missionary paradigm that should be put into practice by the church: (1) As a new community, “the church is the vanguard of the new creation and has, of necessity, to reflect the values of God’s coming world” (171). (2) Christian mission encompasses responsibility towards the Jews. He affirms that “the issue of a continuing evangelistic mission to Jews remains an unfinished item on the agenda of the church” (171; for more details, see 172–74). Bosch highlights that such an understanding is denied by several scholars, “particularly on the basis of their exegesis of Romans 9–11” (172). (3) Mission

4:16; 10:31–11:1; Philippians 3:15, 17; 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:6 (cf. 2:14); and 2 Thessalonians 3:7–9 indicate that Paul saw himself as a model to be followed.<sup>801</sup>

However, for Bosch, “The primary responsibility of ‘ordinary’ Christians is not to go out and preach, but to support the mission project through their appealing conduct and by making ‘outsiders’ feel welcome in their midst.”<sup>802</sup> According to this view, believers were expected to practice a missionary lifestyle so as to attract people (i.e., centripetal orientation) rather than an outward ministry by evangelizing them (i.e., centrifugal orientation).

This raises the question of the nature of the imitation Paul refers to. As Peter O’Brien puts it, “Does his exhortation to imitate him include an admonition to evangelism and mission?”<sup>803</sup> On the basis of his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 9:19–23 and 10:31–11:1, O’Brien argues that the answer to that question should be affirmative. He admits that “Paul is not suggesting that they [the Corinthians] should be engaged *in the same wide-ranging*, apostolic ministry in which he has been involved” (emphasis added).<sup>804</sup> However, Paul really expected that “each *in his or her own way and according*

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is to be accomplished “in the context of God’s imminent triumph, [...] within the horizon of Christ’s parousia” (174). In other words, “our mission in the world only makes sense if it is undertaken in the sure knowledge that our puny ‘accomplishments’ will one day be consummated by God” (175). (4) Christian mission is not only about future salvation but also present transformation of the society (175–76); (5) The proclamation of the gospel can result in suffering and death of those proclaiming the gospel message (176–77). (6) The mission of the Christian community is “bound up with God’s cosmic-historical plan for the redemption of the world” (178).

<sup>801</sup> For a few details on these and other passages, see Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 194–96. Furthermore, according to Abraham J. Malherbe, Paul follows a method that was practiced by moral philosophers. However, he is not only a moral paradigm but one whom others turned to in order to receive guidance. See Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 52–60.

<sup>802</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 138.

<sup>803</sup> O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 89.

<sup>804</sup> O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 105.

to their personal gifts was to have the same goal and ambitions as Paul himself, that is, that of seeking by all possible means to save many.”<sup>805</sup> O’Brien goes on to contend that Paul “expected them, therefore, to be committed to evangelism just as he was,”<sup>806</sup> and “consumed by passion as he was!”<sup>807</sup> For O’Brien, Bosch fails “to take account of the Pauline teaching about the dynamic of the gospel,<sup>808</sup> and the goal of saving others which the Corinthians are to have *in everything they do* as a necessary element in following Paul’s example.”<sup>809</sup> In other words, to practice a missionary lifestyle involves not only attracting people, but also going where they are.<sup>810</sup> Clear references to the believers’ engagement to the spread of the gospel can be seen in Ephesians 6:10–20<sup>811</sup> and

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<sup>805</sup> O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 106.

<sup>806</sup> O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 107.

<sup>807</sup> O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 106.

<sup>808</sup> By the dynamic of the gospel O’Brien means that “instead of focusing on what men and women are doing, he [Paul] regularly highlights this powerful advance of the kerygma” (O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 127). He further states that “it is the divine work that the apostle consistently stresses and, although the evangelistic endeavours of Christians are mentioned from time to time, Paul regularly focuses on the ultimate source, namely, God’s powerful saving action in the kerygma” (page 128). Accordingly, “it is wrong to assume that, because the apostle mentions Christians engaging in evangelism on only a few occasions, he had no great interest in the matter” (page 131). An example of what he names as “the dynamic of the gospel” can be seen in 2 Thess 3:1–2, where, by using a prosopopoeia, Paul prays that “the word of the Lord may speed ahead” rather than praying that his colleagues and he might spread the word (pages 127–28). O’Brien claims that Paul’s emphasis on the dynamic of the gospel can elucidate the apparent scarcity of references to appeals for Christians to evangelize.

<sup>809</sup> O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 106.

<sup>810</sup> This has been argued recently by Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

<sup>811</sup> For details on Paul’s missionary teaching in Eph 6:10–20, see O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 109–31. O’Brien takes a whole chapter to discuss that passage and entitles it as “The Pauline Great Commission.” In short, he argues that the spiritual warfare of Eph 6 requires, on the one hand, resistance to temptation and, on the other hand, proclamation of the gospel. This is clear in Eph 6:15, where Paul teaches that “believers are to have their feet fitted with ‘readiness’, a preparedness to announce the gospel of peace (v. 15), and to take up the sword, that is, the word of God or the gospel which the Spirit makes powerful and effective (v. 17)” (page 199). Perhaps Ephesians is the letter where an image of Paul as a model for the church emerges more visibly (see Senior and Stuhlmueller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 206–7). In addition, “The missionary theology of Colossians and Ephesians forms one of the most powerful statements in the New Testament concerning the universal missionary nature of the church. No longer can the church’s

especially in the Letter to the Philippians. A relevant study on the missionary impulse of Paul's letter to the Philippians has been performed by James P. Ware; we will turn to it briefly.

Ware argues that Philippians reveals both “a quite extraordinary interest in the spread of the gospel through the Christian community at Philippi”<sup>812</sup>—which pervades the whole epistle—and “the crucial place of the mission of the church in Paul's thought.”<sup>813</sup> In 1:12–26 Paul deals with the advancement of the gospel (cf. v. 12),<sup>814</sup> the paradigms of which are applied to the Philippians in 1:27–2:18. The Philippians are summoned to imitate Paul “and the believers at Rome, to a united and fearless struggle for the spread of the gospel despite the threat of persecution from the wider civic community at Philippi.”<sup>815</sup> Ware contends that Paul's command in 2:12, “work out your own salvation,” summarizes Paul's appeal in 1:12–2:11 and “functions as an exhortation to spread the gospel despite the threat of persecution and suffering.”<sup>816</sup> The hymn in 2:5–11 and its emphasis on the example of Christ is the background against which the exhortation to mission activity in 2:12–18 is to be understood. An explicit command to

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horizons be narrow, its agenda timid. It serves a cosmic Lord: therefore its field of service is as wide as the world” (Senior and Stuhlmueller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 208).

<sup>812</sup> Ware, *Paul and the Mission*, 287.

<sup>813</sup> Ware, *Paul and the Mission*, 290. For similar conclusions, see Alistair I. Wilson, “An Ideal Missionary Prayer Letter: Reflections on Paul's Mission Theology as Expressed in Philippians,” in Laansma, Osborne, and Neste, *New Testament Theology*, 245–63.

<sup>814</sup> For details, see Ware, *Paul and the Mission*, 163–215.

<sup>815</sup> Ware, *Paul and the Mission*, 290. See also O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 86–88.

<sup>816</sup> Ware, *Paul and the Mission*, 288. In 1 Thess 2:2 Paul mentions that his colleagues and he suffered and were shamefully treated at Philippi, and declared “the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.” In this matter too, Paul becomes a model for believers. For a brief discussion on hardships and mission in Paul, see Paul Ellingworth, “‘Nobody Knows de Trouble I Seen’: Hardship Lists in Paul and Elsewhere,” in Laansma, Osborne, and Neste, *New Testament Theology*, 317–26.



spread the gospel is found in 2:16a, “holding forth the word of life” (2:16a).<sup>817</sup> Ware asserts that this sentence ought to be understood in connection with 2:15c, “you shine as lights in the world,” and, hence, is a missionary appeal.<sup>818</sup>

Two observations in relation to 2:5–18 are necessary at this point. First, Paul’s allusions to Isaiah 40–55 (e.g., 2:10–11) indicate that he sees the fulfillment of those prophecies in the suffering, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus. Second, Paul embraces a collective dimension of the Servant Songs by applying them both to his apostolic ministry (2:16b) and to the Philippians themselves (2:15c).<sup>819</sup> This suggests that Paul sees the mission of the church as an extension of his own mission.<sup>820</sup> In addition, both Paul’s mission and that of the church find their basis in the mission of Jesus as the Isaianic Servant. In Paul’s thought, Ware explains, “the mission of the church is the activity of Christ.”<sup>821</sup>

Ware believes that Philippians brings Paul’s “theology of the church’s mission, including the obligation of believers actively to spread the gospel, to fuller

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<sup>817</sup> Ware argues that the only possible meaning for *epechō* in 2:16a is “hold forth” (Ware, *Paul and the Mission*, 269). For arguments, see 256–70.

<sup>818</sup> Ware, *Paul and the Mission*, 269–70. Ephesians 6:15 also seems to be an explicit exhortation for Christians to spread the gospel.

<sup>819</sup> Ware, *Paul and the Mission*, 256, 291–92. For details, see 224–82.

<sup>820</sup> Ware comments that this “is why Paul could write to the Romans that he had completed the preaching of the gospel (Romans 15:19) in regions where he had in fact formed only a few communities in major provincial centers such as Philippi” (Ware, *Paul and the Mission*, 292). In Rom 15:20, Paul indicates that he is aware that he is not the only one preaching the gospel to Gentiles. From his reference to the missionary work of the Philippians (Phil 1:14–18), it can be inferred that he not only approved of it, but rejoiced in it. Therefore, it is not surprising that Paul asks his readers to keep doing what they are doing (Phil 3:16), and to do it “more and more” (1 Thess 4:10), as well as to “walk in wisdom toward *outsiders*, making *the best use* of the time” (Col 4:5, emphasis added).

<sup>821</sup> Ware, *Paul and the Mission*, 292.

expression.”<sup>822</sup> In this manner, what Paul says about the mission of the church elsewhere should be addressed in the light of his teaching in Philippians.<sup>823</sup> Take as example Paul’s teaching on salvation as an ever-present reality. As Howell remarks, for Paul, salvation “is a broad term encompassing the entire range of God’s redemptive activity—past, present, future.”<sup>824</sup> Thus, salvation has already taken place (Rom 8:24; Eph 2:5, 8; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5), is taking place (1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15), and will definitely be completed in the future (Rom 5:9–10; 1 Cor 3:15; 5:5; 2 Tim 4:18). Therefore, since salvation has a past, present, and future dimension, the task of the church is still unfinished. Thus, Paul’s exhortations for Christians to “shine as lights in the world” (Phil 2:15) and to hold forth “the word of life” (Phil 2:16) are as current now as they were back then.

### **Mission in Hebrews and the General Epistles**

Hebrews and the General Epistles lack a clear command to spread the gospel. However, this does not mean that these writings do not contribute to the biblical theology of mission. By and large, their major concerns are related to defending the gospel against false teachings regarding the person of Jesus and exhorting believers about what should be the Christian attitude before suffering and persecution. As Andreas J. Köstenberger puts it, “in order for the gospel to be proclaimed persuasively and with God’s saving power, it must be preserved pure.”<sup>825</sup> It is also implicit that believers can win people for

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<sup>822</sup> Ware, *Paul and the Mission*, 290.

<sup>823</sup> Ware, *Paul and the Mission*, 290.

<sup>824</sup> Howell, “Mission in Paul’s Epistles,” 95.

<sup>825</sup> Köstenberger and Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 74.

Jesus Christ insofar as they maintain a godly life even in the face of hostile opposition.<sup>826</sup> In addition, it is clear in Hebrews and the General Epistles that God's strategic plan of salvation has been inaugurated through the person of Jesus.<sup>827</sup> Because of what Jesus has done, God expects believers to trust him and live in such a way that others will be drawn to him.<sup>828</sup> Next, I will provide a brief survey on the individual books. To begin with, it must be said that, at first sight, virtually all of them seem unlikely candidates for a missional reading, but a more attentive analysis can show that they give a contribution to the Scripture's theology of mission.

### Hebrews

Hebrews is heavily focused on the singularity and supremacy of Jesus and, hence, God's plan of salvation through him. Jesus is the Davidic King (chapters 1–2), the God-designated High Priest (5:10; cf. also 2:17; 3:1; 4:14, 15; 5:5; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11), and the Mediator of the new covenant (9:15; 12:24; cf. 8:812). He is God's final prophetic Word (1:12) and "the climax in a long line of patriarchs and prophets who bore the message of salvation."<sup>829</sup> While the book does not express any direct command for the preaching of the gospel, its audience is aware of the missionary movement initiated by the Lord himself and transmitted to eyewitnesses,<sup>830</sup> by whom they were won for Christ

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<sup>826</sup> Köstenberger and Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 74.

<sup>827</sup> Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Interpreting the General Letters: An Exegetical Handbook*, Handbooks for New Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2013), 104-13. This has been explored in more detail by Brandon D. Crowe, *The Message of the General Epistles in the History of Redemption: Wisdom from James, Peter, John, and Jude* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2015).

<sup>828</sup> Bateman IV, *Interpreting the General Letters*, 116-18.

<sup>829</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 309.

<sup>830</sup> This does not mean that they necessarily heard the gospel message from the twelve. See Craig

(2:3). But the author does not develop this idea. His main point is that the Davidic King reigns (8:1), and believers should live in light of that by showing brotherly love, hospitality, concern for prisoners, sexual purity, detachment from money, trust in God's providence, and care for spiritual leaders as well as imitation of their faith (13:1–7).

### James

By and large, scholars assert that James's potential contribution to the biblical theology of mission is summarized in his emphasis on faith that is expressed by good works.<sup>831</sup> Joel B. Green goes beyond by arguing that, if mission has to do with God's programmatic plan to save the world through Jesus, so James has more to say about mission.<sup>832</sup> In his discussion on mission in James, he formulates two questions to be answered. The first one is, "How does the letter of James locate its readers within the scriptural narrative of God's mission?"<sup>833</sup>

Joel Green answers this question by holding that James refers to God's mission by addressing four central pillars: creation, Jesus' mission and message, exilic life of the audience, and new creation.<sup>834</sup> He argues that creation and new creation form the framework within which the other two topics appear in the letter. James' interest in creation (1:16–18; 3:9) rests primarily upon the nature of the Creator. By alluding to Genesis 1:26–27 in 3:9, James indicates that human beings must be seen in their relation

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R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 36 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 207; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 88.

<sup>831</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 309.

<sup>832</sup> Joel B. Green, "Reading James Missionally," in Goheen, *Reading the Bible Missionally*, 194–212.

<sup>833</sup> Green, "Reading James Missionally," 195.

to the Creator. The “two ways” motif in 3:15–18<sup>835</sup> suggests that people expressing the earthly wisdom—namely, the one marked by vices such as jealousy and ambition—should be exhorted to abandon these sins (5:19–20).<sup>836</sup> It might be implicit that these people have blurred God’s image in them because of their sinful life. The new creation is expected on the basis of God’s promise of a crown of life and an eternal kingdom (1:12; 2:5). These things will be available for those who enter into a proper covenantal relationship with God, “those who love him” (1:12; 2:5). This has been put into practice by Jesus during his earthly ministry (John 14:31). As a matter of fact, Jesus’ mission and message exert a prominent function in the letter, so much so that James builds upon Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount several times.<sup>837</sup> He presents Jesus as one who is to be imitated by believers as they live their lives in this world. James’ readers are in the dispersion (1:1), and this serves as a metaphor for subsequent readers in the sense that those who serve Jesus are exiles on earth, waiting to receive the inheritance of the kingdom (2:5). In the meanwhile, “their homes and gatherings are missional outposts.”<sup>838</sup>

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<sup>834</sup> Green, “Reading James Missionally,” 199.

<sup>835</sup> This motif pervades the letter as a whole. See Darian R. Lockett, *Letters for the Church: Reading James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, and Jude as Canon* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2021), 15–16. For a more extensive treatment of the topic, see Darian R. Lockett, “Structure or Communicative Strategy?: The ‘Two Ways’ Motif in James’ Theological Instruction,” *Neotestamentica* 42 no. 2 (2008): 269-87.

<sup>836</sup> Not infrequently, James 5:19-20 has been used by modern readers as an example of missionary activity among Jews or Gentiles. However, the context indicates that James is referring to apostate people. See Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 198.

<sup>837</sup> Green gives two examples of connections between James and the Sermon on the Mount (cf. Jas 2:5/Luke 6:20; Jas 5:12/Matt 5:34-37; cf. Green, “Reading James Missionally,” 203-4), but the parallels go beyond (Jas. 1:12/Matt 5:10; Jas 1:23/Matt 7:24, 26; Jas 2:13/Matt 5:7; Jas 2:14/Matt 7:21; Jas 2:26/Matt 5:16; Jas 4:2; Matt 5:21-22a; Jas 4:11-12/Matt 7:1-2; Jas 5:2-4/Matt 6:19-21).

<sup>838</sup> Green, “Reading James Missionally,” 205.

The second question formulated by Green is, “How might James’ letter shape its readers in their formation as participants in God’s mission?” Green answers that people participate in God’s mission insofar as they embody the gospel message by embracing exilic life (4:4), recognizing God’s gracious character (1:17), and living an integrated life (1:2-4, 26-27) marked by love to one’s neighbor (2:8).

### The Letters of Peter

This embodiment of the gospel message mentioned above is taken a step further in 1 Peter. Peter also writes to exiles of the Dispersion, but they are named from the outset as “elect” (1 Pet 1:1). The covenantal tone of this term is developed further ahead with a direct allusion to God’s covenant with Israel (Exod 19:5–6) in 2:9 (cf. 2 Pet 1:10). In fact, the language of 1 Peter is highly covenantal. For instance, in 1:15-16 the readers receive a call to be holy (cf. Lev 11:44–45; 10:2; 20:7); in 2:5 they are “being built up . . . to be a holy priesthood” (cf. Exod 19:5); in 2:9 they are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,” and a people for God’s own possession (cf. Exod 19:5–6). In 2:10 they are said, “Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people”. The idea of calling appears not only in 1:15 but pervades the letter as a whole (2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10). In turn, the idea of election and calling are also present in 2 Peter 1:3, 10, but it is clear that this letter has different concerns. These are only passing references.<sup>839</sup> While 1 Peter aims at giving the readers encouragement in face of suffering (1 Pet 1:6–7), the purpose of 2 Peter is related to warning the audience against false teachings (2 Pet 2:1–3) so future generations receive the pure doctrine (2 Pet 1:15).

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<sup>839</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 309.

The missionary force of God’s calling is made explicit in 1 Peter 2:9, “that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” Such a sense of mission must be put into practice even in a strange environment—for they are exiles (1:1; 2:11)—and in the midst of hostile opposition and persecution. The *πασχ*-root (“suffer”) occurs 17 times in this short letter and is an undeniable signal that the audience deals with much distress. In any case, the readers are exhorted to keep their “conduct among the Gentiles honorable” (2:12), even when they suffer unjustly (2:19; 3:14, 17). In that regard, Eckhard J. Schnabel comments, “The First Epistle of Peter is a ‘missionary document’ precisely because it raises the most fundamental question about the church: How should Christians live in a non-Christian society as a new community of people who have a discernibly different lifestyle?”<sup>840</sup> The purpose of such gentle behavior among the Gentiles is given in the second half of 2:12, “so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and *glorify God on the day of visitation* (emphasis added).” Thus, this attitude on the part of the audience aims at the repentance and conversion of the Gentiles.<sup>841</sup> They are aware that they are subjected to suffering (2:19, 20; 3:14, 17; 4:19; 5:9, 10) just like Jesus (1:11; 2:21, 23; 3:18; 4:1, 13; 5:1). They should even rejoice in their suffering (4:13). But this joy does not appear in a vacuum. It is the fruit of hope (1:3, 13, 21). In their proclamation of the excellencies of him who called them (2:9), they were supposed to explain the reason for their hope to anyone who demanded that from them (3:15).<sup>842</sup> While there is no itinerant preaching in

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<sup>840</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1522.

<sup>841</sup> Elsewhere, Peter relates the idea of glorifying God to an act of worship by believers (1:8; 4:6, 14, 16). For more details, see J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC 49 (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1988), 118.

<sup>842</sup> This includes a series of doctrinal teachings. See Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1525.

1 Peter, the letter demonstrates interest in the engagement with the environment outside the church and the necessity to draw people's attention to God through a life of holiness and good works.<sup>843</sup>

### The Letters of John

Mission has a central role in John's theology. While this is much more evident in the Gospel, the epistles should also be considered in discussing John's missionary teaching. Their content indicates that mission is better defined as resistance to false teachings about the person of Jesus.<sup>844</sup> Although they do not express an exhortation to missionary activity,<sup>845</sup> they have other missional elements that can be identified, especially as far as the mission of Jesus is concerned.

Just as in the Fourth Gospel, in 1 John Jesus is also presented as the Sent One by the Father (1 John 4:9, 10, 14). First John 4 shows (1) God's purpose for sending his Son. He was sent into the world "so that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9), "to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10), and "to be the Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14); (2) God's motivation in sending his Son. It was for love (1 John 4:9-10; cf. John 3:16). However, Jesus came into the world not only because of the love of the Father but also because of his own love for us (1 John 3:16); (3) The scope of God's mission. Jesus was sent "into the *world*" (1 John 4:9, emphasis added) to be the Savior of the *world* (1 John 4:14, emphasis added; cf. also 2:2). In addition, although not explicitly stated, one can perhaps imply from 1 John 1:1–4 that the apostle is concerned with the continuation of

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<sup>843</sup> Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 28.

<sup>844</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1512.

<sup>845</sup> Köstenberger and Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 225.



the Christian proclamation regarding the person and work of Jesus<sup>846</sup> by his audience, as though he was “passing the baton” to future generations. In this sense, this passage sounds as inviting readers to mission.<sup>847</sup>

The Letters of John share important concepts with the Fourth Gospel: light (John 1:4–9; 3:19–21; 5:35; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9–10; 12:35–36, 46; 1 John 1:5–6); darkness (John 1:5; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35, 46; 1 John 1:5–6; 2:8–9, 11); life (John 1:4; 5:26; 6:33, 35, 48; 8:12; 11:25; 14:6); 1 John 1:12; 5:12); truth (John 3:21; 14:6, 16–17; 15:26; 1 John 1:6, 8; 2:21; 3:19; 4:6; 2 John 1, 4; 3 John 3); world (John 14:17; 15:18–19; 16:8, 20; 1 John 2:15; 3:13; 4:4–5). To a certain degree, some of these concepts, if not all of them, are missional. For instance, sometimes John portrays Jesus’ mission as bringing people from darkness into light (e.g., John 12:35–36).<sup>848</sup> Also, Jesus’ followers are supposed to lead people to the light (e.g., John 1:7–8).<sup>849</sup> Obviously, the missional tone of the contrast between light and darkness in 1 John is not as clear as in the Fourth Gospel.

Second and Third John share with First John the concept of truth, but they differ from the latter in that they emphasize the idea of hospitality.<sup>850</sup> However, while 2 John

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<sup>846</sup> Georg Strecker comments that “in the message of 1 John both the person and the ‘cause’ of Jesus Christ are united in one” (Georg Strecker, *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 11).

<sup>847</sup> See Peter Rhea Jones, “The Missional Role of ὁ Πρεσβύτερος,” in *Communities in Dispute: Current Scholarship in Johannine Epistles*, ed. R. Allan Culpepper and Paul N. Anderson, Society of Biblical Literature 13 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 141–43.

<sup>848</sup> Marianne Meye Thompson, *John: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 207.

<sup>849</sup> Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples*, 205

<sup>850</sup> Some scholars have suggested that the reference to hospitality in 3 John 5–8 means support for traveling missionaries. See Senior and Stuhlmueller, *Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 293; Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 229; Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 222–23; Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, WBC 51 (Dallas: Word, 1984), 352; Daniel L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, NAC 38 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 242, among others.

warns against offering hospitality to unreliable teachers (2 John 9–11), the purpose of 3 John is to encourage Gaius to extend hospitality to traveling missionaries despite the intimidation of Diotrophes, a local church official.<sup>851</sup> John’s statements in 3 John 3, 6, 8, and 12 have been seen by many scholars as alluding to traveling missionaries.<sup>852</sup> In any case, it is safe to say that the relevance of 2-3 John to the theology of mission has to do with the necessity to support missionaries.

In sum, John’s Epistles provide a fine contribution for the biblical theology of mission in that they are an appeal for believers to walk in the truth (2 John 4; 3 John 3–4) and reject false teachings (2 John 9–11).<sup>853</sup> In the context of the letters, to walk in truth likely means to receive the apostolic gospel message (1 John 1:1–2), the purpose of

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Another important missionary feature of John’s letters is their emphasis on brotherly love. This has been suggested by David Rensberger. On the basis of an exegesis of 1 John 4:11–18, he argues that, while “the Gospel of John presents Jesus as being on a mission in the literal sense, as one who has been sent from God for a purpose, [...] 1 John presents the believers in a comparable light, as being entrusted and charged with carrying out the purposes of God in revealing divine love to the world and in the world. The sense of this in 1 John is clearly eschatological: as in the Fourth Gospel, so here the Messiah, the eschatological life-giver, has come and has inaugurated the eschatological community of those who love one another as he has loved them (John 13:34–35). [...] The mission of God’s love and the aim of God’s eschatological action is to generate love among human beings [...]” See David Rensberger, “Completed Love: 1 John 4:1–18 and the Mission of the New Testament Church,” in *Communities in Dispute: Current Scholarship in Johannine Epistles*, ed. R. Allan Culpepper and Paul N. Anderson, Society of Biblical Literature 13 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 252–53. Rensberger concludes that “mission does not end with conversion to right belief. The divine love that sent the Son into the world has as its aim not only the creation of individual believers, but the formation of them into a community of mutual love” (254).

<sup>851</sup> For more details, see Köstenberger and Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 226-27.

<sup>852</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1512-13. Schnabel adds that “There seems to be no doubt [...] that [...] John sent missionaries to other areas who visited other cities and towns (perhaps villages).” (page 1513). See also Peter Rhea Jones’ discussion on the role in 2–3 John. Jones takes the position that “The elder was above all a missional leader who belonged to a church whose ecclesiology was missional” (Jones, “Communities in Dispute,” 154). For more details, see pages 144–53.

<sup>853</sup> In John’s letters, the “Spirit of truth” is the only antidote to face the false teaching that Jesus was not God in flesh (1 John 4:1–3). The Spirit gives discernment to distinguish between true and false teaching (1 John 4:6; cf. 3:24; 4:13). Accordingly, those who walk in the truth that Jesus was the Son of God in flesh (2 John 4; 3 John 3–4) do so because they have the Spirit of truth (1 John 5:6).

which is fellowship with God and his Son (1 John 1:3).<sup>854</sup> These letters present a warning against heresy and internal issues because these problems can be an obstacle to the church's mission.<sup>855</sup>

### Jude

Just as 2 Peter, Jude is primarily concerned about warning readers against false teachers. One can agree with the assertion that these two letters provide an important contribution to the Christian mission in that, “while they do not engage in mission directly, they help ensure the continued purity of the gospel message. This, in turn, is an important prerequisite for an effective missionary enterprise.”<sup>856</sup> They make it clear that, not infrequently, the church is challenged by various types of problems. But it has to keep the doctrine pure and remain united in Christ.

### Conclusion

Christology is crucial for understanding the NT teaching on mission. Without a correct understanding of Jesus' identity and work, it is not possible to arrive at a correct view of the mission of the church. Because salvation in Christ has universal consequences, this message is to be taken to the ends of the earth. This teaching is conveyed in the NT writings in various ways.

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<sup>854</sup> See Karen H. Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 54. Jobes adds that the invitation in 1 John 1:3 implies “the warning that if John's readers do not continue to embrace the apostolic witness, their fellowship with John and with God and the Son cannot be sustained” (54). John strongly appeals for believers to hold fast to the pure doctrine of Christ (2 John 9) because eternal consequences are at stake.

<sup>855</sup> The following warning is worthy being quoted, “The church cannot afford to let urgent needs or pressing circumstances set its agenda. That agenda has already been set in its parameters by Jesus and needs to be defined and understood in relation to Jesus' mission.” Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 219.

In Matthew, Jesus is portrayed as the One in whom the OT prophecies and their fulfillment meet. Two passages are crucial for understanding Matthew's missionary theology: 10:1–42 and 28:16–20. While the former serves as a sort of paradigm for the post-Resurrection mission, the latter provides a programmatic plan for the mission of the church by means of a statement that summarizes the major elements of Matthew's missionary teaching, with a language of enthronement, covenant, and commission. In that connection, mission is the proclamation of the sovereign lordship of Christ over the universe. This imagery provides a possible background to Revelation 11:15–19. In turn, the emphasis on discipleship (Matt 28:19) may shed light on the discussion of Revelation 14:1–5, especially its reference to the 144,000 following the Lamb (Rev 14:4). Furthermore, the fact that the narratives of Jesus' passion and resurrection (Matt 26–28) are preceded by the Prophetic Discourse (24–25) is illuminating. Among other things, that discourse concerns the termination of the missionary work. Consummation will come only when "this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations" (24:14; cf. 25:32; 28:19). Mission is, hence, placed within an eschatological framework. It is the task of the church until the second coming of Christ, a task that will be accomplished in the midst of hatred and persecution (24:9). Thus, while Matthew teaches that the kingdom of God has dawned in this world, the consummation is yet to come. In the canonical record, this theme is further explored in Revelation 10–14.

In Mark, the theme of discipleship is taken a step forward. Persecution and suffering are such pervasive topics that discipleship in the Second Gospel can very well be labeled a discipleship of the cross. Isaianic themes permeate the entire Gospel and

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<sup>856</sup> Köstenberger and Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 98.

shed light on the interpretation of its missionary teaching. This can be seen in the fact that the proclamation of the gospel and Jesus' suffering and atoning death are inseparable. Accordingly, Christology and discipleship are seen as integral parts of Mark's theology. Mark portrays Jesus always in association with his disciples. However, to follow Jesus is to follow him in his sufferings. It is not surprising that the universal mission in 13:10 takes place within a setting of imprisonment, trial, harassment, persecution, opposition, and hatred (13:9–13; cf. Matt 24:9). The followers of Jesus are called to emulate their Master by preaching, healing, teaching, suffering, and even dying in the course of their missionary task. Apparently, in the NT this topic is taken to its fullest expression in Revelation 13. This will be investigated ahead.

In Luke-Acts, the theme of salvation in Christ is further explored. While Luke's Gospel mostly focuses on the story of Jesus and his salvation, the book of Acts gives continuity to that story by concentrating on the apostles' task of proclaiming salvation to the ends of the earth. Luke 24:44–49 has been called the Great Commission in Luke's Gospel. Similarly to Matthew 28:16–20, Luke 24:44–49 is also seen as a synthesis of the whole book. The major aspects of Luke's mission theology identified in this passage can be summarized as follows: fulfillment of OT promises; suffering; task; response; scope; the significance of Jerusalem and the temple; witnessing; and the role of the Holy Spirit. To greater or lesser degrees, all these topics are also present in the book of Acts. Some of them, nevertheless, are given more prominent roles, such as the scope of the church's mission, the significance of Jerusalem and the temple, the witnessing motif, and the role of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:8). The possible connections with Revelation are too many

to mention here,<sup>857</sup> but will be explored in the exegetical chapters further ahead.

In John, the mission of Jesus is continued through the body of believers in the power of the Spirit until the second coming of Christ. The disciples are Jesus' agents (cf. 13:20) as they fulfill their mission through the power of the Holy Spirit. The tasks of harvesting, bearing fruit, and witnessing are all seen as an extension of Jesus' mission. This language can shed light on Revelation passages dealing with harvest terminology (14:14–20) and the witnessing motif (Rev 11). In addition, since John clearly presents the mission of Jesus, the mission of the Holy Spirit, and the mission of the church as inseparable and integral parts of the mission of God, this may help in reading Revelation 2–3 (cf. 2:14, 17, 20; 3:12) and texts probably alluding to that passage, such as 11:3–4 and 14:1–4, from a mission perspective. What is more, the portrayal of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel as the eschatological Shepherd calling his followers to gather his eschatological harvest may be a possible background for Revelation 14:4, 14–20 (cf. also 7:9, 17). It seems that while in his Gospel John focuses on the continuity of the mission of Jesus through the church in the power of the Spirit, in Revelation he focuses on the eschatological completion and consummation of the same task.

In Paul, readers see a deepening of the missionary view of the NT. As David J. Bosch assures, Paul “is unparalleled in the profound way in which he presents a universal Christian missionary mission.”<sup>858</sup> Paul identifies himself as an apostle of Christ (e.g., 1 Cor 1:1) who was set apart for the gospel (Rom 1:1; cf. Gal 2:7; 1 Thess 2:4), meaning

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<sup>857</sup> For instance, the scope of the mission of the church can be seen in passages such as Rev 10:11 and 14:6. The significance of the temple for a mission theology can be drawn from 4–5; 11:1–2, 19; 15:1–8, etc. The witnessing motif pervades the book as a whole but 11:3–13 is a key passage for sure. The role of the Holy Spirit can be seen in the sentence, “hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; cf. 14:13) and in passages such as 4:5; 5:6; and 22:17.

<sup>858</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 170.

proclamation of the gospel (Rom 1:1, 15; cf. 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11). From several passages it is possible to infer that evangelism was an integral part of Paul's missionary task, which included planting churches, nurturing them, and preparing them for mission. All of this was seen by Paul as his priestly service to God (Rom 15:16). Paul's appeals for people to respond to God (Rom 2:4; 2 Cor 3:16; 7:9-10; 12:21; Gal 4:9; 1 Thess 1:9; 2 Tim 2:25) indicate that his proclamation was intended to convert his hearers. At the same time, this was a goal he wanted other missionaries to aim for. Indeed, Paul expected believers to get involved in evangelism. He not only conceived of the mission of the church as an extension of his own mission, but also saw these "two missions" as based on the mission of Jesus as the Isaianic Servant and as its continuation. For Paul, because the gospel has a universal claim, salvation has to be offered to all humans. However, since salvation has a past, present, and future dimension, the task of the church is still unfinished. The book of Revelation is the place in the canonical record where one can have a glimpse of the accomplishment of this task by the church, as envisioned by Paul.

Hebrews and the General Epistles give a contribution to the biblical theology of mission in the sense that their major concerns are related to defending the gospel against false teachings regarding the person of Jesus. As Andreas J. Köstenberger puts it, "in order for the gospel to be proclaimed persuasively and with God's saving power, it must be preserved pure."<sup>859</sup> In addition, these writings also exhort believers about what should be the Christian attitude among non-believers, even in the face of suffering and persecution. Christians are to draw people's attention to Christ by living in holiness before God.

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<sup>859</sup> Köstenberger and Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 74.

By and large, it can be said that Jesus—and the apostles—saw his mission in connection with Isaiah 40–55. Furthermore, the apostles themselves were highly influenced by that passage when interpreting their own mission (cf. Act 13:46–48).<sup>860</sup> Finally, the discussion above supports N. T. Wright’s contention that “the New Testament is the birth of what we can describe as public, missionary theology.”<sup>861</sup> Mission is something the church is supposed to be involved in until the second coming of Christ, with the purpose of taking the gospel message to the ends of the earth. This universal scope is emphasized in Revelation 14:6: “to every nation and tribe and language and people.” The engagement of believers/readers in mission is envisioned by the NT writers in different ways, including, quite likely, the shorter ending of Mark and the open-ended conclusion of Acts. The task is not finished yet. While other NT writings point to the launch of the Christian mission, Revelation points to its conclusion. This is the discussion we will turn to next. Before doing so, it is necessary to mention that, obviously, it is not expected that all the missional elements above will appear in Revelation. My intention was to provide a brief summary of the NT theology of mission in order to make it easier to identify possible missional features that Revelation may share with the other NT writings.

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<sup>860</sup> Accordingly, several statements from Isa 40–55 are quoted and cited in the NT—some of them with a certain frequency—in order to explain the mission of Jesus and that of the church (cf. 40:3–5, 6–8, 13; 42:1–4; 43:6, 20, 21; 45:21, 23; 49:6, 8, 22; 52:7, 15, 11; 53:1, 4, 5–6, 7–8, 12, 13; 54:1, 13; 55:3), not to mention innumerable clear allusions. Passages such as 42:6 and 49:6 (cf. also 51:4 and 60:1–3), which refer to the Servant as “a light for the nations” deserve remark. Passages such as 40:28; 41:5, 9; 42:10; 43:6; 45:22; 48:20; 49:6; 52:10 (cf. also 5:26; 24:16; 62:11) are likewise important seeing that they highlight the reach of God’s salvation (“the ends of the earth”). Isa 40–55 also highpoints an important feature linked to the Servant, “You are my witnesses” (43:10, 12; 44:8; cf. also 55:4). This feature has important missiological implications in the NT as a whole and in Rev 10–14 in particular, such as, for instance, the witnessing motif in Rev 11:3–13.

<sup>861</sup> Wright, “Reading the Bible Missionally,” 192.



## CHAPTER 5

### REVELATION CONTEXT OF MISSION IN REVELATION 10–14

“Is there mission in Revelation?” This is probably the first question some will ask themselves as they read a work that proposes to speak about mission in the Apocalypse of John. Thus far, it has been demonstrated that various scholars affirm mission in Revelation.<sup>862</sup> Indeed, many of them have addressed Revelation from a missional

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<sup>862</sup> Many are prone, however, to situate Revelation with NT writings such as Hebrews and the General Epistles when affirming that those documents’ primary concern is showing Christians how to respond to suffering and persecution (e.g., Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends*, 227; Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 147–54; Schnabel, “John and the Future of the Nations,” 256; Schnabel, *Jesus, Paul, and the Early Church*, 353–84). Roughly speaking, therefore, mission is seen merely as resistance. A counterpoint to this issue is to posit a different question, “Is there a crisis in Revelation?” This issue has recently been dealt with by Paul B. Duff (*Who Rides the Beast*, see especially pages 3–16). Duff observes that the assumption of persecution under Domitian as the background against which Revelation is to be interpreted has been seriously called into question in recent years due to the lack of external evidence (Duff, *Who Rides the Beast*, 3–4; see also the provocative assessment by Brian W. Jones, *The Emperor Domitian* [London; New York: Routledge, 1992], 114–17). However, internal evidence pointing to intense persecution has given room to a tension between history and literature. Duff mentions that “John’s narrative—especially as regards persecution—is so strikingly vivid that it is hard to ignore” (Duff, *Who Rides the Beast*, 4). Various solutions have been proposed (Duff, *Who Rides the Beast*, 5–14). Duff argues that if there was a crisis, it “can be more accurately defined as a social conflict within the churches” (14).

Drawing upon Duff’s material, Sigve K. Tonstad remarks that the bad reputation of Domitian as a persecutor of Christians has been built upon the testimony of Eusebius, who, in turn, was influenced by writers such as Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius; he thus argues that the situation behind the writing of Revelation demands reconsideration (Tonstad, *Revelation*, 9). This does not mean that a date in the time of Domitian should be rejected, but that Domitian “was not the persecutor of Christians that generations of interpreters made him out to be” (Tonstad, *Revelation*, 11) and, hence, a different explanation for the situation of Revelation must be provided. Adela Yarbro Collins goes as far as to mention that “Domitian apparently took no steps against Christians as Christians [...]. The origin of the Apocalypse, therefore, cannot be explained in terms of a response to that particular kind of social crisis” (Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 104). With that in mind, many scholars shifted their attention to the Roman empire as such, with a focus on Nero (“The Roman Imperial View,” see Tonstad, *Revelation*, 11, 15–18). Nevertheless, objections to the Nero hypothesis are also many. The most remarkable is that the empire and the idea of the return of Nero cannot explain John’s imagery in the sense that Revelation transcends first-century political concerns (Tonstad, *Revelation*, 19). Revelation is cosmic in its scope and truly prophetic.

hermeneutic standpoint, especially Dean Flemming’s essay “Revelation and the Missio Dei: Toward a Missional Reading of the Apocalypse.”<sup>863</sup> While the essay is a fine contribution on that matter, Flemming himself acknowledges that an essay is too short a space to explore the Apocalypse of John from a missional perspective. It is expected, therefore, that this and the following chapters will provide more insights into whether Revelation should be read from a missional hermeneutic perspective.<sup>864</sup> Accordingly, this

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This approach is referred to as “The Cosmic Conflict View” (Tonstad, *Revelation*, 20). Tonstad states that “this view is not indifferent to Roman imperial reality, but it deals with bigger concerns, and it projects on a wider screen” (Tonstad, *Revelation*, 20).

Because persecution under Domitian has been challenged as the situation behind Revelation, Tonstad states that “it is not inconceivable that he [John] was on Patmos voluntarily, for reasons of mission.” (Tonstad, *Revelation*, 51). He argues that the phrase διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ/*because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus* in Rev 1:9 may have a future orientation (Contra Boring, *Revelation*, 82; Yeatts, *Revelation*, 40). Although others before him have pointed to that possibility—including Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 15; Thomas and Macchia, *Revelation*, 80; Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 2006), 39; Francis J. Moloney, *The Apocalypse of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 51; Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 82—his discussion on the lack of evidence of a real crisis further supports it. In addition, if the contention of Craig R. Koester that “John is the only person known to have been sent” to Patmos is correct (Koester, *Revelation*, 242), this information may enhance the notion of a missionary reason. The fact is that, in current scholarship, a missionary reason cannot be proved nor denied. Nevertheless, while a definitive answer is not possible, it is not necessary either. A missional reading of Revelation is not about the mission of John in Patmos, but the mission of God in the world through his church.

<sup>863</sup> See the Review of Literature in chapter 2.

<sup>864</sup> Scholars debate what is involved when applying a missional reading to Scripture (see Hunsberger, “Proposals for a Missional Hermeneutic,” 309–21). For some points of agreement, see Flemming, “Revelation and the Missio Dei,” 162. Also, Wright, *The Mission of God*, 48–69. A missional hermeneutic assumes that the Scripture tells the story of God’s mission in restoring creation to its perfect state and reconciling humanity to himself through the death and resurrection of Jesus, as well as commissioning a people—Israel in the OT and a redefined Israel (the church) in the NT—to bear witness to his redemptive plan until all the world is filled with his glory.

The book of Revelation brings this story to its climax by focusing on the triumph of God’s mission through his end-time church. In that regard, the study of Külli Tõniste on Rev 21–22 is very insightful. Tõniste argues that the canonical location of Revelation is not accidental, and that “Revelation should be approached as a canonical ending with an expectation that it completes the canonical narrative.” See Tõniste, *Ending of the Canon*, 1. A recent treatment of Revelation as the climax of biblical prophecy can also be found in Brian J. Tabb, *All Things New: Revelation as Canonical Capstone* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), especially 17–19. While focusing on the end of the biblical story, Revelation tells other interconnected stories—creation, redemption, covenant, judgment, new creation. These stories follow a universal-oriented pattern. Richard Bauckham argues that the Scripture presents a universal orientation that runs through Gen 12 to Revelation. There is always a “movement from the particular to the universal, [...] from a particular past toward the universal future; [...] from the one to the many, from Abraham to the

chapter aims at providing the Revelation context of mission in Revelation 10–14. The discussion will focus first on the preceding chapters (Rev 1–9) and then on the following chapters (Rev 15–22). My comments will follow the flow of the narrative by paying attention to passages that have been selected on the basis of a semantic field of mission.

### Preceding Context

#### The New Covenant Community: Kingdom, Priests, and Lampstands

Previous works have pointed out that witness is one of the main themes in Revelation.<sup>865</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that terms from the μαρτυς-root<sup>866</sup> abound from the very outset (1:2 [2x], 5, 9).<sup>867</sup> Since the witnessing motif will be discussed further ahead,<sup>868</sup> for now we will turn to three important passages, namely, 1:5–7; 1:11; 1:20. With covenantal language, these passages introduce the church as the new covenant community and the agent of faithful witness.

#### 1:5–7

The language of 1:5–6 is highly covenantal. Scholars have suggested that 1:5a

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nations, from Jesus to every creature in heaven, on earth, and under the earth” (Bauckham, “Mission as Hermeneutic for Scriptural Interpretation,” 30–31. For a broader discussion, see Bauckham’s *Bible and Mission*). Revelation is the place in the canonical record where this universal orientation is given its fullest expression.

<sup>865</sup> Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 72–73; Osborne, *Revelation*, 62; Fanning, *Revelation*, 470; Blount, *Revelation*, 27; Peters, “The Mandate of the Church,” 152; Duvall, *Heart of Revelation*, 101–18.

<sup>866</sup> I am aware that not always μαρτυς-root means “witness”.

<sup>867</sup> While John is identified as a witness (1:2), Jesus is portrayed as “the faithful witness” in the absolute sense (1:5; cf. 3:14). The NA<sup>28</sup> and UBS<sup>5</sup> read “The Witness, the Faithful One” (ὁ μάρτυς, ὁ πιστός). However, in light of 3:14, the SBLGNT reading (ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός, with no comma) is preferable. In fact, all three editions (NA<sup>28</sup>, UBS<sup>5</sup>, and SBLGNT) have no comma in 3:14. In addition, Jesus’ designations both in 1:5 and 3:14 seem to be threefold, following the pattern of a threefold predicate of God in 1:4 (Roloff, *Revelation*, 24). Jesus is the pattern according to which all the other witnesses are presented in the book (e.g., “Antipas my faithful witness,” 2:13; cf. “my two witnesses,” 11:3).

<sup>868</sup> See chapter 7, “The Prophetic Task of the Two Witnesses.”

alludes to Ps 89:27 (88:28 LXX).<sup>869</sup> Verbal parallels are easily identified as one compares key terms in the two passages.<sup>870</sup> They share three words in common and in the same order. In addition to the use of *πρωτότοκος/firstborn*, the phrase “the ruler of kings on earth” (Rev 1:5) seems to borrow from “the highest of the kings of the earth” (Ps 89:27). Furthermore, the phrase “his God and Father” in 1:6 may be reminiscent of “*My Father you are, my God and supporter*” in Psalm 88:27 (LXX), enhancing the allusion to Psalm 88:28 (LXX) in 1:5a. These data indicate that John sees Christ as the eschatological Davidic Ruler alluded to in Psalm 89 (cf. 2 Sam 7).<sup>871</sup>

In the second half of 1:5, the covenant imagery switches from David to Israel. This is likely due to John’s portraying of Jesus as the ultimate or ideal Davidic King commissioning a new Israel.<sup>872</sup> Exodus 19:5–6 has to do with the calling of Israel to be a

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<sup>869</sup> E.g., Beale, *Revelation*, 101; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 64; Mounce, *Revelation*, 49; James Moffat, “The Revelation of St. John the Divine,” in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: George H. Doran, n.d.), 5:338; Trafton, *Revelation*, 20; Brighton, *Revelation*, 35. Notice also the wording of Ps 88:38 (LXX), “And the witness in heaven is faithful,” or “the faithful witness in heaven” (Ps 88:37 Brenton LXX). Ps 89 is seen as a prayer for the fulfillment of God’s promise to David; see Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms 1–89: Commentary*, KEL (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2011), 2:823. This psalm is widely used by the NT writers with reference to Jesus. See Donald Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1992), 107–10.

<sup>870</sup> Compare *πρωτότοκος... τῶν βασιλέων τῆς γῆς* in Rev 1:5 to *πρωτότοκον... τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν τῆς γῆς* in Ps 88:28 LXX. It is noteworthy that John utilizes the nominative *ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός* in apposition to an oblique case. This has been pointed out by some scholars as an example of Revelation’s unconventional Greek (David L. Mathewson, *Revelation: A Handbook on the Greek Text* [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016], 5. However, this can also be explained otherwise. John may be simply imitating the LXX because he knows that his audience will recognize such a construction (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 62).

<sup>871</sup> Stefanovic affirms that the three titles of Christ in Revelation 1:5 come from Psalm 89:27 and 37 and identify Christ “as the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises and hopes”. Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 67.

<sup>872</sup> So, Davis, *Revelation*, 96–104; Beale, *Revelation*, 191; Fanning, *Revelation*, 82; Leithart, *Revelation*, 89–90. The phrase “To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood” (1:5b) is reminiscent of exodus language. This is confirmed by an allusion to Exod 19:6 in 1:6. John shares two words from the same root with Exod 19:6. Compare *βασιλείαν* and *ἱερεῖς* (Rev 1:6) to *βασιλείων* and *ἱεράτευμα* (Exod 19:6).

priestly nation. For that to happen, first God redeemed his people (Exod 1–18). The same movements are seen in Revelation 1:5–6. First, John emphasizes our redemption through Jesus’ blood (1:5b),<sup>873</sup> then he indicates the formation of the new covenant people (1:6a).<sup>874</sup> By using the pronoun ἡμᾶς (“loves *us*,” “freed *us*,” “made/appointed *us*”),<sup>875</sup> John redefines the identity of Israel to include the Christian church.<sup>876</sup> The Christian church is a “new actor” in God’s mission.<sup>877</sup> As elsewhere in the NT (see chapter 3),

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<sup>873</sup> Rev 1:5 presents three designations of Jesus as well as three actions. The two triads point to Jesus’ mission, which involved his earthly ministry (“faithful witness”), atoning death (“by his blood”), resurrection (“firstborn of the dead”), his ascension and rulership (“the ruler of kings on earth”), and commissioning (“made us kingdom and priests”). The mission of the church derives from and is a continuation of Jesus’ mission.

<sup>874</sup> A similar movement can be seen in Titus 2:14. See Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 45. Just as in Exodus, in Rev 1:5b–6a redemption and calling cannot be dissociated.

<sup>875</sup> The three actions described in 1:5b–6a (“loves,” “freed,” “made”) are closely interconnected. The first two verbs are participles, whereas the third one is an indicative. Although “made” is in a different grammatical form, it is parallel to the participles (so Fanning, *Revelation*, 83n54; Osborne, *Revelation*, 75). As seems evident, early Christians understood this threefold description of Jesus’ activity on behalf of the church as a missionary calling. Elisabeth Fiorenza argues that the three actions “represent formulary material which in all probability belonged to the early Christian baptismal tradition” (Elisabeth S. Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985], 72. She also highlights that the verb ποιέω in “made us kingdom” has a sense of installation or investiture. This is how ποιέω is used in Mark 3:14–19 “where it refers to the institution of the twelve” (p. 72).

<sup>876</sup> For a helpful survey on the church as kings and priests in the NT, see Gladd, *From Adam and Israel*, 116–43; Andrew S. Malone, *God’s Mediators: A Biblical Theology of Priesthood*, NSBT (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2017); and Padilla, *Bases bíblicas de la misión*, 356–59. Padilla argues that Revelation abounds in “kingdom” terminology and that this reveals John’s missionary concerns.

<sup>877</sup> As Christopher Wright has helpfully emphasized, “it is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world but that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission—God’s mission” (Wright, *The Mission of God*, 62). W. Ross Blackburn argues that the missionary teaching of Exod 19:4–6 has clearly been captured in the NT in 1 Pet 2:9: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, **that you may proclaim** the excellencies of him who called you *out of darkness into his marvelous light*” (emphasis added). See Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 102. The missionary impulse of the exodus can also be perceived from Exod 9:16, “so that my name may be **proclaimed** in all the earth” (emphasis supplied). It is possible that Peter is alluding to that passage. Peter’s ὅπως... ἐξαγγείλητε is very similar to ὅπως διαγγελη. In addition, Peter’s τὰς ἀρετὰς (“excellence of character, virtues,” BDAG, 130) may be connected thematically to τὸ ὄνομά in Exod 9:16. Blackburn further mentions that Peter’s usage of Exodus is similar to what Jesus said to his disciples in Matt 5:14–16, where he emphasizes that the disciples are the light of the world. Would not the same thing be happening in Rev 1:5–6? Would not John have captured the same missionary impulse of God’s covenant with Israel? While a sentence such as “that you may proclaim” does not appear in Rev 1:5–6, the metaphor of light is abundantly used in the first three chapters, producing virtually the same effect.

Jesus' suffering ("by his blood"), resurrection ("firstborn of the dead"), and ascension ("ruler of kings on earth") result in commission ("made us kingdom, priests"). Suffering and rulership are mission-related themes. This idea is further explored in 1:7, where the phrase "those who pierced him" refers to Jesus' suffering and death, and the image of his "coming with the clouds" is one of royalty.<sup>878</sup>

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<sup>878</sup> This passage contains a conflation of Dan 7:13 and Zech 12:10–12. One can agree with Randolph R. Rogers' assessment that Rev 1:7 contains clear "verbal parallels to the MT and LXX version of Zech 12:10, 12"; see Randolph R. Rogers, "An Exegetical Analysis of John's Use of Zechariah in the Book of Revelation: The Impact and Transformation of Zechariah's Text and Themes in the Apocalypse" (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002), 69. Marko Jauhiainen goes as far as to state that Rev 1:7 contains "one of the most obvious allusions to Zechariah"; see Marko Jauhiainen, *The Use of Zechariah in Revelation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 142.

Seemingly, John was also aware that Jesus combined these two OT passages (cf. Matt 24:30). Both of them combine Dan 7:13 and Zech 12:10–12 (Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:361). Would John also have in mind Jesus' teaching on the eschatological gathering recorded in Matt 24:31? Apparently, when writing the content recorded in 1:5–7, John had in mind not only Zech 12:10 but also other passages in Zech 9–14. R. T. France argues that Zech 9–14 "introduces four figures which may be taken as Messianic: the king riding on an ass (9:9–10), the good shepherd (11:4–14), the one 'whom they have pierced' (12:10), and the smitten shepherd (13:7)" (France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, 104). Three of these can be identified in Rev 1:5–7. Jesus is the Eschatological Shepherd who "has freed us from our sins by his blood" (1:5; see Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 46; Leihart, *Revelation*, 95–98). He is the one "whom they have pierced" (1:7), and the smitten shepherd ("by his blood," 1:5). Although the figure of the king riding on a donkey does not appear in Rev 1:5–7—and this for obvious reasons, i.e., the portrayal of Jesus in Revelation as a warrior does not combine with the sign of peace conveyed by that image—the idea of kingship is expressed in different ways. In any case, Zech 9–14 seems to play a major role in Rev 1:5–7. This assessment is reinforced by the fact that this use of Zech 9–14 is not a novelty in the Johannine corpus. In his study on mission in the Fourth Gospel, Köstenberger argues that John utilizes this Zecharian background when he presents Jesus as the Eschatological Shepherd-Teacher who calls his followers to gather "fruit." Accordingly, Jesus rides a donkey (John 12:15; cf. Zech 9:9–10) and is presented as the good Shepherd (John 10; cf. Zech 11:4–14), martyr (John 19:37; cf. Zech 12:10), and smitten Shepherd (John 10; cf. Zech 13:7). See Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 135.

As a matter of fact, the conflation of these four figures in order to depict Jesus as the King-Shepherd seems to have become a tradition in the early church. See, for instance, Joel Marcus's discussion on Markan allusions to Zech 9–14 in the passion narrative (Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 153–64. See also F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes* (Nashville: Kingsley Books, 2017), 100–114). As far as the Gospel of John is concerned, Köstenberger argues that the gathering in 10:16 (cf. 11:52) must be interpreted against the background mentioned above and refers to the "the future mission of the exalted Lord through his disciples" (Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus*, 135) as portrayed in 4:34–38; 14:12; 17:20; 20:21–23; 21:15–19.

The data above suggest that, if John was alluding to Jesus' teaching as recorded in Matt 24:30, it is likely that he also had in mind Jesus' teaching recorded in Matt 24:31. First, the conflation of Zecharian passages portraying the eschatological Shepherd-King is not a novelty in Rev 1:5–7. The same occurs in the Fourth Gospel. Second, the fact that Jesus' teaching on the coming of the Son of Man is associated with the sending of angels to gather the elect in both Matt 24:30–31 and Mark 13:26–27 suggests that these two

## 1:11, 20; 2:1–3:22<sup>879</sup>

Revelation 1:9–20 brings the first visionary experience of John. This passage introduces the imagery of the seven lampstands that will be developed in Revelation 2–3.<sup>880</sup> The missionary impulse of the candlestick imagery has drawn the attention of several interpreters.<sup>881</sup> That the metaphor of light is heavily loaded with mission connotations can easily be seen from OT passages such as Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; 51:4; 60:1, 3, and the way the metaphor of light is applied in the NT.<sup>882</sup> Most references to

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images were part of the same tradition. If this is true, it is possible that the coming of the Son of Man in 1:7 is mentioned after the description of the church as kingdom and priests in order to indicate the church's missionary role until the second coming. Furthermore, these data can shed light on the interpretation of 14:14–20, where angels are also involved in a harvest on earth.

<sup>879</sup> William Shea proposed that the five main sections—or formulaic statements—of each letter of Rev 2–3 reflect the covenant formulary—preamble, historical prologue, stipulations, witnesses, blessings and curses—as identified in Exodus and Deuteronomy (see William H. Shea, “The Covenantal Form of the Letters to the Seven Churches,” *AUSS* 21, no. 1 [1983]: 71–84). In turn, David Aune argues that the seven letters follow the form of imperial edicts (see David E. Aune, *Apocalypticism, Prophecy, and Magic in Early Christianity* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 212–32). For Stefanovic, “these two proposals should not be regarded as mutually exclusive but rather correlative and complementary” (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 85; So Beale, *Revelation*, 228. Beale, however, resists some arguments presented by Shea and, hence, defends “a qualified version of Shea’s view” (227). The fact that John communicated OT truths in a language more comprehensible to first-century Christians within the Greco-Roman culture reveals a missionary concern. See Jon Paulien, *Present Truth in the Real World: The Adventist Struggle to Keep and Share Faith in a Secular Society* (Boise; Oshawa: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1993), 149–150.

<sup>880</sup> Interestingly, the term *λυχνία*/*lampstand* occurs seven times in Revelation, with concentration in chapters 1–2 (1:12, 13, 20 [2x]; 2:1, 5; 11:4). In 1:11, John hears a voice telling him to write a message to the seven churches (v. 11). Next, he sees seven lampstands (v. 12) and the resurrected Christ in the midst of them (v. 13). This is the first time the I-hear-and-I-saw pattern is used in the book. First, John *hears* about the seven churches, then he *sees* the seven lampstands. This indicates that the seven lampstands stand for the seven churches, which is confirmed in 1:20. For more details on the I-hear-and-I-saw technique, see Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 27–28. For a thoughtful analysis of eight significant passages containing the hearing/seeing pattern, see Rebecca Skaggs and Thomas Doyle, “The Audio/Visual Motif in the Apocalypse of John Through the Lens of Rhetorical Analysis,” *Journal of Biblical and Pneumatological Research* 3 (2011):19–37.

<sup>881</sup> Poucota, “La mission prophetique de l’eglise,” 38–57.

<sup>882</sup> The metaphor of light is applied to Jesus (Matt 4:16; Luke 2:32; John 1:4, 5, 7, 8, 9; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35–36, 46), the church or individuals (Matt 5:14, 16; Luke 16:8; John 5:35; 12:23; Acts 13:47; Eph 5:8; Phil 2:15; 1 Thess 5:5; cf. Matt 5:16; 6:23; Luke 11:35–36; 12:35); and the gospel/word (Acts 26:18, 23; 2 Cor 4:4, 6; Eph 3:9; 2 Pet 1:19; cf. 1 Pet 2:9; 1 John 2:8–10). As discussed in chapter 4, Jesus—and the apostles—saw his mission in connection with Isa 40–66, especially 50–55 (Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 33–57). Furthermore, the apostles themselves were highly influenced by that passage when interpreting their own mission (cf. Acts 13:46–48). Accordingly, several statements from Isa 40–55 are

lampstands specifically in Scripture are related to religious or symbolic use.<sup>883</sup> Although there has been much discussion of the meaning expressed by the symbol,<sup>884</sup> by and large it has been interpreted as a representation of “God, the law, and Messianic hopes for salvation.”<sup>885</sup>

From Leviticus 24:3 one can infer that the lampstand serves as a metaphor for God’s continuous presence among his people.<sup>886</sup> God is the light and the bread of life.<sup>887</sup> Based on the fact that the position of the lampstand precisely in front of the veil both allows the lamps to illuminate the veil (Exod 25:37) and, in turn, causes the veil to send light back to the lampstand, Paulin Poucota concludes that this is a metaphor for the mission of God’s people as they “reflect the light of God.”<sup>888</sup> Accordingly, the fact that

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quoted and cited in the NT to explain the mission of Jesus and that of the church. In Revelation, “light” language occurs in a positive sense and likely with mission connotations various times (“shining woman” [12:1]; an angel illumining the earth [18:1; cf. 10:1]; “the glory of God gives it [the New Jerusalem] light, and its lamp is the Lamb” [21:23; cf. 21:11; 22:5]; “the nations will walk by its light” [21:24]). This will be explored further ahead. Conversely, it is said regarding Babylon, “and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more” (18:23).

<sup>883</sup> Leland Ryken et al., eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 486.

<sup>884</sup> Joan E. Taylor, “Jewish-Christianity: Material Culture (200–550),” in *The Eerdmans Encyclopedia of Early Christian Art and Archaeology*, ed. Paul Corby Finney (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 753.

<sup>885</sup> Taylor, “Jewish-Christianity: Material Culture,” 753.

<sup>886</sup> Richard N. Boyce, *Leviticus and Numbers*, WeBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 94. Willem VanGemeren has helpfully observed that the close association of the lampstand “with the table of the bread of God’s presence and its location in front of the veil [Exod 26:35; 40:24] strongly suggest it had a theological purpose.” See *NIDOTTE*, 977–78.

<sup>887</sup> It is significant that Jesus applied those symbols to himself (John 6:35, 48; 8:12; 9:5).

<sup>888</sup> Poucota, “La mission prophétique de l’église,” 46. Similarly, Chad Michael Foster states that “in religious practice, prophetic vision, parables, and apocalyptic texts, lampstands serve as a symbol of people’s connection with Yahweh and the anticipation of His full light shining upon them.” See Chad Michael Foster, “Lampstand,” in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham: Lexham, 2016). In that connection, Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel state that “in Scripture, the gold lampstand symbolizes the continuing witness of the covenant community.” See Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “Tabernacle, Temple,” in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 2016. Also, *NIDOTTE*, 1098.



Jesus is seen in the midst of the lampstands (Rev 1:13) indicates that the church is supposed to reflect the light of Jesus and give continuity to his mission.<sup>889</sup> The Davidic King described in Revelation 1:5–6 now commissions the church by portraying its missionary role in the world as “the seven lampstands” (Rev 1:20). The rest of the narrative will show that there is much darkness in this world in connection with the evil forces acting in it (8:12; 9:2; 16:10).<sup>890</sup> As a light in the darkness, the church is called to illuminate the world with the knowledge of God and his Messiah.<sup>891</sup>

Towards the end of Revelation 1, readers can realize that the book begins where the Gospels finished. Jesus is enthroned in heaven. In a sense, the introductory material of Revelation resembles that of Acts. More than that, there is a sense in which Revelation is the continuation of Acts. While Acts shows that the activity of the apostolic church continues the mission of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, Revelation begins with the

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<sup>889</sup> It is noteworthy that the OT applies the metaphor of light to David’s descendants (2 Sam 21:17; 1 Kgs 11:36; see *NIDOTTE*, 159–60) and to the very ultimate Davidic King (Ps 132:17). These passages suggest that “David’s house will survive even the darkest days because of God’s covenant promise” (*NIDOTTE*, 159–60). Similarly, L. Michael Morales argues that “the lampstand shining its light upon the twelve fragrant loaves is a symbol of the covenant.” See L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, NSBT 37 (Nottingham; Downers Grove: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2015), 192.

<sup>890</sup> Also notice the term ἄβυσσος/*abyss* in 9:2, which, just as in Gen 1:2 LXX (cf. *Jub* 2:2), is also associated with darkness (Koester, *Revelation*, 457). Interestingly, like *luchnia* (“lampstand”), the term *abyssos* also occurs seven times in Revelation (9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3). The church is called to shine even during the dark moments when the evil forces portrayed in the rest of the book seem to prevail in this world.

<sup>891</sup> Erhard S. Gerstenberger argues that the temple illumination by means of the lampstand conveys a theological message that must be interpreted against the notion that “the night itself remains [...] as a symbol of the presence of forces inimical to life” (Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Leviticus: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 356. Conversely, the lampstand is a symbol of the source of life. It is not surprising, therefore, that in Jewish thought it stands as a representation of the tree of life in the garden of Eden (Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 486; also, L. Yarden, *The Tree of Light: A Study of the Menorah, The Seven-Branched Lampstand* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971], 35–40). Carol L. Meyers goes as far as to contend that “it is the cosmological modality of the tree motif which constitutes the most vital and pervasive way in which it appears in the biblical sources” (Carol L. Meyers, *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult*, American Schools of Oriental Research Dissertation Series [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976], 180).

apostolic era and goes beyond by showing how the church will bear testimony until the second coming of Jesus.

Revelation reminds us that the church is only a light-bearer.<sup>892</sup> If a church does not fulfill its role as a light-bearer, its lampstand can be removed (Rev 2:5).<sup>893</sup> Revelation 1–3 has a high view of the church<sup>894</sup> because it has a high view of mission.<sup>895</sup> In fact, ecclesiology and missiology go together.<sup>896</sup> The church exists because there is a mission to fulfill! The first three chapters of Revelation set the missionary lens through which the rest of the book is to be read.

### Tracing the Missionary Teaching of the Seals and Trumpets

Revelation 4–5 is important for understanding what comes next in the book.<sup>897</sup> This introductory scene combines the themes of creation (Rev 4) and redemption (Rev 5).<sup>898</sup> It shows that God is on his throne and in control of history.<sup>899</sup> Therefore, readers

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<sup>892</sup> *NIDOTTE*, 160. This is similar to John, where Jesus is “the true light which gives light to everyone” (John 1:9).

<sup>893</sup> The notion of removal of the lampstand in 2:5 reflects Mark 4:21–25 and Luke 8:16–18 (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 115). It conveys the idea of failure in witnessing. Jesus reminds the readers “that their primary role [...] should be that of a light of witness to the outside world” (Beale, *Revelation*, 230). The loss of first love mentioned in 2:4 is not the love for Christ in general as is clear from 2:3. It is the decrease of enthusiasm to witness about Jesus to the world. The imagery of Jesus walking among the seven lampstands (2:1) is a reminder to the members of Ephesus of their role as light-bearers (2:5) by means of faithful witness (See Beale, *Revelation*, 230-31). Additionally, the love in 2:4 is not love for one another either since the imagery of Jesus among the lampstands evokes the relationship between Jesus and the church.

<sup>894</sup> Tonstad, *Revelation*, 47.

<sup>895</sup> According to Beale, “witness is the prevailing theme of all the letters” (Beale, *Revelation*, 289).

<sup>896</sup> Senior, “Correlating Images of Church,” 10–12.

<sup>897</sup> Stefanovic, “Literary Patterns of Revelation,” 42. Rev 4–5 and the remaining chapters of the first half of the book seem to follow the order of transmission disclosed in 1:1–3, namely, God, Jesus, the angel, John, the churches. For details, see Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 327.

<sup>898</sup> Strand, “‘Victorious-Introduction’ Scenes,” 56.

can be sure that, while the evil powers will be active until the end of history—as the rest of the book will reveal—God will finally triumph over them. Revelation 4 shows that “God’s sovereignty and will are perfectly acknowledged in heaven,” whereas Revelation 5 indicates how this will “become a reality on earth.”<sup>900</sup> Accordingly, Revelation 4–5 tells us how the will of God will be done on earth as it is done in heaven (Matt 6:10).<sup>901</sup> The answer to that question is twofold. First, the worthiness of Jesus on account of his sacrificial death (5:9, 12; cf. vv. 2, 4). Second, the faithful witness of the church by means of its kingly priesthood.<sup>902</sup> This is mission at its highest expression. Next, we will focus on some key passages in Revelation 4–9.

## 5:6

In his insightful study of Revelation 5, Ranko Stefanovic points to the highly covenantal language of Revelation 4–5—“at the right hand” (5:1), “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” (5:5), “the Root of David” (5:5), as well as the very references to the throne,

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<sup>899</sup> See László Gallusz, “The Throne Motif in the Book of Revelation” (PhD diss., University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, 2011), 322–57. Similarly, in her fine study on the throne and God’s characterization in Revelation, Carol Joyce Rotz remarks, “The Apocalypse does not so much describe the end of history as the One who controls history” (Carol Joyce Rotz, “The One Who Sits on the Throne: Interindividual Perspectives of the Characterization of God in the Book of Revelation” [PhD diss., Rand Afrikaans University, 1998], 110).

<sup>900</sup> David L. Mathewson, *A Companion to the Book of Revelation* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2020), 69. One can see here a movement that is similar to that in the words “your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” in the Lord’s Prayer (Matt 6:10). For the will of God to be done on earth as it is in heaven, mission is necessary (Blomberg, *Matthew*, 119). Seen from this perspective, Revelation 5 does not convey only an act of worship but also an act of prayer—a prayer for heaven and earth to be brought to full reconciliation through the Lamb of God. This anticipates Revelation 21:1.

<sup>901</sup> Craig R. Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 81; Boxall, *Revelation*, 101.

<sup>902</sup> Mathewson, *Revelation*, 69. Mathewson further states that “the remaining chapters of the book of Revelation will flesh out in more detail how this will transpire” (69).

some of which recall the throne of David.<sup>903</sup> The rest of the chapter is better understood against this background.

In 5:6 the sacrificial death of Jesus is referred to through the imagery of a Lamb “as though it had been slain.” Next, the readers are informed that “the seven spirits of God [are] sent out into all the earth.”<sup>904</sup> The “seven spirits” have widely been interpreted as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. As in the Fourth Gospel, the mission of Jesus and the mission of the Spirit are closely related.

Some interpreters have seen the phrase “sent out into all the earth” as a reference to the Pentecost.<sup>905</sup> While this is debatable, it seems clear that this phrase “refers to the worldwide mission of the Holy Spirit in the full authority of Christ.”<sup>906</sup> It brings to mind the universal mission referred to in Acts 1:8, “to the end of the earth.” The text refers to Jesus’ full authority by portraying him as the Lamb with seven horns (meaning omnipotence) and seven eyes (meaning omniscience).<sup>907</sup>

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<sup>903</sup> Stefanovic states that these key terms “are clearly defined as the fulfillment of the OT promises with reference to the future king of the Davidic lineage and its NT fulfillment in the person and life of the resurrected Christ, the Messiah.” See Ranko Stefanovic, “The Background and Meaning of the Sealed Book of Revelation 5” (PhD diss., Andrews University, 1995), 226. He further states, “Nowhere else in the NT are the most significant Messianic royal terms and titles grouped together in association with Christ and his post-resurrection ministry as well as his sitting on the throne of the Father at his right side” (226).

<sup>904</sup> This recalls John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; cf. Wis 9:17.

<sup>905</sup> E.g., Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 207; Kendall H. Easley, *Revelation*, HNTC 12 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 9; Leithart, *Revelation*, 249. Notice that while in 4:5 the seven spirits of God are stationary before the throne, in 5:6 the seven spirits “are sent out.” Also notice that in 4:5 the seven spirits are “the seven lamps (λαμπάδες) of fire” (NASB). The term ἑπτὰ λαμπάδες/*seven lamps* or *seven torches* reminds us of the ἑπτὰ λυχνία/*seven lampstands*. This suggests the close relationship between the Spirit and the church. In 5:6 it becomes clear that the church fulfills its mission in the power of the Spirit.

<sup>906</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 204.

<sup>907</sup> The notion that the seven horns and seven eyes stand for, respectively, the omnipotence and omniscience of Jesus is widely accepted by Revelation scholars.

Jürgen Roloff argues that this passage reflects a Christological tradition in hymns of worship that sketched the story of Jesus from humiliation to exaltation<sup>908</sup> in the fashion of Philippians 2:9–11 (cf. also 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:5; Matt 28:18–20).<sup>909</sup> Jesus’ full authority can also be seen in the sevenfold list of “gifts” received by him in his investiture (cf. 5:12, 1. power; 2. wealth; 3. wisdom; 4. might; 5. honor; 6. glory; 7. blessing; cf. also 7:12).<sup>910</sup> Thus, Jesus’ death, resurrection, and enthronement granted him the prerogatives for exerting his role as the ideal Davidic King. More than that, his all-encompassing power and wisdom include his authority to send the Spirit, thereby empowering the church to fulfill its mission.<sup>911</sup> This is best seen in the next passage.

## 5:9–10

This passage contains the first of seven occurrences of the so-called fourfold formula, i.e., tribe, language, people, and nation (cf. 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15).<sup>912</sup> While in 5:6 Jesus’ death, resurrection, and enthronement result in the sending of the Holy Spirit, in 5:9–10 Jesus’ atoning death results in the purchase/redemption of a

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<sup>908</sup> Roloff, *Revelation*, 75.

<sup>909</sup> Roloff, *Revelation*, 75. See also Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 364.

<sup>910</sup> Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (London: SPCK, 2005), 139. Very likely the fourfold list in 5:13 has the same effect, perhaps with a slightly different emphasis. While the sevenfold list in 5:12 emphasizes the *complete* and *perfect* authority of the Lamb, the fourfold list in 5:13 focuses on his *universal* authority.

<sup>911</sup> A. Robert Nusca, *The Christ of the Apocalypse: Contemplating the Faces of Jesus in the Book of Revelation* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road, 2018), 49–51.

<sup>912</sup> Four of the seven occurrences of this formula appear in Rev 10–14 and thus will be further explored in the exegetical chapters. Various commentators see here an allusion to the blessing promised to Abraham: see Fee, *Revelation*, 85; Leithart, *Revelation*, 265; M. Robert Mulholland Jr., “Revelation,” in *James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, CBC 18 (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2011), 467. This will be explored along with the analysis of this formula.

“people for God.”<sup>913</sup> The two ideas are complementary. As a matter of fact, the Greek text suggests that the worthiness of Jesus to rule is based upon a threefold event, i.e., he was slaughtered, he bought a people, and he made/appointed them a kingdom and priests. One sees here the same movement as in 1:5–6 and in the background source (Exod 19:5–6), namely, redemption precedes commission. But 5:9–10 adds to 1:5–6 an important element: God’s grace and mercy toward the nations.<sup>914</sup> Those who respond positively to God’s offer of salvation by means of Jesus’ blood will also be raised to positions of royalty and priesthood.<sup>915</sup>

It is noteworthy that Revelation 4–5 and Acts 2 share several thematic parallels. Both refer to the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4, 17, 18, 33, 38; Rev 4:5; 5:6), the death (Acts 2:23, 24, 27, 36; Rev 5:9, 12), resurrection (Acts 2:24, 27, 28, 31, 32; Rev 5:6), and enthronement (Acts 2:25, 33–36; Rev 5:8–14) of Christ. In addition, both allude to the Davidic covenant (Acts 2:29–30; Rev 5:5). Both relate the Holy Spirit to fire (Acts 2:3–4; Rev 4:5; cf. 5:6), which is an indication of theophany throughout the OT (e.g., Exod 3:2; 19:18; 1 Kings 18:38–39; Ezek 1:27). Both refer to the church’s commission (Acts 2:30; cf. 1:8; Rev 5:10). Furthermore, whereas in Acts 2 the Holy Spirit fills the apostles (v. 4), is given as a gift (v. 38), and, most importantly, is poured out on *all flesh* (v. 17, italics

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<sup>913</sup> Although the term “people” does not occur in the Greek text, it is implied by the fourfold formula.

<sup>914</sup> Notice the switch from “us” in 1:6 to “them” in 5:10. The KJV reading “us” in 5:10 is unlikely. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 666.

<sup>915</sup> Osborne, “The Mission to the Nations,” 354. In addition, 5:10 indicates that, while God has already made us his kingdom and priests (so we already have participation in Jesus’ rulership), this will be plainly revealed in the future: “they shall reign on the earth” (5:10b; cf. 20:6; 22:5). See Schnelle, *Theology of the New Testament*, 765–66. Another allusion to Exod 19:4 occurs in 12:14, but it seems that the allusion limits itself to the deliverance element.

added; cf. vv. 18, 33), in Revelation 5:6 the Holy Spirit is “sent out into *all the earth*” (italics added). In a sense, Revelation 4–5 is John’s version of Pentecost.

As mentioned above, Revelation can be seen as a sort of continuation of Acts in that whereas Acts focuses on the activity of the apostolic church, Revelation begins with the apostolic era and goes beyond by showing how the church will bear testimony until the second coming. This suggests that the opening of the seals is the time for the Christian mission started at Pentecost, whereas the seventh seal points to the end of history after the preaching of the gospel is accomplished. The sealing is a time for salvation (Rev 7:10).

#### **6:9–11**<sup>916</sup>

Revelation 6:9, with its reference to “those who had been slain *for the word of God and for the witness* they had borne,” anticipates a theme that will be further explored in Revelation 10–14, especially chapters 11 and 13. The verb *σφάζω/to slay* is applied to the Lamb in 5:6, 9, 12. In 6:9, the readers become aware that the followers of the Lamb may face the same type of persecution and even death “because of the word of God and because of the witness they had borne” (6:9; cf. 6:11).<sup>917</sup> The prepositional phrase

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<sup>916</sup> I am intentionally skipping Rev 6:2 with its reference to the white horse and its rider. Three lines of interpretation provide different explanations to their identity. One of them identifies the rider as Christ and the white horse as the victorious preaching of the gospel to the world by the infant church. Irenaeus seems to have been the first to make this connection (Mounce, *Revelation*, 141; Boring, *Revelation*, 123; Smalley, *Revelation*, 148), which is referred to as “the classical view” (Pugh, “Revelation,” 230). While objections have been presented over time, this view is still maintained by various scholars with minor variations (Lenski, *Interpretation of St. John’s Revelation*, 220–23; Ladd, *Revelation*, 96–100; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 233; Leithart, *Revelation*, 2:432). If our appraisal of Rev 4–5 as John’s version of the Pentecost is correct, so it is likely that 6:2 has to do with the proclamation of the gospel. In any case, since this interpretation is more related to historical aspects of the preaching of the gospel by the early church, no further assessment will be done. This dissertation is more interested in theological aspects.

<sup>917</sup> Ladd, *Revelation*, 102.

“because of the word of God” suggests that their witnessing includes the preaching of the gospel. Accordingly, the material of the fifth seal fits the overall theology of mission of the seals, which has to do with the preaching of the gospel during the Christian era. Revelation 6:9–11 helps one understand what it means to “follow the Lamb wherever he goes” (cf. 14:4).<sup>918</sup> One important feature of the people of God derives from this passage.<sup>919</sup> The followers of Christ are defined as those who are willing to even die for the sake of their witness. They are molded in the likeness of Christ in their witness, for they “had been slain” because of their testimony (6:9) just as Jesus was slain (5:9, 12) because of his testimony (1:2, 9).

#### **7:4**

Revelation 7:4 introduces an important metaphor for the people of God in Revelation, namely, the 144,000 sealed. The term “sealed” (from Greek, σφραγίζω) plays a major role in the passage by connecting the 144,000 to the “servants of God” in 7:3 and to the phrase “from every tribe of the sons of Israel” in 7:4b.<sup>920</sup> Only after the number of the sealed is complete (7:1–3) will the final judgment of God against the wicked be performed (6:10). The time of sealing is a time for preaching the gospel. In Revelation 12–14, the 144,000 (14:1–5) are identified with the remnant (12:17) and the saints (13:10; 14:12). In our analysis of particular passages in that section of Revelation, we

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<sup>918</sup> As Pattemore has demonstrated, Rev 6:9–11 “is a starting point for many themes to be developed in the remainder of the book.” See Pattemore, *The People of God in the Apocalypse*, 90. If the witnessing in 6:9 includes the preaching of the gospel and such missionary activity results in martyrdom, so the killing in 6:11 must include the same reasons. Perhaps, this can be seen as an anticipation of 14:13, which says, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on”.

<sup>919</sup> Pattemore, *The People of God in the Apocalypse*, 114–16.

<sup>920</sup> The fact that the term 144,000 is tantamount to “the servants of God” indicates that the church does not impose any limitation to a particular people.



will investigate whether the 144,000 serve as a portrayal of agents of missionary work. For now, it is enough to mention that most scholars agree that the number 144,000 stands for all the people of God.<sup>921</sup> The fact that the 144,000 are described in OT terms—“from every tribe of the sons of Israel”—has led various scholars to defend a possible allusion to God’s promise to Abraham, which implies the inclusion of the Gentiles in the covenant people. However, while this is possible from a biblical theology perspective, it is not demonstrable from the exegesis of this particular text. Yet, on the basis of passages such as Romans 2:28–29; 4:11; Galatians 3:29; 6:16; Philippians 3:3; and Revelation 2:9; 3:9, many have argued that Revelation 7:4–8 is referring to the church as a spiritual Israel,<sup>922</sup> which can be defensible on the basis of John’s use of the OT elsewhere.<sup>923</sup> At this point in the narrative, the reader already knows that this new Israel (5:10) is made up of people coming “from every tribe and language and people and nation” (5:9).<sup>924</sup> This will be further discussed below.

## **7:9–10**

The second vision in Revelation 7 complements the first in that it shows an anticipation of the sealed people of God in heaven after the great tribulation (7:13–14).<sup>925</sup>

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<sup>921</sup> There are many reasons to take it figuratively rather than literally (for a synthesis of arguments see Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 210–37).

<sup>922</sup> E.g., Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 264; Beale, *Revelation*, 420; Mounce, *Revelation*, 158. For a very helpful discussion on the church as a new and spiritual Israel, see also Hans LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1983), 98–121.

<sup>923</sup> As Caird emphasizes, “In the Revelation John has already applied to the church so many descriptions of the old Israel that it would be perverse to treat the present case as an exception to the general rule” (Caird, *Revelation*, 95).

<sup>924</sup> Prigent, *Apocalypse*, 284.

<sup>925</sup> In that connection, the 144,000 and the great multitude are the same group but in “different

Of special interest to this work is the phrase “a great multitude that no one could number” (7:9), which is referred to by several scholars as an allusion to God’s covenantal promise to Abraham (see Gen 12:2; 15:5 [cf. 22:17]; 17:4–5; 32:12 [32:13 LXX]). Pierri Prigent goes as far as to assert that John sees in this great multitude the fulfillment of that promise, even if he does not emphasize it consciously.<sup>926</sup> Revelation 7:9 shares verbal parallels with Genesis 15:5 (LXX). If John’s intention to connect the material in 7:9 to God’s promise to Abraham is to be grounded only on the verbal parallels with Gen 15:5 (LXX), any assumption in that direction should be done with caution. Nevertheless, similar wording between 7:9 and Genesis 17:4 (LXX) and 32:13 (LXX) seems to suggest that the Revelator wanted to point to the expectation that the seed of Abraham would

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roles, circumstances, and periods, and from different points of view” (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 271). Objections to this view have been presented by commentators, but, as Alan F. Johnson remarks, the objections are not serious if one considers that the number of the sealed is symbolic and the list of tribes is representative of the new Israel (Johnson, “Revelation,” 484–85). This view is supported by various scholars, e.g., Koester, *Revelation*, 93; James L. Resseguie, *The Revelation of John: A Narrative Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 138; Easley, *Revelation*, 128; A. J. P. Garrow, *Revelation* (London: Routledge, 1997), 21; Wilfrid J. Harrington, *Revelation*, Sacra Pagina Series 16 (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 100; John Sweet, *Revelation*, TPI New Testament Commentaries (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 152; Williamson, *Revelation*, 145.

<sup>926</sup> Prigent, *Apocalypse*, 288. However, John shares words with the Septuagint of Gen 15:5; 17:4–5; 32:13 that leave the impression that such a connection with the book of Genesis is intentional.

LXX Background	Revelation 7:9
καὶ <u>ἀριθμήσον</u> τοὺς ἀστέρας, εἰ <u>δυνήσῃ</u> <u>ἐξαριθμῆσαι</u> αὐτούς (“and <u>number</u> the stars, if you will <u>be able to count</u> them...”) (Gen 15:5)	<u>ἀριθμῆσαι</u> αὐτὸν οὐδεὶς <u>ἐδύνατο</u> (no one <u>was able to count</u> ; my translation)
πλήθους ἐθνῶν (a multitude of nations) (Gen 17:4) πολλῶν ἐθνῶν (many nations) (Gen 17:5)	ὄχλος πολὺς (a great multitude)
τὸ σπέρμα ... <u>οὐκ ἀριθμηθήσεται</u> ἀπὸ τοῦ <u>πλήθους</u> (your offspring... <u>shall not be counted</u> for <u>multitude</u> ) (Gen 32:12 [32:13 LXX])	<u>ἀριθμῆσαι</u> αὐτὸν <u>οὐδεὶς</u> ἐδύνατο (“ <u>multitude no one</u> could <u>number</u> ”).

become as innumerable as the stars of heaven or the sand of the sea.<sup>927</sup> Apparently, John did not have a specific text in mind, but may be alluding to the thought that God made a promise to Abraham that his offspring would become a great multitude (Gen 15:5; 17:4–5; 32:12), an international one (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14).

In Revelation, the idea of an international multitude is reinforced by the fourfold formula.<sup>928</sup> Although it occurs seven times in the book, John describes it only twice as the source for the formation of the people of God (5:9; 7:9).<sup>929</sup> Scholars refer to Genesis 10:5, 20, 31 as one possible background of the fourfold formula in 5:9.<sup>930</sup> As seen in chapter 3 of this dissertation, Genesis 10–11 occupies a strategic position in the book of Genesis by immediately preceding God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12. It is as though the narrator wanted to indicate that the fulfillment of that promise somehow concerns the reversal of the scattering of the nations. These data suggest that the Revelator likely sees the international multitude making up the church in 5:9 and 7:9 as

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<sup>927</sup> Furthermore, sometimes a single word is enough to establish a thematic parallel with the background source (Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 182).

<sup>928</sup> “Tribe and language and people and nation,” cf. 5:9. See variations in 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15.

<sup>929</sup> Both in 5:9 and in 7:9 the formula is introduced by the preposition ἐκ/*from, out of*. This preposition also introduces the formula in 11:9, but the sense is partitive there, and certainly does not refer to the formation of God’s people. These data suggest that 5:9 and 7:9 are the only instances in Revelation in which the fourfold formula refers to the church (so Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 329). The other occurrences likely refer to the addressees of missionary work or the targets of the evil powers’ deceit. This will be examined further ahead.

<sup>930</sup> Interestingly, 5:9 follows the same order of items as in Gen 10:20, 31 (LXX), with the exception that John replaces the third item γῶρα with λαός. Bauckham argues that “this is in fact, the only fourfold phrase used in the OT to describe the nations of the world” (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 328). Bauckham also points to the threefold list “peoples, nations, and languages” in the book of Daniel as another possible background source. Interestingly, this list occurs six times (3:4, 7, 4:1; 5:19; 6:25; 7:14) in the plural and once in the singular, “any people, nation, and language” (3:29), also totaling seven occurrences. The LXX of Dan 3:4 expands the list to four items, which does not happen in the remaining occurrences. A fourfold formula also occurs in 2 Esdras 3:7 in reference to the descendants of Adam. These OT backgrounds to the fourfold formula will be further explored in chapters 6 and 9.

the fulfillment of that promise.<sup>931</sup> The close connection between 5:9 and 7:9 indicates that the mission of the Lamb is continued by his followers.<sup>932</sup> In that sense, the vision introduced in 7:9 “constitutes a mission that Jesus gave his followers at the beginning and continues throughout the age (Matt 28:19–20; Luke 24:47; John 10:16; Acts 1:8).”<sup>933</sup> Finally, the statement “salvation belongs to our God” in 7:10 is important in this discussion insofar as it indicates that the ultimate goal of mission is salvation.<sup>934</sup> Accordingly, 5:9 and 7:9–10 are complementary in that, while the former concerns how people coming from all nations are integrated into God’s people, the latter points to the results of God’s salvific activity. The sequence of the narrative shows that not everyone will accept God’s offer of salvation.

## 9:20–21

Revelation 9:20–21 contains two of only four occurrences of μετανοέω/*to repent*<sup>935</sup> outside the seven letters (9:20, 21; 16:9, 11).<sup>936</sup> This passage (9:20–21) is within

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<sup>931</sup> Tonstad also sees here the fulfillment of Isa 49:6 and its reference to God’s salvation to the ends of the earth (Tonstad, *Revelation*, 133).

<sup>932</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 333.

<sup>933</sup> Fanning, *Revelation*, 267. John was certainly aware of the Christian mission initiated after the Pentecost event and the numerical growth of the church as recorded in the book of Acts. Except for 5:36, all the other uses of the ἀριθμ-*root* in Acts have to do with the numerical growth of the church (4:4; 6:7; 11:21; 16:5; cf. 1:17). Such a numerical increase would naturally result in “a great multitude that no one could number (ἀριθμηῆσαι)” (Rev 7:9).

<sup>934</sup> The seal (7:4–8) is a symbol of protection but also a metaphor of salvation (see Beale, *Revelation*, 410–12). It is remarkable that people coming “from every nation, tribe, people, and language” address God as “our God” in acknowledgement of the salvific acts performed by God and the Lamb. Based on John 7:39, some scholars have seen the term “living water” in 7:17 as an allusion to the Holy Spirit (e.g., Brighton, *Revelation*, 180). This suggestion may be enhanced by the fact that there are also references to Jesus as the Eschatological Shepherd and to God the Father. If this assessment is correct, it is possible to conclude that Rev 7:9–17 points to the activity of the Holy Trinity on behalf of humankind.

<sup>935</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel fits this term in the semantic field of “goal of proclamation” (Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 37), and this is the way it is treated in this dissertation.

the septet known as the seven trumpets, and one might wonder whether there is any hint of mission here, since the passage's major theme has to do with judgment. However, as argued by Grant Osborne, "mission and judgment are interdependent aspects of Revelation."<sup>937</sup> This is best seen in 14:6–7<sup>938</sup> and, therefore, will be dealt with further ahead in our analysis of Revelation 14. For now, it is necessary to mention that this view is not accepted by some scholars.<sup>939</sup> For instance, Aune (also Beale and Schnabel) argues that the reference to repentance in 9:20–21 and 16:9, 11 concerns a negative reaction to punishment.<sup>940</sup> An alternative position could be referred to as a conflation view, i.e., there is no positive repentance in the context of the plagues (16:9, 11) while the fifth and sixth trumpets aim at bringing people to repentance (9:20–21),<sup>941</sup> although ultimately they do not repent.<sup>942</sup>

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<sup>936</sup> For the immediate context of the fifth and sixth trumpets, see Ranko Stefanovic, "End-Time Demonic Activities in the Book of Revelation," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 11, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 169–82.

<sup>937</sup> Osborne, "The Mission to the Nations," 357. Elsewhere, he states that "the outpouring of judgment has a redemptive purpose and is part of the final chance to repent [...]. God's judgments are an act of mercy, for he shows the powerlessness of the earthly gods [...] and calls upon sinful humankind to 'fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come' (14:7). In this way the judgments are part of God's mission to the world" (Osborne, *Revelation*, 271). He further asserts that God's judgments have a dual purpose. On the one hand, they intend to provide a final offer of salvation. On the other hand, they intend "to demonstrate the depravity of a people who would reject it" (Osborne, *Revelation*, 385).

<sup>938</sup> Osborne, "The Mission to the Nations," 357–62.

<sup>939</sup> See Osborne, *Revelation*, 385, and a comment on the objection in footnote 14.

<sup>940</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 541.

<sup>941</sup> This view is based on the dissimilarities between the seven trumpets and the seven plagues. While admittedly there are points of contact between the two, there are also several differences that do not allow for both visions to refer to the same events (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 480–82). While the trumpets are judgments seeking to attract people *for* God—see, e.g., Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 319–20; Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Revelation: I Saw Heaven Opened*, BST (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 98; Ian Boxall, "The Animal Apocalypse and Revelation 9:1–21: Creaturely Images during the Great Tribulation," in *Reading Revelation in Context: John's Apocalypse and Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Ben C. Blackwell, John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019), 92; Bruce M. Metzger, *Breaking the Code: Understanding the Book of Revelation*, revised and updated by David A.

## Following Context

### Opposition to the Church's Mission

The book of Revelation shows that the completion of the church's mission will be accomplished in the midst of much hatred and persecution. Below, some passages provide an overview of this subject.

#### 15:2–4

Revelation 15:2–4 forms an interlude that contrasts with the ensuing narrative.<sup>943</sup> Indeed, it is a sort of springboard passage that concludes the previous description (14:14–20) and introduces what comes next (the seven plagues)<sup>944</sup> by giving the reader a foretaste of the victorious celebration and praise performed by the overcomers of the beast. The praise concerns God's holiness and righteousness, the necessary prerogatives for a just judgment. Exodus language abounds in this short passage to show that justice

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DeSilva (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2019), 66; Resseguie, *Revelation*, 149—the plagues have the purpose of making even more evident their hardened hearts and rebellion *against* God (see e.g., Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 492; LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 264–65; Patterson, *Revelation*, 306; Keener, *Revelation*, 393, 400).

<sup>942</sup> As will become clearer in chapters 7 to 9 of this dissertation, the second half of Revelation is very judgment-oriented and tied with the idea of “coming out” of the sanctuary (14:15, 17; 15:6; 16:17). Interestingly, while 14:15 and 14:17 (cf. also the ellipsis of ἐξέρχομαι in 14:18) follow the order ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν (an angel came out), 15:6 and 16:17 are arranged in the reverse order, respectively, ἐξῆλθον οἱ ἑπτὰ ἄγγελοι (lit., “came out the seven angels”) and ἐξῆλθεν φωνὴ μεγάλη (lit., “came out a loud voice”). Such an arrangement forms a chiasmic structure as follows: A. ἄγγελος; B. ἐξῆλθεν; B'. ἐξῆλθον A'. οἱ ἑπτὰ ἄγγελοι/φωνὴ μεγάλη. In all these examples, the angels (14:15, 17; 15:6) or the loud voice are coming out of the sanctuary (ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ). This chiasmic structure suggests that the final events portrayed in 15–18, which lead to the second coming of Christ (19:11–21), are related to a coming-out-of-the-sanctuary movement. This is further suggested by the fact that the prepositional phrase ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ also appears in 16:1 to indicate the provenance of the voice announcing the pouring out of the seven plagues. This theme is so important in the second half of Revelation that it is referred to as late as in 21:9. In addition, the fact that the trumpets septet precedes that of the last plagues not only indicates the order of events in Revelation but also serves as a literary device to emphasize the sort of material that comes next. Among other things, in the OT “Trumpets serve a ritualistic purpose of announcing the advent of times of judgment and redemption” (Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 578).

<sup>943</sup> Mounce, *Revelation*, 284; Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 427, 431.

<sup>944</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 483.

and redemption go side by side as integral parts of the gospel message.

These verses provide a picture of the overcomers as “they sing the song of Moses . . . and the song of the Lamb” (v. 3). The overcoming motif reveals a military<sup>945</sup> metaphor and is explored in Revelation from two interconnected perspectives: it is promise and warning at the same time,<sup>946</sup> thus Christians can be victorious or fail in their Christian life depending on their decisions. Judging by the use of ὁ νικῶν/*the one who conquers* in the seven-churches section, it is likely that this term also has missionary connotations. Firstly, the conqueror is a member of the church.<sup>947</sup> Secondly, as such, he/she is supposed to be victorious not only by holding fast to his/her allegiance to Christ but also by keeping his/her light shining (Rev 2:5, 7; cf. 12:11). In addition to “the conquerors” (v. 2), other terms in this passage are mission-related. (1) The terms τὰ ἔθνη/*the nations* (v. 3) in the phrase “O king of the nations”<sup>948</sup> and πάντα τὰ ἔθνη/*all the nations* in the phrase “all the nations will come” (v. 4) are in the semantic field of addressees of missionary work. (2) The verb ἤκω in “all the nations will come (ἔξουσιν)” fits into the semantic field of activity involving movement from one place to another.<sup>949</sup> (3) The verbs φοβέω/*to fear*, δοξάζω/*to glorify* and προσκυνέω/*to worship*<sup>950</sup> in verse 4

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<sup>945</sup> Metzger, *Breaking the Code*, 30. Louw and Nida fit the term into the semantic domain of hostility and the subdomain of conquering; see L&N, 499.

<sup>946</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 123.

<sup>947</sup> Swete, *Apocalypse*, 28.

<sup>948</sup> This text has three variant readings: (1) τῶν αἰώνων “of the ages”; (2) πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν “of all the nations”; and (3) τῶν ἁγίων “of the saints.” The reading adopted by the UBS<sup>5</sup>, τῶν ἐθνῶν “of the nations,” is preferable based on both internal and external evidence. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 679–80.

<sup>949</sup> This verb reveals a centripetal orientation to mission.

<sup>950</sup> This is true when these verbs have “God” as their direct object and humans as the subject. Revelation 15:4 has one of the two important uses of προσκυνέω according to this criterion (cf. 14:7).

are in the semantic field of goal of proclamation. With an impressive economy of words, Revelation 15:2–4 puts together various mission-related themes in the OT: judgment, new exodus, redemption, eschatological pilgrimage, worship, monotheism, and God’s covenantal promises.<sup>951</sup> Time and space do not allow an extensive treatment of the passage; these themes are explored in the following chapters only insofar as they appear in Revelation 10–14.<sup>952</sup> For now, John’s use of exodus language in 15:2–4 gives the missional lens through which one should read the narrative of the seven plagues. Just as “Pharaoh’s opposition threatens God’s purposes to be known throughout the world,”<sup>953</sup> the false trinity seems to have the same purpose (see below, 16:13–14). However, just as God’s victory in the first exodus made God’s name known throughout the world (Exod

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<sup>951</sup> Despite his universalist reading of this passage, Bauckham’s treatment of possible OT passages lying behind it is very insightful. See Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 296–307. In turn, Beale offers a criticism of Bauckham’s conclusions (Beale, *Revelation*, 799–800) with a rich discussion on the OT background to this passage (pages 89–800). Rev 15:2–4 is so pervaded with Septuagint language that perhaps it is not an exaggeration to affirm that virtually every expression composing this passage comes from the OT. The suggestions of LXX allusions and/or echoes in this passage offered by scholars include (but are not limited to) Exod 14:31; 15; Deut 28:59; 31:19, 22, 30; 32:4, 44; 4 Kgd 25:13; Pss 85:8–10; 97:2; 105; 110:2–4, 7; 144:17; Isa 12:4–6; Jer 10:6–7; 52:17; Dan 7:10). This is so puzzling that Elisabeth S. Fiorenza goes as far as to say that Rev 15:3–4 is “an amalgamation of various OT themes” (Fiorenza, *Revelation*, 135). According to her, John “does not interpret the OT but uses its words, images, phrases, and patters as a language arsenal in order to make his own theological statement or express his own prophetic vision” (135). Bauckham reacts to that statement by contending that “nothing could be further from the truth” (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 298). Similarly, Beale affirms, “The use of the OT in vv 3–4 is not the result of random selection but is guided by the theme of the first exodus and the development of that theme later in the OT” (Beale, *Revelation*, 799).

<sup>952</sup> Rev 15:2–4 resumes themes that are treated in more detail in Rev 10–14. For instance, Beale argues that the title “king of the nations” was “applied to God’s reign over the nations in 11:15–18” (Beale, *Revelation*, 795). Moreover, the reference to “the conquerors” (v. 2) recalls the hymn of victory in 12:10–12. The verbs “fear,” “glorify,” and “worship” (v. 4) connect this passage to 14:6–7. Indeed, the theme of worship plays a major role in Rev 10–14 (11:1, 16; 13:4, 8, 12, 15; 14:7, 9, 11). In turn, the phrase “all nations will come” resumes the eschatological pilgrimage in 14:1–5.

<sup>953</sup> Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 30. Blackburn convincingly argues that this theme dominates Exod 1:8–15:21. He demonstrates that Pharaoh’s statement in Exod 1:9 (“the people of Israel are *too many* and *too mighty* for us”) is a response to Exod 1:7 (“the people of Israel were *fruitful* and *increased* greatly; they *multiplied* and *grew exceedingly strong*, so that the land was *filled* with them”), which, in turn, is a convergence of Gen 1:27–28 and Gen 12:1–3. For more details, see pages 28–31.



7:5, 17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 16, 29; 10:2; 14:4, 8; cf. 5:2; 6:3, 7), God's victory over the beast will have the same effect, but this time in an escalated manner (Rev 21–22).

### 16:13–14

The term “mouth” is a recurrent metonym for speech in Revelation.<sup>954</sup> It has a polysemous use, as it can refer to judgment (2:16; 19:15, 21), the word of God (10:9–10), and even a blasphemous utterance (13:5–6) or a deceitful discourse (9:17–19; 12:15; 16:13).<sup>955</sup> The fact that “mouth” is used three times in 16:13 is very significant. The reference to the *mouth* of the dragon, the *mouth* of the beast, and the *mouth* of the false prophet is not accidental. Scholars have pointed out that this satanic triumvirate—also referred to as “three unclean spirits like frogs”—is a counterfeit of the true Trinity. This is not the first time this false trinity or their discourse appear in the book. Revelation 12–13 emphasizes in detail this triple alliance, and there is much speech of the dragon implied by 12:9, 10, 15–16<sup>956</sup> (cf. 13:11; 20:3, 8, 10). In 12:15–16, the serpent has a *mouth* pouring water like a river. In turn, the sea beast is portrayed with a *mouth* speaking blasphemies in 13:5–6. While the earth beast is not depicted as having a “mouth” uttering something, it is described as *speaking* like a dragon (13:11).<sup>957</sup> Seemingly, the threefold

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<sup>954</sup> See Fanning, *Revelation*, 102; Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 98.

<sup>955</sup> This is in tune with the OT, where it is also used as a metonym for one's speech as a spokesperson (Isa 6:7, 9) or as a reference to deception (Pss 5:9; 144:8) and arrogant discourse (Pss 17:10; 73:9). For more details, see Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 575.

<sup>956</sup> The description of water like a river coming out of the mouth of the Serpent is a symbol of deceitful speech. See Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 400; Beale, *Revelation*, 672; Mounce, *Revelation*, 242; Osborne, *Revelation*, 483; Tonstad, *Revelation*, 186; Smalley, *Revelation*, 331–32; Leithart, *Revelation*, 24. However, this can also be a reference to persecution. As Stefanovic remarks, persecution and deception are the two strategies of Satan in his attempts to destroy the church. See Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 401; Osborne, *Revelation*, 483.

<sup>957</sup> There is general agreement that the False Prophet in 16:13 is identified with the second beast of 13:11–17.

reference to mouths in 16:13 represents Satan's efforts to mislead people by means of a deceitful message with the help of his allies.<sup>958</sup>

That the three entities in 16:13 constitute a parody of the Holy Trinity seems to be very clear. Ranko Stefanovic, however, goes beyond this by referring to the three unclean spirits as the evil counterfeit of the message of the three angels (14:6–12).<sup>959</sup> The best way to perceive that the deceitful message of the demonic trinity counterfeits the message of the three angels of 14:6–13 is by comparing the content of both.<sup>960</sup> Since, as indicated above, 16:13 resumes the references to the deceitful discourse of the satanic trinity in Revelation 12–13, it is necessary to contrast it to the message of the three angels of 14:6–12. Apparently, the message presented by the satanic triumvirate is a sort of counterpropaganda against the missionary message of the three angels, with the purpose of persuading the kings of the world to assemble for the last battle (16:14, 16).<sup>961</sup>

## 17:14

Revelation 17 indicates that the propaganda of the satanic trinity (16:13–14) is successful. It gives birth to a coalition with global proportions (17:13, 15). At this point, the reference to the fourfold formula in 17:15 (“peoples and multitudes and nations and

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<sup>958</sup> The members of this false trinity are portrayed as deceivers several times in Revelation (12:9; 13:14; 19:20; 20:3, 8, 10).

<sup>959</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 500 (see also 380). This has been a topic completely overlooked by other Revelation scholars. Besides Stefanovic, R. H. Charles long ago briefly commented that the three unclean spirits like frogs “contrast the three angels in 14:6” (Charles, *Revelation*, 47). The *Expositor's Greek Testament* mentions the possibility of a contrast to the three angels of Rev 14 in a short note on the number *tria* (“three”, 16:13); see W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (New York: George H. Doran, 1956), 5:447. However, no further commentary I consulted has touched on this issue.

<sup>960</sup> This will be done in chapter 9 of this dissertation.

<sup>961</sup> At first reading, it seems that Rev 13 portrays the deceptive discourse of the satanic trinity and indicates that it is accompanied by serious restrictions and persecution against God's people. This will be explored in our analysis of Rev 13.

languages”) is important. It suggests that the inhabitants of the world are the target audience of the false gospel of the satanic trinity (16:13–14).<sup>962</sup> However, it is the reference to the called, chosen, and faithful that reveals the missionary tone of the passage.<sup>963</sup> The terms κλητός/*called* and ἐκλεκτός/*chosen* here are *hapax legomena* in Revelation, but have clearly missional connotations elsewhere in the NT.<sup>964</sup> It is, therefore, particularly significant that κλητοί and ἐκλεκτοί occur together in Revelation 17:14. This is not a novelty in the NT, as one can see in Matthew 22:14; Romans 9:11; 2

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<sup>962</sup> If this is correct, Rev 14:6 must be the place where the fourfold formula describes the audience of the true gospel. This will be explored in our study of Rev 14:6–11. As far as the fourfold formula in 17:15 is concerned, Richard Bauckham suggests that it presents a close connection with that of 11:9. According to him, in both cases the nations are subjects of “the great city” (cf. 11:8; 17:18). Furthermore, in both cases “the great city” “is responsible for the murder of the prophetic witnesses of Jesus” (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 334). Now, however, the cry for vengeance in 6:9–11 is about to be fully answered (Osborne, *Revelation*, 624). The beast and the ten kings “will make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them” (NET). Scholars debate whether the antecedent of αὐτοί in the beginning of 17:14 is the “ten kings” (17:12) or the beast and the ten kings. In light of 19:19, it is more likely that αὐτοί refers to the beast and the kings.

<sup>963</sup> John implies that not only the Lamb but also those with him will conquer. Although the verb νικάω does not occur in the second part of the sentence, it is implied (Bratcher and Hatton, *Revelation*, 251; Ladd, *Revelation*, 232; Brighton, *Revelation*, 431). The idea of the Lamb accompanied by his followers recalls the 144,000 “who follow the Lamb wherever he goes” (14:4). Here, the readers are given an answer to the arrogant question posed by the followers of the beast, “Who can fight against it [the beast]?” (13:4). See Beale, *Revelation*, 880. The answer is “The followers of Christ!” These ideas and their relationship to the missionary teaching of Revelation will be further explored in our analysis of Rev 13 and 14.

<sup>964</sup> The term κλητός refers to those called to God’s kingdom in Rom 1:6–7 and 1 Cor 1:2 (cf. Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 1:24; Jude 1) (BDAG, 549). Louw and Nida emphasize that it is rare that one can translate words such as καλέω, κλήσις (including κλητός), and προσκαλέομαι “as simply ‘to call’ in the sense of ‘to speak to someone at a distance and tell them to come.’ For example, in 2 Th 2:14 it may be necessary to render the above clause as ‘through the good news we preached, which summoned you to do this.’ Similarly, in Ac 16:10 one may translate ‘because God has urgently invited us to preach the good news to the people there’” (L&N, 423). The term κλητός is also used by Paul to refer to his apostolic calling (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1). In Acts 16:10, the cognate προσκαλέω refers to a calling to a particular task (L&N, 423), a commission (Rick Brannan, ed., *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Lexham Research Lexicons [Bellingham: Lexham, 2020], s.v. “κλητός”).

In turn, the word ἐκλεκτός is, as it were, an ecclesiastical term. It is used elsewhere in the NT to refer to the followers of Jesus as a community of believers, with an eschatological flavor (Matt 20:16; 22:14; 24:22, 24, 31; Mark 13:20, 22, 27; Luke 18:7; Rom 8:33; Col 3:12; 2 Tim 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet 1:1; 2:9). See John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 37B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 446. It has also a covenantal flavor, as one can infer from 1 Pet 2:9. Elliott asserts that “Old and New Testament material [...] indicates that the concept of the election of God’s people is an intrinsic element of the Exodus and Sinai covenant traditions” (Elliott, *1 Peter*, 446). In

Thessalonians 2:13–14; 1 Peter 2:9; 2 Peter 1:10. To a greater or lesser degree, all these passages convey missional overtones.<sup>965</sup> It seems that the terms κλητοί and ἐκλεκτοί are applied in the NT to refer to those who were reached by the gospel of Christ (cf. 2 Thess 2:14)<sup>966</sup> and now, in turn, are sent to preach the same message for which they themselves were conquered (Acts 16:10). By combining the concepts of calling and election, John gives Revelation 17:14b a missionary tone that is aligned with the rest of the NT.<sup>967</sup> If this assessment is correct, these terms suggest that witnessing in Revelation implies verbal communication. This will be investigated in the chapters on Revelation 10–14. For now, it is possible to mention that, in Revelation 17:14b, the pair κλητοί and ἐκλεκτοί is followed by πιστοί/*faithful* to emphasize the faithfulness of the church in the fulfillment of its missionary task even in the midst of opposition.<sup>968</sup> The reader is informed, however, that the followers of Christ will be victorious along with the Lamb. The beast and its followers will be defeated. It is not surprising, therefore, to see the solemn appeal in 18:4, “come out of her [Babylon], my people.”

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Qumran literature, “it was used to refer to members of the community” (David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, WBC 52C [Dallas: Word, 1998], 955).

<sup>965</sup> See Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21–28: A Commentary*, ed. Helmut Koester, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2005), 59; Osborne, *Romans*, 243; Frederick W. Weidmann, *Philippians, First and Second Thessalonians, and Philemon*, ed. Patrick D. Miller and David L. Bartlett, WeBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 196–200; Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, ed. Ferdinand Hahn, trans. John E. Alsup, first English ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 147–51; L. E. Brown, “Mission, Godliness, and Reward in 2 Peter 1:5–11,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 25, no. 48 (2012): 67–93.

<sup>966</sup> *NIDNTTE*, 606.

<sup>967</sup> Although the verb in 2 Thess 2:14 is καλέω/call and in Acts 16:10 is προσκαλέω/call, all these cognate terms (including κλησις/call and κλητός/called) are highly loaded with missionary meaning. See L&N, 423.

<sup>968</sup> In his paper on the Matthean community, Petri Luomanen argues that the terms ἐκλεκτοί, ἅγιοι, and πιστοί are designations of the church and have no fundamental difference in Matthew or in the other NT writers. See Petri Luomanen, “Corpus Mixtum—An Appropriate Description of Matthew’s Community?,” *JBL* 117 (1998): 469–80.

## 18:1–4

The second half of the opening verse of this passage<sup>969</sup> is deeply rooted in the OT teaching that God’s mission would be consummated when his glory ultimately filled the earth. This is inaugurated in Jesus (John 1:9, 14b) and consummated in the New Jerusalem. The light from God illuminating the earth echoes a theological theme that pervades the OT (Num 14:21; Ps 72:19; Isa 11:9; Ezek 43:2; Hab 2:14; cf. Pss 8:1, 9; 57:5, 11; 108:5; Isa 6:3; 24:16; 66:18–19) and likely provides a “stock language” for John in 18:1. Psalm 8 indicates that one function of Adam was to fill the earth with God’s glory.<sup>970</sup> In the NT, this is fulfilled in Jesus and the preaching of the gospel.<sup>971</sup> No wonder that some interpreters see the angel of 18:1 as “an angel of the gospel.”<sup>972</sup> Just as in Revelation 1–3, the metaphor of light comes on the scene again.

While John’s description in 18:1b may reflect a “stock language,” it is likely that the prophet had in mind the text of Ezekiel 43:2 and its immediate context,<sup>973</sup> which portrays the glory of God returning to the temple.<sup>974</sup> The difference between Ezekiel 43:2

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<sup>969</sup> “And the earth was illumined with his glory,” 18:1b NASB.

<sup>970</sup> Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 37; also C. Hassell Bullock, *Psalms 1–72*, ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton, Teach the Text Commentary Series 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015), 63–64. Adam would do that by transmitting the knowledge of God to future generations and, hence, inhabiting the world with people in his own likeness, just as he was created in the likeness of God (Gen 5:1, 3; Isa 45:18).

<sup>971</sup> Kimble and Spellman, *Invitation to Biblical Theology*, 404. Jesus performs Adam’s failed mission; see Wendel Sun, “New Testament Theology and World Mission,” in *World Mission: Theology, Strategy, and Current Issues*, ed. Scott N. Callaham and Will Brooks (Bellingham: Lexham, 2019), 38.

<sup>972</sup> Caird, *Revelation*, 222.

<sup>973</sup> This is defended by a number of scholars (Osborne, *Revelation*, 635).

<sup>974</sup> Mounce, *Revelation*, 325. See also Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 407–21. The LXX of Ezek 43:2 has *καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐξέλαμπεν ὡς φέγγος ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης κυκλόθεν/and the land shone like a light from the glory* (LES), whereas Rev 18:1b has *καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐφωτίσθη ἐκ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ/and the earth was illumined with his glory all around* (NASB).

and other the-earth-is-filled-with-God’s-glory passages is its emphasis on light imagery. Beale (following Swete) suggests that 18:1 “anticipates the vision beginning in 21:10, which is based on Ezekiel 40–48.”<sup>975</sup> He concludes that “the desolation of Babylon thus prepares the way for God to dwell in the new creation.”<sup>976</sup> The connection between the angel in 18:1 and the content of his message in 18:2 may suggest that the preaching of the gospel somehow leads Babylon to its ultimate fall.<sup>977</sup> In turn, the connection between 18:1–3 and 14:8 suggests that the three angels’ messages<sup>978</sup> will be preached with additional power right before the second coming of Christ.<sup>979</sup> Apparently, the three

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There are, admittedly, notable differences between the two passages. (1) John uses φωτίζω/*illuminate* rather than ἐκλάμπω/*shine*; (2) John does not use the terms ὡς φέγγος/*like a light* and κυκλόθεν/*around*; (3) John switches from the active to the passive voice. (1) and (2) can be explained by the fact that John is likely following the MT rather than the LXX. By the way, the terms ὡς φέγγος and κυκλόθεν are pluses in the LXX. In addition, the most common alignment of the Hebrew term אור is φωτίζω/*enlighten* (15x), followed by ἐπιφαίνω/*give light to* (8x), φαίνω/*appear, shine* (5x), διαφανύσκει/*show light through* (2x), and a few *hapax legomena*, including ἐκλάμπω/*shine out* in Ezek 43:2 (see Isaiah Hoogendyk, ed., *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible* [Bellingham: Lexham, 2017], s.v. אור). The switch from the active to the passive voice can be explained by the emphasis on the angel as the agent. Accordingly, while on the one hand the differences can be explained, on the other hand, the two passages have sufficient words in common to represent a verbal parallel.

<sup>975</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 893.

<sup>976</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 893.

<sup>977</sup> As the Gospels seem to indicate, the message of the coming judgment is part of the gospel message. John the Baptist preached a message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; cf. Matt 3:2; Act 13:24) and nearness of the kingdom of heaven (Matt 3:2) in the light of the coming judgment (Matt 3:10, 12). Jesus preached the same message of repentance (Mark 1:15) as the content of the gospel of God (Mark 1:14; cf. Matt 26:28), and commissions the church to do the same (Luke 24:47; cf. Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; Col 1:14; Heb 9:22).

<sup>978</sup> Although 18:2–3 resumes 14:8, it is likely that the message of the three angels is in view. While Rev 14:6–13 mentions three angels, in a sense their proclamation constitutes only one message. This is suggested by John’s use of the expressions “a second [angel] followed, saying” (v. 8) and “a third [angel] followed them, saying” (v. 9). The conclusion is that the second angel complements the message of the first, and the third one complements the message of the first two, making up a threefold message. The unity of the three messages can also be seen in a different way. While the first angel preaches the gospel message, angels 2 and 3 are the mirror image of the first angel in that they show what happens if one rejects the message of the first angel.

<sup>979</sup> This is suggested by the image of an angel illuminating the whole earth with his glory. David E. Aune remarks that “this is the only instance in Revelation in which an angelic being is described as having δόξα, ‘glory, splendor,’ a term usually reserved as a designation for the presence of God (Rev 15:8;

angels' messages expose the true character of Babylon, and thus the inhabitants of the world will be able to make a conscious decision, hence the appeal, "Come out of her, my people" (18:4).<sup>980</sup> This is a call to abandon idolatry and pay allegiance to Christ!

Although commentators have included Genesis 12:1–4 in the list of possible backgrounds to Revelation 18:4, their attention has mostly turned toward passages in Jeremiah and Isaiah.<sup>981</sup> However, the verbal forms ἐξέλθατε in "come out of her" (Rev 18:4) and ἐξέλθε in "come out of your land" (Gen 12:1 LXX, my translation) may establish a thematic parallel between the two passages. If John really had Genesis 12:1–4 in mind when writing Revelation 18:4, this may suggest that just as Abraham left "Babylon"<sup>982</sup> so that he might be a blessing, those who want to become spiritual children

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21:11, 23)." See Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 985. Long ago, James Glasgow proposed that this angel might be a reference to either Christ or the Holy Spirit, in *The Apocalypse Translated and Expounded* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1872), 447. Indeed, this thought goes back to ancient commentators; see William C. Weinrich, ed., *Revelation*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture 12 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 285–86. Recently, Beale has identified this angel with Christ (Beale, *Revelation*, 892–93). See also E. W. Hengstenberg, *The Revelation of St. John*, trans. Patrick Fairbairn (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1853), 2:266–67. Although this is rejected by several scholars, he has a good point.

Nevertheless, Revelation also applies the metaphor of light to the Holy Spirit. This is clear in 4:5, where the "seven torches of fire" are "the seven spirits of God" (cf. also 11:4). Accordingly, the two views are not mutually exclusive. The angel of 18:1 can refer to Christ acting through the church in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is reinforced by the fact that, in Revelation, Christ and the Holy Spirit are presented in close connection (4:5; 5:6). For a helpful essay on the close relationship between Christ and the Spirit in Revelation, see F. F. Bruce, "The Spirit in the Apocalypse," in Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley, *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament: Studies in Honour of C. F. D. Moule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 333–44. Indeed, this is not a novelty in Johannine theology (see chapter 4 of this work). Interestingly, in the Shepherd of Hermas, a text contemporary to Revelation, the Holy Spirit is presented as an angel (Herm. Vis. 2:1[5]; see also Ford, *Revelation*, 19, 296). A further argument is that the Markan Apocalypsis envisions the preaching of the gospel in the midst of persecution but with the empowerment of the Spirit (Mark 13:10–11; cf. Matt 10:19–20 and Luke 12:11–12).

<sup>980</sup> Various scholars remark that this call is reminiscent of a cry that runs throughout Hebrew history, such as, for instance, God's call for Abraham to leave Ur and go "to the land that I will show you" (Gen 12:1). For details, see Swete, *Apocalypse*, 225–26; Barclay, *Revelation*, 171–72; Beale, *Revelation*, 899; Mounce, *Revelation*, 326–27; Wall, *Revelation*, 214–15; Thomas and Macchia, *Revelation*, 309.

<sup>981</sup> Beale and McDonough, "Revelation," 1140.

<sup>982</sup> Ur of the Chaldeans is commonly identified as a city located in the region of Babylon; see Wiseman, "Chaldea, Chaldeans," 180; Elwell and Beitzel, "Chaldea, Chaldeans," 422.

of Abraham and share in his blessings must do the same.<sup>983</sup> If this assessment is correct, in the context of the end-time preaching, leaving Babylon is seen as the starting point of the pilgrimage to the New Jerusalem. In other words, it is necessary to come out of Babylon to enter the New Jerusalem.<sup>984</sup>

### Completion and Triumph of Mission

Revelation 19:1–10 contains the only uses of the term ἀλληλουϊά/*Hallelujah* in the NT (vv. 1, 3, 4, 6). The fourfold occurrence of this term recalls the OT psalms of praise. This passage is a song of praise for God’s victory over the beast and is very rich in missional content. The term “great multitude” (vv 1, 6) connects this passage to 7:9. Here, however, while it is hard to demonstrate that John had a particular OT passage in mind, one can hear an echo of God’s promise to Abraham mingled with the Isaianic imagery of an eschatological marriage (Isa 61:10).<sup>985</sup>

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<sup>983</sup> Christopher Wright observes that “Abraham must relinquish all that ties him to the land of Babylon before he can be the vehicle of blessing to the whole earth” (Wright, *The Mission of God*, 202). Another important idea is that Abraham’s move from Ur toward Canaan plays out in advance the exodus of Israel from Egypt (Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 274). This is suggested by Gen 15:7, which anticipates the language of Exod 20:1. Therefore, Abraham’s migration, by extension, can perhaps be also seen as a prefiguration of Jesus’ flight from Egypt (Matt 2:15; Hos 11:1), and—even more likely—a sort of “primeval version” of the nations-in-pilgrimage-to-the-New-Jerusalem story (Rev 18:4; 21–22). That seems to be the accomplishment in full of the promise made to Abraham.

<sup>984</sup> Accordingly, the great multitude in Revelation 19:1 includes those who were in Babylon and accepted the call to leave out of her. One can see here the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham that all families would be blessed by his descendants (Gen 12:3; cf. 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:15) forming a great multitude (Gen 15:5; 17:4-5; 32:12). The invitation to leave Babylon is a further indication that Babylon is doomed to destruction. In that sense, Revelation seems to follow the same eschatological order portrayed in the OT (see chapter 3 of this work), for instance, in Ezek 38–39 and Ezek 40–48 (Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, 317), in which God first deals with the enemies of his people (Rev 16–20) and then he dwells with them (Rev 21–22).

<sup>985</sup> For the use of Isa 61:10 in Rev 19:7–8, see Beale, *Revelation*, 938–41; Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1022–23. The image of a marriage supper was also applied by Jesus in the parable of the wedding feast, where he also explored the theme of the appropriate clothing for the feast (22:1–14). N. T. Wright helpfully states, “Here John’s vision, drawing on all of these, focuses on the fact that the great moment has come at last. This is what the world had been waiting for, ever since Genesis 1, ever since the covenant with Abraham (which always envisaged the birth of a family), ever since the covenant with Moses, ever since



Buist M. Fanning argues that two images emerge from 19:1–10—the wedding (19:1–8) and the guests (19:9), “who will share in the joy and table fellowship of the wedding.”<sup>986</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 4, the motif of the table of fellowship is a literary device often used in the Gospels with the purpose of emphasizing that Gentiles and other outcasts are invited to take part in God’s salvation (see Matt 8:11; 26:29; Luke 5:29–32; 7:34, 36–50; 12:36–38; 13:28–29; 14:15–24; 15:1–2; 19:1–18; 22:16–18; cf. Matt 26:29; Mark 14:25).<sup>987</sup> As in Revelation 7:10, here salvation belongs to God (19:1). It seems that those who have answered the call to “fear God,” “give him glory,” and “worship him” (14:7)<sup>988</sup> by coming out of Babylon (18:4) are integrated into the people of God (19:5). Now, all his servants praise him, fear him (19:5), and give him glory (19:7). There are hints of this throughout the book (1:6; 4:9, 11; 5:12, 13; 11:8, 13; 14:7), but now “the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready” (19:7). Who will not fear, glorify, and worship God? (19:5, 7; cf. 14:7 and 15:4). Those who responded to God’s invitation are blessed (19:9). Conversely, those who “did not repent and give him glory” (16:9) will be excluded from the New Jerusalem and will face the same destiny as the beast (19:20). The time for vengeance has come (19:2; cf. 6:10)! By using the

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the renewal of the covenant promised at the time of the exile. Marriage is the ultimate covenant, Jesus is the ultimate bridegroom. And though John uses his imagery freely enough to allow the church to be both the bride and the guests invited to the bride’s wedding party (verse 9), this should not distract us from the sense of fulfilment, of excitement, of rightness and fitness, that emerge at last after the sorry tale of human rebellion” (Wright, *Revelation*, 170).

<sup>986</sup> Fanning, *Revelation*, 482.

<sup>987</sup> Fanning further states that verse 9 with its reference to a banquet and invited guests not only continues “the biblical imagery of God’s restoration of the full communion he desires to have with his people viewed as a marriage celebration,” but also “adds to it the portrayal of God’s eschatological fulfillment as a messianic banquet” as envisioned in the gospels (Fanning, *Revelation*, 482).

<sup>988</sup> This will be explored in our analysis of Rev 14:6–11.

metaphor of a marriage supper with the presence of a great multitude, this passage announces the gathering of God’s people in the New Jerusalem.<sup>989</sup>

### The Gathering of the Nations in the New Jerusalem

Revelation 21–22 functions as the ending of the biblical canon by providing closure to the story introduced in Genesis 1–3 and describing the conclusion of God’s mission. Accordingly, it is expected that various biblical theological motifs play a role in this *grand finale*.<sup>990</sup> My comments on Revelation 21–22 will follow the flow of the narrative and pay attention to mission-oriented themes.

#### 21:1–5

Revelation 21:2 resumes the wedding motif introduced in 19:7–9. This theme in 21:2 appears in parallel to God’s dwelling with humanity (21:3) in the chiasmic structure of 21:1–5a.<sup>991</sup> The centrality of these two themes in the introductory section of Revelation 21–22 suggests that “the new Jerusalem-bride (v. 2) as God’s new covenant

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<sup>989</sup> Moloney, *Apocalypse*, 290. Beale argues that the hymn in Rev 19 “is portrayed as occurring at the time of the establishment of the new Jerusalem” (Beale, *Revelation*, 927), serving as an anticipation of that section. Similarly, Jan Fekkes claims that 19:7–9 concerns the announcement and preparation of the bride, anticipating 21:2, where one sees the entrance of the bride, and 21:9–21, where one sees the description of the bride. See Jan Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and their Development*, LNTS 93 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 232.

<sup>990</sup> See Töniste, *Ending of the Canon*, 132-98; Dumbrell, *End of the Beginning*, 1-5, 37-38, 79, 121, 166-67; Tabb, *All Things New*, 29-225. Also David L. Mathewson, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: The Meaning and Function of the Old Testament in Revelation 21:1-22:5*, LNTS 238 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003) and Eric J. Gilchrest, *Revelation 21–22 in Light of Jewish and Greco-Roman Utopianism* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 83–264. While the study of Gilchrest is not focused on Revelation as the end of biblical canon, it is still helpful in showing that it reunites several topics under the theme of utopian vision. It is worth mentioning that the sense of utopia in Gilchrest’s work is primarily related to “*eu*” *topos*, “good place,” rather than “*ou*” *topos*, “no place” (p. 1).

<sup>991</sup> Mathewson, *A New Heaven*, 33.

dwelling place”<sup>992</sup> is the idea controlling the description of the city-temple in 21:9–22:2. At the same time, the fact that the new creation motif frames this section (21:1, 5a) indicates that the theme of renewal runs throughout chapters 21–22.<sup>993</sup>

Küllli Tõniste contends that marriage language in 21:2 (cf. 21:9) is part of the “stock prophetic imagery for expressing Yahweh’s relationship with his people (e.g., Isa 61:10; 62:4–5; 49:18; 54:5–6; Jer 2:2; 3:20; 31:32; Ezek 16:32; 23:1–49; Hos 2).”<sup>994</sup> This is clearly stated in 21:3 (cf. 21:22), where God’s covenantal promise of his abiding presence among his people (Lev 26:11–12; 2 Chr 6:18; Ezek 37:27; 43:7; Zech 2:10–11) is ultimately fulfilled.<sup>995</sup> Scholars debate whether the original reading in 21:3b is “and they will be his people (λαός)” or “and they will be his peoples (λαοί).” Both readings are well supported, with fairly strong evidence for the plural.<sup>996</sup> In addition to the weight of slightly superior external evidence, some scholars add the argument that the plural is the most difficult reading, since the scribe must have changed the plural into the singular in order to fit the OT covenant formula.<sup>997</sup> If this assessment is correct, it is theologically significant. John switches from the singular to the plural so as to point to the multiethnic

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<sup>992</sup> Mathewson, *A New Heaven*, 33.

<sup>993</sup> Mathewson, *A New Heaven*, 33. Dumbrell argues that the five major themes of Rev 21–22 can be found in 21:1–5: the New Jerusalem (v. 2), the New Temple (v. 3), the New Covenant (v. 3), the New Israel (v. 4), the New Creation (v. 5). See the introduction to Dumbrell, *End of the Beginning*.

<sup>994</sup> Tõniste, *Ending of the Canon*, 147.

<sup>995</sup> Keener, *Revelation*, 487.

<sup>996</sup> Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 688. That the Committee preferred λαοί (peoples) with a B decision (i.e., “the text is almost certain”; see Barbara Aland et al., eds., *The Greek New Testament: Apparatus*, Fifth Revised Edition. (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; American Bible Society; United Bible Societies, 2014), 8) is not surprising. Several recent translations follow the plural “peoples” (ASV; CSB; EMPH; ERV; NRSV; NTMS; YLT).

<sup>997</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 1048; Bratcher and Hatton, *Revelation*, 298; Osborne, *Revelation*, 744; Boxall, *Revelation*, 295; Koester, *Revelation*, 798.

diversity of the redeemed. They come from all races and nationalities, in keeping with 5:9 and 7:9.<sup>998</sup> The other sheep become part of the one flock (John 10:16).<sup>999</sup> The universal mission envisioned in the Gospels and in the book of Acts is now fulfilled.<sup>1000</sup>

## 21:6–8

Revelation 21:6–8 develops the idea of God’s abiding presence by focusing on the theme of inheritance.<sup>1001</sup> The promise of a land was given first to Abraham and his descendants, then to Israel, and renewed to David. The NT borrows this language from the OT with the purpose of referring to the future inheritance of the believers (Matt 5:5; 19:29; 25:34; 1 Cor 6:9–10; 15:50; Gal 5:21; 1 Pet 1:3–12; Heb 11:39–40).<sup>1002</sup> Revelation 21:6–7 shows that the “land” is finally inhabited with the redeemed from all eras and ethnicities. For that to happen, the proclamation of the gospel must take place between Jesus’ ascension into heaven and his second coming (Matt 24:14). Conversely, those who rejected God’s appeal to leave Babylon and its idolatry (18:4) are left out (21:8). The list of vices in 21:8 makes it clear that the exclusion of the wicked from the New Jerusalem is

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<sup>998</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 589; Fanning, *Revelation*, 532; Easley, *Revelation*, 395; Thomas and Macchia, *Revelation*, 366; Smalley, *Revelation*, 538; Blount, *Revelation*, 380.

<sup>999</sup> Mounce, *Revelation*, 383.

<sup>1000</sup> In that connection, the article in the prepositional phrase μετὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων/*with men* is generic, meaning “humankind” (Fanning, *Revelation*, 532n19). This is a return to the Edenic condition, prior to the fall in Gen 3 and the scattering of the nations in Gen 10–11.

<sup>1001</sup> Tõniste claims that this theme is “the vehicle of passing down God’s covenant promises” and “is used to communicate the nature of God’s relationship with his people.” See Tõniste, *Ending of the Canon*, 156. The Greek text calls attention to this intimate and new relationship by giving the terms “his peoples” and “with them” a position of prominence in 21:3.

<sup>1002</sup> Indeed, the concept may be present even where inheritance terminology is absent. For instance, in Matt 28:18–20, Jesus is the son of Abraham (Matt 1:1) recovering the dominion of the “land.” After his resurrection, he is given full authority in heaven and on earth by “taking possession of the inheritance” (Phil 2:9–11). See Alford, *Alford’s Greek Testament*, 306. Also, J. Knox Chamblin, *Matthew: A Mentor Commentary*, MC (Ross-shire: Mentor, 2010), 1487. Invested with universal authority, Jesus commissions his followers to go and disciple the nations (Matt 28:18–19a).

good news for the saints.

## 21:9–22:5

Revelation 21:9–22:5 focuses on the description of the city-temple. This passage brings the temple motif in Revelation—and in all of Scripture—to its climax.<sup>1003</sup>

Curiously, 21:22 says that there is “no temple in the city.” However, various scholars have long noticed that 21:9–22:5 follows the mold of the eschatological temple of Ezekiel 40–48<sup>1004</sup> so that “the city has become the temple.”<sup>1005</sup> The importance of the temple for a biblical-theology approach to mission cannot be overstated. As discussed in chapter 3 of this work, the OT envisaged an eschatological pilgrimage according to which the nations would come to Zion, to “the mountain of the house of the Lord . . . to the house of the God of Jacob” (Isa 2:2–3; cf. Pss 84, 122; Isa 11:11–12; 19:23–25; 30:29; 35:10; 43:5–6; 51:11; 66:18–23; Jer 31:10–14; Zech 8:7–8; Mic 4:1–13). This is a centripetal-oriented approach to mission. By showing the nations walking in the New Jerusalem, Revelation indicates that the prediction of OT prophets is fulfilled.<sup>1006</sup>

Previous studies have demonstrated that the heavenly temple plays a crucial role

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<sup>1003</sup> See Dumbrell, *End of the Beginning*, 35–71.

<sup>1004</sup> E.g., Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976), 229; Beale, *Revelation*, 1046; Koester, *Revelation*, 828; Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1162. William J. Dumbrell goes as far as to contend that 21:9–22:5 “has been **carefully** constructed on the form and content of Ezek 40–48.” See Dumbrell, *End of the Beginning*, 37 (emphasis added). Yet, as David Mathewson notes, while utilizing the imagery from Ezek 40–48, John does not drop out other OT backgrounds (Mathewson, *A New Heaven*, 95).

<sup>1005</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 746. Yet, Revelation 21:22 says that God and the Lamb are the temple. The two views should not be seen as mutually exclusive. The idea that God and the Lamb are the temple is to be seen in the light of Ezekiel 48:35, “the name of the city from that time on shall be, The LORD Is There” (see Yeatts, *Revelation*, 405; Kistemaker, *Revelation 572*; Duvall, *Revelation*, 293). Both views emphasize God's physical presence in the city. If we take the two ideas as complementary, the result is that Rev 21–22 points to a profound intimacy between God and the inhabitants of the city.

<sup>1006</sup> The pilgrimage motif also serves as a backdrop for 14:1–5, which, in turn, is important for the

in Revelation.<sup>1007</sup> These studies indicate that the affairs on earth are coordinated from God's control room in heaven. This naturally includes God's decisions concerning the salvation of the human race. While the field of missionary endeavors is the earth, God's mission has its origin in his temple in heaven. As readers move from early to late chapters in Revelation, they perceive that the temple will play a culminating role at the end. The end would not be a climax, however, were it not for the presence of the multiethnic multitude of the redeemed in the New Jerusalem as envisioned by OT prophets.

The NT indicates that the church has become a spiritual temple on earth (1 Cor 3:9–17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; 1 Tim 3:15; 1 Pet 2:15). Thus, it is not surprising that in 21:14 “the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” are seen on the twelve foundations of the city-temple.<sup>1008</sup> It is not clear whether the emphasis is placed on the apostles themselves or their labors.<sup>1009</sup> Perhaps it could be both. After all, is it possible to dissociate the apostles from their missionary work? They were what they were because they did what they did. This is reinforced by a surprising reversal in 21:12–14. As Beale

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understanding of the three angels' message in 14:6–12.

<sup>1007</sup> Strand, “Eight Basic Visions,” 107–21; Strand, “The ‘Victorious-Introduction’ Scenes,” 267–88. See further developments of Strand's arguments by Davidson, “Sanctuary Typology,” 111–16, and Paulien, “Seals and Trumpets,” 187–88. See also Paulien, “The Role of the Hebrew Cultus,” 247–55. Other scholars also notice the role of the introductory sanctuary scenes in the structure of Revelation. See Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 30–33; Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, xcvi–xcviii, 313. For a summary of the ideas contained in the bibliography above, see Stefanovic, “Literary Patterns of Revelation,” 32–37. These studies have suggested that an introductory scene in the heavenly temple is the starting point of major visions in the book. While this is more apparent in the first half of Revelation, it is not so evident in the second half.

<sup>1008</sup> This is very close to the idea found in Eph 2:19–20, which mentions “the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” The genitive phrase τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν/*of the apostles and prophets* is very likely to be understood as a genitive of apposition, “the foundation that consists of apostles and prophets” (see Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1157). It is likely that the same idea is used here.

<sup>1009</sup> Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1157. He argues for the former.

observes, the apostles, not the tribes of Israel, are part of the foundation of the city-temple, in spite of Israel preceding the church in redemptive history.<sup>1010</sup> He argues that this reversal highlights the fact that the promises to Israel have been fulfilled in Christ, “who, together with the apostolic witness to his fulfilling work, forms the foundation of the new temple, the church, which is the new Israel.”<sup>1011</sup> As our survey on mission in the book of Acts has shown, the work of the apostles was to be continued by the church.<sup>1012</sup>

As in the early chapters of Revelation, the metaphor of light abounds in 21–22, especially 21:23–26. This passage mentions the nouns “sun” (ἥλιος, v. 23), “moon” (σελήνη, v. 23)—although these stars are not needed (v. 23; cf. 22:5)—“lamp” (λύχνος, v. 23), and “light” (φῶς, v. 24), as well as the verbs “shine” (φαίνω, v. 23) and “illuminate” (φωτίζω, v. 23). In addition, “there will be no night” (v. 25; cf. 22:5). All this radiance emanates from “the glory of God” (v. 23; cf. 21:11) and the Lamb, which is the lamp of the city (v. 23). At this point, the pilgrimage motif appears once again. John states that “by its [the Lamb’s] light will the nations walk” (v. 24). Old Testament

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<sup>1010</sup> Curiously, while the names of the twelve apostles are on the foundations of the city (21:14), the names of the twelve tribes are on the gates of the city (21:12). LaRondelle is correct when affirming that, “taken together, this means that the prophetic Israel of God includes all the followers of Christ” (LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 334), Jews and Gentiles.

<sup>1011</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 1070. He further states that “this is consistent with 7:4–8 and 7:9ff., where the tribes of Israel in the new age are interpreted to be none other than innumerable multitudes from the nations” (1070). While Beale is certainly correct when saying that the promises to Israel are fulfilled in Christ, his idea of the new Israel may sound too supersessionist. As LaRondelle has demonstrated, it is not correct “to state that the Church has replaced Israel. Rather, the Church is the continuity of the OT Israel of God; it has only replaced the Jewish nation. Gentile Christians do not constitute a different or separate entity from the faithful remnant of Israel. They are ingrafted into the messianic Israel.” (LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy*, 210). Ellen G. White puts this very well when affirming, “the gospel was but the development of the Hebrew faith.” (Ellen G. White, *Sketches from the Life of Paul* (Review and Herald, 1883), 104.

<sup>1012</sup> As Beale puts it, “Our task as a church is to be God’s temple, so filled with his presence that we expand and fill the earth with that glorious presence until God finally accomplishes this goal completely at the end of time! This is our common, unified mission” (Beale, “Eden, the Temple, and the Church’s Mission,” 31).

prophecies such as Isaiah 2:2–5, which envisioned that the nations would come to worship God in Jerusalem, are now fulfilled.<sup>1013</sup> The pilgrimage motif is fundamental for understanding the missionary impulse of 21:23–26. Since the nations come to Zion, Israel and the nations are now one family, the true people of God. As in 5:9 and 7:9, 21:23–26 also seems to convey the notion that the redeemed come from every tribe, language, people, and nation, and that they were made a kingdom and “shall reign on the earth” (5:10). As one will see in the ensuing chapters of this work, the mission of the church plays a critical role in that respect. As Francis J. Moloney remarks, 21:24–26 is a call to mission in that “it is the Christian church that possesses the glory of God and the light of the Lamb.”<sup>1014</sup> The church is called to live today, even in part, what it will experience in full in the future.<sup>1015</sup>

A final note before we move on regards John’s reference to “the healing of the nations” (22:2), which must be understood against the background of 5:9 and 7:9, where the term “nations” is also applied to the people of God.<sup>1016</sup> Now, the “racial, ethnic, tribal, or linguistic” differences no longer exist.<sup>1017</sup> The preaching of the gospel “to every nation

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<sup>1013</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 338. Isa 2:2–5 is further developed in Isa 60 (Beale, *Revelation*, 1093–95), which adds the light motif as a metaphor of God’s glory shining upon the nations that gather in Jerusalem, who, in turn, give glory to God as a sign of their submission and praise (Beale, *Revelation*, 1096). It is important to notice, as Beale observes, that “21:24–26 represents the peoples redeemed from the nations” (1101). Only those who repent will be granted entrance into the New Jerusalem. Verse 27b leaves no doubt in this regard when affirming that “only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life” will have the right to enter the city.

<sup>1014</sup> Moloney, *Apocalypse*, 338.

<sup>1015</sup> Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Apocalypse*, New Testament Message 22 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1979), 150.

<sup>1016</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 1107.

<sup>1017</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 605. Most scholars claim that 22:2 is based on the imagery of Ezekiel 47:12. Tonstad makes a different suggestion when contending that, along with Ezekiel, Isaiah provides the background for the “nations” idea (cf. 11:1–10; 42:6; 49:6; 52:15; 60:3, 5, 11; 62:12, 19). He affirms, “All



and tribe and language and people” (14:6; cf. 10:11) has granted an opportunity for people from all nations to repent and be integrated into the one people of God.<sup>1018</sup> The notion that there is now only one people of God is also conveyed by the fact that three of the major terms making up the fourfold formula occur in Revelation 21–22, but *γλῶσσα/language* does not.<sup>1019</sup> The absence of *γλῶσσα* in the New Jerusalem section may suggest that the scattering of the nations as described in Genesis 10:1–11:9<sup>1020</sup> is now reversed,<sup>1021</sup> for the mission initiated with Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3 is

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of Isaiah envisions a mission of revelation to the nations, echoes of which exercise a commanding influence on Revelation” (Tonstad, *Revelation*, 330). He states that “the nations are an integral part” of Isa 11:1–10 (p. 331), especially verse 10, “In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.” The nations, he states, “are bewildered, at a loss, and in a state of need” (p. 331). Then, he contends, “Against this background, ‘the healing of the nations’ is a vision of mission and of mission accomplished” (p. 331). That 22:2 points to the accomplishment of mission seems clear. However, perhaps the suggestion that 22:2 alludes to Isa 11:1–10 lacks more evidence.

<sup>1018</sup> Pugh, “Revelation,” 482.

<sup>1019</sup> The term *φυλή/tribe* occurs in 21:12; *λαός/people* occurs in 21:3; and *ἔθνος/nation* occurs in 21:24, 26; 22:2]. The term *βασιλεύς/king*, which occurs only in 10:11, appears in 21:14; and the term *ὄχλος*, which occurs only in 17:15, although not used in 21–22, appears in 19:1, 6. As mentioned above, 19:1–10 announces the gathering of God’s people in the New Jerusalem, and, hence, serves as a sort of introduction to 21–22.

<sup>1020</sup> Although scholars debate why the event in 11:1–9 is placed after the Table of Nations (10:1–32) in the literary arrangement of Genesis, there is general agreement that the two passages form a literary unit.

<sup>1021</sup> While the nations are dispersed according to four primary subgroupings in Gen 10:5, 20, 31, it seems that Gen 10–11 emphasizes the language element, seeing that the explanation for the dispersion in 10:1–32 is found in the confusion of languages in 11:1–9, in an *effect-to-cause* arrangement. It is significant that the emphasis of 11:1 is on the fact that “the whole earth had one language [lit., *ἑῷ*, “one lip”; cf. vv. 6, 7, 9] and the same words.” Interestingly, the technical term *לשון/language* of chapter 10 (vv. 5, 20, 31) does not occur in chapter 11. Instead, *ἑῷ* is used consistently (vv. 1, 6, 7 [2x], 9) and always in the singular. The emphasis on the language element is even clearer in the LXX. While the MT has an alternation between the prepositions *בְּ* and *לְ* prefixed to their objects in Gen 10:5, 20, and 31, the LXX translates the Hebrew prepositions with their respective Greek counterparts *ἐν* and *κατά*, but consistently reserves *κατά* only to *γλῶσσα/language* while applying *ἐν* to the other terms. This can be visualized as follows:

	MT	LXX
5	<i>בְּ</i> -lands; <i>לְ</i> -language; <i>בְּ</i> -clans; <i>בְּ</i> -nations	<i>ἐν</i> -lands; <i>κατά</i> -language; <i>ἐν</i> -tribes; <i>ἐν</i> -nations
20	<i>לְ</i> -clans; <i>לְ</i> -languages; <i>בְּ</i> -lands; <i>בְּ</i> -nations	<i>ἐν</i> -tribes; <i>κατά</i> -languages; <i>ἐν</i> -towns; <i>ἐν</i> -nations
31	<i>לְ</i> -clans; <i>לְ</i> -languages; <i>בְּ</i> -lands; <i>לְ</i> -nations	<i>ἐν</i> -tribes; <i>κατά</i> -languages; <i>ἐν</i> -towns; <i>ἐν</i> -nations

accomplished.<sup>1022</sup>

### Final Appeal to Mission

Towards the end of Revelation, one can find the final appeal to mission (22:17). This appeal is made in the context of two themes that are central to the epilogue: the return of Christ and the necessity of decision.<sup>1023</sup> Jesus himself speaks about how soon he will return in 22:7, 12, and 20. This has led some interpreters to take the appeal, “come,” in 22:17 as a response to Jesus’ announcement of his coming as well as to his self-description as the Davidic Messiah in 22:16 (cf. Isa 11:1, 10; Num 24:17).<sup>1024</sup> While this is possible, it is also possible that this appeal is driven to “the readers who have not yet made a decision, urging them to ‘come’ [...] to Jesus.”<sup>1025</sup>

The fact that the call in 22:17 is performed jointly by the Spirit and the bride

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While the MT suggests that the peoples were separated *according to* their languages, clans, and nations, the LXX suggests that they were separated *according to* their languages (only). Likewise, it is remarkable that the LXX translates *ἡψῆ/lip* in three different ways in 11:1–9 (*χεῖλος/lip* [vv 1, 6, 9]; *γλῶσσα/language* [v. 7]; and *φωνή/voice* [v. 7]). Perhaps this is an “attempt to portray a sense of confusion in a story about God’s confusion of speech” (Susan Brayford, *Genesis*, Septuagint Commentary Series [Leiden: Brill, 2007], 287). If this assessment is correct, it enhances the idea that the LXX emphasizes the language element.

<sup>1022</sup> The reversal of the order of events in Gen 10:1–11:9 is likely due to the intention of showing the nations in chapter 10 as a part of God’s blessing promised to Abraham in 12:1–3. In that connection, Victor P. Hamilton argues that “problem (ch. 11) and solution (ch. 12) are brought into immediate juxtaposition, and the forcefulness of this structural move would have been lost had ch. 10 intervened between the two” (Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 348). Seen from this perspective, at the same time that the Table of Nations in Gen 10 fulfills God’s command to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” in Gen 9:1 (Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 330–31), it also becomes a sort of anticipation of the eschatological fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham. This is experienced in part in Acts 2:5–13 (Doukhan, *Genesis*, 186), but is fully accomplished in Rev 21:22, 24; 22:2 (cf. 7:9).

<sup>1023</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 793.

<sup>1024</sup> Thomas, *Revelation* 8–22, 511–12; Also, Lenski, *Revelation*, 670; Swete, *Apocalypse*, 306; Bratcher and Hatton, *Revelation*, 323.

<sup>1025</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 793. This is reinforced by the direct appeal conveyed by the third “come” in 22:17, i.e., “let the one who is thirsty come [...] and] take the water of life without price.”

means that the church is an agent of mission in the power of the Spirit.<sup>1026</sup> This is in consonance with the rest of the NT writings. More than that, this passage also indicates that those who hear cannot keep silent. They invite others to come to Christ.<sup>1027</sup> The call to engage in mission is explicit, “a commission to go forth to the nations on a mission of healing in the world.”<sup>1028</sup> The evangelistic tone of this passage, especially the second half, is clear: “And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life *without price*” (21:6; Isa 55:1).<sup>1029</sup> Salvation is offered as a free gift. This is an invitation for those who need grace. The message to be preached concerns the gospel of Christ and his invitation for people to come to him so that he may satisfy their thirst (John 6:35; 7:37).

As Osborne remarks, one of the major purposes of Revelation is to call Christians to a deeper commitment to Christ and his mission to the lost.<sup>1030</sup> There is an urgency in

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<sup>1026</sup> While the bride (νύμφη) is clearly the New Jerusalem in 21:2, 9–10, it seems that the bride (γυνή) in 19:7 is better identified with the church. Revelation 21:8 mentions that the bride was granted “to clothe herself (περιβάλλεται) with fine linen, bright and pure”. Several times in Revelation the redeemed in heaven are identified as clothed in something. So, “the one who conquers will be clothed (περιβαλεῖται) [...] in white garments” (3:5). The twenty-four elders are “clothed (περιβεβλημένους) in white garments” (4:4). A great multitude “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” are “clothed (περιβεβλημένους) in white robes” (7:9; cf. 7:13); and this is so because “They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (7:14). In addition, while 19:8a mentions that the bride was granted “to clothe herself with fine linen (βύσσινος)”, 19:8b defines βύσσινος as “the righteous deeds of the *saints*” (emphasis supplied). This points to a correlation between the bride and the saints. In that connection, George E. Ladd is likely correct when contending that “the people of God and their capital city—the church and the new Jerusalem—are so closely connected that the same figure—the bride—is used for both” (Ladd, *Revelation*, 249). Perhaps, the best scriptural foundation for this contention is found in Revelation 21:9, where the phrase ἡ γυνή τοῦ ἀρνίου/*the wife of the Lamb* is in apposition to the term νύμφη (bride). One should notice that, before 21:9, the last time the noun γυνή/*bride* (cf. ESV, NIV, NASB, ISV, NET Bible, NAB, RSV, NRSV, among others) was used in Revelation is precisely in 19:7, where the term, as mentioned above, seems to point to the saints, i.e., the church.

<sup>1027</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 621.

<sup>1028</sup> Tonstad, *Revelation*, 339.

<sup>1029</sup> This is accepted by a number of scholars.

<sup>1030</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 794.

light of the imminence of the second coming (22:20). Indeed, the book ends as it began, i.e., with a reference to Jesus' return (22:7, 12, 20; cf. 1:7). Now, one hears a request for the fulfillment of that promise, "Come, Lord Jesus" (22:20). Mission is the task of the church until then!

### **Conclusion**

The book of Revelation has much to say about the mission of the church. In consonance with the rest of the NT writings, the church is expected to fulfill its missionary vocation by giving continuity to the mission of Jesus in the power of the Spirit.

The book opens with highly covenantal language. Passages such as 1:5–7, 1:11, and 1:20 introduce the church as the new covenant community and the agent of faithful witness. The metaphor of light is abundantly used in Revelation 1–3 in order to set the missionary lens through which the rest of the book is to be read. The Davidic King described in Revelation 1:5–6 commissions the church by portraying its missionary role in the world as "the seven lampstands" (Rev 1:20). As a light-bearer, the church is called to illuminate the world with the knowledge of God and his Messiah, even during dark moments in which the evil forces portrayed in the rest of the book seem to prevail.

Revelation can be seen as a sort of continuation of Acts in that whereas Acts focuses on the activity of the apostolic church, Revelation begins with the apostolic era and goes beyond by showing how the church will bear testimony until the second coming. In a sense, Revelation 4–5 is John's version of Pentecost. These chapters prepare the reader for what comes next. While chapter 4 shows that God's will is acknowledged in heaven, chapter 5 indicates how this will happen on earth, namely, through the

worthiness of Jesus on account of his sacrificial death (5:6) and the faithfulness of his people as a kingdom of priests (5:9–10). Revelation 5:9–10 points to God’s grace and mercy toward the nations. In that respect, Revelation 5 provides an important background for the understanding of Revelation 10:1–11 and indicates that the opening of the seals is the time for the Christian mission started at Pentecost. The sealing is a time for mission!

Revelation 5:9 and 7:9 indicate that a multitude in heaven, coming from all nations and ethnicities, is the ultimate result of mission. The fourfold formula, especially in 7:9, points to the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham. Seen from this perspective, the great multitude in 7:9 is more than a vision of the glorious future of God’s people in heaven: it is a call for mission. However, the book often reminds the reader that the witnesses of Jesus are subjected to suffering and death (6:9–11) just as Jesus himself suffered and died (5:6). In addition, despite God’s initiative and the work of his people on earth, many will respond negatively to God’s offer of salvation (9:20–21; 16:9, 11), even with hatred toward the saints. For this reason, mission occurs in the midst of suffering, persecution, and opposition, as the discussion above has shown. Many scholars recognize that 16:13 resumes the references to the deceitful discourse of the satanic trinity in Revelation 12–13. Apparently, the three angels’ messages are a response to the work and message of the false trinity. They are an appeal for people to turn away from their idolatry and allegiance to the beasts to the worship of the true God. However, this does not happen without resistance on the part of the satanic triumvirate. They respond with a sort of counterpropaganda (16:13) against the missionary message of the three angels. This deserves further investigation and will be dealt with in the ensuing chapters of this work.

Despite the exacerbated opposition of the evil forces, the book of Revelation envisions the victory of the Lamb and his followers over them (17:14). It has been observed that the pair of words “called and chosen” in 17:14 implies missionary activity, even verbal communication, whose content is likely related to the three angels’ message of 14:6–12. After the defeat of the beast is described comes the solemn appeal in 18:4, “Come out of her [Babylon], my people.” The connection between 18:4 and 14:6–12 suggests that the proclamation of the three angels’ messages takes place because of the moral fallenness of Babylon as a warning for people to come out of it. At the same time, the proclamation of the first angel announces the judgment that unleashes the ultimate fall of Babylon. These connections will be further investigated in the analysis of 14:6–13.

Revelation 19:1–10 points to the completion and triumph of mission. By using the metaphor of a marriage supper with the presence of a great multitude, this passage announces the gathering of God’s people in the New Jerusalem. Revelation 21–22 functions as the ending of the biblical canon by providing closure to the story introduced in Genesis 1–3 and describing the conclusion of God’s mission. By showing the nations walking in the New Jerusalem, Revelation indicates that the predictions of OT prophets are now fulfilled. How this is supposed to happen and the role of the end-time church in the accomplishment of God’s mission will be examined in the ensuing chapters dealing with Revelation 10–14.

### **Summary and Conclusion of Chapters 3–5**

The Old Testament envisioned the coming of the Messianic King and a time when Israel would be restored and renewed, in such a manner that it would finally fulfill the commission of being a witness to the ends of the earth by proclaiming God’s name

among the nations. Jesus himself perceived his mission in consonance with this overarching teaching found in the OT. At the same time, he molded the thought of the disciples on the basis of that missional theology. For that reason, Christology is crucial for understanding the NT teaching on mission. Without a correct understanding of Jesus' identity and work, it is not possible to arrive at a correct view of the church's mission. Because salvation in Christ has universal consequences, this message is to be taken to the ends of the earth. This teaching is conveyed in the NT writings in various ways.

In Matthew, Jesus is portrayed as the One in whom the OT prophecies and their fulfillment meet. In Mark, Isaianic themes permeate the entire book and shed light on the interpretation of its missionary teaching. In Luke-Acts, the theme of salvation in Christ is further explored. While Luke's Gospel mostly focuses on the story of Jesus and the salvation he brings, the book of Acts gives continuity to that story by concentrating on the apostles' task of proclaiming salvation to the ends of the earth. In John, the mission of Jesus is continued through the body of believers in the power of the Spirit. In Paul, readers see a deepening of the missionary view of the NT. From several passages, it is possible to infer that evangelism was an integral part of Paul's missionary task, which included planting churches, nurturing them, and preparing them for mission. Paul expected believers to get involved in evangelism. He not only conceived of the church's mission as an extension of his own mission but also saw these "two missions" as based on the mission of Jesus as the Isaianic Servant and as its continuation. In Hebrews and the General Epistles, mission includes the concern with defending the gospel against false teachings regarding the person of Jesus. The gospel must be preserved pure in order to be preached in a persuasive way and with saving power.

The discussion on The New Testament writings outside Revelation indicates that mission is something the church is supposed to be involved in until the second coming of Christ, with the purpose of taking the gospel message to the ends of the earth. This teaching, nevertheless, is taken a step forward in Revelation. Revelation can be seen as a sort of continuation of Acts in that, whereas Acts focuses on the activity of the apostolic church, Revelation begins with the apostolic era and goes beyond by showing how the church will bear testimony until the second coming. In a sense, Revelation is an extension of the Book of Acts, extending its timeline from the first century to the end. In addition, Revelation extends the New Testament theology of mission from this world to the whole universe and points to the completion and triumph of God's mission. This will be explored in the ensuing chapters.



## CHAPTER 6

### JOHN'S RECOMMISSIONING, "YOU MUST PROPHECY AGAIN"

Revelation 10 is a turning point in the book of Revelation, especially the command in 10:11. Scholars agree that it constitutes the climax of the whole chapter, but its meaning is a matter of debate. After all, why is it necessary to tell John that he must prophesy again? Did he think that his work was already done? What is the nature of his message? Is it judgment? Good news? In other words, is it a message "against" the nations or "about" the nations or even "to" the nations? A particular interpretation of 10:11 can affect one's understanding of subsequent passages such as 11:1–2, 3–13; 14:6–13; and, consequently, 14:14–20. Therefore, chapter 10 is crucial for understanding what comes next in Revelation. These issues will be dealt with in this chapter. I will follow the flow of the narrative, starting with an overview of 10:1–7 with special attention to its proclamation of imminence, "There will no longer be time" (10:6), and the fulfillment of the mystery of God (10:7). Next, I will turn to a mission-focused exegesis of 10:8–11 and 11:1–2, respectively. A brief rationale for including 11:1–2 in the discussion of 10:1–11 will be presented further below.

#### **Proclamation of Imminence**

Revelation 10:1–7 revolves around the proclamation of the mighty angel, "There

will no longer be time” (v. 6).<sup>1031</sup> Scholars have long recognized the role the book of Daniel plays in the study of this section of Revelation. Indeed, given the close connection between Revelation 10 and Daniel 12, a more complete comprehension of the former is not possible without the latter. Scholars agree that John had Daniel 12 in mind when presenting the vision recorded in 10:1–7.<sup>1032</sup> The strong verbal parallels suggest that John is certainly alluding to Daniel 12. Thus, the context of Daniel 12 is critical for the message of Revelation 10.<sup>1033</sup> However, when a NT author uses a certain OT passage, not only the particular passage but also its context is in view.<sup>1034</sup> Accordingly, in reading Revelation 10, the interpreter must pay attention not only to Daniel 12 but also to the context where it is included, namely, chapters 7–12.

A careful comparison between Revelation 10 and Daniel 12 reveals that John is especially interested in the time prophecies of Daniel. While the similarities are important for understanding John’s message,<sup>1035</sup> the differences are perhaps even more relevant in

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<sup>1031</sup> Aune argues that translating χρόνος as “delay” does not fit the context. For details, see Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 568.

<sup>1032</sup> The phraseology is too similar to reject John’s use of Dan 12 (cf. Rev 10:4/Dan 12:4, 9; Rev 10:5–6/Dan 12:7).

<sup>1033</sup> There is general agreement among scholars that, when using OT passages, the NT authors had their contexts in mind rather than using them as “proof-texts.” See Kenneth Berding and Jonathan Lunde, *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008). Berding and Lunde address this issue often throughout their book (for a summary, see pages 236, 237, 240).

<sup>1034</sup> C. H. Dodd has given a fine contribution in that regard. He argues that NT authors used a given OT passage “not merely for its own sake, but as a pointer to a whole context” (C. H. Dodd, “The Old Testament in the New,” in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. G. K. Beale [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994], 176; also 166–81). Although Dodd’s arguments are not free from criticism on the part of some (e.g., Albert C. Sundberg, “Response Against C. H. Dodd’s View: On Testimonies” in Beale, *The Right Doctrine*, 182–94), they are widely accepted by a number of scholars. See I. Howard Marshall, “Counter-Response in Favor of C. H. Dodd’s View,” in Beale, *The Right Doctrine*, 195–216; G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 5, 7, 98, 99.

<sup>1035</sup> This has been widely explored by a number of commentators. See Beale, *Revelation*, 524–47; Osborne, *Revelation*, 393–400; Koester, *Revelation*, 478–92; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 327–33.

that regard. Whereas Daniel 12:4 (cf. 12:9) mentions a sealed book, Revelation 10 mentions “a little scroll open” (v. 2; cf. 22:10). Also, whereas in Daniel 12:7 the fulfillment of the vision will be after “time, times, and half a time,” in Revelation 10:6 John is told that “there will no longer be time.” Thus, when Daniel 12 and Revelation 10 are read side by side, one perceives a movement from secrecy to revelation, from the distant future to imminence.<sup>1036</sup> These major differences suggest that the time of disclosure as envisioned by Daniel 12 is about to take place in Revelation 10. The mystery of God (10:7) will be fulfilled after the end of the period identified as “time, times, and half a time” (Dan 12:7). Thus, a better understanding of the period mentioned in Daniel 12:7 is relevant for tracing the missionary teaching of Revelation 10. A brief look at the immediate (12:4–13) and broader contexts of Daniel 12:7 (chapters 7–12) is necessary.

### The Danielic Background

Daniel 12:4 is clearly a transition to a new unity (12:5–12), as it mentions what Daniel is supposed to do in his time—“shut up the words and seal the book”—as opposed to what will happen “at that time” (12:1–3). The term *ἡ/that time* is a keyword in the chapter as a whole. In 12:1 it always refers to the future from Daniel’s perspective, “at *that time*” (12:1a); “*there shall be a time*” (12:1b); “*till that time*” (12:1b); “at *that time*” (12:1c).<sup>1037</sup>

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<sup>1036</sup> Tonstad, *Revelation*, 158. David C. Maltsberger argues that in the context of Dan 12:4–9 the idea of sealing regards the notion of secrecy (David C. Maltsberger, “Seal, Signet,” *EDB*, 1176). The LXX maintains the same idea by translating *σφραγίζω* as *σφραγίζω*, which is frequently used to refer to the idea of keeping something in secrecy (*NIDNTTE*, 41).

<sup>1037</sup> This term resumes the expression “at the time of the end” (cf. 11:40–45). See Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, NAC 18 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 313–14; John Joseph Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 390. The future fulfillment is also conveyed by a series of imperfective verbs (“shall arise” [v. 1]; “shall be delivered” [v. 1]; “shall awake” [v. 2]; “shall shine” [v. 3];

It also appears in the phrase “the time of the end” (12:4, 9), which plays a crucial role in Daniel 12:4–13.

The expression “the time of the end” is peculiar to Daniel in the OT (8:17; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9),<sup>1038</sup> and, hence, it is a technical term whose understanding depends on its analysis within the context of the book of Daniel itself. The fact that the expression “the time of the end” appears for the first time in Daniel 8:17 and occurs for the last time in Daniel 12:9 indicates that Daniel 8–12 must be taken into consideration in order to assess its meaning.<sup>1039</sup> In fact, the entire second half of Daniel (chapters 7–12) has to be considered, since it is the eschatological section of the book.<sup>1040</sup> This can be observed through clear connections between chapter 12 and the previous chapters. The sealing mentioned in 12:4, 9 echoes 8:26, where Daniel is told to seal up the vision regarding the

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“shall run” [v. 4]; “shall increase” [v. 4]; “comes to an end” [v. 7]; “shall purify” [v. 10]; “shall understand” [v. 10]; “shall rest” [v. 13]; “shall stand” [v. 13]).

<sup>1038</sup> Gerhard Pfandl, “‘Daniel’s ‘Time of the End,’” *JATS* 7, no. 1 (1996): 141–58. By way of clarification, in English, the expression “time of the end” also occurs in 8:19. However, the Hebrew word for “time” in that passage is מועד rather than זמן.

<sup>1039</sup> By and large, the term “the time of the end” has been applied either to the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes or to the time preceding the second coming of Christ. As Pfandl argues, “the linguistic and thematic parallels in chapters 2, 7, 8, and 10–12 support the second view. They indicate that all these visions reach to the time of the second advent.” See Pfandl, “Daniel’s ‘Time of the End,’” 148. Following J. R. Wilch, he states that all occurrences of “the time of the end” in Daniel “refer to the absolute eschatological end.”

<sup>1040</sup> Pfandl, “Daniel’s ‘Time of the End,’” 141. There is no agreement among commentaries about whether Daniel 7 belongs to the first half of the book (1–7) or to the second half (7–12). By and large, the criterion applied by those who place Daniel 7 in the first half is the language; that is, Daniel 2–7 is in Aramaic. Conversely, those who place Daniel 7 in the second half follow the criterion of the genre. In other words, while Daniel 1–6 has to do primarily with narrative, Daniel 7–12 deals mainly with visions. It seems that Daniel 7 plays a transitional role and, hence, it can go either way (see Jon Paulien, “The End of Historicism? Reflections on the Adventist Approach to Biblical Apocalyptic—Part Two,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17.1 [2006]: 186–87). However, in this dissertation, I am following the genre criterion. In addition, there is a close connection between chapters 7 and 8. John J. Collins argues that Dan 8 is “a companion piece for Daniel 7” and that “Daniel 8 is evidently designed to complement ch. 7 and shares the same conceptual and symbolic world” (John J. Collins, *Daniel: With an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, *The Forms of the Old Testament Literature* 20 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984], 86, 87). In that sense, one should not dissociate chapter 7 from chapter 8.

2,300 evenings and mornings.<sup>1041</sup> The term “the time of the end,” which occurs in 12:4, 9, also appears in 8:17; 11:35, 40. In turn, the cryptic phrase “time, times, and half a time” in 12:7 also appears in 7:25.<sup>1042</sup>

Therefore, elements of secrecy (12:4, 9; cf. 8:26; 9:24) and time (12:4, 9; cf. 8:17; 11:35, 40) bind together the entire prophetic section of the book of Daniel. Also, the reference to the *תמיד*/*tamid* in 12:11 connects this passage to 8:11, 12, 13; and 11:31, where one finds the other only occurrences of the term in Daniel. This fact strongly

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<sup>1041</sup> The imperatives in 12:4a, “*shut up* (סָתַם) the words” and “*seal* (סָתַם) the book” (cf. 12:9), play a major role in Dan 12:4–13 and are crucial for its understanding. Interestingly, Dan 12:4, 9 are the only places in the Hebrew Bible where סָתַם and סָתַם occur together.

A point to consider regards the shift from the active voice in 12:4, “shut up” and “seal,” to the passive voice in 12:9, “the words are shut up and sealed.” While Daniel is the subject of the two Qal imperatives in 12:4, it seems that the task had already been accomplished in 12:9 without Daniel’s participation in the process. The use of the passive voice in 12:9 suggests that the words had already been “shut up and sealed” by divine determination. In this sense, the fact that Daniel was summoned to “shut up the words and seal the book” must be interpreted on the basis of 12:8 and its reference to Daniel’s lack of understanding (cf. 8:26–27). Thus, Daniel shuts up the words and seals the book in the sense that he does not understand the words because they were not for his own time. They were to be fulfilled in the time of the end.

It is remarkable that the verb סָתַם is translated in Dan 12:4 (LXX) by *καλύπτω* and in Dan 12:9 (LXX) by *κατακαλύπτω*. Both *καλύπτω* and *κατακαλύπτω* are almost always used in the LXX as the Greek equivalents to the Hebrew סָתַם (see Bernard Taylor, *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Septuagint* [Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2009], s.v. *καλύπτω*, *κατακαλύπτω*). There is no fundamental difference in meaning between the compound verb and its simple form (*NIDNTTE*, 612). Both can be rendered as “cover.” Dan 12:4 and 9 are the only places in the Hebrew Bible where *καλύπτω*/*hide, cover* and *κατακαλύπτω*/*cover* translate סָתַם. Indeed, the reader of the Septuagint would expect סָתַם/*cover* rather than סָתַם/*shut up*, which, in turn, is almost always translated by *φράσσω*/*shut* and its compound forms (Hoogendyk, *Analytical Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible*, s.v. סָתַם), as is the case in the Theodotian version of Daniel. Out of 153 occurrences of סָתַם in the Hebrew Bible, it is translated 106 times by *καλύπτω* and its compound forms (Hoogendyk, *Analytical Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible*, s.v. סָתַם). It is hard to imagine that John was aware of these data. We can only speculate that the Holy Spirit moved the LXX translator to use *καλύπτω* and *κατακαλύπτω* where one should expect *φράσσω* and/or its compounds, so that John, and his readers, could conceive the book of Revelation as the “uncovering” of that which had been “covered” in Dan 12.

<sup>1042</sup> The link between 12:7 and 7:25 is so evident that the LXX translator implied the word *καιρός* in 12:7 from 7:25. The MT (12:7) reads, “time [מוֹעֵד], times [מוֹעֲדִים], and half.” The noun *καιρός*/*time* is commonly used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew *מוֹעֵד*/*time*. This plus in the LXX of 12:7 likely occurs as an attempt to maintain the symmetry of the phrase as it occurs in Dan 7:27, “time, times, and half a time.”

suggests that all these passages are referring to the same events.<sup>1043</sup> A key event is mentioned for the first time in 7:26–27 as a judgment court, but it is further developed in 8:9–14, especially in verses 13–14.<sup>1044</sup> The end of this time prophecy in 8:13–14 would take place in “the time of the end” (8:17).<sup>1045</sup> The material contained in 8:15–26 concerns

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<sup>1043</sup> Francis D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1977), 4:880. Moreover, the conversation between Daniel and the heavenly being in 12:5–12 is very similar to that seen in 8:13–16, which enhances the connection between the two passages. See Zdravko Stefanovic, *Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise: Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Nampa: Pacific Press, 2007), 442–43.

<sup>1044</sup> This passage brings a vision that points to the end of the period of 2,300 evenings and mornings. The expression “how long” that appears in most English translations as a rendering of the Hebrew *ḥāṣṣā* is misleading. It can leave the false impression that Daniel is emphasizing the duration rather than the end of the time period. Gerhard F. Hasel reports that “leading lexicographers translate the compound expression *ḥāṣṣā* as ‘until when’” (Gerhard F. Hasel, “Chapter VI: The ‘Little Horn,’ the Heavenly Sanctuary, and the Time of the End: A Study of Daniel 8:9–14,” in *Symposium on Daniel: Introductory and Exegetical Studies*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, DARCOM 2 [Washington: Biblical Research Institute, 1986], 429; also, Stefanovic, *Daniel*, 308–9). Hasel further states that “the thrust of the expression (until when) is upon what is to take place at the end of the time span and beyond” (429). This is the way Leander Bertram Chalice reads *ḥāṣṣā* in his translation of the Dead Sea Scrolls of Daniel and Ezra. See Leander Bertram Chalice, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of Daniel and Ezra: The Newest Translation from the Oldest Manuscripts*, ed. Ji Yang Jang (Seoul: Korean Publishing House, 2008), Dan 8:13.

Likewise, the meaning of the niphal form *ḥāṣṣā*/*shall be restored to its rightful state* in Dan 8:14 has been widely debated, as one can see from the different translations in English versions. In his paper on the meaning of *ḥāṣṣā*, Richard Davidson argues that one should work with a conflation of three major ideas of the term as conveyed by some English versions: restoration, cleansing, and vindication. For details, see Richard Davidson, “The Meaning of Nisdaq in Daniel 8:14,” *JATS* 7, no. 1 (1996): 107–19. See also Niels-Erik Andreasen, “Chapter VIII: Translation of Nisdaq/Katharistesetai in Daniel 8:14,” in Holbrook, *Symposium on Daniel*, 475–96.

<sup>1045</sup> The beginning of “the time of the end” (Dan 8:17; 11:40, 45; 12:4, 9) seems to be connected both with the termination of the prophetic period of time mentioned in Dan 7:25 (cf. 12:7) and that mentioned in 8:14. The time of the end points to a certain span of time. This is evident by the fact that the time of the end begins in an appointed time (Dan 11:35; cf. 8:19) and climaxes with the deliverance of the saints (Dan 12:1), the resurrection (Dan 12:2) and, consequently, the end of history. According to Dan 12, the time of the end would be a time for the unsealing or new understanding of Daniel’s prophecies (vv. 4, 9), which would follow the period of the antichrist’s rulership (v. 7; cf. 7:25). In Dan 8:17 (cf. 8:15), the phrase “the vision” connects “the time of the end” with “the vision” concerning the “*ḥāṣṣā*” (Dan 8:13) and the restoration/cleansing of the sanctuary (Dan 8:14). According to Dan 8:17, such a restoration/cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary would occur in the time of the end. For more details on the beginning and conclusion of the time of the end, see LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 360–61; William H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, DARCOM 1 (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 72–73; Hasel, “The ‘Little Horn,’” 378–61; Raoul Dederen, *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, electronic ed. (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2001), 12:871–72, 75.

While in Dan 11–12 the beginning of “the time of the end” seems to be related to the end of the 1,260 days/years (cf. 12:7), in 8:17 its beginning seems to be marked by the end of the vision of the 2,300 days/years (cf. 8:13–14). Hence, one should not be surprised by statements such as “This time seems to

an explanation of that vision, with emphasis on Daniel’s lack of understanding (8:27; cf. vv 15, 16, and 17). Next, 9:24–27 explains part of that prophecy with the purpose of helping Daniel understand it (9:22–23). Finally, Daniel 12 provides further explanation of the same prophecy, but the explanation is basically that he will not understand it. The period described as “the time of the end” still remains obscure to him (12:8; cf. 8:27).<sup>1046</sup>

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coincide with the completion of the 1260 years of papal church-state union in 1798 (Dan. 7:25), and with the subsequent restoration (in 1844) of the downtrodden sanctuary truth of Christ’s high-priestly ministry” (Dederen, *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, 12:871); “These unique time prophecies [Dan 7-12] determine the beginning of the appointed “time of the end,” particularly the termination of the prophetic time period of the 2300 “days” in the sealed vision of Daniel 8 (vss. 14, 17, 19) [...] Its start is connected with the termination of the symbolic times of the antichrist’s rule (see Dan. 7 (7:25; 12:4, 7) and with the long-range time prophecy of the 2,300 symbolic ‘days’” (LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 19, 360). In turn, Gerhard Pfandl clearly associates the beginning of the time of the end to 1798 (see Gerhard Pfandl, “The Remnant Church and the Spirit of Prophecy,” in Holbrook, *Symposium on Revelation, Book 2*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, DARCOM 7 (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 314; cf. also Nichol, *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4:874-75).

Perhaps, an intermediate view is to see a transition period from 1798 to 1844. The term “the time of the end” is always the object of a preposition. The fact that 8:17 is the only place where “the time of the end” is introduced by the preposition הַ may shed light on this discussion (cf. טַ + “the time of the end in 11:35; 12:4, 9 and אַ + “the time of the end in 11:40). When used in a temporal sense, הַ may indicate “the terminal point in time of a process” (Christo Van der Merwe et al., *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*, electronic ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 285). This may suggest that the 2,300 days/years of 8:13–14 come to a completion in the time of the end. In other words, by the time of the fulfillment of the 2,300 days/years the time of the end would already be in motion. In that sense, the prepositional phrase הַיּוֹם הַהַוא לְעֵת הַסֵּפֶר could be translated as in the Vulgate “in tempore finis *complebitur* visio” (i.e., the vision *will be completed* in the time of the end). In this case, the use of הַ + “the time of the end” in 8:17 could be a further argument for 1798. It is also interesting that Daniel seems to use הַ and טַ interchangeably in 7:25 and 12:7 (cf. טַ + a time, times, and half a time in 7:25 and הַ + a time, times, and half a time in 12:7). If that is the case, why would he replace טַ for הַ precisely in 8:17 rather than in 11:35, 40; 12:4, and 9? All these data call for more research. For now, it is safe to mention merely that the beginning of the time of the end is clearly associated with the fulfillment of the time prophecies of Daniel. Cautiously, Jacques Doukhan states that the time of the end “refers to the time coming at the end of the prophetic periods (cf. 7:25; 8:17, 19, 26; 12:7–12), thus beginning in A.D. 1798-1844” (Jacques Doukhan, *Daniel 11 Decoded: An Exegetical, Historical, and Theological Study* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2019), 201).

<sup>1046</sup> Dan 12 is part of a big section that begins in chapter 10. Interestingly, Dan 10:1 mentions that Daniel “understood the word and had understanding of the vision” (cf. 10:11–12), whereas Dan 12:4–13 emphasizes Daniel’s lack of understanding. This seeming contradiction is generally overlooked by Daniel scholars. John J. Collins, for instance, offers a short footnote: “Contrast 10:1, where he is said to have understanding” (Collins and Collins, *Daniel*, 400). Other major commentaries, such as John Goldingay, *Daniel*, ed. Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, rev. ed., WBC 30 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019) and Miller, *Daniel*, do not refer to the issue. Daniel 10:14 explains that what Daniel understands is what “is to happen to your people in *the latter days*” (emphasis supplied). Whatever the meaning of this phrase, it cannot be equated to “the time of the end,” since 12:8 makes it clear that Daniel did not understand this part of the prophecy. For a brief exposition of the meaning of this phrase and its relation to “the time of the end,” see Pfandl, “Daniel’s ‘Time of the End,’” 149–52. For a broader discussion on the subject, see

## The Mystery of God

When reading Revelation 10:1–7, the interpreter must consider that John had in mind not only Daniel 12:7 but its larger context. In that connection, the phrase “there will no longer be time” (10:6) must refer to the fulfillment of the vision described in Daniel 8:13–14. According to Revelation 10, the time for that fulfillment has arrived, and this will lead to the end of history,<sup>1047</sup> to the revelation of the mystery of God. While John uses the term “mystery” elsewhere in the book (1:20; 17:5, 7), the phrase “the mystery of God” is a *hapax legomenon* in Revelation.

Similar ideas can be found in Daniel 2:18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47 and in a number of NT passages (Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10; Rom 16:25 [cf. 11:25]; 1 Cor 2:7; 4:1; Eph 3:9; 6:19; Col 1:27; 2:2; 4:3). The phrase is also attested in some manuscripts of 1 Corinthians 2:1. Indeed, while various English versions (ASV, AV, ESV, KJV, LEB, NASB, NIV) follow the reading τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ θεοῦ/*the testimony of God* (as in SBLGNT), the UBS<sup>5</sup> and NA<sup>28</sup> (followed by CSB, EMPH, ERV, GW, NJB, NRSV, NTOGCASBIDCV, SNTTEP) read τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ/*the mystery of God*. While μαρτύριον is well supported, μυστήριον is early supported.<sup>1048</sup> This must explain the Committee of the UBS<sup>5</sup>'s decision to mark μυστήριον with the degree of certainty B, i.e., almost certain. Internal evidence also seems to support the decision, since the noun μυστήριον reappears a few verses later (cf. 1 Cor 2:7). If μυστήριον is the original reading, one can find here an example of the term applied to the gospel. Furthermore,

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Gerhard Pfandl, “The Latter Days and the Time of the End in the Book of Daniel.” PhD Dissertation; Andrews University, 1990, 292-431.

<sup>1047</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 252. Yet, the phrase “there will no longer be time” does not refer to the end of history itself, for Rev 10:7 mentions that the mystery of God will be fulfilled “in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel.”



some scholars believe that the genitive τοῦ εὐαγγελίου in the phrase τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου/*the mystery of the gospel* in Ephesians 6:19 is expegetical (i.e., the mystery, namely, the gospel).<sup>1049</sup> If this is correct, so one can see a clear example in the NT where the term “mystery” corresponds to the gospel. In Mark 4:11 (cf. Luke 8:10), the term μυστήριον in the genitive construction “the secret of the kingdom” has been understood by various scholars as referring to the coming of the kingdom of God through Jesus Christ.<sup>1050</sup> The genitive “of the kingdom” can be read as a genitive of reference, i.e., the secret about the kingdom.<sup>1051</sup>

The data above seem to indicate that the term mystery was used in relation to the gospel in early Christian circles. In Revelation 10:7, the phrase “the mystery of God” is likely the implied object of the verb εὐαγγελίζω in 10:7b. This relationship between “the mystery of God” and the verb εὐαγγελίζω suggests that John also used the term “mystery” to refer to the gospel. He affirms that God announced (εὐηγγέλισεν) “his mystery” “to his servants the prophets” (cf. Gal 3:8). This statement in 10:7b is key for understanding the meaning of “the mystery of God.”

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<sup>1048</sup> Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 480.

<sup>1049</sup> See, for instance, F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984], 412; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC 42 [Dallas: Word, 1990], 435).

<sup>1050</sup> Walter W. Wessel, “Mark,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 8:648; James A. Brooks, *Mark*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1991), 82; C. E. B Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, CGNTC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 152. According to R. C. H. Lenski, the mystery is revealed through Jesus in his “preaching and the teaching of the gospel of the kingdom” (R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 445–460.

<sup>1051</sup> The Evangelists and Paul seem to indicate that the kingdom of God, as foreseen in Daniel, has broken into the world through Jesus Christ. G. E. Ladd puts this as follows, “The new truth, now given to men and women by revelation in the person and mission of Jesus, is that the Kingdom that is to come finally in apocalyptic power, as foreseen in Daniel, has in fact entered into the world in advance in a hidden form to work secretly within and among human beings” (George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New*

Revelation 10:7b alludes to Amos 3:7. While “his servants the prophets” is a sort of “stock phrase” running throughout the OT (cf. 2 Kgs 9:7; 17:13, 23; 21:10; 24:2; Ezra 9:11; Jer 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4; Ezek 38:17; Dan 9:6, 10; Amos 3:7; Zech 1:6), the book of Daniel and Amos 3:7 are the only places where it is associated with the idea of mystery.<sup>1052</sup> And only in Amos 3:7 does a mystery idea (“secret counsel,”<sup>1053</sup> from the Hebrew *סֵדֶר*) appear in the same sentence as a reference to God’s “servants the prophets.” In utilizing Amos 3:7 in Revelation 10:7, John remarkably replaces *ἀποκαλύπτω/reveal* (LXX) with *εὐαγγελίζω/announce*, and likely *εὐαγγελίζω* has “its full NT flavor of ‘announce the good news.’”<sup>1054</sup> The former would better express the notion that the time for the fulfillment of Daniel’s time prophecies is at hand. However, the latter indicates that the time of the end will be marked by a powerful preaching of the gospel. In that sense, John’s use of the phrase “the mystery of God”<sup>1055</sup> is akin to Paul’s assertion that he preached the gospel “according to the revelation of the *mystery* that was kept secret for long ages but *has now been disclosed* and through the prophetic writings has been made known *to all nations*” (Rom 16:25–26, italics supplied).<sup>1056</sup> In Colossians 2:2 (cf. 1:27), the exact phrase “the mystery of God” is defined by apposition as Christ. A

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*Testament*. Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 92.

<sup>1052</sup> Likewise, G. K. Beale argues that John combines Daniel and Amos into one idea in Rev 10:7. Beale, *Revelation*, 543. He affirms that “the same Daniel-Amos combination appears also in 1QpH 7.4–5” (543).

<sup>1053</sup> *BDB*, 691.

<sup>1054</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 401.

<sup>1055</sup> By and large, Revelation scholars read “the mystery of God” as referring to God’s plan of salvation for humanity. E.g., Swete, *Apocalypse*, 127; Caird, *Revelation*, 128; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:265; Ladd, *Revelation*, 145; Mounce, *Revelation*, 207; Bratcher and Hatton, *Revelation*, 160; Morris, *Revelation*, 138. Morris adds that it refers not only to God’s purpose of saving man through Christ but also to God’s judging of evil (Morris, *Revelation*, 138).

<sup>1056</sup> In the Pauline corpus, the “mystery” is usually related to the gospel. In addition to Rom 16:25–

simple way to put it is that the mystery of God refers to the good news that, in Christ, God's plan for saving man is accomplished. This is likely the meaning in Revelation 10:7, which is hinted at by John's replacement of ἀποκαλύπτω with εὐαγγελίζω.

However, the Danielic background of the phrase "the mystery of God" (Dan 2:18, 19, 27, 30, 47)<sup>1057</sup> suggests that the preaching of the gospel is only part of its fulfillment. The mystery of God will be fully fulfilled when the events portrayed in 11:15–18 take place. In Revelation 10:7, the mention of the "mystery of God" connected to the sounding of the seventh trumpet indicates that an intense proclamation of the gospel in the time of the end leads to the events preceding the second coming and the final judgment.<sup>1058</sup> Revelation 10 prepares the reader for the idea that the proclamation of the good news of salvation and the warning that God will judge Babylon and its worshipers are part of the same gospel message (14:6–13), like two sides of the same coin. This will be further explored in chapter 9 of this work ("The End-Time Preaching") in our study of the three angels' messages. For now, we turn to a brief assessment of Revelation 10:8–11 and a

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26, see especially Eph 3:3–6, 9; Col 1:26–27; see also Eph 1:9; Col 2:2; 4:3.

<sup>1057</sup> That the idea of fulfillment of the mystery of God comes from the OT is enhanced by John's usage of the aorist ἐτελέσθη (lit., "it was fulfilled") to refer to a future event. This suggests that John has a *waw consecutivum* in mind (Moulton et al., *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 4:152; also, Constantine R. Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008], 90), which can be explained by his usage of Dan 2 and Amos 3.

<sup>1058</sup> This is coherent with the wider context of Amos 3:7, which is one of impending judgment. See Billy K. Smith and Franklin S. Page, *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*, NAC 19B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 70–71. Rev 10 also involves judgment, but it ought to be understood in connection with the fulfillment of Dan 8:13–14 as well as in light of Rev 14:6–7, where the proclamation of the gospel and the announcement that the hour of judgment has come are integral parts of the same message. This will be resumed in chapter 9 of this work. That John had Amos 3:7 in mind is demonstrated by further parallel ideas: the angel's loud voice in Rev 10:2 brings to mind the roar of a lion in Amos 3:4, 8, and the trumpet of the seventh angel in Rev 10:7 brings to mind the trumpet sounding in a city in Amos 3:6. Is the command "you must again prophesy" (Rev 10:11) somehow reminiscent of "The Lord GOD has spoken; who can but prophesy?" (Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 573). Also, while reflecting on the purpose of the judgment implied in Rev 10 and mentioned in Rev 14, one must consider the Danielic background, which hints that the purpose is twofold, namely, to destroy the evil powers and give the kingdom to the saints (Dan 7:26–27).

few other important questions mentioned in the introduction to this chapter: Why was it necessary to tell John that he must prophesy again? Did he think that his work had been already done? Is it a message “against” the nations, “about” the nations, or “to” the nations?

### **Command to Prophecy: Revelation 10:8–11**

The discussion above has indicated that the phrase “there will no longer be time” (10:6) is related to the fulfillment of the “2,300 evenings and mornings” of Daniel 8:13–14. Thus, Revelation 10:8–11 deals with a period in history that is connected to the fulfillment of that prophecy and follows it.<sup>1059</sup> Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that Revelation 10:1–11 is part of an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets (10:1–11:13).<sup>1060</sup> As a matter of fact, Revelation 10 is part of the sixth trumpet<sup>1061</sup> at the same time that it precedes the seventh trumpet and, hence, the end of history and the completion of God’s mission.<sup>1062</sup>

The renewal of John’s commission to prophesy is the fourth subunit in Revelation

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<sup>1059</sup> The conjunction *καί* very likely has a consecutive meaning in 10:8, as one can see in many modern English translations. It is used to indicate the order of events.

<sup>1060</sup> Scholars have recognized that Revelation is a very well-structured literary piece, with its major sections containing interludes that interrupt the flow of the narrative in a consistent and strategic fashion. Such interludes, reveal a technique that is not without purpose and meaning. See Ranko Stefanovic, “The Angel at the Altar (Revelation 8:3–5): A Case Study on Intercalations in Revelation,” *AUSS* 44, no. 1 (2006): 79–94.

<sup>1061</sup> This can be seen through a comparison between 8:13, 9:12, and 11:14. It is widely recognized by Revelation scholars that the three woes in 8:13 refer to the last three trumpets. Accordingly, when contending in 9:12 that “the first woe has passed” John is clearly referring to the fifth trumpet (cf. 9:1–11). In that connection, when mentioning in 11:14 that “the second woe has passed” John is referring to the sixth trumpet, which Rev 10:1–11:13 is a part of.

<sup>1062</sup> This will be discussed in chapter 10 of this dissertation.

10.<sup>1063</sup> In turn, Revelation 10:8–11 can be split into five scenes, with the focus on verse

11.<sup>1064</sup> The literary structure of this passage can be proposed as follows:

- a. The heavenly voice commands: go and take the scroll (v. 8)
  - b. John obeys the heavenly voice: he went and asked the scroll (v. 9a)
- a'. The angel commands: take and eat (v. 9b)
  - b'. John obeys the angel: he took and ate the little scroll (v. 10)
  - c. Renewal of John's commission: you must prophesy again (v. 11)<sup>1065</sup>

This literary arrangement suggests that the focus and climax of the passage lie on the command for John to prophesy again.<sup>1066</sup>

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<sup>1063</sup> The chapter follows a fourfold division in which John describes (1) the descent of the mighty angel (10:1:3a); (2) the seven thunders' speech and the command not to write its content (10:3b–4); (3) the angel's oath (10:5–7); and (4) the command to prophesy again (10:8–11). See Smalley, *Revelation*, 254.

<sup>1064</sup> (1) The heavenly voice gives John a command to go and take the scroll from the angel (v. 8); (2) John obeys the heavenly voice (v. 9a); (3) the angel gives John a double command and warns him as to the double and polarized result of his obedience (v. 9b); (4) John obeys him anyway and lives the experience predicted by the angel (v. 10); (5) the command to prophesy again (v. 11). I am following Aune's arrangement with slight differences. See Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 554.

<sup>1065</sup> This is not the only appearance in Revelation of a literary structure that puts the climax in the last element. See, for instance, the literary structure of the seven beatitudes as proposed by Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 55.

- A** 1:3—reading the book
- B** 14:13—death
- C** 16:15—keeping the garment
- C'** 19:9—the wedding supper
- B'** 20:6—death
- A'** 22:7—reading the book
- D** 22:14—to wash the robes

<sup>1066</sup> This is a common literary arrangement in the OT. Take for example the literary structure of Gen 1:1–2:4:

- a. light
- b. sea and sky
- c. dry land
- a'. lights
- b'. fish and birds
- c'. land animals and humans
- d'. Sabbath

Another example can be seen in the book of Jonah, where, as in Revelation, one finds a prophet's commissioning and recommissioning:

- a. Jonah's commissioning (1:1–3)
- b. Jonah and the pagan sailors (1:4–16)
- c. Jonah's pious, grateful prayer (1:17–2:10 [2:1–11])
- a'. Jonah's recommissioning (3:1–3a)
- b'. Jonah and the pagan Ninevites (3:3b–10)

The command in Revelation 10:11, “You must prophesy again,” is presented as a reported speech. The agent of that speech is not clear, nor is necessary. The focus lies on the speech itself.<sup>1067</sup> The term rendered as “must” in several English versions (ESV, NIV, NRSV, AV, etc.) is δεῖ. This verb denotes a sense of obligation and indicates God’s control and superintendence over earthly affairs, the salvation plan, and even commissions directed to individuals.<sup>1068</sup> In Revelation 10:11 δεῖ is used to express what some scholars have called “divine commission.”<sup>1069</sup> As elsewhere in the NT,<sup>1070</sup> it is also used to express unavoidable necessity, sounding as an imperative.

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c'. Jonah’s angry, resentful prayer (4:1–4)  
d'. God’s lesson for Jonah (4:5–11)

For details, see David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 29. At first sight, it seems there is nothing in common between Rev 10:8–11 and the book of Jonah, except this similarity of literary arrangements. However, it is noteworthy that the climax of Jonah’s book relies on God’s lesson for Jonah, which is not only for the benefit of Jonah but also for the readers of the book. This is clearly seen in the fact that the book concludes with a question with no answer, suggesting that the reader is invited to interact with Jonah’s story by providing the answer (Hans Walter Wolff, *A Continental Commentary: Obadiah and Jonah* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986], 175). But, above all, since God has the last word, it highlights the fact that salvation comes from the Lord (Donald J. Wiseman, T. Desmond Alexander, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Obadiah, Jonah and Micah: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 26 [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988], 144). In Rev 10:8–11, the position of prominence falls on John’s recommissioning (Rev 10:11). This is the climax of the passage and prepares the reader for what comes next (12–22). As hinted in 7:10, Rev 12–22 will show that salvation comes from the Lord (cf. 19:1). God is in control of the last events of human history, even when his people undergo the bitter experience of trials and persecution as they proclaim the gospel’s message.

<sup>1067</sup> This is grammatically suggested by the use of the historical present, “λέγουσιν.” As Steven Runge emphasizes, one of the primary functions of a historical present “is to highlight a significant speech or event that immediately follows. It is not the action of the H[istorical] P[resent] that is prominent, but that which follows.” Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 137.

<sup>1068</sup> See *NIDNTTE*, 637–38.

<sup>1069</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 573. The sense of divine commission is highlighted in 10:8–10 by means of its OT background. Scholars agree that the strongest OT parallel to John’s experience of taking the scroll and eating it comes from Ezek 2:8–3–3. This passage indicates that before delivering a message to “the house of Israel,” Ezekiel was supposed “to eat the scroll” by making the contents of the message his own. This also symbolized acceptance of his calling as a prophet. Likewise, John’s eating of the little scroll means acceptance of the divine calling as well as making the message his own by means of personal experience. Only after tasting all those details is he ready to receive a renewal of his commission. As Stephen Smalley notes, this command comes in the force of “a divine compulsion to proclaim God’s word, as experienced by other prophets and evangelists in Jewish and Christian history (cf. Jer. 4:19; Amos 3:8; *Sib. Or.* 3.162–64; 1 Cor. 9:16–17; et al.)” See Smalley, *Revelation*, 268. The commission of John in 10:11 is based on his experience in 10:8–10. Thus, as Beale notices, the conjunction καί/and in 10:11 has the

Since Revelation 10:11 finds itself in the interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets—i.e., the period in history between the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecies and the second coming of Christ—this is a commission for God’s end-time people.<sup>1071</sup> This is in consonance with the idea that the little scroll of Revelation 10 refers to “the experience of God’s people in the last days.”<sup>1072</sup>

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sense of “therefore.” Beale, *Revelation*, 553.

<sup>1070</sup> E.g., Luke 2:49; 4:43; 9:22; 11:42; 13:33; 17:25; 24:7, 26; see also Matt 16:21; Mark 8:31; John 3:14. For more details, see *NIDNTTE*, 638.

<sup>1071</sup> The gospel has been preached throughout Christian era. However, Rev 10 seems to focus on a time when an intensification of the gospel proclamation would take place, leading to the final events that would antecede the second coming of Christ. By placing the material recorded in chapter 10 before the seventh trumpet, John hints that mission is to be accomplished before the end comes.

<sup>1072</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 339. There has been much discussion concerning the identity of the little scroll in Rev 10. Whether one should take it as the same scroll from Rev 5 (e.g., Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 243; Osborne, *Revelation*, 390) or as a different scroll (e.g., Roloff, *Revelation*, 123) is a matter of debate in recent Revelation scholarship. One important issue regarding this debate concerns whether *biblaridion* (10:2, 9, 10) should be taken as a diminutive form of βιβλίον (5:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9). Βιβλίον also appears as a variant reading in 10:10; however, the manuscript support in favor of βιβλαρίδιον is stronger (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 671). Three important papers on diminutives in the Greek NT have been published in the last few decades, whose findings may shed light on this discussion.

In his paper “Diminutives in the Greek New Testament,” Swanson corrects the long-established thought that the NT does not have many diminutives. Comparing the NT with other *koine* documents, he points out that the NT shows, for instance, “twice the number over the figure for the LXX, and 2.5 times over that of Polybius” (Donald C. Swanson, “Diminutives in the Greek New Testament,” *JBL* (1958): 150). He contends that “the inevitable conclusion (based on this evidence) is that, contrary to the dogma, the NT has more diminutives [*sc.* than comparable texts of the period]” (151). When assessing several diminutive suffixes in the NT, Swanson brings into discussion the formation of the so-called triple diminutives, in which category he includes the term βιβλαρίδιον (*i.e.*, bibl + ar + id + ion) (see Mathewson, *Revelation*, 131, for the opinion that βιβλαρίδιον carries a double rather than triple diminutive ending). Swanson speculates that the “rise of double and triple diminutives is due to the process of fading” (p. 146), which may explain John’s insistence in using βιβλαρίδιον in Rev 10 and may suggest that he really uses the term for the sake of its diminutive meaning.

In 1970, Keith Elliott explored these diminutives in a short paper (“Nouns with Diminutive Endings in the New Testament,” *Novum Testamentum* 12, no. 4 [1970]: 391–98). Elliott concurs with Swanson’s conclusion that “Koine Greek uses diminutive suffixes more frequently than the classical language. The New Testament has more nouns with these suffixes than some comparable texts of the period” (391). However, he complains that Swanson’s study “does not take fully into account textual variants involving diminutives” (391). Accordingly, his purpose is “to show the extent to which scribes copying the New Testament were influenced by stylists [...], and to show how far they succeeded in eliminating ‘faded diminutive’ forms from the mss. they were copying” (392). Nevertheless, Elliott’s paper does not go beyond what Swanson had already pointed out in his paper. Specifically regarding βιβλαρίδιον, he is not able to go beyond Swanson or lexicons such as that of Liddell and Scott, since all of them had already indicated that the multiple suffix -αρίδιον deviates from the classical suffix -αριον. Furthermore,

Thus, while Revelation 1–3 has to do with a commission to the Christian church in a general manner, Revelation 10:11 is a commission to the end-time church.<sup>1073</sup> In

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Elliott, based on Liddell and Scott, misses the fact that the NT does not have the only occurrence of such a word (396). It also occurs in Hermas (see Rick Brannan, *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* [Bellingham: Lexham, 2008], s.v. βιβλαρίδιον). It is accurate, however, that the word does not occur prior to the NT (*NIDNTTE*, 512), which may indicate that John was not only well acquainted with the process of nominal suffixation, but also used a triple diminutive suffix in order to make it clear to his readers that he really saw a “little scroll.” It is not surprising that most lexicons refer to βιβλαρίδιον as meaning “little book.” Richard Bauckham’s claim that βιβλαρίδιον is a synonym of βιβλίον in Hermas, *Vision 2.1,4* (Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 244–45; he is followed by Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 530) must be viewed with suspicion. See, for instance, Carolyn Osiek’s commentary on the Shepherd of Hermas, where she seems to think otherwise. She refers to βιβλίον as a scroll of substantial length, whereas βιβλαρίδιον is referred to as a “paper or short document,” as in Rev 10:2 (Carolyn Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary*, ed. Helmut Koester, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999], 52). Furthermore, even if these words were synonymous in Hermas, this does not mean that they should be synonymous in Revelation.

A third paper on the issue of diminutives in the NT has been published more recently by Jonathan M. Watt (“Diminutive Suffixes in the Greek New Testament: A Cross-Linguistic Study,” *Biblical and Ancient Greek Linguistics* 2 [2013]: 29–74). As the subtitle suggests, Watt relies on a cross-linguistic approach to assess the diminutives in the NT. His analysis mainly addresses the possible meanings conveyed by a diminutive form, i.e., “smallness, endearment, or derogation, a means of politeness, or something pertaining to community values and solidarity” (68). Consequently, there is little information in this paper that might be helpful in the present discussion. Yet, Watt mentions that “the use of βιβλαρίδιον in Rev 10:2, 8 [*sic*], 9, and 10 indicates a document that is more than a single sheet but less than a book” (51).

The discussion above on diminutives in the NT suggest that the word βιβλαρίδιον in Rev 10 must be taken as a diminutive and, as such, it must refer to the experience of God’s people in the last days of the salvation history. In addition, it is important to keep in mind John’s use of Daniel’s time prophecies. Accordingly, this little open scroll in Rev 10 must be interpreted as opposed to Daniel’s sealed book (Dan 12:4, 9). That is to say, what is sealed in Dan 12 is open in Rev 10. A seeming obstacle to this interpretation is the fact that John uses βιβλίον rather than βιβλαρίδιον in 10:8. However, this can be explained by the fact that the anarthrous use of βιβλαρίδιον in 10:2 as opposed to the articular use in 10:8, 9, and 10 strongly suggests that the article is anaphoric. Accordingly, even when John uses βιβλίον in 10:8, he is clearly referring to βιβλαρίδιον in 10:2. It seems that John is not consistent in his use of these terms. In that sense, Beale’s postulation that βιβλίον “has in this context retained its original diminutive idea” (Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 530) is compatible with John’s anaphoric use of the article in “τὸ βιβλίον” (10:8). For further linguistic arguments for the difference between the scrolls in Rev 5 and Rev 10, see Aune, “John’s Prophetic Commission,” 219–20.

<sup>1073</sup> Various scholars argue that 1:10–20 and 4:1–2 refer to previous commissions. However, it seems that “the first commission includes the whole book” (Beale, *Revelation*, 553), the second focuses on 4–9, whereas the third points to the material in 12–22. Nevertheless, it is debatable whether John is commissioned twice in Rev 1–9 (Koester, *Revelation*, 483). The commission in 4:1–2 seems to be part of that in 1:10–20. In that connection, it is better to see two commissions in Revelation, the first in 1:10–20 and the second in 10:8–11 (see Aune, “John’s Prophetic Commission,” 213; see also the arguments by Trafton, *Revelation*, 30). Obviously, there is no essential distinction between the two commissions. Richard Bauckham helpfully mentions that the emphasis on the church in the first half of Revelation prepares God’s people for their role in the last days. Thus, “the new feature from 10:11 onwards is the concern with the nations and the church’s prophetic witness to them” (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 266). This suggests that after the explosive missionary impulse in the first centuries, missionary zeal faded in the Christian



other words, the end-time church is in focus from Revelation 10 onwards as a missionary agent.

The emphasis on mission also derives from John's bittersweet experience of eating the scroll (10:8–10). This has widely been understood as a call for mission and even “a rite of ordination”<sup>1074</sup> with all its implications. In eating the scroll, John makes the content his own and is now ready to communicate its message. So, while the adverb *πάλιν* in “you must again (*πάλιν*) prophecy”<sup>1075</sup> points backward to previous commission(s), at the same time it points forward to the second half of Revelation,<sup>1076</sup> especially 14:6–13,<sup>1077</sup> where one finds the proclamation of the gospel and the announcement that the time for judgment has come. In that regard, Revelation 10 seems

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church. Rev 10 indicates that it will reawaken with the fulfillment of Daniel's time prophecies.

<sup>1074</sup> This idea comes from the Ezekiel background lying behind Rev 10:8–10. Margaret S. Odell argues that Ezekiel's experience of eating the scroll (Ezek 2:8–3:3) presents “similarities to the priestly rite of ordination described in Leviticus 8–9.” Margaret S. Odell, *Ezekiel*, ed. P. Keith Gammons and Samuel E. Balentine, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 45; see also Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, WBC 28 (Dallas: Word, 1994), 40.

<sup>1075</sup> The adverb *πάλιν* is left-dislocated in the Greek text for the sake of emphasis, which indicates its importance for the interpretation of this passage.

<sup>1076</sup> Charles, *Revelation*, 269. The idea that *πάλιν* points to the second half of Revelation is reinforced by the fact that chapters 10 and 11 serve as a sort of introduction to 12–22. This is recognized by various Revelation scholars. G. K. Beale goes as far as to state that “Chapters 10–11 are put within the cycle of trumpets to connect the two halves of the Apocalypse together” (Beale, *Revelation*, 520; see also Yeatts, *Revelation*, 189). That chapters 10–11 already have the second half of Revelation in view can also be seen, for instance, in 11:18, whose five statements anticipate the themes developed in 12–22. Jon Paulien observes that Rev 10–11 contains “the first mention of a number of elements which form a major part of visions in the latter half of the book, such as the ‘beast’ and the ‘great city’” (Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 337, see also 338–39). This will be further explored in chapter 11 of this work.

<sup>1077</sup> This can be seen through some linguistic and structural connections between chapters 10 and 14. (1) In both 10:4 (cf. 10:8) and 14:2 (cf. 14:13) John writes, “and I heard a voice from heaven” (*καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ*). In fact, 14:2 contains an *ipsis literis* repetition of this phrase in 10:4. While John mentions similar ideas elsewhere (4:1; 11:12, 15; 12:10; 18:4; and 19:1), 14:2 has the only exact repetition. The statement in 14:13 has *φωνή*/sound in the genitive rather than in the accusative as the direct object of *ἀκούω*/to hear (for the difference between the genitive and the accusative as objects of *ἀκούω*, see Beale, *Revelation*, 601). (2) Both in 10:8–9 and in 14:2, 6–7, John hears the voice from heaven and then hears the voice of an angel. (3) 10:11 and 14:6 are the only places where the fourfold formula is used to refer to the target audience of missionary work. These parallels suggest that 14:6–13 is a development and intensification of 10:11.

to indicate that before the end comes, proclamation of the gospel message will intensify.

One question that arises at this point regards why it is necessary to tell John that he ought to prophesy “again.” Did he think that his work had been already done? The fact that *πάλιν/again* is left-dislocated in the Greek text may suggest that John, as it were, did not expect to keep prophesying. Apparently, he thought that the end would take place at the close of the time prophecies of Daniel (“there will no longer be time,” 10:6). This is further suggested by the point/counterpoint set in 10:6–7, in which “there will no longer be time” (v. 6) is the counterpoint, whereas the material in verse 7 is the point.<sup>1078</sup> A point/counterpoint set has two primary purposes: (1) it links two items that might not have been interrelated otherwise and (2) draws “more attention to the ‘point’ than it would otherwise have received.”<sup>1079</sup> While point/counterpoint sets can be formed by means of various connecting devices, it is remarkable that the one used in Revelation 10:6–7 is the conjunction *ἀλλά*. Quoting Jacob K. Heckert, Runge explains that *ἀλλά* “introduces a correction of the expectation created by the first conjunct; an incorrect expectation is cancelled and a proper expectation is put in its place.”<sup>1080</sup> Obviously, this does not mean that the counterpoint is not true. In the context of Revelation 10 that would be impossible, as the phrase “there will no longer be time” is part of the angel’s oath. The construction only calls attention to the more important information in verse 7. Likely, this was necessary as John expected the end to come with the fulfillment of Daniel’s time

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<sup>1078</sup> For a visualization of this rhetorical construction in Rev 10:6–7, see Steven E. Runge, *The Lexham Discourse Greek New Testament* (Bellingham: Lexham, 2008–2014), in Logos Bible Software.

<sup>1079</sup> Runge, *Lexham Discourse Greek New Testament*. This resource is available on Logos Bible Software. For more details, see Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 73–74.

<sup>1080</sup> Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 56.

prophecies.<sup>1081</sup> Instead, he was told that it was not the end yet. This generated a disappointment, represented by the bitter-like flavor in the stomach (10:9–10). In consonance with the notion that it was not the end yet, Revelation 10:8–11 indicates that the gospel is supposed to be preached throughout the world before the trumpet call is sounded by the seventh angel. In short, it is necessary to prophesy again because, on the one hand, the time prophecies of Daniel have been fulfilled (10:6) and, on the other hand, the seventh angel has not sounded his trumpet yet (10:7). It is time for mission!

At this point, another important question must be addressed, which concerns the meaning of the preposition ἐπί in 10:11. Is John supposed to prophesy *against*, *about*, or *to* “many peoples and nations and languages and kings”?

### **The Meaning of ἐπί in Revelation 10:11**

The meaning of the preposition ἐπί in 10:11 is disputed. The debate regards whether the sense of ἐπί should be neutral (“about,” “concerning,” etc.),<sup>1082</sup> negative (“against”),<sup>1083</sup> or positive (“to”).<sup>1084</sup> The fundamental difference between the positive

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<sup>1081</sup> It is very likely that John’s bitter experience is related to disappointment in realizing that the second coming would not happen as early as he initially thought.

<sup>1082</sup> See, e.g., Swete, *Apocalypse*, 129; Charles, *Revelation*, 269; Ladd, *Revelation*, 148; Osborne, *Revelation*, 405; Mounce, *Revelation*, 210–11, among many others. See also ESV, NKJV, LEB, NIV, CSB, CJB, GNB, HCSB, ISV, NET, NABR, NCV, NIrV, NLT, RSV, NRSV, NASB, RSVCE, YLT. In affirming that “about” should be the meaning of ἐπί in 10:11, these commentators mean that the nations are the topic of John’s prophesying rather than the addressee. In that connection, John would be addressing the readers by informing them what would happen to the nations.

<sup>1083</sup> E.g., Beale, *Revelation*, 554–55; Schnabel, “John and the Future of the Nations,” 251–52; Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 574; George W. Buchanan, *The Book of Revelation: Its Introduction and Prophecy*, MBC (Lewiston: Mellen Biblical Press, 1993), 244; Leonard L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 124. See also EMPH and NJB.

<sup>1084</sup> Lenski, *Revelation*, 322; John C. Thomas, *The Apocalypse: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Cleveland: CPT Press, 2012), 322; Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments: Bible Text*, vols. I–VI (London; Glasgow: William Collins, Sons, & Company, Limited, n.d.), no pagination. See also DRB, CEV,

view and the others is that it interprets the fourfold formula in 10:11 as the direct audience or addressees.<sup>1085</sup> Proportionally speaking, Revelation has the greatest incidence of ἐπί in the NT (one occurrence for every 68.40 words), followed by Acts (one occurrence for every 109.17 words).<sup>1086</sup> By and large, ἐπί appears in the NT in its spatial sense without distinction in meaning whether it is followed by the accusative, the genitive, or the dative.<sup>1087</sup> The same seems to be true in Revelation.<sup>1088</sup> In that connection, affirmations such as the following—“The translation, ‘You must prophesy

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ARETGSNCJC, HB:CONTTLOT, LTNTVIII, SWAEJCCSNT, and TPT. The following English versions translate ἐπί as “before”: AV, KJV, HBCONTCV, HB:BRAEV, MXPNT, NCPB, NTCVCGSGT, NTOLSJC, NTOGCASBIDCV, NT:TOG, which implies that the fourfold formula is also taken as the addressee of the end-time message.

<sup>1085</sup> The decision as to which rendering in English better reflects the use of ἐπί in Rev 10:11 is not as easy as one would like it to be (Ladd, *Revelation*, 148). One factor that may complicate the discussion even more has to do with grammatical governance, i.e., do prepositions govern cases or is a preposition governed by its case? Scholars such as Stanley E. Porter (Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1999), 140) and Murray J. Harris (Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament: An Essential Reference Resource for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 28), following A. T. Robertson (A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Logos Bible Software, 2006), 450), argue in favor of the latter. Conversely, Daniel Wallace, following a different grammatical tradition, argues in favor of the first (Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 360). Depending on which approach one will follow, it will determine which category is to be more focused, whether the preposition or the case of its object. In any case, it seems there is general agreement that the preposition helps to clarify the meaning of the case.

<sup>1086</sup> The number in Revelation is noteworthy, especially if compared with the relative low frequency of ἐπί in the Fourth Gospel (one occurrence for every 434.30 words). For details, see *NIDNTE*, 237. Further research might provide some clues to and/or implications from such a disparity. For now, one can postulate that John’s abundant usage of ἐπί in Revelation might be related to his constant allusions to the LXX, where this preposition occurs about 7,300 times, with the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel responsible for nearly 15 percent of all its occurrences (*NIDNTE*, 237). This is an impressive number if compared with the occurrences of ἐπί, for instance, in large books such as Genesis (266x) and Isaiah (346x).

<sup>1087</sup> *NIDNTE*, 237. Also Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 376; Harris, *Prepositions and Theology*, 137; T. Muraoka, *A Syntax of Septuagint Greek* (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 218–19; John D. Schwandt, *An Introduction to Biblical Greek: A Grammar with Exercises* (Bellingham: Lexham, 2017).

<sup>1088</sup> Take for example John’s use of the phrase “on the throne” in Revelation—ἐπί plus genitive (4:10; 5:1, 7; 6:16; 7:15); ἐπί plus accusative (4:2); and ἐπί plus dative (4:9; 5:13; 7:10; 19:4; 21:5). For details, see Harris, *Prepositions and Theology*, 137. Harris explains that several other meanings derive from the spatial sense (138). In consonance with Harris, Silvia Luragui explains that ἐπί “displays a high degree of semantic overlap with different cases. [...] As a consequence, describing the semantics of ἐπί is very complicated.” See Silvia Luragui, *On the Meaning of Prepositions and Cases: The Expression of Semantic Roles in Ancient Greek*, Studies in Language Companion Series 67 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2013),

again before many peoples and nations...’ makes good sense; but this meaning requires the genitive case, whereas the object in the text is in the dative case”—are too generalist,<sup>1089</sup> and some of them fail to consider important issues such as context, authorial usage, and the influence of the LXX. It is not that there is no distinction in meaning when different cases are used with ἐπί, but interpreters should not assume those meanings are as straightforward as they appear at first sight. Next, follows a brief assessment of each meaning mentioned above.

### The “Against” View

G. K. Beale is likely the most representative of the “against” view. He argues that προφητεύω ἐπί in the LXX of Ezekiel generally means hostile opposition (“prophesy against”).<sup>1090</sup> This observation is significant given John’s use of Ezekiel in 10:8–10. However, one obstacle to such an interpretation is that all occurrences of προφητεύω ἐπί in Ezekiel are followed by a noun in the accusative case, whereas προφητεύω ἐπί is followed by the dative in Revelation 10:11. Furthermore, the context is not precisely the same, since Ezekiel is commissioned to prophesy to Israel in exile (Ezek 2:8–3:3), whereas John has a universal audience in mind,<sup>1091</sup> not to mention that the idea of hostile

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<sup>1089</sup> Ladd, *Revelation*, 148. Ladd’s statement is inconsistent since he himself gives Acts 25:12 as an example of ἐπί with the sense of “before” (148), but ἐπί is followed by the accusative in that passage. Other statements such as “with the genitive the preposition means ‘before’; with the accusative, ‘against’; and with the dative, ‘in regard to’” (Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 318) or “when ἐπί is followed either by an accusative or a dative, its meaning is that of ‘against’” (Laurențiu F. Moț, “Semitic Influence in the Use of New Testament Greek Prepositions: The Case of the Book of Revelation,” *Biblical and Ancient Greek Linguistics* 6 [2017]: 56) are generalist too.

<sup>1090</sup> He states that this occurs in eighteen out of twenty-one occurrences of the structure in Ezekiel (LXX). See Beale, *Revelation*, 554.

<sup>1091</sup> John K. Goodrich, “Jubilees and Revelation 10:1–11: Heavenly Beings Bearing Heavenly Books,” in Blackwell et al., *Reading Revelation in Context*, 99.

opposition coming from προφητεύω ἐπί is not consistent in Ezekiel.<sup>1092</sup> While both ἐπί with the accusative and ἐπί with the dative can be used to express hostile opposition,<sup>1093</sup> one should not overlook two observations: (1) in the LXX, hostile opposition is expressed exclusively through ἐπί with the accusative;<sup>1094</sup> (2) a fading of the dative case occurred in NT times. This second observation deserves further consideration.

Murray J. Harris reports that most of the time the object of ἐπί in the NT is a noun in the accusative case (464x), followed in frequency by the genitive (216x) and the dative (176x).<sup>1095</sup> In the time of the NT, some prepositions, such as μετά and περί, were not taking dative any longer.<sup>1096</sup> Furthermore, other prepositions, such as ἐπί, παρά, πρός, and ὑπό, were taking dative less than before.<sup>1097</sup> Given this situation, one should ask why John retained the dative case in Revelation 10:11, when very probably he was acquainted with the Septuagint text of Ezekiel and its usage of ἐπί plus accusative to mean hostile opposition.<sup>1098</sup> If he wanted to point to the broader context of judgment in Ezekiel, why

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<sup>1092</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 264. In other words, there are instances in which “against” does not apply. Beale himself admits that προφητεύω ἐπί sometimes refers to a blessing (Beale, *Revelation*, 554).

<sup>1093</sup> See *BDAG*, 366.

<sup>1094</sup> While the LXX is very consistent in expressing hostile opposition through ἐπί with the accusative, this does not mean that every instance of ἐπί with the accusative implies hostile opposition.

<sup>1095</sup> See Harris, *Prepositions and Theology*, 138. See also Pietro Bortone, *Greek Prepositions: From Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 182.

<sup>1096</sup> Cf. *BDAG*, 636, 797. In Attic Greek, while περί was used with the dative, μετά occurred with the dative only in poetry. Both of them, though, were largely used with the genitive and accusative cases. See H. G. Liddell, *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1996), 500, 622.

<sup>1097</sup> Bortone, *Greek Prepositions*, 182.

<sup>1098</sup> As a matter of fact, the formula προφητεύω + ἐπί + dative occurs a few times in the LXX and only in Jeremiah, almost always in the phrase “prophesy in the/my name” (Jer 11:21; 14:14, 15; 23:25; 34:15; 36:9). The exception is 34:15, where προφητεύω is followed by ἐπί plus dative a second time and the prepositional phrase likely functions adverbially, modifying προφητεύω, “wrongly prophesying lies.”

not to use προφητεύω ἐπί plus accusative? A reasonable answer is that he deliberately wanted to deviate from the sense of hostile opposition against the nations. In addition, as mentioned above, while Ezekiel’s message was intended for the house of Israel, John’s has a worldwide scope.<sup>1099</sup>

### The “About” View

The rendering “about” is by far the most accepted among commentators. By and large, proponents of the “about” view refer to the fact that most commentators consider “about” the best translation for ἐπί with the dative, and take for granted that this is the case in Revelation 10:11. Two further arguments can be summarized as follows: (1) The use of ἐπί in 10:11 is similar to that of John 12:16 and Revelation 22:16, but this is not convincing.<sup>1100</sup> (2) According to George E. Ladd, ἐπί with the dative in Revelation 10:11 reflects an idiom occurring very often in the Hebrew Bible meaning “to prophecy in regard to.”<sup>1101</sup> Ladd is likely following R. H. Charles’s claim that the Hebrew idiom behind the construction προφητεύω ἐπί is the verb נָבֵא followed by the preposition לְ.<sup>1102</sup>

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Cf. Jer 34:15 (NETS). See also Gerald L. Keown, *Jeremiah 26–52*, WBC 27 (Dallas: Word, 1995), 42. The formula προφητεύω ἐπί + genitive occurs only once (Jer 35:8) and in the sense of hostile opposition (“against”).

<sup>1099</sup> For other differences between the two passages, see Aune, “John’s Prophetic Commission,” 215–20. Interestingly, in his commentary, David Aune defended the interpretation that ἐπί should be translated as “against” in Rev 10:11 (Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 574). Later on, he revisits the passage and changes his opinion for “about” (Aune, “John’s Prophetic Commission,” 217–18, n1). For a very helpful and more detailed assessment of the “against” view, see Morales, “Christ, Shepherd of the Nations,” 193–94, n45.

<sup>1100</sup> While John 12:16 really has ἐπί followed by a dative of reference (i.e., concerning), one has to consider that the entire grammatical construction is not the same as in Rev 10:11. In Rev 10:11, the prepositional phrase introduced by ἐπί follows a transitive verb, which does not occur in John 12:16. As for Rev 22:16, the prepositional phrase ἐπί ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις is better understood as a dative of advantage or even as a “marker of the experiencer,” meaning “to.” See Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, clxxxii.

<sup>1101</sup> Ladd, *Revelation*, 148. Ladd is vague. He does not mention which idiom he is referring to or provide any OT passages (so Thomas, *Revelation 8–22*, 75).

<sup>1102</sup> Charles, *Revelation*, 269. This information is, nevertheless, incomplete, since a few times the

If that is the case, the interpreter is back to square one, since both προφητεύω ἐπί and נבא על can be rendered as “to prophecy about/in regard to,” “to prophecy against,” or “to prophesy to.” Thus, the argument is not sustainable.

Another line of argumentation holds that “about” fits the Revelation context better since it does not reduce the act of prophesying solely to judgment against the nations,<sup>1103</sup> as seems to be the argument of those defending the meaning of ἐπί as “against.” In this manner, “about” has a more neutral sense while not denying the presence of judgment. As Osborne remarks, it conveys both positive and negative connotations.<sup>1104</sup> One issue with such an interpretation is that the message is not addressed to the fourfold formula in 10:11 (peoples, nations, languages, and kings). Rather, John is addressing the readers, speaking to them about the nations.<sup>1105</sup> Does this do justice to what is going on in Revelation 10–11 and, as we will see further ahead, Revelation 14? To read ἐπί as “about” causes the peoples, nations, languages, and kings to be only the indirect audience of the gospel proclamation.<sup>1106</sup>

### The “To” View

By and large, the arguments for this view fall into two groups: (1) grammar and (2) context. R. C. H. Lenski claims that ἐπί in Revelation 10:11 expresses a simple indirect object or juridical use as in Acts 25:10,<sup>1107</sup> but, unfortunately, he does not

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Hebrew Bible presents נבא על rather than נבא על.

<sup>1103</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 405.

<sup>1104</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 405.

<sup>1105</sup> Koester, *Revelation*, 483.

<sup>1106</sup> Aune, “John’s Prophetic Commission,” 225.

<sup>1107</sup> Lenski, *Revelation*, 322.



develop his claims. The notion that ἐπί conveys juridical use as in Acts 25:10 is possible; ἐπί is followed by the genitive in that passage, but, as stated in the opening of this section, the different meanings of ἐπί with oblique cases are not as consistent as one would like them to be, so this argument is not completely acceptable nor discardable. The idea that ἐπί introduces an indirect object is also possible,<sup>1108</sup> and can be further developed. The use of ἐπί with the accusative after εὐαγγελίσαι in Revelation 14:6 is tantamount to a dative of indirect object.<sup>1109</sup> The reason why John does not use the accusative in 10:11—as he does in Revelation 14:6—can be explained as avoiding association with the concept of hostile opposition deriving from the construction προφητεύω plus ἐπί with the accusative in the LXX, as mentioned above. In support of that argument, 10:11 and 14:6 present a close relationship. In both of them, the fourfold formula is introduced by ἐπί and in both of them ἐπί follows a verb of communication. In addition, Revelation 14:6 is the only place in the NT where an object of εὐαγγελίζω is introduced by ἐπί. This must not be accidental: John wants the reader to see a connection between 10:11 and 14:6. In addition, 10:7 and 14:6 are the only places in the NT where εὐαγγελίζω occurs in the active voice.<sup>1110</sup> These data suggest, as it were, that John

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<sup>1108</sup> Take, for instance, the phrase “he rolled a stone *to the entrance* (ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν) of the tomb” (my translation) in Mark 15:46 and notice, in comparison, the absence of ἐπί in the synoptic parallel in Matt 27:60. Both examples are construed by A. T. Robertson as indirect objects (Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 542).

<sup>1109</sup> Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, clxxxiii. The dative occurs as the indirect object of εὐαγγελίζω with a certain frequency in the NT: Luke 1:19; 2:10; 4:18; Acts 8:35; Rom 1:15; 1 Cor 15:1, 2; 2 Cor 11:7; Gal 1:8; 4:13; Eph 2:17; 3:18; and 1 Pet 4:6. In Eph 3:8 and Luke 4:43, εὐαγγελίζω is used with the accusative of thing and dative of person in the same sentence. In Rev 14:6 the accusative of thing is the cognate object εὐαγγέλιον, whereas ἐπί plus accusative replaces the dative of person.

<sup>1110</sup> This has also been observed by Smalley, *Revelation*, 361. Compounds of ἀγγέλλω occur throughout the NT in the active voice, but while coming from the same root, it is a different term.

intended to give readers “signposts” to see connections between chapters 10 and 14.<sup>1111</sup>

J. Massyngberde Ford<sup>1112</sup> and Sigve K. Tonstad<sup>1113</sup> translate ἐπί as “to” without offering any explanation. John C. Thomas goes a little further by arguing that up to chapter 10 John’s focus is the church, but from 10:11 onwards he focuses on the nations. Thomas states that chapter 11 indicates that “John’s prophetic mandate,<sup>1114</sup> and that of the church with him, is to prophesy to all nations by bearing fruitful witness to the Lamb. Thus, the translation ‘to’ is the likely meaning of ἐπί [...] in this context.”<sup>1115</sup> That John is more focused on the church in the first half of Revelation can be seen from passages such as 1:5–6; 2:1–3:22; 5:9–10; 7:1–8. In 5:9 and 7:9 the fourfold formula is introduced by the preposition ἐκ/*from*, which indicates that the people of God come from all nations. As a matter of fact, 5:9 and 7:9 show the people of God in heaven as a sort of anticipation of what will happen in the end.<sup>1116</sup> In turn, 10:11 indicates how that end will be accomplished. In other words, for people *from* all nations to be integrated into the people

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<sup>1111</sup> Some of these connections have been perceived by previous interpreters. See, e.g., Ranko Stefanovic, “‘You Must Prophesy Again!’: The Task and Mission of the End-Time Church,” in *Mission Vision in Action: Perspectives on Global Missiology: A Festschrift Honoring the Life, Work, and Global Ministry of Bruce L. Bauer*, ed. Wagner Kuhn and Boubakar Sanou (Berrien Springs: Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 2022), 254–55.

<sup>1112</sup> Ford, *Revelation*, 161.

<sup>1113</sup> Tonstad, *Revelation*, 160. It seems, however, that a reason for doing so regards the emphasis of 10:1–11 on mission. For details, see pages 156–60.

<sup>1114</sup> Obviously, John must be seen here as a representative of the church. He was not able to accomplish the task described in 10:11. In order for the gospel to be preached to all nations, a worldwide movement is necessary.

<sup>1115</sup> Thomas, *Apocalypse*, 322.

<sup>1116</sup> That “the great multitude [...] *from* every nation, *from* all tribes and peoples and languages” seen in heaven in 7:9 is only an anticipation of the accomplishment of mission is clear from the fact that this passage appears in the interlude between the sixth and seventh seals. This is a time for mission! Revelation gives the reader “a preview of what mission accomplished looks like” (Tonstad, *Revelation*, 156).

of God, it is necessary to proclaim the gospel *to* all nations.<sup>1117</sup> This is in consonance with the assertion found in the Synoptics that the gospel is to be proclaimed *to* all nations (Matt 24:10; Mark 13:10; Luke 24:47).

A further argument in favor of the “to” view regards John’s use of the LXX.

While Beale claims that ἐπί means “against” in 10:11 on the basis of the meaning of προφητεύω ἐπί in Ezekiel, that formula can also mean “to prophesy to,” as in Ezekiel 37:4, 9.<sup>1118</sup> That the meaning of ἐπί in Revelation 10:11 is likely the same as in Ezekiel

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<sup>1117</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 258, also 265. A possible further support for the “to” view is the very use of the adverb πάλιν/*again*. The fact that John was supposed to prophesy *again* to many peoples, nations, languages, and kings implies that this had already happened to a certain degree. It is hard to prove that John had in mind Jesus’ teachings as recorded, for instance, in Matt 24:14 and 28:18–20, or Paul’s statements such as those found in Rom 1:8; 10:18; 16:26; Col 1:5–6, 23. However, it is very likely that he was familiar with the growth of the church as recorded in Acts. In Gal 2:9, Paul mentions that John was among those who “gave the right hand of fellowship,” which indicates the agreement that Paul and Barnabas should devote themselves to the mission to the Gentiles, whereas John, Peter, and James would focus on the Jewish mission.

One possible piece of evidence that John had some of Jesus’ words in mind is a potential allusion in 10:8–10. David E. Aune suggests a parallel between the phrase “take and eat” and the eucharistic words of Jesus in Matt 26:26; Mark 14:22 (Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 572; also, Leithart, *Revelation*, 1:415; Blount, *Revelation*, 198). Ian Boxall goes a little further by postulating that Rev 10:8–10 was probably read “during a eucharistic celebration” (Boxall, *Revelation*, 157). Unfortunately, none of them develop the idea. Eucharistic language is found with a certain frequency in Luke-Acts (Luke 6:4; 9:16; 22:19; 24:30, 43; Acts 27:35) and sometimes seems to be connected to resurrection narratives. For instance, in Luke 24:43, Jesus takes a piece of broiled fish and eats it before the disciples as evidence that he is the resurrected Christ, not a ghost (Luke 24:39–41). Then, He appeals to Scripture to make it clear “that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead” (Luke 24:46–48). A few verses before, Eucharistic language is used in the narrative of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: “He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them” (Luke 24:30, NKJV). In the following verse, Luke comments, “Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him” (Luke 24:31, NKJV). Eucharistic language is also used in the resurrection narrative of John 21. Verse 13 mentions that “Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish” (NKJV; compare to 1 Cor 11:23–25). In the following verse, the narrator comments, “This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead” (NKJV). Eucharistic language is associated with Christ’s resurrection in Acts 10:39–41. Accordingly, it is possible that John had in mind a tradition that seems to have become widely known in his time, i.e., the association of Jesus’ eucharistic words with his own resurrection. John seems to have been aware of not only this tradition, but also other traditions related to Jesus’ teachings. If this is true, it is to be expected that he would allude to some of them in Revelation. In any case, this is a matter for further investigation—one that, by the way, could illuminate other issues in Revelation scholarship. Perhaps further understanding of these eucharistic overtones may shed light on the identification of the mighty angel of Rev 10 as the resurrected Christ.

<sup>1118</sup> So Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 264. Bauckham mentions only Ezek 37:4, but the construction in Ezek 37:9 is the same. In these two verses, the objects introduced by ἐπί (“theses bones” in

37:4, 9 is further suggested by the fact that John alludes to Ezekiel 37 in 11:11.<sup>1119</sup> If this assessment is correct, it is possible that John had Ezekiel 37 in mind already in Revelation 10:11.

Before moving to the next section in this chapter, one observation is necessary. Arguing that Revelation 10 focuses on the mission of the end-time church to the nations of the world does not deny that judgment is also addressed in this passage.<sup>1120</sup> The end-time message has two faces: condemnation for those who reject it and salvation for those who accept it. This will be further explored in our study of Revelation 14:6–13. For now, we will turn toward Revelation 11:1–2 and its relation to 10:8–11.

### **Command to Measure the Temple, the Altar, and the Worshipers**

Revelation 11:1–2 is closely connected to 10:11. Since 11:1–2 is not introduced by any introductory vision formula, it is better to see this passage as a continuation of 10:8–11.<sup>1121</sup> Indeed, Revelation 11:1–2 continues John’s active participation in the vision introduced in 10:8–11. In 10:1–7 John is a mere spectator, while in 10:8–11:1–2 he becomes an actor in the vision he narrates.<sup>1122</sup> While in 10:11 John is told something,<sup>1123</sup>

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v. 4 and “the spirit” in v. 9) correspond to datives of indirect object just as in Rev 14:6.

<sup>1119</sup> This allusion will be explored in the next chapter of this dissertation.

<sup>1120</sup> As D. E. Holwerda rightly notes, “While the spoken witness includes words of judgment against those who refuse to repent, the purpose of such witness and of the judgment itself continues to be repentance and giving glory to God, as seen in subsequent chapters.” See D. E. Holwerda, “The Church and the Little Scroll (Revelation 10,11),” *Calvin Theological Journal* 34 (1999): 154. As indicated in the first section of this chapter, Rev 10 does involve judgment, but it ought to be understood in connection with the fulfillment of Dan 8:13–14 as well as in light of Rev 14:6–7, where the proclamation of the gospel and the announcement that the hour of judgment has come are integral parts of the same message. This will be explored in chapter 9 of this work.

<sup>1121</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 603; also, Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 78.

<sup>1122</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 343; Mounce, *Revelation*, 213; Smalley, *Revelation*, 271.

in 11:1–2 he is given something. Most importantly, while in 10:11 John receives a prophetic message to proclaim, in 11:1–2 he receives a symbolic prophetic act to perform. This constitutes a link between 10:8–11 and 11:1–2,<sup>1124</sup> so that the latter is part of the former<sup>1125</sup> and may shed light on our understanding of it. Apparently, the command for John to measure the temple, the altar, and the worshipers (11:1) somehow corresponds to the command for him to prophesy again. Thus, a brief discussion on that command is necessary.

### The Measuring

The measuring of the temple has traditionally been interpreted as a symbol of protection.<sup>1126</sup> A different line of interpretation is suggested by Ranko Stefanovic, who argues that the measurement must be seen figuratively in the sense of evaluation or judgment.<sup>1127</sup> Following Kurt Deissner,<sup>1128</sup> he claims that the verb μετρέω/*to measure* is used in reference to God’s last judgment elsewhere in the NT (Matt 7:2; cf. Mark 4:24

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<sup>1123</sup> While the Greek text has an active verb, “they said,” it likely means “I was told” as in many English translations (e.g., ESV, NIV, NJB, NLT, RSV).

<sup>1124</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 603.

<sup>1125</sup> Michaels, *Revelation*, 10:11.

<sup>1126</sup> E.g., Caird, *Revelation*, 130–31; Charles, *Revelation*, 274; Pugh, “Revelation,” 361; Beale, *Revelation*, 289, 566, 642; Trafton, *Revelation*, 106; Osborne, *Revelation*, 409, 415, 422; Brighton, *Revelation*, 285; Wall, *Revelation*, 141; J. S. Duvall, *Revelation*, ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014), 149; Richard D. Phillips, *Revelation*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip G. Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, REC (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2017), 311; Rob Dalrymple, *Follow the Lamb: A Guide to Reading, Understanding, and Applying the Book of Revelation* (Bellingham: Lexham, 2018), 165. Whether this protection is physical or spiritual (or both) is a matter of debate. Pugh, “Revelation,” 299–300; Moloney, *Apocalypse*, 157–58; see especially Ford, *Revelation*, 176.

<sup>1127</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 343–44. Yet, he does not deny the idea of protection behind the symbol (349).

<sup>1128</sup> See Kurt Deissner, “Μέτρον, Ἄμετρος, Μετρέω,” *TDNT* 632–34.

and Luke 6:38).<sup>1129</sup> He argues that the measuring in Revelation 11:1–2 is to be understood against the OT notion that measuring involved decision about life or death.<sup>1130</sup> The idea of judgment can be enhanced by an allusion to the Day of Atonement in Revelation 11:1–2. The vision of the New Temple in Ezekiel 40–48 and the vision of a man with a measuring line in Zechariah 2:1–5 are frequently pointed out as the major OT backgrounds behind Revelation 11:1–2.<sup>1131</sup> Kenneth A. Strand has demonstrated that Leviticus 16 is an ignored background,<sup>1132</sup> while not denying the roles Ezekiel 40–48 and Zechariah 2:1–5 play.<sup>1133</sup> Strand points out that, while Zechariah 2:1–5 does not mention the temple, altar, and worshipers, and Ezekiel 40–48 does not mention the worshipers,<sup>1134</sup> except for the omission of priesthood, Revelation 11 shares with Leviticus 16 a reference to the temple, altar, and worshipers.<sup>1135</sup> In the same line of thought, Jon Paulien remarks

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<sup>1129</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 344. In 2 Cor 10:12, μετρέω is used “with reference to some members of the church in Corinth who were measuring or evaluating themselves by themselves” (344). Beyond Jesus’ saying in Matt 7:2 (2x); Mark 4:24 (2x); and Luke 6:38 (1x; and ἀντιμετρέω, 1x), and Paul’s use of μετρέω in 2 Cor 10:12, the only other occurrences of μετρέω in the NT are located in Revelation (11:1, 2; 21:15, 16, 17). Both the verb μετρέω and the noun μέτρον “are found in some significant contexts dealing with judgment” in the NT (see *NIDNTTE*, 294; also, Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 762–63).

<sup>1130</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 344.

<sup>1131</sup> Beale and McDonough, “Revelation,” 1118.

<sup>1132</sup> Kenneth A. Strand, “An Overlooked Old Testament Background to Revelation 11:1,” *AUSS* 22, no. 3 (1984): 317–25.

<sup>1133</sup> Strand argues that Ezek 40–48 and Zech 2:1–5 serve as background to Rev 11:1, but this is true in the particular sense that those passages provide the measuring language as a common element. “But the commonality goes relatively little beyond this, and there are also some striking contrasts” (Strand, “Overlooked Old Testament Background,” 317).

<sup>1134</sup> Strand, “Overlooked Old Testament Background,” 320–21.

<sup>1135</sup> Strand, “Overlooked Old Testament Background,” 324. The objection that Lev 16 lacks “measuring” language or imagery (Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 324n8; Osborne, *Revelation*, 409n2; Keener, *Revelation*, 289n11) is not convincing since, once the Day of Atonement is identified as a day of judgment, the measuring imagery is unnecessary—not to mention the fact that Lev 16 is prescriptive ritual law, so that apocalyptic imagery such as a measuring rod should not be expected. Regarding the lack of reference to the priesthood, Strand explains that this “is perfectly logical, for Christ as NT High Priest would need no atonement (or ‘measuring’) made for himself” (Strand, “Overlooked Old Testament Background,” 324).

that the allusion to the Day of Atonement in 11:1–2 is preceded by an even more explicit allusion in 11:18–19.<sup>1136</sup> It appears that John combines the idea of Yom Kippur in Leviticus 16 with the notion of the restoration of the temple deriving from Ezekiel 40–48.<sup>1137</sup> Importantly, the temple John refers to in 11:1 cannot be the Christian church, as he clearly distinguishes the temple from the worshipers. It cannot be the temple in Jerusalem either, for it had been destroyed by the time Revelation was written. It can be interpreted as a reference to the heavenly temple.<sup>1138</sup>

The fact that John is told not to measure “the court outside the temple” (11:2)<sup>1139</sup> is an indication that the measuring also involves preservation and protection. Only the

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For strong arguments for the Day of Atonement as Israel’s judgment day, see Roy E. Gane, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 305–23.

<sup>1136</sup> Paulien, “The Role of the Hebrew Cultus,” 256. Paulien highlights that “from these points on in the Apocalypse there is repeated focus on the *ναός* or inner sanctum of the temple where the central activities of Yom Kippur took place. Judgment language and activity, a central theme of Yom Kippur, is also a major concern of the second half of the Apocalypse” (257). That *ναός* refers to the inner part of the sanctuary is also accepted by Beale, *Revelation*, 561–62.

<sup>1137</sup> Stefanovic observes that “the measuring of the temple came on the tenth day of the first month, which was the Day of Atonement” (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 347). He remarks that the measuring of the temple in 11:1–2 must be interpreted against the background of judgment and restoration (344, 347).

<sup>1138</sup> For details, see Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 344–45. The Greek term translated as “temple” is *ναός*, not *ἱερόν*. Beale remarks that *ναός* always refers to the heavenly temple in Revelation (cf. 7:15; 14:15, 17; 15:5–6, 8; 16:1, 17). See Beale, *Revelation*, 562.

<sup>1139</sup> Measuring refers to something being intact so that it can be measured. Something that is destroyed—like the court of the temple in Rev 11 that was trampled by the nations—cannot be measured. As widely recognized by commentators, this court in Rev 11 must be a reference to the Court of the Gentiles outside the building of the temple in Jerusalem. Here, however, it must be understood figuratively referring to the earth and in contrast with the heavenly temple. In Revelation, the wicked are always portrayed as dwelling on the earth (3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 17:2, 8), whereas the saints are depicted as dwelling in heaven (12:12; 13:6; cf. Eph 2:6; Phil 3:20). For details, see Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 245; Ladd, *Revelation*, 62; Trafton, *Revelation*, 74; and Fanning, *Revelation*, 176. This contrast has been explored in more detail by A. Boyd Luter and Emily K. Hunter, “The ‘Earth Dwellers’ and the ‘Heaven Dwellers’: An Overlooked Interpretive Key to the Apocalypse,” *Faith & Mission* 20, no. 1 (2003): 3–18. Although some conclusions, in my view, go beyond exegetical evidence, the overall treatment of Luter and Hunter is very helpful.

worshippers of God will be preserved from the final judgments.<sup>1140</sup> The reason why John is told to leave the court out of the measuring<sup>1141</sup> is that “it has been given to the Gentiles” (11:2, NET). At this point, the reader must notice the switch from the aorist tense (ἐδόθη/*it has been given*) to the future tense (πατήσουσιν/*they will trample*),<sup>1142</sup> meaning that, while the period of “forty-two months” had already been determined by heavenly decree,<sup>1143</sup> the period itself was in the future from John’s perspective. The “forty-two months” period is important for understanding the passage as well as its idea of measurement.

In summary, from the exegetical perspective, three important pieces of information must be taken into account, as follows. First, this time period coincides with those mentioned in 11:3; 12:6; 12:14; 13:5, and all of them point to the same period of time.<sup>1144</sup> Second, it seems that the “forty-two months” (11:2)—along with all the other

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<sup>1140</sup> Nichol, *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:801. See also Roy C. Naden, *The Lamb Among the Beasts: A Christological Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1996), 172. Interestingly, the measuring functions as a sort of dividing line between those who worship in the temple and those who trample the holy city. This contrast enhances the idea of judgment coming from this passage. The idea of preservation of the worshippers of God is enhanced by the relationship between the interlude of the trumpets section and that of the seals section. That is to say, the measuring in 11:1–2 is related to the sealing in 7:1–8. In the words of Stefanovic, the measuring is “for the purpose of deciding who is to be sealed—namely, those who belong to God and are faithful to him” (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 349). Stefanovic further remarks that “the Day of Atonement was also the time of the measuring of the temple in Ezekiel” (348). This indicates that judgment and protection are not mutually exclusive in Rev 11:1–2.

<sup>1141</sup> The conjunction καί is to be read epexegetically in the construction ἐκβαλε ἔξωθεν καὶ μὴ αὐτὴν μετρήσης (“leave [it] out, namely, do not measure [it]”).

<sup>1142</sup> The language is very similar to Luke 21:24. While it is hard to prove that John is quoting Luke, it seems clear that he was aware of the tradition of Jesus’ teaching that Luke 21:24 is a part of. According to Stefanovic, “the trampling of Jerusalem referred to by Jesus has become the prototype of the oppression and persecution that God’s people have experienced from the powers that are hostile to God and the gospel” (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 350).

<sup>1143</sup> The aorist passive ἐδόθη must be interpreted as a “divine passive” (so, Pugh, “Revelation,” 301; Blount, *Revelation*, 205).

<sup>1144</sup> See Jon Paulien, “The 1,260 Days in the Book of Revelation,” *Fourth International Bible Conference*, Jun 11–21, Rome. A shorter version of this paper is available on



periods of “1,260 days” (11:3; 12:6, 14: 13:5)—has its origin in Daniel.<sup>1145</sup> Third, the term “forty-two months” in 11:2 and 13:5 seems to give the historical frame of this time

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<https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/the-1260-days-in-the-book-of-revelation>. See also LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 169–82; William H. Shea, “Time Prophecies of Daniel 12 and Revelation 12–13,” in Holbrook, *Symposium on Revelation, Book 1*, 327–60; William G. Johnsson, “The Saints’ End-Time Victory over the Forces of Evil,” in *Symposium on Revelation: Exegetical and General Studies, Book 2*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, DARCOM 7 (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 18.

In his assessment of the “forty-two months” in 13:5, David Aune goes so far as to state, “It is clear that the author intends the reader to understand that the period during which the first beast is active coincides with the period during which the holy city will be trampled on by the nations and the period during which the two witnesses will prophesy” (Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 743). Before making this statement, in the same paragraph, Aune equates the 1,260 days in 11:3 to the forty-two months in 11:2. In that connection, he takes the expression “a time, times, and a half time” in 12:14 as tantamount to the 1,260 days in 12:6.

<sup>1145</sup> This can be argued in different ways. First, John deliberately uses words from Dan 8:11–14 in Rev 11:1–2. The opening clause, καὶ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν/*and, as for the court outside the temple, leave [it] out*, my translation), is a translation of וְהַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֵילַן הַקֹּדֶשׁ/*and the place of his sanctuary was cast down*, NKJV) in Dan 8:11 (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 270). The first clause is left-dislocated for the sake of emphasis. Although τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἔξωθεν must be seen as the direct object of ἔκβαλε, the left-dislocation produces, as it were, the pragmatic effect of an accusative of reference. The clause “it is given over to the nations” (11:2) is reminiscent of “the giving over of the sanctuary and host” in Dan 8:13; likewise, the clause “they will trample the holy city” (11:2) is reminiscent of “to be trampled underfoot” in Dan 8:14 (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 270). The data suggest that “Revelation 11:1–2 results from a quite precise interpretation of Daniel 8:11–14” (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 271). Bauckham further mentions that this interpretation of Dan 8:11–14 occurs in connection with Zech 12:3 (271). However, any allusion to Zech 12:3 seems to be secondary (cf. Ps 79:1–7 and Isa 63:18 for similar language).

Second, the idiom “a time, times, and half a time” in Rev 12:14 is found elsewhere in the canonical record only in Dan 7:25 and 12:7 and, hence, is a clear allusion to the book of Daniel. Since the “forty-two months” (11:2; 13:5), the “1,260 days,” and “a time, times, and half a time” all refer to the same time period, it follows that Dan 7:25 and 12:7 provide the background for all of them. Some commentators refer to Elijah’s drought and/or the length of Jesus’ ministry as the background for the time periods in Revelation. However, it is hard to think that John is building upon a background other than that from the book of Daniel. See LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 169–70.

Third, the other reference to the “forty-two months” (13:5) is within a section (13:1–7) with strong allusions to Dan 7:25: see, e.g., the emphasis on blasphemies (13:1, 5, 6) and compare to “He shall speak words against the Most High” (Dan 7:25a), as widely pointed out by several scholars. For instance, in his comments on Rev 13:5, G. K. Beale states, “That the ‘forty-two months’ is based on Dan. 7:25b (and Dan. 12:7) is evident from its close association with *other allusions to Daniel* and the clear allusions to the Danielic time period in Rev. 12:6, 14b and earlier in 11:2–3” (Beale, *Revelation*, 695, italics added).

Fourth, since, as seen in the first section of this chapter, John had Dan 12:7 and its larger context in mind when writing the material of Rev 10:1–7, it is reasonable to conclude that Dan 12:7 still plays a major role in 11:1–2 given the close connection between 11:1–2 and 10:8–11. As a matter of fact, since “the forty-two months” in 11:2 is tantamount to “a time, times, and half a time” in 12:14, which, in turn, borrows directly from Dan 7:25 and 12:7, it follows that, just as in 10:1–7, it is very likely that also here John has the eschatological section of Daniel in mind (chapters 7–12).

prophecy.<sup>1146</sup> The use of the future tense in 11:2, “and they *will trample*,” indicates that this period is in the future from the perspective of John. Conversely, since Revelation 13 elaborates on 12:17,<sup>1147</sup> which, in turn, has to do with Satan’s final attack on the remnant, the “forty-two months” in 13:5 must be understood from the perspective of the final events. The actions of the sea beast and the dragon as well as events related to them are consistently described as past tense in 13:1–7,<sup>1148</sup> whereas, abruptly, verse 8 moves the scene into the future, “all . . . *will worship* it.”<sup>1149</sup> Thus, while 13:1–7 focuses on the past activities of the sea beast, Revelation 13:8–10 and 13:12–18 refer to Satan’s final attack on the remnant through his two allies, namely, the sea beast after his mortal wound is healed and the earth beast. As Jon Paulien remarks, the actions in 13:1–7, including the “forty-two months” (13:5), “are understood to have occurred prior to the dragon’s final war against the remnant.”<sup>1150</sup> Accordingly, from an exegetical perspective, the fulfillment of the 1,260-day prophecy must be located after the first century<sup>1151</sup> and before the final

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<sup>1146</sup> The reason why John uses the term “forty-two months” in 11:2 and 13:5 is likely to make it clear that the activities of the sea beast in chapter 13 correspond to the trampling of the holy city in 11:2.

<sup>1147</sup> See Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 409. Stefanovic refers to 12:17 as a “springboard” passage that concludes the previous section at the same time that it introduces what comes next. In that connection, Rev 12:17 introduces the material not only of chapter 13 but also chapter 14 (p. 26). For details on the function of the so-called springboard passages in Revelation, see Stefanovic, “Literary Patterns of Revelation,” 27–43. The ideas presented in that paper appear in a summary fashion in Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 25–26.

<sup>1148</sup> “the beast . . . *was*” (v. 2); “and to it the dragon *gave*” (v. 2); “one of its heads [looked as though] *slaughtered* to death” (v. 3, my translation); “its mortal wound *was healed*” (v. 3); “the whole earth *marveled*” (v. 3); “and they *worshiped* the dragon” (v. 4); “for he *had given*” (v. 4); “and they *worshiped* the beast” (v. 4); “and it *was given* to it a mouth” (v. 5, my translation); “and to it *was given* authority to act for forty-two months” (v. 5, my translation); “it *opened* its mouth” (v. 6); “and it *was given* to it [permission] to make war” (v. 7, my translation); “and it *was given* to it authority” (v. 7, my translation).

<sup>1149</sup> Although other verbs appear in the past tense in 13:8–10, it is the first clause that sets the time frame of the scene.

<sup>1150</sup> Paulien, “The 1,260 Days,” 14.

<sup>1151</sup> More precisely, according to the book of Daniel, this time period would begin only “after the ‘ten horns’ [of Dan 7] have divided the Western Roman Empire. This historic partition took place over one

events, somewhere in the central period of Christian history.<sup>1152</sup> At this point, an important question must be raised: “What are the missionary implications of the discussion above?” We will turn to that question next.

### The End-Time Message

The discussion above provided the theological framework of the end-time message the church is called to proclaim. The fulfillment of the mystery of God in 10:7 is a reference to the preaching of the gospel with greater emphasis in the face of the impending end. According to this passage, the task of preaching the gospel will be accomplished “in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet” (NIV).<sup>1153</sup> Furthermore, as also indicated elsewhere in the Scripture, the task of the church is a universal one (10:11).

Revelation 10:1–11:2 presents strong allusions to the book of Daniel, especially chapters 7–12. While 10:1–7 is backgrounded by Daniel 12:7, the reference to the 42 months in 11:2 points not only to Daniel 12:7 but also to 7:25. These two passages in Daniel serve as pointers to the larger context in which they are inserted (chapters 7–12). Daniel 8:9–14 plays a major role in all that section.<sup>1154</sup> While Daniel 7:25–27 mentions

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hundred years, until in A.D. 476 the last West-Roman emperor, Romulus Augustus, was deposed.” LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 173. For more details, see pages 169–82.

<sup>1152</sup> It is not the purpose of this dissertation to discuss where in history this time period begins and ends. However, from an exegetical perspective, it can be said that some events of that period as presented in Rev 13:1–5 do not allow the conclusion that it is a representation of the whole Christian era. As George Beasley-Murray asserts, “the three and a half years are the time of the Antichrist’s raging (13:5), and so of the Church’s exposure to his attempts to crush it out of existence (11:1f., 3–13). This does not characterize the period of the Church between the ascension and the parousia of Christ.” See George Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 201. Traditionally, SDAs have pointed to 538 AD and 1798 AD as the beginning and end of that period. For example, see C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares: The Message of Revelation for You and Your Family*, vol. 2 (Boise: Pacific Press, 1985).

<sup>1153</sup> We will come back to this matter in our discussion of Rev 11:15–18 further ahead.

<sup>1154</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel claims that Dan 8:9–14 constitutes “the pivotal point of the entire book.”

for the first time the period of activity of the “little horn” (v. 25; cf. 12:7) and briefly describes the judgment (cf. also 7:9–10, 13–14) that would take place thereafter so as to remove his dominion (v. 26) and give it to the saints (v. 27; cf. v. 22), Daniel 8:9–14 expands the themes introduced in chapter 7 concerning the activities of the little horn (cf. 7:8, 11, 21, 25; 8:9, 10, 11, 12),<sup>1155</sup> with the addition of one important element: the judgment is presented against the background of the Day of Atonement.<sup>1156</sup> As seen above, given that Revelation 11:1–2 is an interpretation of Daniel 8:11–14 and alludes to Leviticus 16, it is reasonable to conclude that Daniel 8:9–14 was of supreme importance to John. Obviously, however, he also had an eye on subsequent passages in Daniel, as they expand and explain the content of the vision in 8:9–14. At this point, it is safe to affirm that the gospel to be preached to the whole world (10:11) right before the second coming of Christ integrates the messages of the book of Daniel, especially its eschatological chapters (Dan 7–12).

The end-time gospel also integrates the prophecies of Revelation. The adverb *πάλιν/again* in 10:11 is to be seen as a forward-pointing device, calling readers’ attention to what comes next in the book of Revelation at the same time that it brings to mind John’s previous commission(s) (1:19; 4:1). In that connection, the entire book of Revelation is in view, but there is an emphasis on what comes after the interlude of the trumpets section, namely, chapters 12–22. Consequently, Revelation invites the church to

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Hasel, “The ‘Little Horn,’” 378.

<sup>1155</sup> For details, see Hasel, “The ‘Little Horn,’” 458–60.

<sup>1156</sup> While Lev 16 as background to Dan 8:9–14 has been widely ignored by interpreters from different quarters, others argue that a reading of Dan 8:9–14 in connection with the Day of Atonement is necessary for a correct understanding of that passage. See Angel M. Rodríguez, “Chapter X: Significance of the Cultic Language in Daniel 8:9–14,” in Holbrook, *Symposium on Daniel*, 527–49. Also, Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile* (Hagerstown: Review and

preach those messages related to the final events of Christian history. If this assessment is correct, it means that the gospel is to be proclaimed with such an urgency as never before in history.

The end-time gospel also integrates the message regarding the restoration of the heavenly temple. As seen in the discussion above, Revelation 11:1–2 indicates that 10:8–11 must be read against the background of the Day of Atonement and the measuring of the temple. Since the temple in view in 11:1 must be the heavenly temple, the end-time message to be proclaimed to the world (10:11) also includes a warning that the hour of God’s judgment has come (14:7).<sup>1157</sup> This will be explored in chapter 9 of this work. For now, it is enough to mention that Revelation 11:2, with its reference to the 1,260-day period for the first time in the book of Revelation and its allusion to Daniel 12:7, starts to explain to the reader one element missing in 10:6, namely, “a time, times, and half a time.” Further information about this time period is given in 11:3; 12:6, 14; 13:5. The absence of that time prophecy in Revelation 10:1–7 suggests that the prophecy is fulfilled. John’s allusion to Daniel 8:11–14 in 11:1–2 indicates that he is especially interested in the prophecy of the restoration<sup>1158</sup> of the heavenly temple.<sup>1159</sup> Revelation

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Herald, 2000), 121–34.

<sup>1157</sup> In that sense, Rev 10:1–11:2 anticipates 14:6–13. Conversely, 14:6–13 draws upon 10:1–11:2.

<sup>1158</sup> It is important to remember that no English word is able to convey the meaning of קָטַף in Dan 8:14. Therefore, a conflation of various words such as “restoration,” “cleansing,” and “vindication” should be considered. See Davidson, “The Meaning of Nisdaq in Daniel 8:14,” 107–19; Andreasen, “Translation of Nisdaq/Katharisthesetai in Daniel 8:14,” 475–96.

<sup>1159</sup> As Ranko Stefanovic puts it, “Revelation 11:1–2 provides a clue to the content of the final gospel message that is to be prophesied to all nations before the sounding of the seventh trumpet. It is the message of restoration of the heavenly temple and its services in the context of judgment” (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 337). Stefanovic further explains that “the restoration of the sanctuary, the altar, and the worshipers has to do with God’s government over the universe. During the history of sin on this earth, God’s character and the way he treats his subjects have been under constant attack. The restoration of the sanctuary message is meant to vindicate God’s character before the entire universe, to restore his rightful rulership, and to establish the kingdom. It further involves the restoration of the gospel message with regard

11:1–2 suggests that the measuring—just like the sealing in chapter 7—is performed from the heavenly sanctuary and represents God’s salvific work.<sup>1160</sup> As it were, the measuring of the temple illustrates the statement found in 7:10, “salvation belongs to God.” It is true that 10:1–11:2 includes judgment. But, as Daniel 7:26–27 makes clear, the judgment has two facets. On the one hand, it removes the dominion of the evil powers who are hostile to God’s people (Dan 7:26). On the other hand, it vindicates God’s people by giving them the kingdom (Dan 7:27). As will be explored in chapter 9 of this work, the end-time message includes a call for repentance in light of the fact that “the hour of his judgment has come” (14:7). This task is accomplished in the midst of bitterness, as illustrated by 10:8–10. However, as rightly put by Louis Brighton, “the measuring assured John that God would protect his church on earth as she carried out her mission.”<sup>1161</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This chapter aimed at providing an assessment of mission-related themes and terms in Revelation 10:1–11:2. Chapter 10 is a turning point in the book of Revelation and is crucial for one’s understanding of what comes next in the book. Revelation 10:11 constitutes the climax of Revelation 10 and points to the commission of the end-time church. The notion that the end-time church finds its missionary calling here derives not only from Revelation 10:11 but also from the immediate context of the passage.

There is scholarly consensus that Revelation 10:1–7 strongly alludes to Daniel 12. Indeed, Revelation 10:5–6 is a direct allusion to Daniel 12:7. Deliberately, however, John

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to the atoning work of Christ and his righteousness as the only means of salvation” (362).

<sup>1160</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 349.

omits the time prophecy from Daniel 12:7 and presents, in its place, the information that “there will no longer be time,” suggesting that the time for the fulfillment of that prophecy has come. Daniel 12:7 is part of an explanation of the “time of the end” (Dan 12:9; cf. 8:17), a technical term that is used in Daniel 8–12. This passage points to their larger contexts, i.e., the entire eschatological section of the book of Daniel (chapters 7–12), where 8:9–14 plays a major role. The end of the time prophecies in Daniel 7–12 marks the beginning of “the time of the end”. Thus, Revelation 10:1–7 points to the end of the prophecy in Daniel 8:13–14 and, consequently, what comes next, i.e., the experience of John in 10:8–11:2, represents the experience of the end-time church in fulfilling the mystery of God (10:7) through missionary activity. That John’s visionary experience represents the experience of God’s faithful people in the time of the end can be further argued in two different ways. First, 10:8–11:2 is placed between the sixth and seventh trumpets. Second, 10:11 and 11:1–2 are closely and indissociably connected, which suggests that the prophesying in 10:11 and the restoration of the heavenly temple in 11:1–2 belong to the same time frame.

The phrase “the mystery of God” ultimately applies to the gospel. The fact that “the mystery of God” will be fulfilled only in the days of the trumpet of the seventh angel, after the fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel 8:13–14, indicates that there will be an intensification of the proclamation of the gospel in the time of the end. According to Revelation 10:1–11:2, the end-time church has been given a calling to proclaim the end-time message “to many peoples and nations and languages and kings” (10:11), with the fourfold formula being the addressees of the end-time message. As seen above, the best

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<sup>1161</sup> Brighton, *Revelation*, 614.

way of conveying the idea expressed by ἐπί in 10:11 is the preposition “to.” First, the prepositional phrase introduced by ἐπί seems to be functioning as an indirect object such as in 14:6. The close relationship between 10:11 and 14:6, as indicated above, enhances this idea. Second, there is a switch of emphasis from the first to the second half of Revelation. While the first half focuses on the church, the second half focuses on the nations. This suggests that for people *from* all nations to be integrated into the church (5:9; 7:9), it is necessary to preach the gospel *to* all nations (10:11; 14:6). Third, the phrase προφητεῖω ἐπί means “prophesy to” in Ezekiel 37:4, 9. John alludes to Ezekiel 37 in 11:11, and it is likely that he has that passage in mind as early as in 10:11. These data suggest that the end-time message is to be proclaimed *to* the nations.

Nevertheless, the notion that judgment is also addressed in 10:1–11:2 is not denied. This is especially seen in 11:1–2 and its allusion to the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16 as well as to Daniel 8:11–14. Revelation 10:8–11:2 hints that the end-time message involves the announcement of judgment. However, as will be explored in chapter 9’s analysis of Revelation 14, the judgment is announced with the purpose of leading people to repent. For now, on the basis of the discussion above, it can be said that the end-time message the church is called to proclaim encompasses four indissociable elements: the gospel, the prophecies of the book of Daniel, the prophecies of the book of Revelation, and the judgment in the heavenly temple. This can be explained in a simple way as follows. Revelation 10:1–7 looks backward to Daniel 12:7 and its larger context, namely, Daniel 7–12. The adverb πάλιν in Revelation 10:11 looks both backward to John’s commission in Revelation 1 and forward to the second half of Revelation (12–22). In turn, Revelation 11:1–2 points to the message of restoration of the heavenly temple.



This task is accomplished in the midst of bitterness, as illustrated by 10:8–10. This is better visualized in 11:3–14, as the following chapter will demonstrate.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE PROPHETIC TASK OF THE TWO WITNESSES

The study of Revelation 10:8–11:2 in the previous chapter has revealed that one major focus of that passage is the mission to be accomplished. Revelation 11:3–13 now turns to how this mission is to be accomplished, namely, by faithful witnesses. This chapter will explore this theme as it is developed in 11:3–13, by directing its attention to the witnessing task as the method for completing the universal mission mentioned in 10:11. The chapter is divided into three sections: (1) the witnessing task (11:3–6), (2) a replay of Jesus’ mission (11:7–11a), and (3) the successful end-time witnessing (11:11b–13).

#### **The Witnessing Task**

John introduces this section by reporting that the two witnesses will be given authority and “will prophesy for 1,260 days” (11:3). The term ἐξουσία/*authority* is not in the Greek text but is correctly supplied in most English translations.<sup>1162</sup> The idea of giving authority may be reminiscent of the tradition connected with the Great Commission (Matt 28:18). While this is hard to prove, it seems that the statement in 11:3

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<sup>1162</sup> Various English versions have “power” instead of “authority.” That ἐξουσία is implied in 11:3 is clear by the fact that this noun often occurs as the object of δίδωμι/*to give* in Revelation. See 2:26; 13:2, 4; 17:13 and 6:8; 9:3; 13:5, 7, where ἐξουσία appears as the subject of a passive voice construction with the verb δίδωμι.

sounds like a commission given to the two witnesses to prophesy.<sup>1163</sup> In a smoother translation, the commission could read, “I will give my two witnesses authority to prophesy.” The Greek construction καὶ δώσω τοῖς δυσὶν μάρτυσίν μου καὶ προφητεύσουσιν/*I will give [authority] to my two witnesses and they will prophesy* is likely a Hebraism<sup>1164</sup> in which the clause “they will prophesy” explains the implied object of the verb δίδωμι/*to give*. In that sense, “and they will prophesy” functions similarly to an exegetical infinitive, such as in 2:7; 3:21; 6:4; 7:2; 13:5, 7, 15,<sup>1165</sup> or a substantival (or sub-final) subjunctive,<sup>1166</sup> such as in 9:5 and 19:8. These data indicate that witnessing and prophesying are related concepts in Revelation. If Jon’s prophesying in 10:11 envisions verbal proclamation, so the prophesying and testimony of the two witnesses in 11:3 envision verbal proclamation too.

The combination of δίδωμι with a clause containing a finite verb behaving as an exegetical infinitive or a substantival subjunctive is unique in Revelation.<sup>1167</sup> In addition to relating prophesying to witnessing, this special construction also draws a

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<sup>1163</sup> This is referred to by several commentators: Bratcher and Hatton, *Revelation*, 167; Fanning, *Revelation*, 331; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 352; Smalley, *Revelation*, 275; Harvey J. S. Blaney, “Revelation,” in *Hebrews-Revelation*, Wesleyan Bible Commentary 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 464. Whether the commission is given by God or Christ is a matter of debate, but this is not important. However, the idea that the speaker is an angel is strange (e.g., Swete, *Apocalypse*, 131), since there is no precedent in Scripture of angels giving a commission.

<sup>1164</sup> Thomas, *Revelation* 8-22, 100. Thomas explains that this is an idiom for “I will commission or I will give permission to”.

<sup>1165</sup> Except for 13:5 (cf. John 1:12; 5:27), where the object of δίδωμι is stated, in all these instances the direct object of δίδωμι is in ellipsis and is explained or clarified by an exegetical infinitive. For a brief discussion on exegetical infinitives with a few examples, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 607. On the basis of 2:26; 6:8; 9:3; 13:2, 4, 5 (cf. 17:13; also John 1:12 and 5:27)—where ἐξουσία appears as the object of δίδωμι—it is very likely that in most (if not all) of these passages, the noun in ellipsis is ἐξουσία (in the sense of “right”). For instance, “To the one who conquers I will give [the right] to eat of the tree of life” (Rev 2:7).

<sup>1166</sup> For this category, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 474–76.

<sup>1167</sup> Thomas, *Revelation* 8-22, 100.

more vivid contrast<sup>1168</sup> between the activity of the two witnesses in 11:3 (“they will prophesy for 1,260 days”) and that of the Gentiles in 11:2 (“they will trample the holy city for forty-two months”). If this assessment is correct, it strongly suggests that the mission of the two witnesses, on the one hand, faces the opposition of the Gentiles, on the other hand.

The attentive reader will notice that there is another important connection between 10:11–11:2 and 11:3. Just as John was summoned to prophesy again (10:11), the two witnesses “will prophesy for 1,260 days” (11:3). This parallel suggests that John’s task of prophesying is accomplished by means of the two witnesses.<sup>1169</sup> Moreover, while Revelation 10:1–11:2 focuses on the mission *per se*, Revelation 11:3–13 focuses on how it is to be accomplished, namely, by witnessing.<sup>1170</sup> Also, Peter J. Leithart must be right when arguing that 10:11–11:3 forms a chiasmic structure with four lines in which the external elements connect John’s commission to prophesy to the commission of the two

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<sup>1168</sup> The contrast becomes vivid by the use of the same grammatical structure in 11:2 and 11:3. Rather than using an exegetical infinitive or substantival subjunctive in 11:3, John uses a construction equivalent to that in 11:2 in order to maintain the consistency and, consequently, draw attention to the contrast between what the two witnesses do in 11:3 and the Gentiles do in 11:2. One can easily see the parallel between 11:2 and 11:3 based not only on the use of future tense-forms but also the repetition of the 1,260-day period. This period is mentioned for the first time in chapter 11 but further developed in chapters 12–13; thus, Rev 11 anticipates themes that will be treated further ahead. For details, see LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 152–54, 166.

<sup>1169</sup> Interestingly, John uses the verb *τελέω* both in 10:7 (“the mystery of God would be fulfilled/ *ἐτελέσθη*”) and 11:7 (“when they have finished/ *τελέσωσιν* their testimony”). This suggests that the two witnesses play a role in the fulfillment of the mystery of God. Although the phrase “when they have finished their testimony” (11:7a) refers to the end of the 1,260 days (11:3), the two witnesses go through a resurrection experience (11:11–13) after their death (11:7b) thereby not only continuing their prophetic testimony but doing it even more intensively, as we will see further below.

<sup>1170</sup> For a helpful synthesis on that, see Tonstad, *Revelation*, 156–67.

witnesses, whereas the internal elements highlight the measuring of the temple.<sup>1171</sup> Thus, it follows that the act of prophesying on the part of the two witnesses is somehow related to judgment and the restoration of the heavenly temple.<sup>1172</sup>

The connection between John and the two witnesses enhances the understanding that the commission given to John in 10:11 goes beyond his time. At this point, two important questions are to be asked: Who are the two witnesses, and what is the meaning of “prophesy”—in other words, what is the nature of their testimony? Whoever they are, the author implies that his readers are familiar with them through the articular use of the noun *μάρτυς*/witness (11:3).<sup>1173</sup> Hence, although the further designations “the two olive

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- <sup>1171</sup> a. Prophecy concerning peoples and nations, 10:11  
b. Given a measuring rod, 11:1a  
b'. Rise and measure, 11:1b–2  
a'. Two witnesses will prophesy, 11:3

If this assessment is correct, it means that John’s act of prophesying (10:11) parallels that of witnessing performed by the two witnesses (11:3–13). For details, see Leithart, *Revelation*, 429–30.

<sup>1172</sup> This is further suggested by the fact that the term *μάρτυς* very likely belongs to a legal context (Num 35:30; Deut 17:6; 19:15; Heb 10:28; for details, see Allison A. Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness*, Society for New Testament Studies 31 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Stefanovic states that “the testimony borne by the two witnesses in Revelation 11 suggests the seriousness and importance of the message they proclaim. The world cannot reject the prophetic witnessing without suffering serious consequences and judgment” (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 356).

<sup>1173</sup> It is also possible that John uses the article only because the possessive *μου*/my specifies the noun *μάρτυς* so as to make the article necessary (Fanning, *Revelation*, 331n34). In turn, R. H. Charles postulates that the article may be part of a lost text, and that the present text is fragmentary (see Charles, *Revelation*, 280). But this seems to be rather speculative.

The observation by Fanning makes good sense from the grammatical perspective, but from the textual perspective, it seems that not only was John’s audience familiar with the identity of the two witnesses, but the two witnesses were active in the first century. This is suggested by the tense-forms utilized by John in vv. 4–6, which constitute a digression. This is clear because, while vv. 3 and 7 refer to the future from John’s perspective, vv. 4–6 are consistent in use of the present tense to refer to the two witnesses or events related to them: “they *are* the two olive trees” (11:4, NIV), “[they] *stand* before the Lord of the earth” (11:4), “if anyone *wants* to harm them” (11:5, my translation); “fire *pours* from their mouth and *consumes* their foes” (11:5), “that he is to be killed this way *is necessary* [δεῖ]” (11:5, my translation); “they *have* the power to shut the sky” (11:6); and “they *have* power over the waters” (11:6). The verb “stand” (ἵστημι) is a participial form in the perfect tense. However, as a stative verb, it has a present effect, especially if one takes it as an intensive perfect. The fact that the two witnesses are described with present tense-forms strongly suggests that they were active in the first century and, hence, that they were familiar to John’s audience.

trees” and “the two lampstands” (11:4) provide more information about who they are, it seems that the focus indicates the wider biblical and theological backgrounds from which one is to understand their mission. The fact is that there is no consensus among scholars as to the identity of the two witnesses. The opinions range from literal<sup>1174</sup> to symbolic interpretations.<sup>1175</sup> The strongest arguments regard the views that they represent the Word of God and the church. We will deal with the latter first.

In recent decades, an increasing number of scholars have proposed that the two witnesses represent the church in its prophetic witness,<sup>1176</sup> with reasonable arguments for

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The two witnesses are further described in v. 4 by means of two articular nouns: ἐλαῖαι/olive trees and λυχνίαι/lampstands, which also suggests that further explanation was not necessary. John’s audience knew what was meant by those terms. One important observation is that both are modified by numerals, which are also specifiers. Nevertheless, elsewhere John makes abundant use of nouns followed by numerals in an anarthrous construction (see 2:10; 4:5, 8; 5:1, 6; 8:2; 9:5, 10; 11:2, 3, 13; 12:1, 3, 6; 13:1, 5, 11; 15:1; 17:3, 10, 12; 21:12, 14, 16, 17; 21:21). Therefore, the articular use in 11:4 strongly suggests that the original audience was acquainted with the metaphors of the two olive trees and the two lampstands.

<sup>1174</sup> According to this view, the two witnesses represent two literal, historical people. Moses and Elijah come to the fore (Charles, *Revelation*, 1:281; Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 88), but other opinions include the pairs Enoch and Elijah; Elijah and Jeremiah; Peter and Paul; Stephen and James the Just; James and John, the sons of Zebedee; John the Baptist and Jesus; James the Just and James the son of Zebedee; and the high priests Ananus and Joshua (for details, see Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 599–602). Others prefer not to give an opinion (Ladd, *Revelation*, 154; John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* [Galaxie Software, 2008], 179). For a brief comment against literal interpretations, see Prigent, *Apocalypse*, 347–51.

<sup>1175</sup> A very helpful review of literature has been presented by Ian R. Brown, “The Two Witnesses of Revelation 11:1–13: Arguments, Issues of Interpretation, and a Way Forward” (Phd., diss., Andrews University, 2016). Brown discusses the literary and symbolic views (pages 53–308) so as to provide a research plan to help scholars in their exegetical treatment of the two witnesses (pages 355–63).

<sup>1176</sup> A few supporters of this view include John Wick Bowman, *The Drama of the Book of Revelation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955), 71; Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 166; Beale, *Revelation*, 573; Mounce, *Revelation*, 217; Morris, *Revelation*, 144; Smalley, *Revelation*, 275; Keener, *Revelation*, 291; Blount, *Revelation*, 208, among others. Beale is the major representative of this view (see Brown, “The Two Witnesses,” 17. For a discussion on Beale’s position, see pages 209–52). Elsewhere in Scripture, the people of God are compared to an olive tree. For instance, the psalmist compares himself to an olive tree in Ps 52:8. In turn, Paul applies the image of an olive tree to the church in Rom 11:16–24. It seems John utilizes the image of two witnesses “clothed in sackcloth” to represent the hardships the church will face in fulfilling the mission. This thought is well summarized in the following words: “*The church will yet see troublous times. She will prophesy in sackcloth... The Lord will have a people as true as steel, and with faith as firm as the granite rock. They are to be His witnesses in the world, His instrumentalities to do a special, a glorious work in the day of His preparation*” (E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* [Oakland: Pacific Press, 1855], 594–95, italics added). The notion that the two witnesses represent the church has a series of ramifications. For a summary, see Kenneth A. Strand, “The Two Witnesses of

such a claim.<sup>1177</sup> Most importantly, the imagery of Revelation 11 is quite symbolic, including symbolic allusions to OT passages that become critical for a better understanding of the passage. There seems to be no doubt among scholars that Revelation 11:4's references to the two olive trees and the two lampstands allude to Zechariah 4:1–14.<sup>1178</sup> Revelation 11:4b clearly draws upon Zechariah 4:14. The phrase αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι/*the two olive trees* occurs in Zechariah 4:3, 11 (LXX) and with a slightly different construction in Zechariah 4:12 (LXX), οἱ δύο κλάδοι τῶν ἐλαιῶν/*the two branches of the olive trees*. In turn, a lampstand (λυχνία) is mentioned in Zechariah 4:2, 11 (LXX). The two olive trees in Zechariah 4:1–14 likely represent Joshua and Zerubbabel,<sup>1179</sup> respectively, the high priest and governor/king.<sup>1180</sup> Thus, John's allusion to Zechariah 4:1–14 is another way to refer to the church as a kingdom and priests (1:6; 5:10; cf. 20:6).<sup>1181</sup> The symbol of the lampstand enhances this understanding. By the way, the

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Revelation 11:3-12," *AUSS* 19, no. 2 (1981): 127n3.

<sup>1177</sup> For a helpful summary of arguments, see Keener, *Revelation*, 291–92.

<sup>1178</sup> The emphasis on the number two has been explained as a reference to the fact that for a testimony to be valid two or more witnesses are necessary (cf. Deut 19:15). Likewise, an allusion to the sending of the disciples in pairs in Luke 10:1 has also been pointed out. Elisabeth F. Fiorenza argues that the latter is more probable based on Luke 10:19, where Jesus promises the disciples that nothing would harm them (cf. Rev 11:5). See Fiorenza, *Revelation*, 78. The two views should not be seen as mutually exclusive.

<sup>1179</sup> Ralph L. Smith, *Micah–Malachi*, WBC 32 (Dallas: Word, 1984), 205; Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 25B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 266.

<sup>1180</sup> Although some commentators refer to Zerubbabel as a king (Beale and McDonough, "Revelation," 1119; Keener, *Revelation*, 292; Gavriel Lumbroso, *Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah*, A Messianic Commentary (Clarksville: Lederer Books: A Division of Messianic Jewish Publishers, 2018), 110), he "did not actually serve as king, but rather functioned as a Persian vassal" (George L. Klein, *Zechariah*, NAC 21B [Nashville: B & H, 2008], 165). In any case, he was a "representative of the royal family" (James E. Smith, *The Minor Prophets*, Old Testament Survey Series [Joplin: College Press, 1994], 544).

<sup>1181</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 578; Keener, *Revelation*, 292; Osborne, *Revelation*, 421; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 353; Duvall, *Revelation*, 150, among others. Christopher A. Davis argues that Rev 11:3–7 refers to the church not only by means of royal and priesthood language, but also applies the image of the church as a prophet (Moses and Elijah). He states that "throughout Revelation, Christians are portrayed as

imagery of seven lampstands is abundantly used in Revelation 1–3 in regard to the church.<sup>1182</sup> As discussed in Chapters 3–4 of this work, the metaphor of light is recurrent in both the OT and NT to refer to God’s people.<sup>1183</sup> In the Zecharian vision, the lampstand—as a light-bearer receiving oil from the olive trees in order to feed their flame—provides an adequate image for the prophetic witness of the church in Revelation 11:4.<sup>1184</sup> Just as all that imagery in the Zecharian vision was an indication of the empowerment of the Spirit for Zerubbabel to rebuild the temple (Zech 4:6, 9), likewise the church’s prophetic witness in Revelation 11 is accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1185</sup> One further piece of evidence in favor of the “church” view is that the 1,260-day period is applied both to the testimony of the two witnesses (11:3) and to the woman in the wilderness (12:6). These are the only instances in Revelation where John uses the

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kings, priests, and prophets.” For details, see Davis, *Revelation*, 233. Furthermore, the very idea of standing “before the Lord of the earth” (11:4) may suggest priestly function (Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 613).

<sup>1182</sup> Why two rather than seven is a matter of debate. G. K. Beale and Sean M. McDonough speculate that it is because “only two churches in the letters did not receive criticism by Christ.” See Beale and McDonough, “Revelation,” 1119. However, it is more likely that John mentions two lampstands merely to maintain symmetry with “two witnesses.”

<sup>1183</sup> The conflation of witnessing and light terminology as a reference to the missionary church must be, at least in part, indebted to Isa 40–66. While commentators rarely refer to that Isaianic section as a possible background to Rev 11:3–13, it is widely recognized that it abounds in light (42:6; 49:6; 51:5; 60:1–3) and witnessing (43:10, 12; 44:8; 55:4) terminology. Passages such as 40:28; 41:5, 9; 42:10; 43:6; 45:22; 48:20; 49:6; 52:10 (cf. also 5:26; 24:16; 62:11) are likewise important, seeing that they highlight the reach of God’s salvation (“the ends of the earth”). In Revelation, this universal flavor is given by means of the fourfold formula (10:11; cf. 11:9). While it is hard to prove that John had this Isaianic passage in mind, it is important to recall that Isa 40–55 is widely used in the NT and that Jesus and the apostles saw the mission of Jesus and their own mission in connection to that passage (Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 33–57). In a general manner, one should wonder whether a reader used to the Hebrew Scripture would not think of Isa 40–55 when seeing witnessing and light terminology bound together.

<sup>1184</sup> Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers comment that “the lampstand’s instrumentality, as light-bearer [provides the] essential symbolic value for Zechariah” (see Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah I-8*, 274; for more details, see pp. 227–77). This is also true for John, as one can judge by his emphasis on the lampstand imagery in early chapters of Revelation.

<sup>1185</sup> As Ranko Stefanovic observes, “in the New Testament, witnessing is the primary task of God’s people” (see Luke 24:48; John 15:27; Acts 1:8; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:43; Rev 1:2) and, in Revelation, it is the reason why they are persecuted (cf. 2:13; 6:9; 12:11; 17:6; 20:4; see Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 352–53). To use the words of G. K. Beale, what one finds in Rev 11:4 “is a symbolic picture of the church’s



phrase 1,260 days/years. This suggests that the two witnesses of 11:3 and the woman of 12:6 are the same entity.<sup>1186</sup>

Nevertheless, the description of the two witnesses in Revelation 11 is not complete until one reaches vv. 5–6. Verse 5 is reminiscent of the OT motif of fire emanating from one’s mouth (Jer 5:14; cf. 2 Sam 22:9; Ps 18:8), which is interpreted as a metaphor for proclaiming the word of God.<sup>1187</sup> This indicates that Scripture plays an important role in Revelation 11:3–13. As a matter of fact, one line of interpretation argues that the two witnesses stand for the word of God in the twofold sense of the OT

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commission in Acts 1:8” (Beale, *Revelation*, 578).

<sup>1186</sup> So LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 159. When John refers to the period covering 1,260 days/years elsewhere, he uses the terms “forty-two months” (11:2; 13:5) or the idiom “a time, and times, and half a time” (12:14). Ekkehardt Müller is right when affirming that the holy city of 11:2 is the same entity as the woman in 12:6. He arrives at this conclusion by comparing the trampling of the holy city for 42 months in 11:2 to the flight of the woman into the wilderness for 1,260 days in 12:6 (see Ekkehardt Müller, “The Two Witnesses of Revelation 11,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 13, no. 2 (2002): 42. However, he rejects the possibility that the two witnesses represent the church. He overlooks that the two witnesses in 11:3 prophesy for 1,260 days/years. Accordingly, the same principle should be applied here as well. By the way, it would be more logical to affirm that the two witnesses represent the church since, as mentioned in the body of the text above, 11:3 and 12:6 are the only places in Revelation where John uses the phrase 1,260 days. The fact is that the “holy city” in 11:2, the “two witnesses” in 11:3, and the woman in 12:6, 14 are different terms to refer to God’s people. Müller further argues that the symbol of the two witnesses cannot be applied to the church because, whereas the woman in 12:14 is set free at the end of the period of 1260 days/years, the two witnesses are killed (page 42). However, he overlooks that the “deliverance” of the woman in 12:16 may be tantamount to the resurrection of the two witnesses in 11:11–13. Revelation 11 does not end with the killing of the two witnesses.

<sup>1187</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 613. See also Leonard L. Thompson, *Revelation*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 126. John Sweet sees here an allusion to the “Pentecostal fire”; see Sweet, *Revelation*, 185. Craig S. Keener seems to go in the same direction when commenting in regard to 11:5–6 that “God empowered his church with prophetic anointing at Pentecost (Acts 2:17–18); although this includes prophecy in the narrower sense (21:9–10), that anointing’s focus is the power to witness (1:8). That these two witnesses performed signs and wonders suits the witness of the apostolic leaders of the church and other evangelists in Acts (2:43; 5:12, 16; 6:8; 14:3); signs and wonders constitute one of the most frequent methods of drawing the world’s attention to the gospel there (3:6–12; 8:6–7, 13; 9:34–35, 40–42; 19:10–20; 28:8–9).” See Keener, *Revelation*, 301. In addition, as mentioned in chapter 5 of this work, the term “mouth” is a recurrent metonym for speech in Revelation (Fanning, *Revelation*, 102; Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 98). It has a polysemous use, as it can refer to judgment (2:16; 19:15, 21), the word of God (10:9–10), and even a blasphemous utterance (13:5–6) or a deceitful discourse (9:17–19; 12:15; 16:13). In the OT, the term is used as a metonym for one’s speech as a spokesperson (Isa 6:7, 9).

and NT.<sup>1188</sup>

Kenneth A. Strand demonstrates that Revelation reveals a “two-witness” theology that runs throughout the book<sup>1189</sup> and is introduced in the very beginning, namely, “the word of God” and “the testimony of Jesus Christ” (1:2; cf. 1:9; 12:17; 14:12; 20:4). He holds that this is “what we today would call the OT prophetic message and the NT apostolic witness.”<sup>1190</sup> It is also possible to interpret the allusions to Moses and Elijah as pointing to the the Law and the Prophets.<sup>1191</sup> That Moses and Elijah represent the Law and the Prophets is undeniable, but the two views are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The “two-witness” theology referred to by Strand is based on passages in Revelation where one can identify the Moses-Elijah motif. These passages, i.e., 1:2, 9; 12:17; 14:12; 20:4, along with 6:9; 12:11; and 11:3–13 reveal a consistent pattern of faithfulness to the Gospel as well as boldness to proclaim it even to the point of death. Thus, the two views can be seen as complementary. The Law and the Prophets are sections of the Hebrew Bible and, hence, refer to the OT Scripture. However, if the two witnesses are really related to the Word/commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus (1:2, 9; 12:17;

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<sup>1188</sup> Strand, “The Two Witnesses,” 131; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 352.

<sup>1189</sup> Strand, “The Two Witnesses,” 132.

<sup>1190</sup> Strand, “The Two Witnesses,” 134. See also Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation: The Apocalypse Through Hebrew Eyes* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2002), 94–96.

<sup>1191</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 582; Blaney, “Revelation,” 464; Mulholland Jr., “Revelation,” 496. It is curious that the allusions to these two characters of the OT do not appear in 11:6 in the order “Moses and Elijah” but “Elijah and Moses”. This is unexpected since both in the OT (2 Kings 17:13; Heh 9:26; Jer 2:8; 18:18; Lam 2:9; Zech 2:9) and in the NT (Matt 5:17; 7:12; 22:40; Luke 16:16; 24:44; John 1:45; Acts 13:15; 24:14; 28:33; Rom 3:21) the order is almost always “the Law and the Prophets”. In the event of the transfiguration of Jesus in the Synoptics, Moses is mentioned first and then, Elijah (Matt 17:3–4; Luke 9:30, 33). The exception is Mark 9:4–5. However, while Elijah is mentioned first in verse 4, Moses is mentioned first in verse 5. This forms a chiasmic structure with Moses in the center of the chiasm (Elijah, Moses, Moses, Elijah), which indicates that the order Elijah/Moses in Mark 9:5 is intentional. Obviously, John does not need to refer to Moses and Elijah in the usual order, but the reverse order is still surprising and deserves more research.

14:12; 20:4), so the apostolic witness as we see it in the NT is also in view. This is especially true if one takes the genitive “of Jesus” in the phrase “the testimony of Jesus” as referring to the testimony borne by Jesus (subjective genitive) and transmitted to us by the NT writers through the Holy Spirit.<sup>1192</sup> The OT message and the NT apostolic witness are inseparable. The Moses-Elijah motif can further explain the inseparable nature of the two witnesses in that both Moses and Elijah are said to perform the activity that should be attributed to only one of them, i.e., both have the authority to shut the sky, and both have the authority to turn the waters into blood and “to strike the earth with every kind of plague” (11:6). In addition, Revelation 19:10 says that the testimony of Jesus is tantamount to the prophetic spirit.

In Romans 3:21 (cf. 1:2), the Law and the Prophets bear witness to the righteousness of God, i.e., God’s saving righteousness through the death and resurrection of Jesus.<sup>1193</sup> Thus, the witness of the Law and the Prophets in Revelation 11 is not a novelty in the NT. Kenneth Strand claims that the immediate context where 11:4 is inserted draws attention to “*prophetic pre-verification of the Christian announcement*” (10:7, italics in original).<sup>1194</sup> Moreover, the OT prophets alluded to in Revelation 11:5–6

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<sup>1192</sup> Pfandl, “The Remnant Church and the Spirit of Prophecy,” 303-304.

<sup>1193</sup> For details, see Schreiner, *Romans*, 178; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 165; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33 (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 344.

<sup>1194</sup> Strand, “The Two Witnesses,” 132. He asserts that this theme is addressed elsewhere in the NT in texts such as Luke 24:27; John 5:46; Acts 2:29-32; 3:18; and 1 Peter 1:10-12 (page 132). Other passages such as Romans 1:1-2; 3:21; and Galatians 3:8 can be added to this list. The idea that the two witnesses can represent the word of God in its twofold sense of OT and NT is reinforced by the statement of Jesus that the Scriptures “bear witness” about him (John 5:39; Luke 24:25–27, 44). See Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 352.

performed miracles through the word of God (cf. Exod 7–11; 1 Kgs 17:1).<sup>1195</sup> In addition to one likely allusion to Jeremiah 5:14,<sup>1196</sup> the allusion to Moses and Elijah enhances the major role the word of God plays in this passage. Strand helpfully asserts that “the unifying element which drew together the various prophetic personages used as a basis for the two-witnesses symbolism was their proclamation of God’s word of warning.”<sup>1197</sup>

The data above suggest that one ought to let the term “the two witnesses” convey a certain level of ambiguity to include both the Word of God and the church,<sup>1198</sup> inasmuch as the two ideas are better seen as complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Thus, the effort to indicate, for instance, that the primary application is the Word of God,<sup>1199</sup> not the church, is unnecessary.<sup>1200</sup> The Scripture and the church are so

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<sup>1195</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 352.

<sup>1196</sup> While the language of Rev 11:5 is reminiscent of OT passages such as 2 Sam 22:9, 2 Kgs 1:10, and Ps 97:3, Rev 11:5 is closer to Jer 5:14. The terms στόμα/*mouth*, πῦρ/*fire*, and κατασθίω/*consume* provide verbal parallels that connect Rev 11:5 to Jer 5:14. In addition, in both passages the context indicates that the metaphor of fire emanating from the mouth stands for uttering a divine message. This is more evident in Jeremiah. In Rev 11, this is suggested by the fact that that the two witnesses’ act of pouring fire from the mouth is in parallel with the act of prophesying. This is confirmed by the OT background.

<sup>1197</sup> Strand, “The Two Witnesses,” 131. For more arguments for the two witnesses as a symbol of Scripture, see Ekkehardt Müller, “The Two Witnesses of Revelation 11,” *JATS* 13, no. 2 (2002): 30–45.

<sup>1198</sup> So Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 352–53. This is not without precedent in the Johannine corpus. John’s use of some expressions with double meaning in the Fourth Gospel has been widely recognized in Johannine scholarship (E. Richard, “Expressions of Double Meaning and Their Function in the Gospel of John,” *New Testament Studies* 31 [1985]: 96–112. It is very likely that Revelation also conveys ambiguities as far as some words and/or expressions are concerned. For instance, the genitive phrase Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rev 1:1) is construed by some scholars as intentionally ambiguous, conveying both a subjective and objective sense (Beale, *Revelation*, 183–84; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 54; Osborne, *Revelation*, 57; Duvall, *Revelation*, 19; Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 120–21, 728). It is important to mention that by interpreting the two witnesses as referring to the Word of God and the Church I am not implying that one witness is the Word of God, and the other is the Church. I believe that the two witnesses refer simultaneously to both the Word of God and the Church in the sense that one does not exist without the other. Also, this interpretation does not deny the notion that the OT background of the law concerning witnesses (Deut 19:15) underlies the metaphor. The principle of a valid legal witness also appears in the NT (Matt 18:16; John 8:17–18; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; Heb 10:28). In Rev 11, the idea is that the rejection of the testimony of the two witnesses becomes a basis for judgment (Beale, *Revelation*, 575).

<sup>1199</sup> Strand, “The Two Witnesses,” 134–35.

closely related that assigning a primary role to either of them would not do justice to the biblical data, since Scripture applies witnessing terminology to both the Word of God and the church. Whether one affirms that the two witnesses represent the church proclaiming the Word of God in the power of the Spirit or the Word of God—the OT and NT—proclaimed by the church in the power of the Spirit, the result is the same. The Scripture and the church simply go together, inseparably.<sup>1201</sup> The church does not exist without a message to preach. Conversely, the Scripture cannot preach by itself. The church and Scripture are as inseparable as two faces of the same coin.

As seen above, prophesying and witnessing are closely related in 11:3 and imply verbal proclamation. This is further suggested by the allusion to the OT metaphor of fire emanating from one's mouth (Jer 5:14), which refers to speech. Thus far, we know that the content of the message to be preached by the end-time church encompasses four elements: the gospel, the prophecies of the book of Daniel, the prophecies of the book of Revelation, and the restoration of the heavenly temple. Therefore, the idea that *προφητεύω/to prophesy* means “to proclaim an inspired revelation”<sup>1202</sup> fits the context satisfactorily. The notion that the two witnesses (11:3–6) have a message to be proclaimed to the world (10:11) reveals a centrifugal orientation. Next, we will turn

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<sup>1200</sup> In addition, how should one decide which is primary and which is secondary? The effort to do so may give rise to ambiguous statements. For instance, LaRondelle states that “God’s two witnesses are primarily the Word of God and the historic testimony of Jesus,” i.e., OT and NT (LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 160), only to state a few lines later in the same paragraph that “the faithful church is Christ’s appointed witness for the world” and “the Bible and the true church of Christ cannot be separated.” If they are, in fact, inseparable, would not the attempt to give one of them a primary role be not only unnecessary but also misleading?

<sup>1201</sup> The words of Carl F. H. Henry are helpful at this point: “The Christian church and the Bible were . . . inseparable from the outset; the church never existed without a Bible nor was there ever a time when it did not recognize the authority of Scripture.” Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1999), 4:34.

toward the idea that in proclaiming their message, the two witnesses experience a replay of the earthly mission of Jesus. Thus, witnessing in Revelation involves not only verbal communication, but also suffering and even death in that process.

### A Replay of Jesus' Mission

Revelation 11:7 resumes the time reference of v. 3 after a digression in vv. 4–6.

While the ministry of the two witnesses is in the future from John's perspective, it seems clear that they were active in John's time from the use of the present tense in vv. 4–6. The clause "and when they have finished their testimony" (11:7a) points to the end of the 1,260-day period.<sup>1203</sup> The verbal form *τελέσωσιν/they have finished* is in the aorist tense, but since it is a temporal subjunctive, it behaves semantically as a future tense.<sup>1204</sup> This temporal subjunctive provides the time reference of the conflict between the beast in 11:7<sup>1205</sup> and the two witnesses described in vv. 7–10. Thus far, the text presents three moments in history: (1) the 1,260 prophetic days (11:3), which are in the future from John's perspective; (2) the time of John (11:4–6), which is a digression in the narrative; and (3) a period after the 1,260 prophetic days, which is introduced by the "three and a

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<sup>1202</sup> BDAG, 890.

<sup>1203</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 616.

<sup>1204</sup> The subjunctive in relative clauses may assume the same time frame as the main clause. Examples are not infrequent in the NT. The subjunctive in Rev 11:7 is future-oriented such as those in Matthew 5:19; Mark 13:11; and Luke 13:25, etc. Such as in Rev 11:7, in all these examples the subjunctive in a relative clause with *ὅταν* precedes a future tense-form in word order (see Ernest De Witt Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed. (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1898), 121–122). Although the subjunctive is usually future-oriented in relation to the speech in this type of construction, by and large it takes place a little before the action of the main verb (see Moulton, James Hope & Turner, Nigel. *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Syntax.*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 112.

<sup>1205</sup> Some interpreters have suggested that the beast in 11:7 and the beast in 13:1 are the same. However, this is not possible, since the former enters the scene *after* the forty-two months (11:7), while the latter acts *during* the forty-two months (13:5). In addition, *θηρίον/a beast* is anarthrous in 13:1, suggesting that this beast is not familiar to the readers.

half days” (11:7–10). Revelation 11:7a is transitional and suggests that while the two witnesses were somehow active in John’s time (11:4–6), the description in 11:4–6 characterizes the 1,260 prophetic days and even the period in history following it.

The tense-forms utilized by John in 11:7–10 (futures and presents) enhance the idea that the events connected to the three and a half days follow the 1,260-day period. John mentions that “the beast . . . *will make war* (ποιήσει . . . πόλεμον) with them and *will conquer* (νικήσει) them and *will kill* (ἀποκτενεῖ)<sup>1206</sup> them” (v. 7, LEB); “their dead bodies *will lie*<sup>1207</sup> in the street” (v. 8, LEB); “*those* from peoples . . . *will see* (βλέπουν) their dead bodies and *will not allow* (ἀφίουσιν) their dead bodies to be placed in a tomb” (v. 9, LEB); “and those who live on the earth *will rejoice* (χαίρουν) over them and *will celebrate*<sup>1208</sup> (εὐφραίνονται) and *will send* (πέμψουσιν) presents to one another” (v. 10, LEB).<sup>1209</sup>

The prepositional phrase “after the three and a half days” (11:11a) functions as a

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<sup>1206</sup> As any beginning Greek student will know, ἀποκτείνει has no σῆμα as future tense identifier because it is a liquid verb. The future tense of liquid verbs is indicated by a circumflex accent, ἀποκτενεῖ.

<sup>1207</sup> This verb is not in the Greek text but is correctly supplied in English translations.

<sup>1208</sup> In alignment with the legal principle of two or three witnesses (Deut 17:6; 19:15), the reason for celebration may be related to the fact that the earth-dwellers feel free from accountability to God and his capital case against them, which the two witnesses were establishing.

<sup>1209</sup> The verbal forms “will see,” “will not allow,” “will rejoice,” and “will celebrate” are all in the present tense, but the context makes it evident that they refer to future events from the perspective of the completion of the two witnesses’ testimony (11:7a). Indeed, the temporal conjunction ὅταν in the beginning of 11:7a provides the future reference for what comes next (11:7b–10). This explains why most English versions translate those present verbal forms into the future tense. These are examples of the futuristic present in prophetic or oracular pronouncements (see Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 225). This phenomenon occurs elsewhere in Revelation. Notice, for instance, the futuristic present (φεύγει) after a series of future tense-forms (ζητήσουσιν, “will seek”; εὐρήσουσιν, “will find”; and ἐπιθυμήσουσιν, “long for”) in Rev 9:6. Although this phenomenon is more common with ἔρχομαι (“to go,” see 1:4, 7, 8; 2:5, 16; 3:11; 4:8; 9:12; 11:5, 9, 10, 14; 14:9; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20; James Hope Moulton and Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Style* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1976], 4:154–55), the data above suggest that John tended to use futuristic presents with other verbs. Remarkably, in some manuscripts the verbs βλέπω/see and ἀφίημι/allow really are spelled with future tense-forms (βλέπουν and ἀφήσουσιν). See Charles, *Revelation*, 302–3.

temporal adverbial modifier that establishes a new point in time. Remarkably, from there to the end of the paragraph (11:13), the tense-forms applied by John are predominantly in the aorist indicative,<sup>1210</sup> and hence, the actions represented by these verbal forms are in the past from the perspective of the narrator. This suggests that John sees these scenes from the perspective of the events leading to the end of history. Accordingly, Revelation 11:11–13 seems to focus on the time of the end, when the proclamation of the gospel message will intensify in the world. Thus, the periods described in Revelation 11:3–13 can be summarized as follows: the time of John (11:4–6); the 1,260 prophetic days (11:3); a transitional period, i.e., “three and a half days” (11:7–10); and the time of the end (11:11–13).<sup>1211</sup> The period of “three and a half days” lies between the central period of Christian history (i.e., the 1,260 prophetic days) and the time of the end. The intensification of the proclamation of the gospel in the time of the end is conveyed in terms of a replay of the Christ-event (i.e., life, suffering and death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus). In other words, as we will see below, the two witnesses accomplish their mission insofar as they reproduce or imitate the mission of Jesus.

The term *μαρτυρία*/*testimony* in 11:7 refers to the two witnesses’ activities

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<sup>1210</sup> “A breath . . . *entered* (εἰσῆλθεν) them” (v. 11); “they *stood up* (ἔστησαν)” (v. 11); “great fear *fell* (ἐπέπεσεν) on them” (v. 11); “they *heard* (ἤκουσαν)” (v. 12); “they *went up* (ἀνέβησαν)” (v. 12); “their enemies *watched* (ἐθεώρησαν)” (v. 12); “*there was* (ἐγένετο) a great earthquake” (v. 13); “a tenth of the city *fell* (ἔπεσεν)” (v. 13); “people were *killed* (ἀπεκτάνθησαν)” (v. 13); “the rest *were terrified* (ἐγένοντο) and gave (ἔδωκαν) glory” (v. 13).

<sup>1211</sup> Beale mentions that the “introductory phrase ‘when they should complete their witness’ shows that what follows in vv 7b–13 is to occur at the end of history” (Beale, *Revelation*, 587). However, the prepositional phrase “after the three and a half days” seems to indicate that, while 11:7b–13 points to the end of history, the period of three and a half days lies between the 1,260 prophetic days and the time of the end. The fact that John reserves a significant amount of material to address the “three and a half days” (four verses: 7–10) indicates that the events related to them deserve close attention.



described in 11:5–6.<sup>1212</sup> Therefore, “their testimony” involves verbal witness. However, the language of 11:7b–10 indicates that, in addition to verbal proclamation, their witnessing encompasses suffering in the face of persecution, hatred, and even death. As Robert H. Mounce observes, “the very word ‘witness’ has the grim flavor of martyrdom.”<sup>1213</sup> This is another term in Revelation one should allow to have a certain ambiguity. That is to say, words deriving from the μαρτυρ-root can convey the idea of attestation of a divine message based on personal knowledge<sup>1214</sup> overlapped with the notion of martyrdom.<sup>1215</sup>

As mentioned above, 11:7 introduces the narration of a conflict between “the beast that rises from the bottomless pit” and the two witnesses. This is the first time in Revelation that the compound expression “make war” occurs (cf. 12:17; 13:7; 19:19). It seems that John uses ποιέω πόλεμον/*make war* as opposed to πολεμέω/*make war* to make a distinction between the subjects of these verbal actions. Whenever the compound ποιέω πόλεμον is used, the text is referring to evil powers attacking God’s people (cf. 11:7; 12:17; 13:7) or even making war against Christ himself and his army (19:19).<sup>1216</sup> Thus,

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<sup>1212</sup> There may be here an echo of the two tablets of the Decalogue as the covenant “witness” against the Israelites if they disobeyed God (Deut 31:26; cf. 10:1).

<sup>1213</sup> Mounce, *Revelation*, 220.

<sup>1214</sup> BDAG, 618–19. This is essentially the same sense as in Acts 1:8, where Jesus’ disciples are portrayed as the witnesses of his life, death, and resurrection. See BDAG, 620. By the way, this seems to be the regular use of the term in the NT (Ford, *Revelation*, 279).

<sup>1215</sup> BDAG, 619–20. Obviously, such an overlapping must be suggested by the context.

<sup>1216</sup> Conversely, except for 12:7 and 17:14, all the other occurrences of πολεμέω in Revelation have subjects in opposition to the evil powers. Thus, Christ is the subject in 2:16 and 19:11; Christ and his angels are the subject in 12:17; and whoever the subject in 13:4 is, it is clearly in opposition to the beast. Although πολεμέω appears as an infinitive in 12:7, it is clear who the subject is (“they”). It seems that while ποιέω πόλεμον emphasizes the attack of the evil powers, πολεμέω highlights the victory of Christ and his followers in the war. This explains why 12:7 and 17:14 figure as exceptions to the rule. In 12:7, “the dragon fought (ἐπολέμησεν, not ποιέω πόλεμον) . . . *but he was defeated* (v. 8). In 17:14, the beast and the

11:7 portrays an intense conflict that will have further developments. For now, the onslaught of the beast of Revelation 11:7 has the purpose of conquering and killing the two witnesses. While a literal reading of the Greek is something such as “the beast . . . will *make war* . . . *conquer* . . . and *kill*,” the construction is similar to that of 11:3, namely, *καί* plus future indicative. Thus, a possible translation is “the beast . . . will make war on them *with the purpose of conquering them* and killing them.”<sup>1217</sup> One should notice John’s insistence on the pronoun as the object of the verbal actions, i.e., “on them” (*μετ’ αὐτῶν*), “them” (*αὐτούς*), “them” (*αὐτούς*), which is repeated for the sake of emphasis.<sup>1218</sup> Thus, John indicates that the two witnesses are the targets of much hatred and persecution, even martyrdom. This is part of the Moses-Elijah motif mentioned above. The two witnesses are persecuted by the world, but, eventually, they are affirmed and uplifted by God. They join the long list of both OT prophets and NT witnesses who faced harassment in the course of their ministry.<sup>1219</sup> Moreover, their lives are shaped by the story of Jesus. This can be seen initially by John’s references to the pair “the word of

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ten horns (cf. 19:19) “will make war (*πολεμήσουσιν*, not *ποιέω πόλεμον*) on the lamb, **but the lamb will conquer them**” (my translation). Thus, while the dragon is the subject of *πολεμέω* in 12:7 and the beast in 17:14, both passages emphasize their defeat. Rev 17:14 indicates that the evil powers’ attempt to conquer (*νικάω*) is doomed to failure. It is noteworthy that “make war” (*ποιέω πόλεμον*) and “conquer” (*νικάω*) also occur together in 11:7 and 13:7, but there are two basic differences between 17:14 and these passages. First, in 17:14 “make war” and “conquer” have different subjects. Second, “make war” in 17:14 is the translation of *πολεμέω*, whereas in 11:7 and 13:7 it is the translation of *ποιέω πόλεμον*. Seemingly, John uses *ποιέω πόλεμον* in 11:7 and 13:7 to indicate that the victory expressed by *νικάω* is only partial.

<sup>1217</sup> So Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 617. This may reflect a telic *waw* such as happens in Exod 3:3, “I must go across *to see* this great sight.” See Merwe et al., *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*, 299.

<sup>1218</sup> Very frequently, translators must supply objective pronouns in rendering from Greek into English, since the NT authors used to leave them implicit.

<sup>1219</sup> Leithart, *Revelation*, 430. That their testimony takes place under hostile opposition becomes even clearer when one considers that the perpetrators of their suffering are portrayed twice as “those who dwell on the earth” (11:10), a phrase that always has negative nuances in Revelation (3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:2, 8). The role of “those who dwell on the earth” as opponents of the mission of God’s people will become even clearer in the second half of Revelation. In that sense, 11:10 anticipates what the reader will find further ahead. This also suggests that the time of the end will see not only the proclamation

God and the testimony of Jesus”. While the word or commandments of God and the testimony/faithfulness of Jesus are mentioned in 1:2, 9; 12:17; 14:12; and 20:4; in 6:9 and 12:11 the word of God is coupled with the testimony of God’s people. This suggests that the testimony of God’s people mirrors the testimony of Jesus. The idea that the testimony of the two witnesses is shaped by the story of Jesus can be further explored in different ways, as follows.

First, John alludes to the crucifixion of Jesus. Many commentators take the term “the great city” as a reference to Jerusalem,<sup>1220</sup> but this is true only in a figurative sense.<sup>1221</sup> It is the spiritual character of Jerusalem that is in view.<sup>1222</sup> The “great city” is symbolically (cf. πνευματικός, lit., “spiritually”) called Sodom and Egypt. What precisely is symbolized by the names Sodom<sup>1223</sup> and Egypt<sup>1224</sup> is a matter of dispute. In any case, it

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of the gospel intensify, but also opposition to it.

<sup>1220</sup> E.g., Charles, *Revelation*, 1:287; Swete, *Apocalypse*, 135; Ladd, *Revelation*, 157; Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 94; Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 618; Walvoord, *Revelation*, 181; and Fanning, *Revelation*, 335, to mention only a few. G. K. Beale reports that the term has been interpreted in five different ways: “(1) Rome, (2) Jerusalem in general, (3) unbelieving Jerusalem, (4) the antagonistic world, and (5) the apostate church”. Beale, *Revelation*, 593.

<sup>1221</sup> Robert H. Mounce notices that elsewhere in Revelation the phrase is never applied to Jerusalem (Mounce, *Revelation*, 220; cf. 16:19; 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21). Those who hold that by “the great city” John intended Jerusalem argue that the relative clause “where their Lord was crucified” alludes to Jerusalem. But this argument must face at least two difficulties. First, “the great city” is spiritually (i.e., figuratively) called Sodom and Egypt, which indicates that a symbolic meaning is intended. Second, it is debatable whether the relative clause refers to Jerusalem or the closest referent, “Egypt” (Beale, *Revelation*, 592). In addition, the term “the great city” contrasts to “the holy city” (v. 3), which does refer to Jerusalem. Thus, John seems to use “the great city” as opposed to Jerusalem. Those defending that John intended the literal Jerusalem resort to passages such as Isa 1:9–10 and Ezek 16:46–49 as passages where Jerusalem is called Sodom. Robert H. Mounce, however, argues that “in the Isaiah passage it is the Jewish people (not the city) who are so designated, and in Ezekiel, Jerusalem is being compared with her sisters, Samaria and Sodom. In neither reference is Jerusalem actually called Sodom, and in the OT it is never designated Egypt” (Mounce, *Revelation*, 221).

<sup>1222</sup> Notice John’s use of πνευματικός/*spiritually* where he could have used ἀλληγορούμενα (Gal 4:24). See Osborne, *Revelation*, 427.

<sup>1223</sup> E.g., “evil” (Blaney, “Revelation,” 466), “moral degradation” (Swete, *Apocalypse*, 135; Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 93; Mounce, *Revelation*, 221; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 354), “oppression” (Mounce, *Revelation*, 221), “hostility” (Lange, *Revelation*, 231; Ladd, *Revelation*, 157; Yeatts, *Revelation*, 196), and “complete ruin” (Swete, *Apocalypse*, 135).

seems that the general idea is that “the great city” rejected the testimony of the two witnesses just as Jerusalem rejected the testimony of the prophets and, finally, that of Jesus.<sup>1225</sup>

Second, just as Jesus was publicly subjected to shame by dying on the cross, the two witnesses are exposed to public disgrace.<sup>1226</sup> The reference to “three and a half days” brings to mind the time Jesus spent in the tomb, although the NT mentions only three days (Matt 27:63; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; John 2:19–22).<sup>1227</sup> Unlike Jesus, their “dead

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<sup>1224</sup> E.g., “slavery” (Thomas, *Revelation* 8-22, 93; Mounce, *Revelation*, 221; Morris, *Revelation*, 146; Davis, *Revelation*, 236; among others), “oppression” (Thomas, *Revelation* 8-22, 93; Mounce, *Revelation*, 221), “persecution” (Beale, *Revelation*, 591; Morris, *Revelation*, 146; Osborne, *Revelation*, 427; Boring, *Revelation*, 146), “evil” (Yeatts, *Revelation*, 196; Fanning, *Revelation*, 335), “abomination” (Lenski, *Revelation*, 345).

<sup>1225</sup> As Craig R. Koester observes, the death of Jesus is “linked to the tradition about prophets being killed in Jerusalem (Matt 23:37; Luke 13:33–34; Acts 7:52; 1 Thess 2:15; cf. *Liv. Pro.* 1:1; 23:1).” See Koester, *Revelation*, 501.

<sup>1226</sup> Koester, *Revelation*, 501. This is similar to what happened in the period of the judges, when it was not “violaters will be prosecuted,” but “prosecutors will be violated.” See Roy Gane, *God’s Faulty Heroes* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1996).

<sup>1227</sup> See also the phrase “on the third day” (Matt 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Luke 9:22; 18:23; 24:7, 21, 46; 1 Cor 15:4). Pierre Prigent protests against connecting the “three and a half days” in 11:9, 11 to the “three days” Jesus spent in the tomb. He affirms that “it is difficult to interpret this number, which is so precise and so firmly anchored in the book of Revelation, as an allusion to the three days that separate the death of Jesus and his resurrection according to the Gospel tradition” (Prigent, *Apocalypse*, 356). However, given the clear allusions to the story of Jesus in Rev 11:7–12—also recognized by Prigent (e.g., p. 358)—it seems easier to find an explanation for the discrepancy between the “three and a half days” and “three days” than to deny the allusion. Craig R. Koester postulates that “just as Elijah’s original three years of drought is extended to three and a half in tradition, the three days before Jesus’ resurrection is extended to three and a half (1 Kgs 18:1; Luke 4:25; Jas 5:17)” (Koester, *Revelation*, 502). Apparently, just as in Luke 4:25 and Jas 5:17, in Rev 11:9 the number “three and a half” also comes from the narrative of Elijah. The allusion to Elijah in Rev 11 enhances this idea. However, why the three years of Elijah become three days and a half and the three days of Jesus in the tomb in the Gospels become three days and a half in Rev 11 is a subject for more investigation. The current status of scholarship on that matter seems to indicate that the number three and a half becomes symbolic of persecution and distress on the basis of the book of Daniel (7:25; 12:7). See John Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, WBC 35A (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 194; Stein, *Luke*, 159; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I–IX: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB 28 (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 537; Marshall, *Luke*, 189; Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle of James*, ICC (New York; London; New Delhi; Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2013), 778.

body” is refused burial (11:9–10a),<sup>1228</sup> which represents insult and desecration,<sup>1229</sup> but also severe persecution.<sup>1230</sup> Their bitter experience goes to the point of death and is symbolized in the beginning of the paragraph by their prophesying “clothed in sackcloth” (11:3).<sup>1231</sup> The reader is warned at the outset about what comes ahead. This bitter experience recalls John’s own bitter experience after eating the scroll (10:8–10) as well as the trampling of the holy city by the nations (11:2). This is further evidence that John’s commission (10:8-11) is accomplished by means of the two witnesses.

Third, while in 11:7–10 John depicts the experience of the two witnesses as shaped by the story of Jesus’ rejection, suffering, and death, in vv. 11–12 their experience is, as it were, a retelling of Jesus’ resurrection and ascension.<sup>1232</sup> Although discipleship

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<sup>1228</sup> Curiously, John mentions “one” dead body (singular, πῶμα), not two (plural, πώματα). This suggests that the two witnesses are symbolic of one entity (Beale, *Revelation*, 594; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 358). Additionally, John mentions only one mouth in “from their mouth” (v. 5), which further indicates that the two witnesses form a unity, inseparable. For more on that regard, see Strand, “The Two Witnesses,” 130–31.

<sup>1229</sup> Fanning, *Revelation*, 336.

<sup>1230</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 595. SDA interpreters explain the killing of the two witnesses as a reference to the French Revolution and its rejection of the Christian religion and Scripture. See Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 358; Doukhan, *Revelation*, 97–100. Consequently, the “three and a half days” are seen as a reference to the period including the decree abolishing religious services, the tolerance to religion that came right after, and the revival that followed it. See Doukhan, *Revelation*, 98–100; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 360.

<sup>1231</sup> The sackcloth garment has been interpreted by some scholars as symbolizing a call to repentance. See Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 277. Also, Pugh, “Revelation,” 304; Reddish, *Revelation*, 210.

<sup>1232</sup> Also, Swete, *Apocalypse*, 137; Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 337; Koester, *Revelation*, 503; Yeatts, *Revelation*, 198; Patterson, *Revelation*, 250; Lange, *Revelation*, 232; Walvoord, *Revelation*, 182, among others. Obviously, there are differences between the experience of Jesus and that of the two witnesses. However, denying that the two witnesses are “retelling” the story of Jesus because of the differences between the two stories raises the question of how to account for the similarities. Elsewhere in the NT, Paul teaches that our lives must be shaped by the story of Jesus in such a way that we retell his story by living its stages: suffering, death, resurrection, and exaltation. This is seen in passages such as Rom 6:3–11; 2 Cor 1:5; 5:14–15; Gal 2:19–20; Eph 2:5–6; Phil 3:10–11; Col 2:12–13; and 3:1–11. In Phil 3:10, the story of Paul must be read as a retelling of the story of Jesus in Phil 2:5–11. In concluding Phil 2:5–11—with its allusions to chapters 40–55 of Isaiah and their prophecies about the suffering, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus—Paul urges the Philippians to “shine as lights in the world” (Phil 2:15). This points to Paul’s understanding that by retelling the story of Jesus in their lives, believers bear witness to his

language is absent here (cf. ἀκολουθέω/*to follow* in 14:4), the theology is present.<sup>1233</sup> The two witnesses perform loyal witness by emulating the mission of Jesus, who is the Faithful Witness (1:5; 3:14) and archetype for faithful believers.<sup>1234</sup> Their rejection is well illustrated by the affirmation “these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth” (11:10b, NKJV). It should be noticed that while 11:7–10a describes future events from John’s perspective, 11:10b uses an aorist tense-form as an anaphoric reference to the identity and activities of the two witnesses described in 11:4–6. This suggests that it is their faithful witness that raises the opposition of “those who dwell on the earth.” This is important information usually overlooked by commentators.

As in Luke-Acts,<sup>1235</sup> here discipleship is not conceivable without the Holy Spirit. In addition to the reference to “three and a half days,” the resurrection idea comes from an allusion to Ezekiel 37:10 (LXX) in Revelation 11:11a. The two passages have in common the words εἰσέρχομαι/*to enter*, πνεῦμα/*spirit*, πόδες/*foot*, ἵστημι/*to stand*, and a word from the ζά-root (i.e., ζάω/*to live* in Ezek 37:10 and ζωή/*life* in Rev 11:11<sup>1236</sup>). This is sufficient to confirm the existence of a verbal parallel between Revelation 11:11 and

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suffering, death, resurrection, and exaltation. However, one cannot expect full correspondence between the story of Jesus and its retelling in the life of his followers. For instance, in Gal 5:24 Paul says that “those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” This is not the experience of Jesus. There is no full correspondence between Jesus’ story and its retelling in the life of believers. As for the two witnesses, one should not expect a full correspondence either.

<sup>1233</sup> By describing the two witnesses’ testimony as shaped by the story of Jesus, John portrays “the pattern of discipleship that the two witnesses have faithfully followed until death.” Fanning, *Revelation*, 335n57.

<sup>1234</sup> Trites, *New Testament Concept of Witness*, 224.

<sup>1235</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church & the World*, BST (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 60. Also, George A. Terry, “A Missiology of Excluded Middles: An Analysis of the T4T Scheme for Evangelism and Discipleship,” *Themelios* 42, no. 2 (2017): 349.

<sup>1236</sup> Remarkably, the phrase πνεῦμα ζωῆς/*breath of life* in Rev 11:11 is the same occurring in Ezek 37:5 (LXX).

Ezekiel 37:10.<sup>1237</sup> By alluding to Ezekiel 37:10, John points to its larger context (37:1–14), namely, the vision of the restoration of God’s people after the exile, which is portrayed in terms of a revivification by the power of the Spirit (cf. v. 14).<sup>1238</sup> The restoration of the temple is the climax of Ezekiel 37 and serves as a sign of God’s covenant with his people (Ezek 37:15–28) as well as his everlasting presence (cf. vv. 26–28).<sup>1239</sup> None of this is possible without the empowerment of the Spirit providing new life. This background sheds light on how one is to interpret Revelation 11:11. Grant R. Osborne must be right when contending that in Revelation 11:11 “it is likely that πνεῦμα ζωῆ [a spirit of life] has a double meaning here, pointing (1) to the ‘life-giving Spirit’ as the means of (2) the new life ‘breathed’ into” the two witnesses.<sup>1240</sup> As happens elsewhere in the NT, this passage points to the empowerment of the Holy Spirit as necessary for the accomplishment of the witnessing task.

That Ezekiel 37:1–14 plays an important role in 10:11–11:13 can be seen in more than one way. In addition to the fact that προφητεύω appears seven times in Ezekiel 37:14 LXX (vv. 4, 7 [2x], 9[2x], 10, 12), the formula προφητεύω ἐπί, used by John in 10:11, appears twice (Ezek 37:4, 9 LXX). In both cases, the meaning is “prophesy to.”<sup>1241</sup>

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<sup>1237</sup> It is possible that Rev 11:11 also alludes to Gen 2:7, but such an allusion would be secondary.

<sup>1238</sup> See the discussion on this passage in Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 367–38, and the excursus, “The Background to Ezekiel’s Notion of Resurrection,” on pages 383–87.

<sup>1239</sup> James E. Smith, *The Major Prophets*, Old Testament Survey Series (Joplin: College Press, 1992), 482.

<sup>1240</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 430.

<sup>1241</sup> This is reflected in various English versions. See LEB, NKJV, NIV, GW, GNB, ISV, NCV, NIV, RSV, NRSV, RSVCE. Several English versions translate προφητεύω ἐπί in Ezek 37:4—not in Ezek 37:9—as “prophesy over” (e.g., ASV, ESV, NASB, ERV, NET, NAB, among others), but this seems to be an attempt to maintain the meaning of ἐπί as deriving from its spatial sense. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, ἐπί with the accusative can be seen as playing the role of a dative of indirect object.

When writing 10:11–11:13, John must have had Ezekiel 37 in mind. Like John, the two witnesses are supposed to “prophesy to” the nations (10:11; cf. 11:9),<sup>1242</sup> not “about” or “against” them. Just as in Ezekiel the task of prophesying “to the breath” restores a valley of dry bones into “an exceedingly great army” (Ezek 37:10), the two witnesses’ prophesying promotes the restoration of the heavenly temple and ultimately results in a great multitude coming from every nation under one shepherd.<sup>1243</sup>

The clause “they stood up on their feet” describes restoration in terms of resurrection language in both Ezekiel 37:10 and Revelation 11:11 (cf. 2 Kgs 13:21).<sup>1244</sup> This clause points to the result of “a breath of life from God entered them” (11:11).<sup>1245</sup> It is also possible that the verb θεωρέω/*to see* in “those who saw them” (11:11) is connected

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Indeed, all these English versions translate προφητεύω ἐπί as “prophesy to” in Ezek 37:9.

<sup>1242</sup> The fourfold formula in 11:9 connects 11:3–13 to 10:11. This connection reinforces the idea of rejection. The end-time message will be rejected by those to whom it is addressed. The sequence of the passage, however, indicates that the rejection is not universal. David E. Aune also sees in 11:9 “a kind of ironic reversal of the Day of Pentecost, in which people from ‘all nations under heaven’ are present in Jerusalem and hear Peter’s sermon (Acts 2:5–11).” See Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 621.

<sup>1243</sup> The fact that the Davidic King in 37:15–28 is viewed as the *one* shepherd (v. 24) who will rule forever (v. 25; cf. also 26 and 28) as *one* king (v. 22) over *one* nation (v. 22) is vital to understand the prophecy of the valley of dry bones (37:1–14) and the missionary impulse of chapter 37 in particular and the book of Ezekiel in general. Ezek 37 is divided up into two parts. The first half deals with the restoration of Israel in terms of re-creation (37:1–14). The second half develops the first section and deals with the historical repercussions of this re-creation (37:15–28): i.e., *one* shepherd (v. 24), *one* king (v. 22), and *one* nation (v. 22). Interestingly, the two sections end in similar and, yet, very different ways. In the end of the first half, the ultimate goal of Israel’s restoration is “You shall know that I am the Lord” (37:14), whereas in the end of the second half, the ultimate goal is “The nations will know that I am the Lord” (37:28). The point is clear: Israel must know God and live in covenantal relationship with him in order to become a channel through which the nations come to know him. If John has the entire context of Ezek 37:10 in mind, which is very likely, this suggests that God must be known to the nations by the testimony of the two witnesses. The fact that their story is shaped by the story of Jesus indicates that they know God and, thus, are ready to make him known to the nations.

<sup>1244</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 624.

<sup>1245</sup> The conjunction καί/*and* connecting “a breath of life from God entered them” to “they stood up on their feet” must have a resultative sense and would be better rendered by an expression such as “so that.” This likely reflects a Hebraism, a resultative *waw* such as happens in Ps 35:9. The joy in Ps 35:9 is the result of Yahweh’s actions in the previous verses. See Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 5:330.



to the resurrection tradition. Grant Osborne states that θεωρέω is frequently used in the Gospel of John “as a prelude of faith.”<sup>1246</sup> He claims that the use of θεωρέω in Revelation 11:11–12 is similar to that in John, and, on that basis, speculates that it may be a signal of conversion.<sup>1247</sup> It is noteworthy that the retelling of the story of Jesus also includes an allusion to the ascension into heaven (11:12). Scholars have pointed out a connection between 11:12 and 4:1. In both passages a voice out of heaven is heard with the invitation “Come up here.”<sup>1248</sup> The two witnesses “went up to heaven in a cloud,” which brings to mind Jesus’ ascension (Acts 1:9, 11). As mentioned above, this further relates the testimony of the two witnesses to the mission of Jesus. Their ministry is shaped by the story of Jesus’ rejection, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven.<sup>1249</sup> They follow the steps of Jesus in steadfast discipleship.

As discussed in Chapter 4 of this work, the Gospels and Acts portray Jerusalem negatively as the place of Jesus’ rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection, but positively (especially in Luke-Acts) as the place where the gospel flows to the ends of the

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<sup>1246</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 432. He remarks that verbs of sensation—especially “seeing” but also “hearing”—appear in 11:9–12 and concludes that the use of θεωρέω in this passage may be deliberate. While βλέπω/*see* occurs thirteen times and ὁράω/*see* seven times, θεωρέω occurs only twice in Revelation (11:11, 12). This verb is used fifty-eight times in the NT, twenty-four of them in the Gospel of John, where its object is often Jesus or his deeds (*NIDNTTE*, 2:425). While Osborne’s observation that the emphasis on “seeing” in this passage is likely reminiscent of traditions connected to the resurrection of Jesus, perhaps the same is not true regarding “hearing” in 11:12. In the resurrection narratives, people heard Jesus, but here it is “the two witnesses” who heard “a loud voice from heaven.”

<sup>1247</sup> He states that “those who are the enemies of God ‘watch’ as his power is demonstrated in resurrection and in the destructive power of the earthquake, and then many are converted (11:13)” (Osborne, *Revelation*, 432).

<sup>1248</sup> John C. Thomas goes as far as to affirm that the two passages form an *inclusio* indicating that 4–11 forms a unity (Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, 340). This link enhances the connection between John and the two witnesses, in that the mission of the former (10:11–11:2) is really accomplished by means of the ministry of the latter (11:3–13). However, while 11:12 is similar to 4:1 in some respects, it is dissimilar in others.

<sup>1249</sup> They emulate the Lamb who was slain (5:9, 12), conquered (5:5), and was seen standing (5:6).

earth. While this positive view is more subtle in Revelation 11:7–13—but, in my view, not totally absent—the negative one comes to the fore. The two witnesses face rejection, suffering, and death in “the great city” that is portrayed as having the spiritual character of Jerusalem. But the same “great city” is also the symbolic place of their vindication (11:13)<sup>1250</sup> and the place where they receive the empowerment of the Holy Spirit for the accomplishment of their mission (an allusion to the Pentecost?). John’s focus is not geographical but theological. The point is that without following Jesus’ footprints and receiving the power of the Spirit, mission is inconceivable. In that sense, Revelation 11:3–13 should not be seen only as a description of the witnessing task, but also as a prescription of how the church is supposed to fulfill its mission today.<sup>1251</sup> The outcome of this faithful witness is portrayed in Revelation 11:11b–13, as follows.

### **The Successful End-Time Witnessing**

Revelation 11:11–13 indicates that there is an intensification of the testimony of the two witnesses in the time of the end. As seen above, 11:3–13 deals with three main periods in Christian history, running from the time of the prophet until the time of the end. The fact that the two witnesses are killed but resurrect and ascend into heaven after they finish their 1,260-day testimony indicates that their prophetic witness continues, but with increased power. The notion of intensification derives from both the idea of resurrection and the signs that follow it. The intensification of their testimony receives a positive response, namely, fear (11:11b, 13) and worship (11:13) on the part of a remnant. Below, we will briefly discuss this twofold answer.

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<sup>1250</sup> The city in 11:13 is the same as “the great city” in 11:8.

Revelation 11:11 mentions that “a great fear [φόβος] fell on those who saw” the two witnesses after their resurrection. James L. Resseguie argues that this statement in v. 11 and the clause “the rest were terrified [ἔμφοβοι]” in v. 13 form an *inclusio*,<sup>1252</sup> which suggests that what lies in between is the cause of the state of fear. This fear can be interpreted negatively—meaning simple acknowledgment of God’s sovereignty rather than genuine repentance<sup>1253</sup>—or positively—implying a mind-changing process. What comes next in Revelation favors the latter. G. K. Beale is certainly right when contending that ἔμφοβος (11:13) “always means ‘terrified’ or ‘frightened’ in the NT.”<sup>1254</sup> However, attention should be paid to the combination of this term (including φόβος) with the phrase “give glory” or the verb “glorify” here and elsewhere in Revelation (14:7; 15:4; cf. 19:5, 7). In addition, while “fear language” is applied in Revelation in reference to fright or terror (cf. 1:17; 2:10; 18:10, 15), it is also used in relation to worship (cf. 11:18; 14:7; 15:4; 19:5).

Revelation 11:11, 13 is the first place in the book where the concepts of “fear” and “give glory” to God appear together. It anticipates the solemn call in 14:7, “fear God and give him glory,”<sup>1255</sup> as we will see further ahead (Chapter 9). For now, it is sufficient to mention that to *fear*, *glorify*, and *worship* God are related ideas in 14:7 (cf. also 15:4),

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<sup>1251</sup> Tonstad, *Revelation*, 166.

<sup>1252</sup> Resseguie, *Revelation*, 165.

<sup>1253</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 603–4. See also Lenski, *Revelation*, 351; Mounce, *Revelation*, 224; Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 339; Walvoord, *Revelation*, 183, among others.

<sup>1254</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 605. The term occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Luke 24:5, 7 and Acts 10:4; 24:5.

<sup>1255</sup> This call is to be interpreted as an invitation for people to repent. Additionally, this call anticipates the universal praise to God in 15:4, “Who will not *fear*, O Lord, and *glorify* your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and *worship* you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

almost synonymous.<sup>1256</sup> Furthermore, in 16:9 the clause “and give him glory” provides a sort of explanation for “they did not repent.” Very likely, the infinitive δοῦναι/*to give* expresses result,<sup>1257</sup> so that a possible translation is “they did not repent, *so as to* give glory to him” (NASB).<sup>1258</sup> If this is correct, it follows that 16:9 indicates “giving glory” to God comes as a result of repentance. Accordingly, in the context of 16:9, there is no worship because there is no repentance. Conversely, as far as 11:13 is concerned, John can say that “the rest . . . gave glory to the God of heaven” because repentance is implied.<sup>1259</sup> Some refer to 9:20–21 to mention that the idea of lack of repentance is still

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<sup>1256</sup> Caird, *Revelation*, 140. The idea of “giving glory” to God runs throughout Revelation and is always associated with worship (1:6; 4:9, 11; 5:12, 13; 7:12; 11:13; 14:7; 15:4; 19:7; cf. 16:9 and, perhaps, 21:24).

<sup>1257</sup> In this sense, the infinitive behaves as a telic or ecbatic subjunctive. That the infinitive and subjunctives introduced by ἵνα are interchangeable in many respects is attested both in the NT and in noncanonical literature. See Chrys C. Caragounis, *The Development of Greek and the New Testament: Morphology, Syntax, Phonology, and Textual Transmission* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 171–72. For this phenomenon in Rev 16:9, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 592n8. Also, Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 1089.

<sup>1258</sup> Or, in a rough translation, “they did not repent, with the result that [they did not] give him glory.” A very slightly different way to read δοῦναι/*give* is by taking it as a final-consecutive infinitive. See Moulton and Turner, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 136. But there is no way to represent in English the difference between the final sense and the final-consecutive sense. Both could read “they did not repent to give him glory” (LEB; cf. ASV, KJV). The difference between a telic and resultative use is very tenuous. As Robertson puts it, purpose is intended result (Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 1089). In any case, this infinitive illumines our understanding of the meaning of “give glory” in Revelation. As G. B. Winer observes, it has an exegetical flavor. See G. B. Winer, *A Treatise on the Grammar of New Testament Greek: Regarded as a Sure Basis for New Testament Exegesis* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1882), 400. In that regard, notice the translation by NABR, “they did not repent or give him glory,” implying that the two clauses are somewhat interchangeable.

<sup>1259</sup> One possible obstacle to this view is John’s use of ἔμφοβος in 11:13 rather than φόβος as in 11:11. By the way, 11:13 has the only occurrence of ἔμφοβος in Revelation. The noun φόβος occurs three times (11:11; 18:10, 15), and the cognate verb φοβέω appears six times (1:17; 2:10; 11:18; 14:7; 15:4; 19:5). Whether words from φοβ-root mean fear in the sense of being afraid or having respect/reverence depends heavily on the context. In the case of ἔμφοβοι in 11:13, the first thing to notice is that this term forms a pair with the idea of giving glory to God, which, in turn, indicates repentance. When applying ἔμφοβοι in Rev 11:13 John may be following the Septuagintal use of this term in Sirach 19:24. This is the only occurrence in the LXX. In the context of Sirach 19:20–30, ἔμφοβος refers to “the God-fearing man” (NABRE, RSV, NRSV, RSVCE), who is in visible contrast to the transgressor of the law (cf. 19:20, 24). See Donald Slager, “Preface,” in *A Handbook on Sirach*, ed. Paul Clarke et al., United Bible Societies’ Handbooks (New York: United Bible Societies, 2008), 393–394. Slager translates κρείττων . . . ἔμφοβος as “it is better to revere the Lord” (p. 394). Such as in Revelation 11, where ἔμφοβος (v. 13) occurs after the

present in 11:13.<sup>1260</sup> However, the clause “and gave glory to the God of heaven” is crucial for understanding the contrast with 9:20–21. In 9:20–21, “the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, *did not repent* . . . nor give up worshipping demons.” In 11:13, the rest, namely, those who were not killed by the earthquake, “were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.” The result of repentance, i.e., “giving glory” to God, which is absent in 9:20–21, now occurs in 11:11–13. Mission succeeds with the testimony of the two witnesses.

As various scholars have pointed out, “giving glory” to God has a positive sense and suggests repentance elsewhere in both the NT and OT.<sup>1261</sup> The fact that “fear language” appears in connection to “give glory” a few times (cf. 11:13; 14:7; 15:4; cf. 19:5, 7) suggests that John sees “fear” as a signal of repentance.<sup>1262</sup> Richard Bauckham goes as far as to state, “There should be no doubt that the end of 11:13 . . . refers to genuine repentance and worship of God.”<sup>1263</sup> Revelation 11:13 seems to indicate that the

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occurrence of φόβος (v. 11), also in Sirach 19:20–24 φόβος and ἔμφοβος occur in the same order, respectively in verses 20 (φόβος) and 24 (ἔμφοβος). The two terms are clearly parallel in that passage thereby expressing basically the same meaning. A similar phenomenon takes place in Acts 10:1–4, where Cornelius is characterized as a God-fearing man (φοβούμενος τὸν θεὸν, v. 2) and he is “in fear” (ἔμφοβος, v. 4; cf. NIV) as he stares at the angel of God (vv. 3–4). Luke has four out of the five occurrences of ἔμφοβος in the NT. In addition to the experience of Cornelius, he also portrays the women at the tomb (Luke 24:5), after seeing two angels (Luke 24:4), and the disciples, after seeing the Risen Christ, as ἔμφοβοι. Accordingly, except for the use of ἔμφοβος in Acts 24:25, Luke always applies the term in a sort of epiphany. Hence, it seems that ἔμφοβος in Luke 24:5, 37 and Acts 10:4 conveys more than merely the idea of being afraid but the sense of being in awe, an attitude of respect and reverence, as in Sirach 19:24. Very likely, the use of ἔμφοβος in Rev 11:13 is in consonance with the use of this term in Sirach 19:24 and Luke-Acts.

<sup>1260</sup> E.g., Lenski, *Revelation*, 351.

<sup>1261</sup> 1 Sam 6:5; Josh 7:19; Isa 42:12; Jer 13:16; Luke 17:18; John 9:24; Acts 12:23; Rom 4:20; cf. also 1 Chr 16:36; Pss 66:2; 96:7–8; 106:47. See Osborne, *Revelation*, 434; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:291–92; Ladd, *Revelation*, 159; Thomas, *Revelation* 8-22, 98–99.

<sup>1262</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 278; Fanning, *Revelation*, 338.

<sup>1263</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 278. Bauckham further mentions that there are two important contrasts between Rev 11:10 and 13 and their OT backgrounds that enhance the idea of conversion in Rev 11:13. According to him, allusions to the feast of Purim (Esther 9:19, 22) and remnant imagery associated

faithful testimony of the two witnesses will lead to a successful harvest before the end of history. Their faithful witness involves both verbal proclamation and steadfast testimony under persecution.

### Conclusion

Revelation 11:3–13 continues the thought introduced in Revelation 10, in that while 10:1–11:2 focuses on the mission of the end-time church, 11:3–13 indicates how it is to be accomplished, namely, by faithful witness. The act of witnessing implies verbal proclamation of the end-time message. This is suggested by the close connection between witnessing and prophesying in 11:3, the symbolism of the two witnesses as the Word of God proclaimed by the church, and the metaphor of the two witnesses' mouth, which stands for speech in Revelation. Witnessing also implies resistance in the face of hostile opposition and persecution. But 11:3–13 also hints that (1) even the suffering of God's people can be divinely used to accomplish mission and (2) John's commission for prophesying (10:11) is accomplished by means of the two witnesses. This can be seen at least in three ways. First, the connection between 10:11–11:2 and 11:3 shows that just as John is summoned to *prophesy* again (10:11), the two witnesses are given authority to "*prophesy* for 1,260 days" (11:3). Second, the bitter experience of the two witnesses in

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with judgment (i.e., a tenth part [Amos 5:3; cf. Isa 6:13] and the seven thousand in the story of Elijah [1 Kgs 19:14–18; cf. Rom 11:2–5]) are used in an odd reverse fashion (pp. 281–82). Accordingly, while in Esth 9 the enemies of God's people are killed, in Rev 11:7–10 the two witnesses are killed. While in Amos 5:3 nine-tenths would face destruction, in Rev 11:13 only one-tenth are destroyed. While in the story of Elijah God leaves (καταλείπω/to spare) seven thousand in Israel (1 Kgs 14:18 LXX), in Rev 11:13 seven thousand are killed and "the rest (λοιπός/remnant) were terrified and gave glory." Bauckham concludes that this reversal points to the faithful testimony of the two witnesses, even in the face of harassment and persecution, as something that God will use to bring the nations to repentance and faith (p. 283). That the same hostile opposition connected to the three and a half days (11:7–10) will intensify in the time of the end can be seen through the description of persecution against God's people in Rev 13. At this point, it is worth mentioning that Bauckham tends to universalism. For a synthesis of several problems regarding his universalist ideas, see Osborne, *Revelation*, 435. Nevertheless, it is also worth mentioning that his universalist ideas do not affect his conclusions regarding the role of the church in the end-time mission.

prophesying “clothed in sackcloth” (11:3) parallels John’s own bitter experience after eating the scroll (10:8–11). Third, both John (4:1) and the two witnesses (11:12) heard a voice out of heaven saying, “come up here” (11:12).

The discussion above suggests that one should allow the term “the two witnesses” to be ambiguous enough to represent both the Word of God—namely, the OT message and the NT apostolic witness—and the church. The connection between the two witnesses and the Word of God is enhanced both by the “two-witness” theology as well as the Moses-Elijah motif. The Word of God and the church are inseparable, so attributing a primary role to either of them does not do justice to the biblical data. Whether one affirms that the two witnesses represent the church proclaiming the end-time message in the power of the Holy Spirit or the word of God proclaimed by the church in the power of the Holy Spirit, the result is the same.

The analysis of 11:3–13 in connection to 10:11–11:2 indicates that the two witnesses’ prophesying is somehow related to judgment and the restoration of the heavenly temple. Thus, while the witnessing motif is a starting point to read Revelation from the mission perspective, a relationship between witnessing terminology and the restoration of the heavenly temple has also been noticed. In addition, themes such as repentance and worship must be taken into account.

Revelation 11:3–13 (cf. 10:8–11) indicates that the proclamation of the gospel will intensify in the time of the end. While the two witnesses were already active in the time of John and were given a ministry of 1,260 prophetic days, their testimony will be even more perceptible in the last part of church history, the period between the sixth and the seventh trumpets. The intensification of their prophetic witness regards not only the

universal reach of their message (11:9; cf. 10:11), but also a deeper understanding of the message itself. The end-time message encompasses the gospel, the book of Daniel, the book of Revelation, and the restoration of the heavenly temple. Thus, Revelation 10–11 indicates that not only will its proclamation intensify, but the message itself will be deeply rooted in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. This message is Christ-centered, which is evident from the fact that the mission of the two witnesses reflects the mission of Jesus. They are supposed to follow the footsteps of Christ in the fulfillment of their mission, in faithful discipleship, even in the face of death. Finally, 11:3–13 reveals that the mission of the two witnesses will be successful. However, their success will take place in the midst of hostile opposition, and their faithful witness is what unleashes persecution. This becomes even clearer in Revelation 12–14, as we will see next.



## CHAPTER 8

### OPPOSITION TO MISSION AND THE ENDURANCE OF THE SAINTS

Chapter 7 has demonstrated that mission is to be accomplished through the faithful witness of the church. The witnessing task encompasses both verbal proclamation of the end-time message and endurance amid hostile opposition. Indeed, the faithful testimony of the church is the very reason for the emergence of intense persecution. Again, this is part of the Moses-Elijah motif that runs through the book of Revelation. Although the theme of the faithful testimony of the church and the persecution arising as a result of it is introduced in 1–11 (1:9; 2:2–3; 2:10; 2:13; 6:9–11), it is developed in 12–14, to which we now turn.

#### **The Attack against the Remnant**

Scholars have pointed out the centrality of chapter 12 to the overall structure and theology of Revelation, and how it functions as a link binding together the two halves of the book.<sup>1264</sup> Revelation 12 deals with the attack of the dragon against the Messiah, the

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<sup>1264</sup> Prigent, *Apocalypse*, 366–74; Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 153; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 404. Recently, Sigve K. Tonstad has referred to chapter 12 as “the apocalypse in miniature” and “the anchoring point” of the book. See Tonstad, *Revelation*, 38, 174. When affirming the centrality of chapter 12 to the overall structure and theology of Revelation, it is not denied the transitional role of chapters 12–14. Chapters 12 to 14 are bracketed by 11:19 and 15:5–8 and, hence, must be read against the background of the restoration of the heavenly temple. These chapters lie in the central part of the book and are important for understanding

church, and the remnant. The attack against the remnant (12:17) brings Revelation 12 to its climax. For a better understanding of 12:17, however, a brief assessment of other important elements in chapter 12 is necessary. Analysis of Revelation 12 should also include 11:19, as we will see next.

### The Opening of the Temple and the Ark of the Covenant (11:19)

The reason to include 11:19 in our discussion of 12:1–17 is that the former serves as an introduction to the latter.<sup>1265</sup> The imagery of 11:19—with lightnings, thunder, and an earthquake—indicates the imminence of judgment<sup>1266</sup> and, thus, provides the background against which 12:1–17 is to be read.<sup>1267</sup> Scholars have noticed strong allusions to the Yom Kippur liturgy in this passage.<sup>1268</sup> Remarkably, 11:19 and 15:5<sup>1269</sup>

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what comes before and after them. However, Chapter 12 plays a special role within that section in that, as Stefanovic puts it, “the vision of Revelation 12 sets the stage for what comes into play in the second half of the book of Revelation” (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 404). It introduces more vividly the great controversy between good and evil as well as the two main characters in the final part of the conflict on earth, i.e., Satan and the remnant. Thus, Chapter 12 provides the cosmic conflict background for the events described in chapters 13–14 and henceforward.

<sup>1265</sup> This has been recognized by various scholars. See, for instance, the outline of 11:19–12:17 as proposed by Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 657–60, and a rationale on pp. 661–62. Aune’s argument that 11:19–12:5 is backgrounded by Isa 66:6–7 and follows the same structure is a strong one. In addition to verbal parallels, a structural parallel seems to be evident (p. 662). A further argument for taking 11:19 as introducing 12:1–17 is the use of the verbal form ὤφθη/*was seen*. It occurs only three times in Revelation and in 11:19–12:3 (“the ark . . . was seen,” 11:19; “a great sign . . . was seen,” 12:1 ASV; “another sign was seen,” 12:3 ASV). This grammatical resource suggests that the material in 12:1–5 is connected to that in 11:19.

<sup>1266</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 661.

<sup>1267</sup> The fact that John sees the heavenly temple opened and the ark of the covenant therein indicates that the heavenly temple is the place where the judgment takes place.

<sup>1268</sup> Paulien, “Role of the Hebrew Cultus,” 256n52. Paulien argues that while the first half of Revelation seems to be modeled according to the daily ritual, the second half is modeled according to the annual ritual, the day of atonement (pp. 255–61). For a reading of 11:19 in light of the Yom Kippur motif, see also Leithart, *Revelation*, 132. Paulien demonstrates that the theme of Yom Kippur becomes a major concern in the second half of Revelation (Paulien, “Role of the Hebrew Cultus,” 257). John focuses very often both on the inner sanctuary, “where the central activities of Yom Kippur took place” (p. 257, see 11:19 [2x]; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8 [2x]; 16:1, 17; 21:22 [2x]) and on the theme itself (14:7; 16:5, 7; 17:1; 18:8, 10, 20; 19:2, 11; 20:4, 12, 13). Most commentators agree that the idea that John is referring to the innermost part of the sanctuary is conveyed by the use of the term *ναός* as opposed to *ἱερόν* (Steve Gregg,

are the only places in Revelation where John refers to the fact that the heavenly temple “was opened.” This reveals that chapters 12–14 are framed by passages related to the Yom Kippur and must be read with that theme in mind.<sup>1270</sup> However, while both 11:19 and 15:5 are backgrounded by this OT theme, the latter differs from the former in that it is followed by a reference to the closing up of the sanctuary, i.e., “no one could enter” it (15:8).<sup>1271</sup> The verb *τελέω/finish* or *complete* in 15:1 and 15:8 offers a structural frame for 15:1–8 and strongly stresses the completion of God’s judgment.<sup>1272</sup> Thus, 12–14 seem to focus on the final events leading to the second coming and the last chance for the inhabitants of the earth to repent and turn from idolatry to the true and only God. Chapter 12 plays a major role by providing the cosmic conflict background for the events described in 13–14.

The reference to the ark of the covenant is very significant in that context.<sup>1273</sup> In the Israelite cult, the ark was a symbol of God’s covenantal presence, both providing

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*Revelation, Four Views: A Parallel Commentary* [Nashville: T. Nelson, 1997], 221). While there is an allusion to Yom Kippur in 11:1–2 (see Strand, “An Overlooked Old Testament Background,” 317–25), the importance of 11:19 is due to its reference to the opening of the innermost part of the heavenly temple. See also Davidson, “Sanctuary Typology,” 124; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 35.

<sup>1269</sup> Peter J. Leithart argues that 15:5 lies at the vortex of a chiasm formed by 15:1–8 (Leithart, *Revelation*, 112). If this assessment is correct, it reinforces how significant the sanctuary motif is for John.

<sup>1270</sup> Paulien argues that the placement of the trumpets septet right before chapters 12–14 recalls the Israelite ritual in that “the Feast of Trumpets itself, falling on the first day of the seventh month (corresponding to the seventh trumpet) ushered in the time of judgment that led up to the Day of Atonement (cf. 11:18–19)” (Paulien, “Seals and Trumpets,” 191).

<sup>1271</sup> Richard Davidson argues that Rev 15:5–8 marks the “‘de-inauguration’ of the sanctuary” (Davidson, “Sanctuary Typology,” 114). Similarly, for Robert H. Mounce the symbols in 15:8 indicate that “the time for intercession is past” (Mounce, *Revelation*, 289).

<sup>1272</sup> So, Osborne, *Revelation*, 572.

<sup>1273</sup> According to David E. Aune, “this is the only explicit reference in early Jewish and early Christian literature to a heavenly ark of the covenant” (Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 677; see also, Trafton, *Revelation*, 114). Heb 9:14 also mentions the “ark of the covenant,” but it is a reference to the earthly sanctuary. In addition, 11:19 contains the only occurrence of “covenant” in Revelation.

grace<sup>1274</sup> and giving assurance of victory for the army in times of war.<sup>1275</sup> Conversely, the ark was also a token of Israel's covenant obligations.<sup>1276</sup> Accordingly, in 11:19 the appearance of the ark suggests that God's gracious offer of salvation still stands<sup>1277</sup> and that he will faithfully lead his people as they go through the attack of the dragon and his allies in chapters 12–14. On the other hand, the ark also serves as a reminder that God requires steadfast allegiance.<sup>1278</sup> With this in mind, we can now turn toward chapter 12. Although 12:17 brings the whole chapter to its climax, the understanding of 12:17 is enlightened by the analysis of a few elements throughout the chapter.

### The Woman Clothed with the Sun (12:1)

Interestingly, Revelation 12 opens with a shining woman adorned with the sun, moon, and stars. The metaphor of light was used in early chapters with missionary connotations. However, since terms such as “lampstand” or the noun “light” itself are not included here, it is not clear whether the image of this shining woman presents

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<sup>1274</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 619.

<sup>1275</sup> Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 211. Connected to this is the fact that “the ark also led the Israelites as they marched in the wilderness toward the Promised Land. The battle call that began each day of march indicates quite clearly that the procession of Israel toward Canaan was the march of an army” (p. 211). Ranko Stefanovic mentions that the ark of the covenant also has to do with “the disclosure of the contents of the little scroll that John received in Revelation 10, because it was by the Ark of the Covenant that the Book of the Covenant was stored” (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 369, also 375–76).

<sup>1276</sup> Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009). Also, Eugene H. Merrill, *Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, CBC 2 (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 1996), 648.

<sup>1277</sup> In a sense, Rev 11:19 conveys an invitation similar to that found in Heb 4:16 (cf. also Heb 10:19–22).

<sup>1278</sup> The ark of the covenant becomes even more significant when one considers that it was seen only by the high priest, once a year, on Yom Kippur, but now it is “visible” to all (cf. Mat 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45), a public disclosure of God's covenantal faithfulness (Morris, *Revelation*, 150).

missionary overtones.<sup>1279</sup> Richard D. Phillips affirms that “this vision of the heavenly woman reminds us of the mission of the church,”<sup>1280</sup> but does not provide any explanation for this statement. In any case, seeing that the metaphor of light has missional connotations elsewhere in Revelation (“seven lampstands,” chapters 2–3; “lampstand,” 2:4; “two lampstands,” 11:4; “glorious angel,” 18:1; cf. also 21:23–24), one should not discard missional connotations here. In addition, because the woman is nourished for 1,260 days in the wilderness (12:6) and the two witnesses prophesy for 1,260 days clothed in sackcloth (11:3), it follows that the two visions are parallel.<sup>1281</sup>

### The Shepherd of All the Nations (12:5)

The information in 12:5a that the woman gave birth to a male child “who is going to shepherd<sup>1282</sup> all the nations with an iron rod” (LEB) is highly covenantal. This is a

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<sup>1279</sup> Indeed, the metaphor comes from Gen 37:9–10, where the symbols of the sun, moon, and stars are applied respectively to Jacob, his wife, and his sons. The imagery occurs elsewhere in the OT and with different connotations (Osborne, *Revelation*, 456), apparently not including missional ones.

<sup>1280</sup> Phillips, *Revelation*, 344.

<sup>1281</sup> Trafton, *Revelation*, 116–17; Smalley, *Revelation*, 313. Perhaps one further piece of evidence is its OT background. David E. Aune called attention to verbal and structural parallels between 11:19–12:5 and Isa 66:6–7. This Isaianic passage brings Isa 56–66 to its climax. As Joseph Blenkinsopp notes, “structural and thematic parallels between 66:7–14 and 54:1–17 suggest that the former is the conclusion or epilogue to 56–66” (Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 19B [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008], 293). Thus, one should read Isa 66:7 with the previous material in mind. Accordingly, the woman Zion in labor in 66:7–14 is the same as the one summoned to arise and shine in Isa 60, which is evident in that the entity to whom Yahweh speaks is addressed with verbs and personal pronouns in the feminine gender. Metaphors of light abound: “*shine*, for your light has come” (v. 1); “the *glory* of the Lord has risen upon you” (v. 1); “his *glory* will be seen upon you” (v. 3); “nations shall come to your *light* and kings to the *brightness* of your rising” (v. 3); “you shall see and *be radiant*” (v. 5); “the *glory* of Lebanon” (v. 13); “I will make the place of my feet *glorious*” (v. 13); “the Lord will be your everlasting *light*” (v. 19, 20) and “the Lord will be your *glory*” (v. 19). In addition, vv. 19 and 20 also mention the sun (2x) and the moon (2x), the nouns “light” (3x), and “brightness” (1x), and the verb “give light” (1x). The missionary nature of chapter 60 can be seen right at the beginning, “and nations shall come to your light” (v. 3). Zion is beautiful because of the light of Yahweh (60:7, 9, 13, 19, 21), and will fulfill her mission insofar as she enlightens the world with that light. This idea may also be present in 12:1. Beauty and light are also features of the woman described in Cant 6:10, which is usually referred to as a possible background to Rev 12:1.

<sup>1282</sup> The Greek verb translated as “rule” in several English versions (ESV, NKJV, NIV, NASB,

conflation of Isaiah 66:7<sup>1283</sup> and Psalm 2:9.<sup>1284</sup> By conflating these two OT passages, John indicates that the woman was in labor to give birth to the promised Davidic King. This explains the hostility of the dragon against the child in 12:4.<sup>1285</sup> In other words, the dragon wanted to devour the woman's son to prevent him from fulfilling his mission.<sup>1286</sup> This prepares the reader for the fact that the dragon's attack against the remnant in 12:17 is also provoked by the faithful fulfillment of their commission.<sup>1287</sup> In that regard, the use of μέλλω in the relative clause “who *is going to* (μέλλει) shepherd all the nations” is

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ASV, etc.) is ποιμαίνω, lit., “shepherd” (cf. LEB, HCSB, etc.).

<sup>1283</sup> The clause “she gave birth to a male child” brings the allusion to Isa 66:6–7 in Rev 11:19–12:5 to a conclusion.

<sup>1284</sup> This is the second of three allusions to Ps 2:9 in Revelation (cf. 2:26–27; 12:5; 19:5).

<sup>1285</sup> The perfect tense of ἵστημι in 12:4, “the dragon *stood* before the woman,” suggests that the dragon was in a state of alert in relation to the birth of the woman's son, as though only waiting for his birth in order to kill him.

<sup>1286</sup> This becomes clear through a comparison between vv. 5 and 4 of chapter 12. The verb τίκτω connects v. 5 to v. 4. In v. 4, the dragon's intention of devouring the child is given in a subjunctive clause introduced by a telic ἵνα. Although the ἵνα-clause is not dependent on the verb τίκτω/*give birth* but on ἵστημι/*stand*, it is closely connected to the “birth” event, which is confirmed by the repetition of τίκτω in the ἵνα-clause. This verb plays a major role in chapter 12. It occurs five times (12:2, 4 [2x], 5, 13) and nowhere else in Revelation. Its repetition in 12:1–5 creates a sense of expectation around the birth event. But, there is no hint in the text that the dragon was able to prevent that event from happening. He only “stood” before the woman and waited for the woman to give birth. This sense of expectation created by the repetition of τίκτω suggests that the best translation for ὅταν/*whenever* in 12:4 should be “as soon as” as in 1 Cor 16:12 (BDAG, 406) or Matt 24:32 (EDNT, 1:424). For the use of ὅταν as “as soon as,” see Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary*, s.v. “ὅταν.” While in 12:4 there is an expectation in relation to a future event, in 12:5 τίκτω appears as an aorist indicative, indicating a past event. In 12:5 the future event is the certainty that the Son of the woman will shepherd the nations. While not stated, it is implicit in the narrative that the dragon knew the male child would shepherd the nations, and this is the very event he was trying to avoid.

<sup>1287</sup> This may be similar to the events portrayed in Daniel 11:44–45, where “news from the east and the north” is construed by SDA interpreters as referring to news of the second coming of Christ (see Roy E. Gane, “Methodology for Interpretation of Daniel 11:2–12:3,” *JATS* 27, n. 2 (2016): 334; Doukhan, *Daniel 11 Decoded*, 221; Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation* (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 2015), 22–23. Also, Marc A. Swearingen, *Tidings out of the Northeast: A General Historical Survey of Daniel 11* (Coldwater: Remnant Publications, 2006), 218. This “news” is seen as tantamount to the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6–12 and provokes persecution leading to holy war (Jacques B. Doukhan, *Daniel: The Vision of the End* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1987), 91; Jacques Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2000), 177; Stefanovic, *Daniel*, 421).

somewhat ironic,<sup>1288</sup> since it likely expresses the certainty<sup>1289</sup> that the son of the woman will shepherd the nations despite the opposition of the dragon.<sup>1290</sup> Revelation 12:1–6 indicates that the mission of Jesus and the church cannot be stopped. This prepares the reader for the fact that despite the attack of the dragon against the remnant, they will overcome. Their victory is grounded on “the blood of the Lamb” and “the word of their testimony.” We will briefly focus on the second point.

### Because of the Word of Their Testimony (12:11)

Revelation 12:11 seems to clearly show that the missionary effort of the church awakes the opposition of the evil powers and that the proclamation of the gospel and suffering go together.<sup>1291</sup> While commentators have written much about the meaning of μαρτυρία/*testimony* in this passage as well as its syntactical relationship to αὐτῶν/*their*, the importance of the term λόγος/*word* and its syntactical relationship to the two genitives in the phrase τῆς μαρτυρίας and αὐτῶν has been somewhat overlooked. The

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<sup>1288</sup> The irony increases when one observes that a participial form of μέλλω is used in 12:4 to provide further information about the woman, “she was going to/about to (μελλούσης) give birth.” In 12:5 μέλλω appears in reference to the male child, “who is going to (μέλλει) shepherd the nations.” The implication is that just as it was prophesied that the woman would give birth to a son, and she did, likewise it was prophesied that her Son is going to shepherd the nations, and he will.

<sup>1289</sup> John replaces the future tense ποιμανεῖς/*will shepherd* (Ps 2:9 LXX) with the periphrastic construction μέλλει ποιμαίνειν. While the translation can be the same, the pragmatic effect is different.

<sup>1290</sup> While the notion of certainty occurs mostly with μέλλω followed by a future infinitive, μέλλω plus present infinitive can also be used that way (see *NIDNTTE*, 3:263). This is the second time John uses μέλλω in 12:1–5. In 12:4, the context favors the meaning “be about to” (see BDAG, 627). One should also notice John’s replacement of the pronoun “them” in Ps 2:9 (LXX, ποιμανεῖς αὐτούς; “you will shepherd *them*”) with μέλλει ποιμαίνειν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη/*He will shepherd all the nations*. While πάντα τὰ ἔθνη is used elsewhere in Revelation and the rest of Scripture to refer to the world in opposition to God (Rev 14:8; 18:3; cf. Matt 24:9; Luke 21:24), it is also used in relation to the world as the target of missionary work (Rev 15:4; cf. Matt 24:9; Mark 11:17; 13:10; Luke 24:47; Acts 15:17; Rom 1:5; 15:11; Gal 3:8; 2 Tim 4:17). This phrase occurs about 60 times in the OT and is somewhat frequent in both early Christian and early Jewish literature. See Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 688–89.

<sup>1291</sup> In light of Rev 19:10 and 22:9, some interpreters have proposed that “our brothers” in 12:10 refers to angels, not humans. However, the angel in 19:10 and 22:9 only mentions that he is a “fellow

term αὐτῶν is usually interpreted as a subjective genitive,<sup>1292</sup> “they bear witness.” This reading better fits the context, since the focus of the passage is not that God witnesses about them (objective reading), but that they bore witness about God (subjective reading). Although μαρτυρία in 12:11 certainly has the flavor of martyrdom, martyrdom is not always involved. Seemingly, the idea is that death may certainly happen, but people are not always going to die because of their testimony. The idea is not that “they are *going to die*” but that “they are *willing to die*.”<sup>1293</sup> Otherwise, ἄχρι/*even* would not be necessary in the context. While μαρτυρία can imply martyrdom, martyrdom is not the whole thing. There is something else.

One should notice the relationship between the terms μαρτυρία and λόγος. The two terms also appear together elsewhere in Revelation (1:2, 9; 6:9; 20:4). Whether the genitive μαρτυρίας is expegetical or subjective,<sup>1294</sup> the combination of these two words here points to a missionary attitude on the part of the saints,<sup>1295</sup> in that their testimony involves words and actions.<sup>1296</sup> The context of 12:11 seems to suggest that the content of

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servant” of the saints. The syntax does not allow the conclusion that he is a brother of the saints.

<sup>1292</sup> E.g., Fanning, *Revelation*, 358; Thomas, *Revelation 8–22*, 135. Beale and Osborne mention that αὐτῶν can be either objective or subjective, but they agree that the context favors a subjective reading. See Beale, *Revelation*, 664; Osborne, *Revelation*, 476.

<sup>1293</sup> The use of the term ἄχρι/*until* is similar to that in 2:10. The term is ambiguous. It can refer to time or extent. The “time” sense means that they did not love their lives for as long as they lived, namely, until the time of death. The “extent” sense means that they did not love their lives to such a degree that they were willing to die. While the second is more likely, one should not discard the first. This may be more one example of John’s ambiguous use of words.

<sup>1294</sup> Scholars debate the meaning of the genitive phrase in the sentence τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν/*the word of their testimony*, whether it should be read as expegetical or appositional (“the word, namely, their testimony”)—see, e.g. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 703 (followed by Osborne, *Revelation*, 476); Smalley, *Revelation*, 328—or subjective (“the message that their testimony communicates”—see Fanning, *Revelation*, 358n42, 358; also, Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 135). A decision between the two options is not an easy one.

<sup>1295</sup> So Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 135.

<sup>1296</sup> So Fanning, *Revelation*, 358.



their testimony encompasses “the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority<sup>1297</sup> of his Christ” (12:10).<sup>1298</sup> It is reasonable to conclude that the preaching of the word of God is implied here. They bear witness by preaching the word of God and, for that very reason, they are persecuted.<sup>1299</sup> Also, as happened with μάρτυς in 11:3–7, one should allow the term μαρτυρία here to be ambiguous enough to include verbal proclamation and personal testimony, with a certain overlap of the notion of martyrdom. Persecution, however, is not the only method of opposition utilized by the dragon. He also uses deceptive speech. This is addressed in Revelation 12:15.

### Water out of the Mouth of the Serpent

Persecution is a method the dragon uses to stop mission, but it is not the only one. The reference to an overflowing flood in 12:15 is construed by various interpreters as an allusion to persecution and deceit.<sup>1300</sup> The idea of deceit is enhanced by the term “mouth,” which is a recurrent metonym for speech in Revelation.<sup>1301</sup> The symbol of a

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<sup>1297</sup> The reference to the authority of Christ may be reminiscent of Jesus’ affirmation that he received “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matt 28:18; cf. Ps 2:8; John 17:2). See Pugh, “Revelation,” 323; Swete, *Apocalypse*, 152; Mounce, *Revelation*, 238n11; Wilcock, *Revelation*, 121n1; Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 363–64; Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 133; Smalley, *Revelation*, 327; Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 700.

<sup>1298</sup> As Buist Fanning notes, “the need for Christians to testify faithfully to God’s saving work through Christ despite persecution and even martyrdom is a major theme throughout Revelation, and terms like ‘word, message’ and ‘testimony, witness’ repeatedly occur” (Fanning, *Revelation*, 358).

<sup>1299</sup> Grant Osborne concurs, “the martyrdom of the saints is due to their ‘testimony’ (6:9; 12:17; 20:4), as exemplified in the two witnesses of 11:3–7” (Osborne, *Revelation*, 476). See also, Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 465.

<sup>1300</sup> The list is too big. See the more detailed assessment by Beale, *Revelation*, 671–75.

<sup>1301</sup> Fanning, *Revelation*, 102; Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 98. Interestingly, John uses the term “dragon” with some consistency throughout chapter 12 (vv. 3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17). Thus, the switch from “dragon” to “serpent” in 12:15 seems to be intentional. This is reminiscent of the serpent of Gen 3:1–7 and its deceptive discourse in the garden of Eden (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 400; Tonstad, *Revelation*, 185–86; Trafton, *Revelation*, 118; Leithart, *Revelation*, 43; Boxall, *Revelation*, 185). One internal piece of evidence for this thought is that “the serpent” in 12:5 refers back to “the old serpent” in 12:9, which is more widely accepted as an allusion to Gen 3.

mouth stands for deceptive speech or blasphemies elsewhere in the book (16:13; cf. 13:2, 5, 6), which reflects a propaganda campaign led by the dragon in consonance with his two allies. The reference to the overflowing flood coming out of the mouth of the dragon anticipates the propaganda of the satanic trinity in chapter 13.<sup>1302</sup> Opposition to the mission of the church comes in the form of persecution and false doctrines. As Chapter 13 will show, these resources are used against the remnant.

### The War Against the Remnant

Revelation 12:17 brings chapter 12 to its climax by concentrating on the attack of the dragon against the remnant. Chapter 12 shows that the dragon was not able to stand against Christ and the church. Now, he drives his hatred against “the remnant of her seed” (KJV). Thus, Revelation 12 describes the dragon’s attack against Christ, the church, and the remnant. These attacks take place in different stages of Christian history, running, respectively, from the time of John to the time of the end: more precisely, the apostolic era, the post-apostolic era (the 1,260 days), and the end-time era.<sup>1303</sup> Revelation 12:17 concerns the third era<sup>1304</sup> and, thus, the remnant referred to therein is the

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<sup>1302</sup> Interestingly, while the dragon has a mouth outpouring water like a river (12:15), the sea beast has a mouth “like a lion’s mouth” (13:2) that speaks blasphemies (13:5, 6), and the earth beast speaks like a dragon (13:11). This brings to mind the *mouth* of the dragon, the *mouth* of the beast, and the *mouth* of the false prophet giving origin to three unclean spirits (16:13). As Joseph L. Mangina rightly observes, this is more fearful than persecution itself. “It is not the hard power of legions and armor that the Christian should fear. Far more dangerous is the soft power of speech, language, and propaganda” (Joseph L. Mangina, *Revelation*, BTCB [Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010], 188).

<sup>1303</sup> Kenneth A. Strand, “The Seven Heads: Do They Represent Roman Emperors?,” in *Symposium on Revelation: Book 2*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, DARCOM 7 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 183; William H. Shea, “Time Prophecies of Daniel 12 and Revelation 12–13,” in *Symposium on Revelation: Book 1*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, DARCOM 6 (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 346; Paulien, “The 1,260 Days in the Book of Revelation,” 9–13.

<sup>1304</sup> Various scholars point out that 12:17 serves as an introduction to the material in chapters 13 and 14. See, for instance, Moloney, *Apocalypse*, 187–88; Moffat, “Revelation,” 428; Fee, *Revelation*, 174; Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 376. The fact that 12:17 introduces the material in Rev 13–14 suggests that John

eschatological one,<sup>1305</sup> who will endure the onslaught of the dragon and his two allies.

The eschatological remnant is described as “those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus” (12:17b). This twofold characterization is quite significant for the understanding of their mission. This is part of a concept that permeates the book of Revelation (1:2, 9; 6:9; 12:17; 14:12; 20:4; cf. 12:11; 19:10).<sup>1306</sup> Some observations are necessary. First, at this point, the reader is aware that God’s people face suffering on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus (1:9; 6:9; cf. 20:4). Persecution is unleashed in response to their unwavering testimony. Consequently, the intense opposition in chapter 13 must be interpreted as the result of the remnant’s fidelity described in 12:17.

Second, 12:17b—along with 14:12b—differs from the other the-word-of-God-and-the-testimony-of-Jesus passages in that, rather than applying the more generic term

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sees the war between the dragon and the remnant from the perspective of the final events (Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 337). This does not mean that the twofold characteristic of 12:17 applies only to God’s end-time people. As argued by Hans LaRondelle, this is “the essential characteristic of Christ’s faithful followers during the entire Christian age” (LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 198).

<sup>1305</sup> Time and space do not allow a deeper assessment of the notion of remnant. For a brief survey, see Hans K. LaRondelle and Jon Paulien, *The Bible Jesus Interpreted* (Loma Linda: Jon Paulien, 2014), 123–29. The concept of remnant runs throughout the OT and NT. G. F. Hasel wrote a helpful article showing that the concept can be applied to three different groups: the historical remnant, the faithful remnant, and the eschatological remnant. The remnant in Rev 12:17 is the third one. For details, see G. F. Hasel, “Remnant,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 130–34. For a deeper analysis of the term *λοιπός/remnant* in Revelation based on its background in the OT and NT, see Leslie N. Pollard, “The Function of *Λοιπός* in Contexts of Judgment and Salvation in the Book of Revelation” (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2007). Leslie N. Pollard observes that the remnant motif pervades the Apocalypse of John. Obviously, there is more on remnant in Revelation than remnant terminology can convey, as Pollard himself admits (Pollard, “The Function of *Λοιπός*,” 416). His study, however, is focused on the term *λοιπός*. He asserts that the term *λοιπός* (“rest,” “remnant”) is applied to establishing a visible contrast between the worshipers of idols and the worshipers of the true God. In that connection, “the remnant [of God] maintain covenant loyalty despite widespread deception (2:24), physical calamity (11:13), and eschatological persecution (12:17)” (p. 411). Conversely, “a counter-remnant . . . worship the idols (9:20), constitute an organized end-time resistance against the Lamb (19:21), and receive annihilation at the final judgment (20:5)” (p. 415).

<sup>1306</sup> Strand, “The Two Witnesses,” 132.

“the *word* of God,” it introduces the more specific “the *commandments* of God.”<sup>1307</sup> The similarity between the two passages is not accidental. They provide the ethical “lens” through which one is to read the eschatological climax in 13:1–14:11. Elsewhere in the NT,<sup>1308</sup> the noun *ἐντολή/commandment* may refer to the Decalogue<sup>1309</sup> or can have a more general sense, such as instructions uttered by God, Jesus, or other people.<sup>1310</sup> However, since the ark of the covenant is mentioned in 11:19, the term *ἐντολαί/commandments* in 12:17 evokes the image of the tablets of stone placed into the ark in the Israelite sanctuary (Exod 25:16, 21; cf. Deut 10:1–5).<sup>1311</sup>

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<sup>1307</sup> So Tonstad, *Saving God's Reputation*, 171. As a matter of fact, the Greek word for “commandment” (*ἐντολή*) occurs only here and in 14:12b.

<sup>1308</sup> The noun *ἐντολή* occurs sixty-seven times in the NT. Almost half of its occurrences are found in the Johannine literature (10 in the Gospel, 14 in 1 John, 4 in 2 John, and 2 in Revelation).

<sup>1309</sup> E.g., Matt 19:17–19 = Mark 10:19 = Luke 18:20; cf. Eph 6:2.

<sup>1310</sup> Johannes Kovar, “The Remnant and God’s Commandments: Revelation 12:17,” in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology 1 (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 113. Kovar rightly observes that “it is not always clear what the Bible means by ‘God’s commandments.’ Sometimes it seems to be the entire Torah, and sometimes it refers specifically to the Ten Commandments or a single commandment” (p. 115). In Revelation, the meaning of the phrase “the commandments of God” has been a matter of debate, with manifold suggestions (pp. 116–17).

<sup>1311</sup> David E. Aune holds a similar position. He argues that *ἐντολαί* may refer to “the second table of the Decalogue and the love commandment” (Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 709). He is surely right when contending that the NT has the tendency of encapsulating the whole law “in either the two commands to love God and love one’s neighbor (Mark 12:28-31 = Matt 22:36-40 [. . .]) or the command to love one’s neighbor (Rom 13:8-10; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8 [. . .])” (p. 711). However, Aune has not given due emphasis to the fact that by conflating Deut 5:6 and Lev 19:18 in one commandment (cf. Mark 12:28–31), Jesus provides a summary of the two tablets of the Decalogue. While it is true that the short lists of commandments in the NT always include only the second tablet of the Decalogue (Matt 19:17–19; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Rom 13:9; 1 Tim 1:9–10), three things must be considered. First, these passages are addressing the particular issue of loving one’s neighbor; thus, there is no need to mention the commandments of the first tablet. Second, based on Jesus’ statement in Mark 12:28–31 (see discussion by Dale C. Allison Jr., “Mark 12:28-31 and the Decalogue,” in *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Craig A. Evans and W. Richard Stegner [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994], 270–78), one should admit that the whole Decalogue is implied even if commandments of the first tablet are not mentioned. Third, and more importantly, as far as Rev 12:17 is concerned, one must consider the strong emphasis on worship in Rev 13–14 (13:4 [2x], 8, 12, 15; 14:7, 9, 11), which brings to mind the first tablet. Rev 14:7 is a call to worship the true God as opposed to the dragon, the beast, and its image (Rev 13). With such a scenario in chapters 13–14, it is very hard to think that John had only the second tablet of the Decalogue in mind when registering the content of 12:17. Craig R. Koester follows the same train of thought when

Thus, this hints that the end-time message includes not only the restoration of the heavenly temple associated with a pre-advent judgment, but also that the law of God and his justice should be the basis upon which the judgment unfolds. Both the sanctuary (Deut 12:5, 11; cf. Ezek 20:9)<sup>1312</sup> and the moral law<sup>1313</sup> are representations of God’s character and reputation.<sup>1314</sup> By alluding to the sanctuary in 11:19 and 15:5–8 and to the Decalogue in 12:17 and 14:12, John likely intended 12–14 to be read as pointing to a sort of end-time Yom Kippur.<sup>1315</sup> Additionally, the references to the Decalogue in 12:17 and 14:12 indicate that the events portrayed in 13:1–14:11 are connected to the vindication of God’s character and the worship of the true God. In Chapter 6 of this dissertation, it was argued that the end-time message encompasses four elements, namely, the gospel, the prophecies of Daniel, the prophecies of Revelation, and the judgment in the heavenly

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contending that commandments here include “especially those that promote the worship of God and warn against idolatry . . . and other sins mentioned in Revelation” (Koester, *Revelation*, 554).

For more details on the Decalogue in Revelation, see Kovar, “The Remnant and God’s Commandments,” 119–23; Kovar reports that connections between some Revelation passages and the Decalogue are recognized by several scholars (pp. 120, 122). See also MacCarty, *In Granite or Ingrained*, 199–200; Jon Paulien, “Revisiting the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” *JATS* 9 (1998): 182–85; Anthony MacPherson, “The Mark of the Beast as a ‘Sign Commandment’ and ‘Anti-Sabbath’ in the Worship Crisis of Revelation 12-14,” *AUSS* 43 (2005): 276–78.

<sup>1312</sup> Roy Gane, *Who’s Afraid of the Judgment?: The Good News about Christ’s Work in the Heavenly Sanctuary* (Oshawa: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2006), 40.

<sup>1313</sup> Dederen, *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, 12:460–61; David VanDrunen, *Divine Covenants and Moral Order: A Biblical Theology of Natural Law*, ed. John Witte Jr., Emory University Studies in Law and Religion (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 436–37; Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 104–5.

<sup>1314</sup> The connection between the sanctuary and the law can be seen in the annual ritual of Yom Kippur. As Schwantes remarks, this ritual was centered on the Decalogue (Lev 16:15, 16). See Siegfried J. Schwantes, “An Alternative to Humanism,” in *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, DARCOM 3 (Washington: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 337–38. The connection between the sanctuary and the Decalogue is further enhanced by various allusions to the sanctuary and Sinai throughout Revelation (Tonstad, *Saving God’s Reputation*, 173–74). Images of the sanctuary and Sinai are bound together in 11:19.

<sup>1315</sup> Roy Gane remarks that the notion of a pre-advent judgment has been widely rejected under the argument that it denies the forgiveness Christians already have in Jesus. He explains that rather than deny forgiveness, the pre-advent judgment reaffirms it (for details, see Gane, *Who’s Afraid*, 41–42).

temple. Now, a fifth element must be added, i.e, the end-time proclamation also includes the message about the validity of the Ten Commandments for Christians.<sup>1316</sup> In the words of Joe M. Sprinkle, the moral law “is a prelude to the gospel” in that it “is necessary to help sinners see their need of a mediator or priest between themselves and God and see that they are in need of a savior.”<sup>1317</sup> The remnant is hated and persecuted for bearing such a message. Apparently, the dragon wants to defeat them with the purpose of subverting “the message that is in their possession.”<sup>1318</sup> This leads us to the next observation.

Third, as with the two witnesses in 11:3–13, the missionary endeavors of the remnant in 12:17 are portrayed in connection with loyal discipleship, since they follow the steps of the Faithful Witness. This is hinted by the second part of the doublet, “who keep the commandments of God and *have the testimony of Jesus*” (NKJV).<sup>1319</sup> There is no reason to take ἔχω in 12:17 as meaning something other than its most basic sense of “have,” indicating possession.<sup>1320</sup> The genitive Ἰησοῦ in πίστις Ἰησοῦ/*faith of Jesus* and

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<sup>1316</sup> On the validity of the Ten Commandments for Christians, see Joe M. Sprinkle, *Biblical Law and its Relevance: A Christian Understanding and Ethical Application for Today of the Mosaic Regulations* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2006), and Especially Roy E. Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017).

<sup>1317</sup> Sprinkle, *Biblical Law*, 26. In addition to the idea that “the law is a prelude to the gospel,” Sprinkle lists five other ways to see the validity of the Mosaic law for Christians: the law “serves to restrain sinners, . . . is a guide for Christian living, . . . shows the holy yet merciful character of God, . . . points to Christ who is the fulfilling of the law.” In addition, “Biblical civil laws are suggestive for modern jurisprudence.” (see pages 26-27).

<sup>1318</sup> Sigve K. Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2009), 473.

<sup>1320</sup> This is similar to what happens in 19:10 and 6:9. In the latter, it is mentioned that the martyrs were slaughtered “because of the word of God and because of the testimony which were continuously in their possession” (my translation). The verb ἔχω links 12:17 to 6:9 and 19:10. The observation by R. H. Charles is helpful at this point: “Many scholars have taken the witness to be that which the martyrs had borne to Christ; but the expression εἶχον/*they had* is against such a view, and implies a testimony that has been given them by Christ and which they have preserved” (Charles, *Revelation*, 1:174). Accordingly, both

in μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ/*the testimony of Jesus* is generally understood by scholars as subjective,<sup>1321</sup> meaning the personal testimony of Jesus<sup>1322</sup> conveyed by the apostles.<sup>1323</sup> By stating that the remnant is in possession of the testimony of Jesus, John implies that, just like the apostles, the remnant is in charge of proclaiming the gospel. The missionary effort of the church awakes the hatred of the evil powers.<sup>1324</sup> The fact that the dragon enlists two allies for his final attack against the church is not surprising since, as we saw

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the word of God and the personal testimony of Jesus were in their possession. That must also be the sense in 19:10, where the genitive construction in the phrase “the testimony of Jesus” could hardly be objective, otherwise the definition of the phrase as “the spirit of prophecy” would sound somewhat awkward (see Charles, *Revelation*, 1:174; Tonstad, *Saving God’s Reputation*, 180–81). Additionally, only a few scholars have paid attention to the tense of εἶχον and its implications in 6:9 (Osborne, *Revelation*, 285; Fanning, *Revelation*, 247n44; Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 444n98). It is in the imperfect tense. As opposed to the aorist tense, which sees the action as a summary, the imperfect tense focuses on the action as it unfolds. In other words, John emphasizes the progressive efforts of the saints to maintain that which was entrusted to them by Christ. This certainly involved not only preservation, but also transmission of the message.

<sup>1321</sup> Tonstad, *Saving God’s Reputation*, 179. Indeed, he asserts that most genitives in the doublets (cf. 1:2, 9; 6:9; 12:17; 14:12; 20:4) are interpreted as subjective (p. 179). Gerhard Pfandl states that outside Revelation, genitive constructions with μαρτυρία are also always subjective (Gerhard Pfandl, “The Remnant Church and the Spirit of Prophecy,” in Holbrook, *Symposium on Revelation: Book 2*, 321), but this is doubtful. For instance, “the testimony of Christ” in 1 Cor 1:6 likely refers to the testimony that others gave about Christ as they preached the gospel. Perhaps it would be safer to state that genitive constructions in the NT with *martyria* or *martyrion* tend to be subjective.

<sup>1322</sup> Tonstad, *Saving God’s Reputation*, 179n63.

<sup>1323</sup> Strand, “The Two Witnesses,” 134. R. C. H. Lenski refers to the testimony of Jesus as “the entire gospel” (Lenski, *Revelation*, 386–87). A similar construction occurs in 1 John 5:9, where the phrase “the testimony of God” clearly has a subjective genitive explained by a clause introduced by an exegetical or appositive ὅτι (so Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John: Translated, with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, AB 30 [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008], 588; Karen H. Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, ZECNT [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014], 223, among others). The testimony of God is his witness about his Son. In Revelation, the testimony of Jesus is the testimony that he bears about himself.

<sup>1324</sup> Interestingly, just as the faithful testimony of the two witnesses seems to be the reason why the beast that rises from the abyss *makes war* against them (11:7), likewise the faithful work of the remnant seems to be the reason why both the dragon (12:17) and the beast (13:7) *make war* against them. Also, John’s allusion to the exodus in Rev 15:2–5 as well as his emphasis on the fact that God will be universally glorified and worshiped provide the lens through which one should read the seven plagues series. However, the exodus account also sheds light on the present discussion in that, just as Pharaoh intended to prevent God’s name from being known throughout the world (see Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 28–31), the false trinity seems to have the same purpose. God’s victory in the first exodus had the goal of making God’s name known throughout the world (7:5, 17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 16, 29; 10:2; 14:4, 8; cf. 5:2; 6:3, 7), and God’s victory over the beast will have the same effect, but this time in an escalated manner (Rev 15:2–4; also, chapters 21–22).

in the previous chapter, 11:11–13 points to an intensification of the proclamation of the gospel in the time of the end, which is paralleled by an intensification of persecution.

### **The Endurance and Faith of the Saints**

The final statement in Revelation 13:10 (“Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints”) describes the loyal witness of the remnant of 12:17 despite the intense activities of the beast in 13:1–8. As astonishing as the activities and blasphemies of the sea beast might be, John seems to indicate that even more impressive are the endurance and faith of the saints in the face of intense opposition. John calls attention to the saying at the end of the first half of chapter 13 (vv. 1–10) by applying a rhetorical device in the fashion of some of Jesus’ sayings registered in the Synoptic Gospels,<sup>1325</sup> “if anyone has an ear, let him hear.”

While the meaning of the two conditional sentences in 13:10 has been a matter of intense debate in recent scholarship,<sup>1326</sup> the end of the verse is clearly a reference to the

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<sup>1325</sup> Cf. Matt 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9, 23; Luke 8:8; 14:35; cf. Matt 19:12 (also Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). David E. Aune asserts that this is an aphorism rooted in Jesus’ tradition, both canonical and noncanonical (see Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 150–51, and the excursus on “The Sayings of Jesus in Revelation” on pp. 264–65).

<sup>1326</sup> Scholars have debated whether they are a warning to unbelievers that they will face retribution for persecuting the saints or a word of encouragement addressed to believers in the certainty that they will face severe opposition. For a summary of the two views, see Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 166–69. The debate is tied to textual issues and more connected to the verb in the protasis of the second conditional sentence (i.e., ἀποκτενεῖ/will kill, kills or ἀποκτανθῆναι/to be killed). Bruce M. Metzger asserts that “among a dozen variant readings, the least unsatisfactory appears to be” ἀποκτανθῆναι, which is supported by codex Alexandrinus (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 675). According to this reading, the Christians are in focus and, thus, they are the ones addressed with a prediction that they will suffer. This is the reading adopted by UBS<sup>5</sup>, NA<sup>28</sup>, and SBLGNT, and followed by CSB, ESV, ISV, NIV, TNIV, REB, NJB, NAB, NCV, NLT, HCSB, NET, LEB, and various commentators (e.g., Anthony C. Garland, *A Testimony of Jesus Christ: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation* [Galaxie Software, 2006], Rev 13:10; Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 750; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:355; Beale, *Revelation*, 704; Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 166; Fanning, *Revelation*, 374; Brighton, *Revelation*, 347; Smalley, *Revelation*, 344). The variant ἀποκτενεῖ (“will kill”) or ἀποκτενει (“kills”) is adopted by the Greek editions CGT, Elzevir, ExpGT, GNTESPT, Scrivener, Westcott-Hort, and Tischendorf, as well as the English translations ASV, ERV, KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, and NASB (for arguments for this view, see, e.g., Lenski, *Revelation*, 401–2; Walvoord, *Revelation*, 204). It is not easy to make a decision. However, the data and the immediate context seem to favor reading it as a prediction that



loyalty of the saints despite persecution. The reference to the endurance and faith of the saints occupies a strategic position in chapter 13, between the descriptions of the activities of the sea beast (13:1–8) and those of the earth beast (13:11–18). This is evidence that the remnant of 12:17—referred to as saints here (cf. 14:12)—are the target of attacks from not only the dragon (12:17) but also his two allies (13:7, 15). In that connection, a brief analysis of key-terms and themes in 13:1–18 can shed light on the understanding of 13:10b. As one will see below, 13:1–18 seems to portray a sort of great commission in the reverse.

### Authority

The term ἐξουσία/*authority* appears five times in 13:1–18. These multiple uses may be reminiscent of the same term in 12:10, where an allusion to Jesus' authority as mentioned in Matthew 28:18 is possible.<sup>1327</sup> In the context of 13:2, 4, however, the sea beast receives authority from the dragon.<sup>1328</sup> The geographical extent of its investiture reaches the entire earth (13:7). That this beast is a caricature of Jesus can also be seen by various other parallels with his earthly ministry.<sup>1329</sup> In addition, after its “resurrection,”

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the saints will face suffering. For further analysis of the reading adopted by the UBS<sup>5</sup> and the two major variants, see Philip W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary: Commentary on the Variant Readings of the Ancient New Testament Manuscripts* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2008), 844–45. A more detailed analysis is performed by Joël Delobel, “Le text de l’Apocalypse: Problèmes de Méthode,” in *L’Apocalypse Johannique et l’Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament*, ed. Jan Lambrecht (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1980), 162–65.

<sup>1327</sup> As David E. Aune remarks, “elsewhere in the NT and early Jewish literature, authority is said to be given by God to Jesus or to a Jewish redeemer figure.” Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 700.

<sup>1328</sup> Rev 17:12–13 hints that the dragon gives authority to the beast by means of the kings of the earth. He manages to entice the world by means of deceit. It is noteworthy that, except for 2:20, all the other occurrences of πλανᾶω/*deceive* are found in the second half of Revelation (12:9; 13:14; 18:23; 19:20; 20, 3, 8, 10).

<sup>1329</sup> See Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 378. For more details on the dragon, the sea beast, and the earth beast as counterfeits of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, see tables on pages 377–79.

the earth beast “exercises all the authority of the first beast” on its behalf<sup>1330</sup> (13:12). In 13:11, John mentions that he saw “another (ἄλλος) beast” (13:11). These data recall Jesus’ farewell discourse in which he introduces the “other (ἄλλος) Parakletos” (John 14:16; cf. 15:26).<sup>1331</sup> It seems that the second beast would lead to a false Pentecost. Indeed, afterwards it is portrayed as the false prophet (16:13; 19:20; 20:10).

### False Pentecost

The fire coming down from heaven in 13:13 is construed by most interpreters as reminiscent of the combat between Elijah and the prophets of Baal at Carmel (1 Kgs 18:24–39),<sup>1332</sup> but an allusion to the Pentecost cannot be discarded.<sup>1333</sup> The parallelism between 13:13 and 13:14 indicates that this Pentecost-like phenomenon has the purpose of deceiving “those who dwell on earth” (13:14).<sup>1334</sup> It is not surprising that the land beast

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<sup>1330</sup> The prepositional phrase ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ can mean either “in the presence of” or “on behalf of.” The second option better fits the context of 13:11–18. See BDAG, 342.

<sup>1331</sup> Wall, *Revelation*, 171; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 379.

<sup>1332</sup> Various interpreters also see the activities of the second beast as “an ironic echo of the acts of Moses, whose prophetic authority was validated by ‘great signs’ (e.g., Exod. 4:17, 30; 10:2; 11:10).” See Beale, *Revelation*, 708. Also, Patterson, *Revelation*, 283; Phillips, *Revelation*, 378; Moloney, *Apocalypse*, 206; Fanning, *Revelation*, 377. Just as the signs performed by Moses attracted the attention of the people to Yahweh, the signs of the second beast have the goal of leading people to worshiping the sea beast (Leithart, *Revelation*, 63).

<sup>1333</sup> So Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 430; Thomas, *Revelation 8–22*, 176; Utley, *Hope in Hard Times*, 98; Yeatts, *Revelation*, 248; Walvoord, *Revelation*, 207; Sweet, *Revelation*, 2016 (followed by Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 390n29); J. Hampton Keathley III, *Studies in Revelation* (Galaxie Software, 2002), Rev 13:13; Damon C. Dodd, *The Book of Revelation*, Clear Study Series (Nashville: Randall House, 2000), 52. A few commentators see connections between the Pentecost (Acts 2) and the narrative of Elijah and the prophets of Baal (e.g., Derek W. H. Thomas, *Acts*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, REC [Phillipsburg: P&R, 2011], 46; Kenneth O. Gangel, *Acts*, HNTC 5 [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998], 31), but the connections, if any, are very tenuous.

<sup>1334</sup> Peter J. Leithart argues that 13:11–15 forms a chiasm structure, with the signs in 13:13–14 placed at the vertex of that chiasm (Leithart, *Revelation*, 2:62). Compare “it performs great signs before (ἐνώπιον) men” (13:13) to “the signs . . . to perform on behalf of (ἐνώπιον) the beast” (13:14). Craig R. Koester remarks that “by performing signs the beast from the land gives the impression that it possesses genuine prophetic authority and that the beast from the sea, whom it serves, is truly a godlike being” (Koester, *Revelation*, 592).

is identified further in the book as the false prophet (16:13). Scholars have also pointed out that the activities of the second beast counterfeit those of the two witnesses (11:5–6).<sup>1335</sup> If this assessment is correct, it follows that, while the end-time message based on the Word of God is proclaimed by the church,<sup>1336</sup> the second beast deceives the inhabitants of the earth by telling lies under the authority of the first beast (13:12; cf. v. 14). In fact, these two beasts perform intense counterpropaganda.

### Counterpropaganda

There is much talking on the part of the dragon’s two allies in 13:1–18. As with the serpent in 12:15, the reference to the mouth of the beast in 13:5–6 denotes deceptive discourse. The mouth of the beast is portrayed as its most important organ.<sup>1337</sup> Its mouth utters “haughty and blasphemous words” (13:5; cf. v. 1) against God (13:6).<sup>1338</sup> Its blasphemies also include deceit insofar as they denigrate the name of God.<sup>1339</sup> In fact, the beast’s blasphemies against God are blasphemies against God’s character and his

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<sup>1335</sup> Gerhard A. Krodel, *Revelation*, ACNT (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1989), 253; Osborne, *Revelation*, 513; Koester, *Revelation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 129; Yeatts, *Revelation*, 256. For a helpful chart contrasting the second beast and the two witnesses, see Mark Wilson, *Charts on the Book of Revelation: Literary, Historical, and Theological Perspectives* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2007), 57.

<sup>1336</sup> The idea of fire coming out of the mouth of the two witnesses likely alludes to Jer 5:14 and, hence, implies verbal proclamation. See Andrew G. Shead, *A Mouth Full of Fire: The Word of God in the Words of Jeremiah*, NSBT (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 54–55. Beale remarks, “Rev. 11:5 portrays the true Christian prophets . . . There the fire portrays the speaking of God’s true word that convicts and judges sinners” (Beale, *Revelation*, 709).

<sup>1337</sup> Roloff, *Revelation*, 157.

<sup>1338</sup> Chapter 13 (vv. 1, 5, 6) has three out of the five occurrences of βλασφημία (cf. 2:9; 17:3) in Revelation. The verbal form also occurs here (13:6; cf. 16:9, 11, 21). Words from this root play an important role in 13:1–8.

<sup>1339</sup> See Smalley, *Revelation*, 340. The target of the beast’s blasphemies is further clarified by an exegetical infinitive cognate to the noun βλασφημία (i.e., βλασφημῆσαι). See Alexander Buttmann, *A Grammar of the New Testament Greek* (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1891), 400.

sanctuary (13:6).<sup>1340</sup> In a word, God’s reputation is at stake! In that sense, the message uttered by the sea beast stands in visible contrast to the first angel’s message, which calls attention to God’s reputation as the Creator of the universe and the judgment in his sanctuary (14:7). Thus, the sea beast’s speech is propaganda against the true gospel connected to the three angels’ messages. This will be further explored in the next chapter.

The discourse of the first beast is joined by that of the second beast. When John saw the second beast, it was “speaking<sup>1341</sup> like a dragon” (13:11).<sup>1342</sup> Its lies have the purpose of convincing the inhabitants of the earth that the first beast is godlike enough to deserve worship (13:12b). That this deception is performed by means of discourse becomes evident in v. 14. The verb *πλανάω/deceive* is elaborated by an adverbial participle following it (*λέγων/telling*).<sup>1343</sup> In fact, the Greek text suggests that deceptive speech reinforces the signs performed by the earth beast. In other words, “it deceives . . . because of<sup>1344</sup> the signs . . . and by telling” (13:14).

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<sup>1340</sup> The term for sanctuary here is *σκηνή*, not *ναός*, but the meaning is basically the same (Jan Paulsen, “Sanctuary and Judgment,” in Holbrook, *Symposium on Revelation: Book 2*, 277). Indeed, passages such as 7:15 and 15:5 indicate a close relation between the two in Revelation. For instance, according to Wilhelm Michaelis, *ναός τῆς σκηνης* in 15:5 is likely “a combination of *ναός τοῦ θεοῦ* in 11:19 and *σκηνή* in 13:3” (Wilhelm Michaelis, “*Σκηνή, Σκῆνος, Σκῆνωμα, Σκηνόω, Ἐπισκηνόω, Κατασκηνόω, Σκηνοπηγία, Σκηνοποιός*,” *TDNT* 377).

<sup>1341</sup> The Greek verb is in the imperfect tense (*ἐλάλει*), indicating a continuous act.

<sup>1342</sup> Interestingly, while speaking like a dragon, it looked like a lamb. This suggests that this beast “projects an attempt to undermine the achievement of the real ‘lamb’ featured” in Revelation” (Tonstad, *Revelation*, 193). Several explanations have been given for the simile “like a dragon.” The idea that it refers to deceptive speech best fits the context. The text does not mention the content of its discourse. However, since “it exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf” (13:12a; cf. v. 14), it seems that its speech is as blasphemous as that of the first beast.

<sup>1343</sup> Usually, adverbial participles following the main verb elaborate by clarifying how the action is accomplished. Also, notice that both *πλανάω/deceive* and *λέγω/tell* have the same addressee, namely, “those who dwell on earth.” Most English versions replace the second occurrence of “those who dwell on earth” with the pronoun “them.”

<sup>1344</sup> Although KJV has translated *διὰ τὰ σημεῖα* as “by means of the signs,” it is better to take *διὰ* as meaning “because of,” since it is followed by the accusative (e.g., NIV, LEB, NASB, HCSB). The same

Accordingly, words along with deeds are applied by the second beast so as to lead “those who dwell on earth . . . to make an image for the beast” (13:14). Whatever that image means,<sup>1345</sup> it is intended to impose false worship under penalty of death (13:15; cf. Dan 3). Remarkably, the earth beast gives “breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast might *even speak*” (13:15, italics added). However, the speaking of the image is as false as the image itself.<sup>1346</sup> It seems clear that this is a parody of the breath of life invigorating the two witnesses (11:11). This may suggest that the making of an image of the beast is an act of resistance against the proclamation of the gospel in the time of the end.<sup>1347</sup> As seen above, this involves signs, deceptive discourse, and even a decree of death. Revelation 13 suggests that the two allies of the dragon engage in intense propaganda to promote false worship as a counterfeit of the call to true worship.<sup>1348</sup> The two beasts of Revelation 13<sup>1349</sup> seek to oppose the preaching of the end-time message by

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is true regarding 12:11 (cf. 6:9). See Moulton and Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 3:267; Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 584.

<sup>1345</sup> For a very helpful discussion on the image of the beast, see Rebekah Yi Liu, “The Backgrounds and Meaning of the Image of the Beast in Rev 13:14, 15” (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2016).

<sup>1346</sup> See Lange, *Revelation*, 271. Scholars have noticed that the reference to the breath is reminiscent of Genesis 2:7. See Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 431; Tonstad, *Revelation*, 195; Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 392; Paul, *Revelation*, 237. Since the language of 13:15 is reminiscent of Gen 2:7, it is likely that the notion of an image of the beast (13:14–15) is also reminiscent of Gen 1:26–27, where it is said that humankind was created in the image of God. If this assessment is correct, it follows that Rev 13:13–14 indicates that the false trinity intends to subvert the image of God in humanity by forging an image in the likeness of the beast. Perhaps, there is also here an imitation of Ezekiel’s vision about the dead bones coming to life again in Eze 37 (so Thomas and Macchia, *Revelation*, 241), which enhances the notion that the land beast is a false prophet (cf. Rev 16:13)

<sup>1347</sup> In her relevant study on the image of the beast, Rebekah Yi Liu arrives at the conclusion that the term εἰκών/*image* alludes to the creation of man in the image of God but also points forward to the full restoration of the image of God in man in the new creation. In that sense, the book of Revelation reveals that the image of the beast counteracts “the divine program of restoring the image of God in human beings.” See Liu, “The Image of the Beast,” 304–6. For more details, see pages 63–136.

<sup>1348</sup> The land beast is also lamb-like (Rev 13:11) and, hence, a counterfeit of Christ, the true Lamb.

<sup>1349</sup> Interestingly, thirty-seven out of the thirty-nine occurrences of θηρίον/*beast* in Revelation occur in the second half of the book (12–22), with sixteen occurrences only in Rev 13. This datum is

imposing a system of idolatry.<sup>1350</sup>

## Idolatry

Monotheism and mission go together. It is not surprising that idolatry is the very means utilized by the satanic trinity to oppose mission. For mission to be successful, it is necessary to confront idolatry.<sup>1351</sup> As many scholars have observed, worship is central in Revelation 13–14. The dragon is worshiped in 13:4, the beast is worshiped in 13:4, 8, 12 (cf. 14:9, 11), and the very image<sup>1352</sup> of the beast is worshiped in 13:15 (cf. 14:9, 11).<sup>1353</sup> The verb προσκυνέω/*to worship* is used eight times in Revelation 13–14. In seven of these occurrences, the dragon or the beast is the object of worship (cf. 13:4 [2x], 8, 12, 15; 14:9, 11),<sup>1354</sup> whereas God is the object of worship only once (14:7).<sup>1355</sup> However, as

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relevant insofar as it connects the end-time worldwide idolatrous system to one of the four covenant curses in Lev 26:21–26 and Deut 28:23–25, i.e., wild beasts, sword, pestilence, and famine. As Liu puts it, “The dominion of human beings over θηρίων is conditional, depending upon human attitudes toward the covenant.” See Liu, “The Image of the Beast,” 306.

<sup>1350</sup> Rev 17 indicates that their propaganda is successful. It gives birth to a coalition with global proportions (17:13, 15; cf. 16:13–14). This is anticipated in 13:7 with its reference to the fact that the beast was given authority “over every tribe and people and language and nation.” This recalls John’s commission in 10:11 and indicates that the world is the missionary arena of both God and his people, on the one hand, and the evil powers, on the other hand. Both sides are seeking to reach the inhabitants of the earth. Rev 12–14 also suggests a sharp polarization between the remnant (12:17; 13:7, 10; 14:12) and the worshipers of the false trinity (13:4, 8, 12, 15; 14:9, 11), who, in turn, are also portrayed as “those who dwell on earth” (13:8, 14) as opposed to “those who dwell in heaven (13:6; cf. 12:12).

<sup>1351</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 136–88. This will be explored in our analysis of 14:6–11.

<sup>1352</sup> The Greek term for image used in 13:14–15 is εικόν. This noun is used in Deut 4:16 (LXX), where it is prohibited to carve an idol or “any image (εικόν) in the likeness of a male or female” or “in the likeness of any beast” (Deut 4:17 LES).

<sup>1353</sup> For more details on idolatry in Rev 13, see Hugo Antonio Coto, “Up From Sea and Earth: Revelation 13:1, 11 in Context” (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2015). The worship of false gods is condemned in the first tablet of the Decalogue. Israel will fulfill its mission insofar as it makes God’s name known to the other nations by keeping his commandments (Blackburn, *God Who Makes Himself Known*, 83–119). Likewise, God’s end-time people are supposed to keep his commandments in order to make his name known throughout the earth, but, in doing so, they bring hatred and persecution upon themselves (12:17).

<sup>1354</sup> For a helpful discussion on idolatry in Rev 13, see Osborne, *Revelation*, 513–16.

we will see in the next chapter, Babylon is accused of having perpetrated false worship, and true worship will be proclaimed in all the world.<sup>1356</sup>

### The Endurance and Faith of the Saints (13:10b)

The call for endurance and faith is to be interpreted in the light of the discussion above. The saints are supposed to endure in the midst of a false Pentecost, counterpropaganda, and idolatry. These are different means the false trinity uses to oppose the mission of God's end-time people. The term ὑπομονή/*endurance* simply means bearing up in the face of trials,<sup>1357</sup> with no missional connotations at first sight. However, its connection to πίστις/*faith* or *faithfulness*<sup>1358</sup> may allow one to go a little

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<sup>1355</sup> As agreed by most Revelation scholars, the number seven is used by John to indicate completeness, fullness, or perfection (Beale, *Revelation*, 64). The fact that a reference to false worship occurs seven times in Rev 13–14 may suggest that this section of the book points to a moment in history when false worship will assume global proportions. If this sevenfold reference to false worship is accidental or intentional is not clear. If it is intentional, it is the sense of completeness or fullness, not perfection, that is present here. Since Revelation also applies the number seven to the heads of the dragon (12:3) and the heads of the beast (13:1; 17:3, 7, 9), not always the number seven indicates perfection. To use the words of Joseph L. Mangina, “not all completions are perfections” (Mangina, *Revelation*, 41n7). One possible argument that John refers to false worship seven times in Rev 13–14 intentionally is that a worldwide false system of worship is affirmed directly in Rev 13:3–4, which says that once the mortal wound of the beast is healed, “*the whole earth* marveled as they followed the beast. And they worshiped the dragon [...] and [...] the beast” (emphasis supplied). Amid this worldwide false system of worship, there is one call to true worship (14:7). Curiously, this is the sixth of the eight references to worship in Revelation 13–14, but this may be accidental too. If it is intentional, one should take into consideration that, in addition to the fact that the number six means incompleteness and imperfection in the sense that it falls short of seven—as supported by most scholars—it may also symbolize evil, iniquity, and apostasy (Prigent, *Apocalypse*, 426). If the arrangement of the eight references to worship in Revelation 13–14 is intentional, the data above may suggest that this section of the Apocalypse of John points to a time in history marked by a total inversion of values, when false worship will look true and true worship, false.

<sup>1356</sup> “Great Babylon” is the term applied in Rev 14:8 to refer to a complex system of false worship. Interestingly, not only is the number of the beast 666 in 13:18, but the very term “Babylon” occurs six times in Revelation (cf. 14:8; 16:9; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21). This is hardly coincidental. Despite this exposure of false worship, Revelation shows that true worship ultimately predominates. To use the words of Erasmus of Rotterdam, “no imitation ever comes to possess the inner quality of a jewel. Truth has its own energy which no artifice can equal.” See Lewis William Spitz, “Erasmus as Reformer,” in *Erasmus of Rotterdam: A Quincentennial Symposium*, ed. Richard L. DeMolen (New York: Twayne, 1971), 62.

<sup>1357</sup> BDAG, 1039.

<sup>1358</sup> Or “faithfulness of the saints,” since τῶν ἁγίων/*of the saints* is clearly a subjective genitive.

beyond, as the ὑπομονή of the saints is connected with their faithfulness to Christ,<sup>1359</sup> which may include faithfulness testimony. In addition, while ὑπομονή seems to be used in the same sense in previous occurrences in Revelation (1:9; 3:19; 3:10), perhaps an exception can be seen in 2:2 (cf. 2:3) where ὑπομονή—along with κόπος/*toil* or *labor*<sup>1360</sup>—provides further explanation for the term ἔργα/*works*.<sup>1361</sup> In that context, it seems that ὑπομονή means not only steadfastness in the face of trials, but also a firm position concerning missionary labor. This may also be the sense in Revelation 13:10. This is further evidenced by the use of ὑπομονή in 14:12–13, where one can see the second of only two occurrences of the triad ὑπομονή, κόπος, and ἔργον in Revelation.<sup>1362</sup> We will turn to this passage as follows.

### **Revelation 14:12–13**

The connection between 12:17, 13:10, and 14:12 suggests that the remnant of 12:17 and the saints of 13:10 and 14:12 are one and the same group. Since the 144,000 are mentioned in 14:1–5, this must also be a further designation for the remnant.<sup>1363</sup> The endurance of the saints is mentioned once again in 14:12 with a slight difference in

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<sup>1359</sup> The use of πίστις here is similar to that of Rev 2:13.

<sup>1360</sup> This is sometimes used as a missionary term elsewhere in the NT (e.g., 1 Thess 2:9; cf. 1 Cor 15:58). See Roloff, *Revelation*, 44.

<sup>1361</sup> Grant Osborne also sees κόπος and ὑπομονή as appositional to ἔργα (Osborne, *Revelation*, 112). That not only κόπος but also ἔργον have mission connotations is further suggested in Rev 2:5, where “works” is connected to “lampstand.”

<sup>1362</sup> According to Grant Osborne, “the three might have been an early catechetical triad for the Christian life” (Osborne, *Revelation*, 113).

<sup>1363</sup> For further arguments, see Thomas, *Revelation* 8-22, 142; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 448. That the term “saints” is a further description of the remnant can also be seen when one compares 12:17 and 13:7. In 12:17 “the dragon . . . went off to *make war* against the remnant” (ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν λοιπῶν, my translation), whereas in 13:7 the beast “was allowed to *make war* against the saints” (ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων, NJB).



relation to 13:10. Here, ὑπομονή is not coupled with πίστις as in 13:10. On the other hand, the saints are defined as “those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus [πίστις Ἰησοῦ]” (NKJV).

The term ὑπομονή plays a major role in Revelation 12–14. This noun occurs seven times in Revelation, five times in chapters 2–3 (1:9; 2:2, 3, 19; 3:10) and twice in chapters 12–14 (13:10; 14:12). Its occurrence in 13:10 and 14:12 may suggest that the events in 13:11–14:11 really demand an attitude of endurance, but not precisely for the same reasons. While in chapter 13 ὑπομονή is more related to steadfastness in the face of trials, in chapter 14 it seems more connected to a firm position concerning missionary labor.<sup>1364</sup> That ὑπομονή has missionary connotations in 14:12 can be argued on the basis of its connection to κόποι and ἔργα in 14:13. These two terms—along with the verb ἀναπαύω/*to rest*—belong to the semantic field of accomplishment of the missionary task. Elsewhere in the NT, κόπος<sup>1365</sup> and ἔργον<sup>1366</sup> are used as missionary terms.<sup>1367</sup> The occurrence of the triad ὑπομονή, κόπος, and ἔργον in 14:12–13 is hardly coincidental.<sup>1368</sup>

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<sup>1364</sup> As suggested in the previous section, an overlap between these two meanings must be considered.

<sup>1365</sup> E.g., John 4:38; 1 Cor 3:8; 15:58; 2 Cor 11:27; 1 Thess 1:3; 2:9; 3:5.

<sup>1366</sup> E.g., John 14:12; Acts 13:2; 14:26; Rom 15:18; 1 Cor 15:58; 16:10; Eph 4:12; Phil 1:22; 2:30; Col 1:10; 1 Thess 1:3; 2 Tim 4:5.

<sup>1367</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel places these terms in the semantic field of proclamation by deed (Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1:37).

<sup>1368</sup> Scholars have striven to specify the difference between κόπος and ἔργον (e.g., Morris, *Revelation*, 176; Swete, *Apocalypse*, 184–85; Bratcher and Hatton, *Revelation*, 216; Lenski, *Revelation*, 443–44; roughly speaking, a common argument is that their works or accomplishments in this life will be remembered after they die, but would this suggest that their labors will be forgotten?), but perhaps this is an unnecessary effort. Some commentators argue that the two words should be read as synonymous (e.g., Mounce, *Revelation*, 276; Beale, *Revelation*, 768). In this case, the use of ἔργον would be merely avoiding repetition of κόπος. More important than asserting the difference between these two words is assessing their meaning in light of their immediate context. This has been overlooked by commentators. While it is undeniable that κόπος and ἔργον in 14:13 must refer to faithful endurance under opposition—as has been suggested by most scholars—one must consider that the saints enduring opposition are defined in 14:12 as

This same triad appears in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 in a context concerning the preaching of the gospel.<sup>1369</sup> In addition, the verb ἀναπαύω links 14:13 to 6:9–11, where the martyrs are given rest after they are killed “because of the word of God and because of the testimony they had given” (Rev 6:9, NET).<sup>1370</sup> These are the only two occurrences of ἀναπαύω in Revelation. Just as in 6:9–11, the saints are given rest after they gave testimony, the same must be true in 14:13. The very fact that the rest and beatitude in 14:12–13 follow the proclamation of the three angels’ messages enhances this idea. This passage indicates that some saints are given rest after having preached the gospel.

The missionary nature of 14:12–13 can also be realized by means of the genitive Ἰησοῦ in the phrase τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ. Four different meanings can be attributed to this Greek phrase. The genitive can be read as objective, i.e., “faith in Jesus” or “faithfulness to Jesus,” or as subjective, i.e., “faith of Jesus” or “faithfulness of Jesus.”<sup>1371</sup> Tonstad

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“those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” This suggests that their labors and deeds are somehow related to obedience to God’s commandments and the faith of Jesus. More than that, if our assessment that the triad ὑπομονή, κόπος, and ἔργον conveys missionary connotations is correct, it follows that their labors and works must be somehow related to the voices of the three angels in 14:6–11. This is very likely since, while the first angel calls the inhabitants of the earth to worship the true God, the second and third angels expose worship of the beast as idolatry. Thus, God’s commandments as described in the Decalogue are in focus. Also, just as in 6:9–11 the saints are given rest after giving their testimony, in 14:12–13 some saints are given rest after preaching the three angels’ messages. While this is only a postulation, it is plausible given that these are the only passages in Revelation where ἀναπαύω occurs.

<sup>1369</sup> According to Abraham J. Malherbe, these three words stress the vigorous effort of the Thessalonians as they proclaimed the gospel. See Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 32B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 108–9.

<sup>1370</sup> In Mark 6:31, Jesus invites the apostles to rest after their missionary labor (Mark 6:30). The use of ἀναπαύω/*to rest* in Rev 6:11 and 14:13 is similar to that in Mark 6:30. The noun ἀνάπαυσις/*rest* occurs in Rev 4:8 and 14:11, but the context does not suggest mission connotation.

<sup>1371</sup> Tonstad, *Saving God’s Reputation*, 167. Beale argues that the noun πίστις in the phrase πίστις Ἰησοῦ can also refer “to the doctrinal content of the Christian faith” (Beale, *Revelation*, 766). In that sense, he contends, Ἰησοῦ would be a genitive of source. Indeed, he argues for the ambiguity of the term, i.e., the genitive expresses the object and the source of πίστις. At the same time, he accepts that a subjective genitive is not unlikely (Beale, *Revelation*, 767).

presents a strong case for “the faithfulness of Jesus.”<sup>1372</sup> This is compatible with the testimony of Revelation itself, which portrays Jesus as the Faithful Witness (1:5; cf. 3:14; 19:11).<sup>1373</sup> Read against the background of 1:5, 3:14, and 19:11, 14:12 refers to the faithfulness of Jesus in bringing his mission of salvation to its completion. As it were, the saints are entrusted with that message of salvation and act as missionary agents in God’s plan, laboring and working faithfully just as Christ did.

### **Conclusion**

The martyrdom language of Revelation has been widely emphasized in recent scholarship (see my Chapter 2), but little attention has been given to the missionary activity of God’s people as a likely reason for that. Our brief analysis of a few passages in Revelation 12–14 has shown that such must be the case.

The discussion above has indicated that Revelation 12–14 should be read against the OT background of the Yom Kippur liturgy. The appearance of the ark of the covenant in 11:19 suggests that God’s gracious offer of salvation still stands and that he will faithfully lead his people as they go through the attack of the dragon and his allies. On the other hand, the ark also serves as a reminder that God requires steadfast allegiance.

Revelation 12 opens with a shining woman. This image likely conveys missionary overtones (cf. Rev 1–3; Isa 56–66, esp. 66:6–7). By reflecting the light of God, the church is to attract the attention of the world to him. In any case, this woman is the means by which the Davidic King would come into the world. The fact that her male child will shepherd the nations (12:5) is the reason for the dragon’s attack against him (12:4). The

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<sup>1372</sup> Tonstad, *Saving God’s Reputation*, 168–94.

dragon wants to prevent the Messiah from fulfilling his mission and, consequently, prevent God from fulfilling his covenantal promises. This prepares the reader for the fact that the dragon's attack against the remnant is also provoked by their faithful fulfillment of their commission.

Revelation 12:11 seems to show clearly that the missionary effort of the church awakes the opposition of the evil powers, and that proclamation of the gospel and suffering go together. Whether one understands "the word of their testimony" as meaning "the word, namely, their testimony" or "the message that their testimony communicates," the phrase points to words and actions as integral parts of their testimony. The final statement "they loved not their lives even unto death" places their words and actions in the context of persecution and suffering, whereas the content of their proclamation seems to be given in 12:10, namely, the salvation of God and the authority of Christ. While it is implied in 12:11 that *μαρτυρία* encompasses verbal proclamation with the flavor of martyrdom, this is developed in the sequence of the text. This becomes more evident with the reference to an overflowing flood coming out of the mouth of the dragon (12:15). The term "mouth" is a recurrent metonym for speech and, in this case, it represents deceptive discourse in the form of a propaganda campaign led by the dragon in consonance with his two allies (Rev 13). Thus, the way the dragon and his allies oppose God's mission encompasses persecution and false doctrines. While deceptive discourse is used to obtain the allegiance of the inhabitants of the earth, the saints are persecuted.

The saints are described in 12:17 as "those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus." While it is not stated in 12:17, the reader knows, based

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<sup>1373</sup> Elsewhere in the NT, the faithfulness of Christ is also affirmed in 2 Tim 2:13 (see also 1 Cor

on 1:9 and 6:9 (cf. 20:4), that the testimony of Jesus is the reason why they are persecuted. Hence, the intense opposition in chapter 13 must be interpreted as the result of the remnant's fidelity described in 12:17. Further above, it was argued that the end-time message encompasses the gospel, the prophecies of Daniel, the prophecies of Revelation, and the judgment in the heavenly temple. The validity of the Ten Commandments for Christians must be added to the list. The remnant is hated and persecuted because of the message that is in their possession. This calls for endurance and faithfulness. They are urged to endure in the midst of a false Pentecost, counterpropaganda, and an environment submerged in idolatry. In fact, Revelation 13, especially vv. 1–5, seems to describe a sort of great commission in reverse. The dragon gives his authority to the beast, just as Jesus received universal authority from his Father (Matt 28:18).

The endurance of the saints is mentioned twice in Revelation (13:10; 14:12). The parallelism between 13:10 and 14:12 suggests that one should read 13:11–14:11 with the notion of endurance in mind. It seems that ὑπομονή in this context means not only steadfastness in the face of trials, but also a firm position concerning missionary labor. The fact that ὑπομονή is associated with κόπος and ἔργον in 14:12–13 suggests missionary overtones. This triad also appears in 2:2 (cf. 2:5) and 1 Thessalonians 1:3 with strong missionary connotations. The nouns κόπος and ἔργον and cognate words are recurrent elsewhere in the NT as missionary terms. In Revelation 14:12–13, labors and works are related to obedience to God's commandments and the faith of Jesus since the saints are defined as those "who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus". Furthermore, it is likely that these labors and works are related to the

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1:9; 10:13; Rom 3:3; 1 Thess 5:24 [cf. 2:12; 4:7]; Heb 10:23; 1 Pet 4:19).

proclamation of the three angels' messages in 14:6–13. This can be seen through a connection between 14:12–13 and 6:9–11. These two passages have the only occurrences of ἀναπαύω in Revelation. In both passages, the saints are given rest after they preached the word of God (6:9), and they did so by means of labors and deeds (14:13). Just as in 6:9–11, the saints are given rest after they gave testimony, the same must be true in 14:13. The very fact that the rest and beatitude in 14:12–13 follow the proclamation of the three angels' messages enhances this idea.

The saints are missionary agents in God's plan. They labor and work faithfully just as Christ did, which provokes opposition and persecution. Despite that, they will fulfill their commission, as we will see in the ensuing chapters. Next, we will turn to an analysis of the three angels' messages in 14:6–13 and further explore the concept that the remnant was entrusted with that message and is in charge of proclaiming it to the world.

## CHAPTER 9

### THE END-TIME PREACHING AND THE ESCHATOLOGICAL HARVEST

The foregoing discussion has shown that the saints are, as it were, the depository of the end-time message to be proclaimed to the world. It has been pointed out that their endurance and faith have missionary connotations and awake the hatred of the dragon and his allies, as well as opposition in the form of deceptive discourse and persecution. While passages such as 12:17, 13:10, and 14:12–13 hint at the evangelical proclamation performed by the saints, this is better seen in 14:6–13, which points to the fulfillment of the commission given in 10:11. Thus, 14:6–13 plays a major role in the theology of mission of the book of Revelation.<sup>1374</sup> Since a discussion of 14:12–13 has been provided in the previous chapter, now the focus turns to 14:6–11. While 14:12–13 provides a sort of summary and climax of either the three angels' messages or, more particularly, the third message, the voices themselves of the three angels are found in 14:6–11.

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<sup>1374</sup> There are various missionary terms in this short passage. It presents “those who dwell on earth” and “every nation, tribe, language and people” as the addressees of the end-time proclamation (14:6). Proclamation by word is indicated by the reference to the noun *εὐαγγέλιον/gospel* associated with the verb *εὐαγγελίζω/to preach the gospel* in 14:6, as well as by the repetition of the verb *λέγω/to say* in 14:7, 8, 9. The goal of this proclamation is also referred to in a threefold construction: “fear God,” “give [him] glory,” and “worship” [him] (14:7). This passage is preceded by another containing various missionary terms: 14:1–5 mentions the addressees of the missionary task as *οἱ ἄνθρωποι/humankind*. In addition, the verb *ἀκολουθέω/to follow* and the noun *ἀπαρχή/firstfruits* are in the semantic field of the goal of proclamation. Furthermore, if one takes the term “mouth” in Rev 12:15; 13:2, 5, and 6 as a metonym for deceptive discourse or propaganda against the end-time message, the reference to the fact that no lie was found in the mouth of the 144,000 must include verbal proclamation of the end-time message.

### The Three Angels' Messages in Immediate Context

The reading of Revelation 14:6–13 must take the adjacent passages into consideration, both 14:1–5 and 14:14–20.<sup>1375</sup> Revelation 14:1–5 presents a visible contrast with the previous section (13:1–18)<sup>1376</sup> and predicts what will come after the events portrayed in the rest of the chapter.<sup>1377</sup> The vision of the Lamb on Mount Zion with the 144,000 recalls the pilgrimage-to-Zion motif in the OT, where Jerusalem is depicted as the center of the universe (Isa 2:2-4; cf. Mic 4:1-3; 5:7–8; Zech 2:11; 8:20–23; 14:8–9, 16–21), into which the nations flow in pilgrimage (Mic 4:2; Hag 2:7; Zech 2:1–13; 8:21–22; 14:6). This motif evokes a centripetal approach to mission, which appears elsewhere in the book.<sup>1378</sup> But it seems that a centrifugal approach is in view too. The reference to the absence of lies in the mouth of the 144,000 (14:5) likely means more than telling the truth as opposed to the deceiving speech of the false triumvirate (12:15; 13:2, 5, 6), for the term “mouth” is a metonym for the *proclamation* of God’s truths.<sup>1379</sup> In the context of Revelation 14, these truths are summarized in the three angels’

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<sup>1375</sup> For a helpful article on that regard, see Thomas R. Shepherd, “The Seven Heavenly Messengers of Revelation 14 and Adventist Identity,” forthcoming.

<sup>1376</sup> Rev 12–13 begins with the dragon persecuting the Son of the woman, the woman herself, and finally the remnant of her seed, in order to prevent them from fulfilling their mission, and ends with two beasts persecuting the saints, apparently with the same purpose in mind. Rev 14 begins with the true Lamb (cf. 13:11) and God’s victorious people on Mount Zion (14:1). For more details on the contrast between 14:1–5 and 13:1–18, see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Followers of the Lamb: Visionary Rhetoric and Social-Political Situation,” *Semeia* 36 (1986): 124.

<sup>1377</sup> Indeed, Rev 14:1–5 is a word of assurance that God’s people will triumph no matter what hardships they suffer in the accomplishment of their commission. Concomitantly, by placing the material in 14:6–13 right after the material in 14:1–5, John reminds the saints of what they are supposed to do before the end comes. More than that, 14:1–5 gives a hint of what their task in 14:6–13 looks like.

<sup>1378</sup> For instance, in 18:4 one sees an invitation for people to come out of Babylon. The reason for such a call is the very fall of the “city” (14:8). The “flight” from Babylon is necessary for people to start their spiritual pilgrimage to the New Jerusalem (Rev 21–22; so Duvall, *Revelation*, 194). In that sense, 14:1–5 prepares the reader for what comes next. Indeed, when dealing with the material in 14:6–13, the reader is already aware that οἱ ἄνθρωποι/*the humankind* (14:4) figure as the targets of God’s mission.



messages. Furthermore, the 144,000 are portrayed “as *firstfruits* for God and the Lamb” (14:4, italics supplied). The term ἀπαρχή/*firstfruits* thematically connects 14:4 to 14:14–16.<sup>1380</sup> The use of this term in 14:4 suggests that a greater harvest is supposed to take place (14:14–16) following the proclamation of the three angels’ messages as described in 14:6–13.<sup>1381</sup>

In our discussion of Revelation 10, it was pointed out that chapters 10 and 14 are closely related.<sup>1382</sup> In 10:11, John is told to prophesy to “many peoples and nations and languages and kings”. In 14:6, John mentions that the eternal gospel is to be preached “to every nation and tribe and language and people”. The fourfold formula is introduced by ἐπί in both 10:11 and 14:6. In both cases, ἐπί follows a verb of communication. An allusion to Exodus 20:11 can be seen in both 10:6 (cf. 5:13) and 14:7. In 10:6, the angel says that “there will no longer be time,” whereas in 14:7 the angel says that “the hour of his judgment has come.” In both 10:8 and 14:2, John mentions that he heard a voice from heaven. In addition, 10:7 and 14:6 are the only places where εὐαγγελίζ-*root* occurs in

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<sup>1379</sup> So Osborne, *Revelation*, 531.

<sup>1380</sup> In the OT, the firstfruits are the first part of a harvest presented as an offering to God (cf. Exod 23:19; Lev 23:10; Deut 26:1–4).

<sup>1381</sup> Ben C. Blackwell argues that what comes after 14:1–5 turns to what happens with the followers of the dragon and the beasts” (Ben C. Blackwell, “The Damascus Document and Revelation 14:1–20: Angels Marking out the Two Ways,” in *Reading Revelation in Context: John’s Apocalypse and Second Temple Judaism* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019], 123). While this is true in a sense, it seems that Rev 14:6–13 conveys a more optimistic view. There is a call for repentance so that those who turn to the worship of the true God will have the same destiny as the 144,000 (14:1–5; cf. 15:2–4). While some scholars argue that the 144,000 stand for the whole church (e.g., Morris, *Revelation*, 169), the fact that this is a different term for the remnant of 12:17 indicates that John is referring to a specific group (so Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 482). It seems that the 144,000 are subjects of missionary work with the responsibility of proclaiming the eternal gospel as a last call to the inhabitants of the earth. In that connection, 15:2–4 seems to include both those identified as “firstfruits” in 14:4 and those who will be gathered in the greater harvest described in 14:14–16. This will be explored in the next chapter of this work.

<sup>1382</sup> Trafton, *Reading Revelation*, 135.

Revelation and the only places in the NT where εὐαγγελίζω/*preach the good news* occurs in the active voice.<sup>1383</sup> These data suggest that 14:6–7 is the counterpart of 10:7, 11 and that the proclamation of the eternal gospel (14:6) and the fulfillment of the mystery of God (10:7) are closely related. Thus, the commission in chapter 10 is developed in chapter 14.

Chapters 13 and 14 also have a close relationship, but one of contrast. In 13:16, the followers of the beast receive a mark on the right hand or the forehead. In 14:1, the followers of the Lamb have his name and his Father’s name on their foreheads. In 13:17, the mark of the beast is tantamount to its name; in other words, its character is reproduced in its followers. In 14:1, the names of Christ and God on the foreheads of the saints mean that God’s character is reproduced in them. In 13:12–15, worship of the beast is propagated by means of force and deceit. In 14:7, the call to worship God is based on his character. In chapter 13, there are lies in the mouth of the first beast (vv. 5–6) and in

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<sup>1383</sup> The use of the active voice of εὐαγγελίζω here is striking considering its middle-only use elsewhere in the NT. Commentators have not paid attention to the implications of this phenomenon. However, recent studies on the middle voice and markedness may illuminate this matter (for a summary on the current status of scholarship on Greek verb voices, see Jonathan T. Pennington, “The Greek Middle Voice: An Important Rediscovery and Implications for Teaching and Exegesis,” in *Linguistics and New Testament Greek: Key Issues in the Current Debate*, ed. David Alan Black and Benjamin L. Merkle (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 83–102; the chapter on “Deponency and the Middle Voice” in Campbell, *Advances in the Study of Greek*; and the bibliographies of these two works). While English speakers tend to see the middle voice as conveying a reflexive idea, these studies have shown that the middle voice distinguishes itself from the active voice in that it grammaticalizes the notion that the subject is somehow affected by the verbal action. As for the active voice, this notion is grammatically unmarked, although potentially present. This non-markedness leaves room for other emphases. In other words, while middle endings tend to emphasize the subject and the benefit it receives from the outcome of the verbal action, active endings place their secondary emphasis on the content of the verb or the entities affected by it (experiencer). Both active and middle verbs place their primary emphasis on the agent, but middle verbs have their secondary emphasis still on the subject or, specifically, on the effect of the action upon it.

In Rev 14:6, the secondary emphasis lies on the content of εὐαγγελίζω, i.e., “eternal gospel.” For Paul Danove, this “provides the context for the following statement of the good news” in 14:7 (Paul Danove, “Rhetorical Applications of New Testament Verbs of Communication,” *Filología Neotestamentaria* 27, no. 47 [2014]: 32). Thus, the gospel mentioned in 14:6 encompasses a threefold call in 14:7: “fear God,” “give him glory,” and “worship [him].” While the interpreter can arrive at this conclusion without resorting to these linguistic constructs, a deeper understanding of the semantics and

the mouth of the second beast (13:11; it speaks like a dragon; cf. 12:15). In 14:4, no lies are found in the mouth of the followers of the Lamb. It is also noteworthy that in 13:7, the arena of the beast's activity involves "every tribe and people and language and nation," at the same time that in 14:6, the stage of God's mission encompasses "every nation and tribe and language and people." These data strongly suggest that the three angels' messages in 14:6–13 are "the divine media blitz"<sup>1384</sup> of which the intense propaganda of the beast in Revelation 13 is a counterfeit and manner of resistance. This will be further explored as we briefly analyze the three angels' messages.

### **The Proclamation of the Eternal Gospel**

The meaning of εὐαγγέλιον/*gospel* in 14:6 has been a matter of dispute in recent scholarship. Scholars debate whether the term really refers to the gospel of Christ or must be taken in a more particular sense related to judgment. An argument often presented against the notion that εὐαγγέλιον in 14:6 has to do with the good news of salvation is its anarthrous use,<sup>1385</sup> hence "a message" rather than "the gospel."<sup>1386</sup> Two major objections to this assessment can be presented. First, the noun εὐαγγέλιον is widely used in the NT in the particular sense of good news of salvation by means of the life, death, and

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syntax of middle and active verbs can shed light on this discussion.

<sup>1384</sup> I owe this phrase to Johnsson, "Saints' End-Time Victory," 13.

<sup>1385</sup> E.g., Smalley, *Revelation*, 361.

<sup>1386</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 825. This has been called a *hapax legomenon* in the NT (Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 825), but the observation misses Rom 1:1. Accordingly, one should not go too far with the omission of the article, since Paul also speaks clearly of εὐαγγέλιον as the good news of salvation in an anarthrous construction (so, Ladd, *Revelation*, 193). While the term εὐαγγέλιον in Rom 1:1 is within a construction with two grammatical phenomena that can attribute definiteness to it, namely, it is the object of a preposition and is modified by a genitive noun (see Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 247, 250–52), those are not the only criteria for an anarthrous noun to be taken as definite. See discussion in Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 243–54. See also P. Richard Choi, who shows that "the apocalyptic delineations of the gospel found in Rev 14:6–12 are consistent with Paul's concept of the gospel in Romans" (P. Richard Choi, "Paul and Revelation 14," *JATS* 20, no. 1 & 2 [2009]: 248).

resurrection of Jesus.<sup>1387</sup> Second, the use of the adjective “eternal” makes it hard for one to take εὐαγγέλιον as indefinite in Revelation 14:6. As it is, the adjective “eternal” gives εὐαγγέλιον a monadic sense.<sup>1388</sup> After all, could one argue for more than one eternal gospel?

The idea that εὐαγγέλιον in Revelation 14:6 is a different gospel from that found in the rest of the NT because it does not refer to the sacrifice of Jesus<sup>1389</sup> cannot be maintained if one takes the larger context of Revelation into account.<sup>1390</sup> While admittedly the sacrifice of Jesus is not mentioned in 14:6–7, it is referred to several times earlier in the book (1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11; 13:8). Therefore, when reading the content of 14:6–7, one can easily connect εὐαγγέλιον to those previous passages. As a matter of fact, the language of 13:8, namely, “the Lamb who was slain *since the foundation of the world*”<sup>1391</sup> (my translation) hints at how one should interpret the phrase “eternal gospel”

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<sup>1387</sup> G. B. Caird goes as far as to state that “εὐαγγέλιον can only mean ‘good news’” of salvation whether or not it is preceded by an article (Caird, *Revelation*, 182).

<sup>1388</sup> That adjectives have the potential of giving an indefinite noun a monadic or restrictive sense is a predictable phenomenon in language. For instance, “we serve a God who loves us” does not mean that we serve one god as opposed to other gods, and saying “we serve a loving God” does not mean that God loves us and other gods do not. The adjectival clause in the first example and the attributive adjective in the second example restrict the semantic role of the indefinite article. In fact, the indefinite article becomes a rhetorical device to emphasize the attribute conveyed by the adjective. Likewise, the phrase “an eternal εὐαγγέλιον” does not mean a message as opposed to other messages.

<sup>1389</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 534. Damon C. Dodd goes a little further when contending that the gospel in Rev 14:6 is not “the gospel of the kingdom” (Matt 24:14) or “the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24) and does not refer to salvation but to judgment. See Damon C. Dodd, *The Book of Revelation*, Clear Study Series (Nashville: Randall House, 2000), 56.

<sup>1390</sup> In addition, it seems that Rev 14:6 presents connections with Jesus’ teaching on the proclamation of the gospel in Matt 24:14 and Mark 13:10. See discussion in Louis Arthur Vos, *The Synoptic Traditions in the Apocalypse* (Kampen, Netherlands: J. H. Kok, 1965), 152–57.

<sup>1391</sup> Scholars debate whether the prepositional phrase ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου/*since the foundation of the world* modifies the verb “write” (e.g., Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 747) or the verb “slay” (e.g., Mounce, *Revelation*, 252). The latter is preferable for several reasons. First, it follows the flow of the word order in the Greek text. Second, this prepositional phrase and its equivalent πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου/*before the foundation of the world* occur eight times elsewhere in the NT, either right after the verb they modify (cf. Matt 13:35; Luke 11:50; John 17:24; Heb 9:26; 1 Pet 1:20) or close to it (Matt 25:34; Eph 1:4; Heb 4:3). In

in 14:6.<sup>1392</sup> John can refer to the “eternal gospel” in 14:6 without mentioning the sacrifice of Jesus because the sacrifice of Jesus had been mentioned in 13:8 as a plan established “since the foundation of the world.”

Grant Osborn upholds that “everywhere that εὐαγγέλιον is found in the NT, it implies the gracious offer of salvation.”<sup>1393</sup> More specifically, Revelation 14:7 shares with Mark 1:15 some important parallels that allow one to conclude that the gospel referred to in the former is the same as the one mentioned by Jesus in the latter. This has been observed by various interpreters<sup>1394</sup> and explored in more detail by Thomas R. Shepherd. Shepherd demonstrates that Mark 1:15 and Revelation 14:6–7 share three important theological elements: time prophecy (“*time* is fulfilled,” Mark 1:15; “the *hour* of his judgment has come,” Rev 14:7),<sup>1395</sup> covenantal promise (“the *kingdom of God* is

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addition, in seven out of ten occurrences this prepositional phrase is modifying a participle (Matt 13:35; 25:34; Luke 11:50; Heb 4:3; 1 Pet 1:20; Rev 13:8; 17:8; cf. its use with non-participle verbs in John 17:24; Eph 1:4; Heb 9:26). These data suggest a pattern in the use of this prepositional phrase, which is followed by John in Revelation. Third, this interpretation is in consonance with other NT passages dealing with God’s eternal plan of redemption through Christ (e.g., Matt 25:34; John 17:24; Acts 2:23; Eph 1:9–11, 1 Pet 1:19–20). An objection to this interpretation regards Rev 17:8, where the prepositional phrase modifies “written.” However, one should not expect John to be consistent in the use of some formulas. For instance, the fourfold formula occurs seven times in Revelation, each time in a different way (for more, see Bauckham’s discussion on repetition and variation of phrases in Revelation (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 22–9). In addition, one ought to interpret 17:8 in light of 13:8, not the other way around. In other words, John can speak of “the book of life since the foundation of the world” (17:8, NET) because of “the Lamb who was slain since the foundation of the world” (13:8, my translation).

<sup>1392</sup> Richard Bauckham argues that Ps 96:2b is an overlooked text in the discussion of the phrase “eternal gospel.” He argues that the Hebrew phrase יוֹם לְיוֹם (litt., “from day to day”) is taken by John as meaning “at all times.” The strongest arguments for this allusion come from other connections between Rev 14:6–7 and Ps 96 (for details, see Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 286–89). He concludes that the “eternal gospel” is the call found in Ps 96 (p. 288). However, while there are clear connections between Rev 14:6–7 and Ps 96, the parallel between the phrase “eternal gospel” (Rev 14:6) and the injunction “bring good news day by day” (Ps 96:2b) is somewhat tenuous. The phrase “the Lamb who was slain since the foundation of the world” (13:8) seems to provide the immediate context for the phrase “eternal gospel” (14:6).

<sup>1393</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 535.

<sup>1394</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 535–36; Yeatts, *Revelation*, 267; Charles, *Revelation*, 2:13; Michaels, *Revelation*, 173; Boxall, *Revelation*, 206; Koester, *Revelation*, 612; Morris, *Revelation*, 172.

<sup>1395</sup> Both in Mark 1:15 and in Rev 14:7, the timing is related to the fulfillment of the prophecies of

near,” Mark 1:15; “the hour of *his judgment* has come,” Rev 14:7),<sup>1396</sup> and call to discipleship (“repent” and “believe”, Mark 1:15; “fear”, “glorify”, and “worship”, Rev 14:7). Thus, the gospel in Revelation 14:7 is to be understood as the good news of salvation very much corresponding to Jesus’ teachings in the Gospels.<sup>1397</sup>

Two further items of information can be added to this discussion. First, Revelation 14:7 also contains strong parallels with Acts 14:15,<sup>1398</sup> where Luke mentions the missionary work of Paul and Barnabas at Lystra. The gospel in Acts 14:15 includes a warning for people to return from idolatry to the worship<sup>1399</sup> of the living God, “who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them”. In the context of Revelation 13–14, the gospel message in 14:6–7 includes a call for people to turn from the worship of the beast to worship him “who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water” (cf. Rev 10:6). These parallels suggest that the gospel in Revelation 14:6–7 is the same one preached by Paul and Barnabas. It calls attention to the correct relationship with God the Creator. In that regard, the Sabbath commandment plays a crucial role in the proclamation of the end-time gospel insofar as it contains the call to true worship (cf. Exod 20:11). This will be explored in more detail further ahead.

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Daniel. While Mark 1:15 parallels Dan 9:24–27, Rev 14:7 is backgrounded by Dan 7–8.

<sup>1396</sup> While this is more evident in Mark 1:15 with its reference to the kingdom of God, in Rev 14:7 this is perceived through its connection to Daniel 7, where the judgment aims at transferring the dominion from the little horn to Christ and the saints so they would possess the kingdom (v. 22).

<sup>1397</sup> Shepherd, “The Seven Heavenly Messengers of Revelation,” forthcoming. However, while the preaching of the gospel in Mark 1:15 is focused on the establishment of the kingdom of God, in Revelation 14:7 it focuses on consummation.

<sup>1398</sup> This has also been noticed by various commentators. See, for instance, Charles, *Revelation*, 2:13; Michaels, *Revelation*, 174; Osborne, *Revelation*, 537; among others.

<sup>1399</sup> The context of Acts 14:15 is worship. See Acts 14:8–18.

Second, Revelation 14:7 also contains parallels with Matthew 24 (cf. Mark 13:10, 13). In Matthew 24:14, the gospel is proclaimed “throughout the whole world...., to all nations”. In Revelation 14:7, the gospel is preached “to every nation...”. Furthermore, in Matthew 24:14 the spread of the gospel is connected with the coming of the end. In Revelation 14:6–7, the preaching of the gospel is connected with the end as described in 14:14–20.

Finally, the notion that εὐαγγέλιον in 14:6–7 has to do with judgment is partially true. The message concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus and the announcement of God’s judgment against those who reject his offer of salvation should be seen not as mutually exclusive but as complementary, the two sides of the same coin.

#### Proclamation by Word

Thus far in this work, we have seen that the missionary task of the church implies verbal communication.<sup>1400</sup> In 14:6, this is further emphasized by the use of the verb εὐαγγελίζω along with the cognate object εὐαγγέλιον.<sup>1401</sup> This verb involves an agent (or agents), content, and experiencer(s).<sup>1402</sup> The cognate accusative εὐαγγέλιον is the content of εὐαγγελίζω, the angel is the agent, and the earth-dwellers are the recipients or addressees.

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<sup>1400</sup> See comments on Rev 6:9; 10:7, 11; 11:3–13; 12:11; 17:14 in previous chapters of this work.

<sup>1401</sup> For εὐαγγελίζω as a verb of communication, see Danove, “Rhetorical Applications,” 25–39.

<sup>1402</sup> According to Paul Danove, these three elements provide the criteria for identifying verbs of communication (Danove, “Rhetorical Applications,” 25). The experiencer is a person or thing receiving a stimulus provoked by the verbal action (Jeremy Thompson, *The Lexham Glossary of Semantic Roles* [Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2014], s.v. “experiencer”). Recipients of a message fall into this semantic role (Peter Bekins, “The Difficulty with Diagnosing Lamed Objecti,” *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 42, no. 2 [2016]: 6). In this case, “experiencer” is broader than “recipient”. While “recipient” is a different term for a grammatical object, “experiencer” can include adjuncts such as, for instance, “among you” in “what father among you” (Luke 11:11). See Danove, “Rhetorical Applications,” 26.

## Agents of Mission

The identity of the angel preaching the gospel in 14:6 is a matter usually overlooked by commentators.<sup>1403</sup> An angel preaching the gospel is, indeed, a novelty in the NT.<sup>1404</sup> The angel preaching this message is not overtly identified.<sup>1405</sup> However, there are a few clues connecting it with the saints.<sup>1406</sup> First, as mentioned above, there is a close connection between 14:6–12 and 14:1–5 that can be perceived in different ways: (1) While in 14:1–5 the 144,000 are seen standing on Mount Zion, the pilgrimage motif is present in 14:6–13 in that the fall of Babylon (14:8) anticipates the call for people to leave her (18:4) and, as it were, start their spiritual pilgrimage to the New Jerusalem (21–22). (2) The term “firstfruits” (14:1–5) as applied to the 144,000 suggests that there will be a greater harvest. For this harvest to happen, the gospel is to be preached to the world (14:6–7). (3) Connected to this, the 144,000 seem to be in charge of proclaiming the end-

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<sup>1403</sup> Only a few interpreters address the issue. Craig S. Keener must be correct when contending that the term “angel” should not be taken literally, but as implying the work of the church as conveyed in Matt 24:14 and Rev 6:9 (Keener, *Revelation*, 372). Similarly, R. Beasley-Murray believes that this angel symbolizes messengers of flesh and blood (G. R. Beasley-Murray, “Revelation,” in *New Bible Commentary: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 4<sup>th</sup> ed. [Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994], 1444). Likewise, R. C. H. Lenski refers to the angel in 14:6 as representing human preachers (Lenski, *Revelation*, 429). Others see a connection between the three angels’ messages and the two witnesses (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 286; Lenski, *Revelation*, 429) and even with John himself (Lenski, *Revelation*, 429).

<sup>1404</sup> The closest parallel is Gal 1:8, but there Paul mentions an angel preaching a gospel contrary to the gospel he preached. In addition, the content of the clause is given within a third-class conditional sentence and, hence, is only hypothetical.

<sup>1405</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 826.

<sup>1406</sup> It should be noticed that ἄγγελος can simply mean “messenger” (cf. Matt 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24, 27; 9:52; 2 Cor 12:7; Jas 2:25). The same is true with regard to מַלְאָכִים in the OT, where the term can refer to both supernatural (e.g., Gen 19:1) and natural beings (e.g., Num 20:14). In addition, in Revelation 2–3 ἄγγελος may refer to the pastor of each church. So, Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 117-18; Lenski, *Revelation*, 68, 81; Walvoord, *Revelation*, 53. The idea that ἄγγελος means a supernatural being in Rev 2–3 faces two major obstacles. First, in this view, John becomes an earthly agent through whom Christ sends a message to heavenly beings, which is strange. Second, these angels, along with the church they represent (except for Smyrna and Philadelphia), are accused of sinful conduct and, hence, must repent. For details, see Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 117.



time message, suggested by the fact that no lie was found in their mouth (14:5). Likely, this means more than telling the truth but proclaiming God's truths, which in the context of 14:6–13 can be summarized in the three angels' messages. This suggests that the 144,000 are the proclaimers of the end-time message of God to the world.

Second, the identification of the 144,000 with the saints (13:7, 10; 14:12) and the remnant (12:17) enhances the notion that they are agents of the end-time proclamation of the gospel.

Third, it seems that John follows a pattern when presenting the 144,000 in chapters 7 and 14 that is similar to his use of the fourfold formula. In other words, just as the fourfold formula in 5:9 and 7:9 focuses primarily on the church, and from 10:11 onwards it concentrates on the church's mission to the nations, the 144,000 in chapter 7 represent the church (7:1–8) whereas in chapter 14 they can be seen as missionary agents and proclaimers of the end-time message.<sup>1407</sup> The recipients or addressees of their message as well as the universal extent of their proclamation are discussed below.

### The Addressees

The fact that “those who dwell on the earth” (14:6) are the addressee of the gospel is quite surprising when one considers the negative uses of that epithet elsewhere in Revelation (3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10 [2x]; 13:8, 14; 17:2, 8; cf. also 13:12). It is noteworthy that while the earth-dwellers are the targets of the two beasts' work of deceit

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<sup>1407</sup> Since the end-time people of God are portrayed as the remnant in 12:17 and saints in 14:12 (cf. 13:10), and the 144,000 in 14:1–5 are portrayed in terms of OT descriptions of the remnant (e.g., Joel 2:31–32; Zeph 3:9–13; for details, see Hans K. LaRondelle and Jon Paulien, *The Bible Jesus Interpreted* [Loma Linda: Jon Paulien, 2014], 126–7), it follows that the remnant of 12:17, the saints of 14:12 and 13:10, and the 144,000 of Rev 7 and 14 are one and the same. This helps one to see the 144,000 as proclaimers of the end-time message since, as it was argued in chapter eight of this dissertation, the remnant and the saints are portrayed as missionary agents in Rev 12–14.

in 13:14, they are the addressees of the gospel message in 14:6. Two observations follow: (1) these data put the end-time proclamation within the framework of the cosmic conflict and, connected to this, (2) the earth-dwellers are targeted by both sides of the conflict, namely, the counterpropaganda of the false trinity and the end-time proclamation of the gospel. Thus, one should not take the expression “those who dwell on earth” as being negative enough to refer to people who are beyond salvation.<sup>1408</sup>

Jon Morales asserts that most scholars make the mistake of identifying the nations with the earth-dwellers.<sup>1409</sup> He argues that, whereas the nations are seen in the new creation, Revelation characterizes the earth-dwellers as those who worship the beast and accept its mark (Rev 13:8, 12, 14; 16:2). He interprets the relative clause in 17:8, “whose names have not been written in the book of life,” as explaining the meaning of “those who dwell on earth.” Thus, he concludes that the phrase “those who dwell on earth” is a reference to those who sealed their lot with the beast.<sup>1410</sup> However, although the terms “the nations” and “earth-dwellers” may not be synonyms, at least a relationship of hyponymy or hypernymy is very likely in operation here.

Two observations can be made. First, the relative clause in 17:8 should be interpreted as restrictive rather than non-restrictive.<sup>1411</sup> That is to say, John is not affirming that all who dwell on earth “will marvel to see the beast” but only those “whose names have not been written in the book of life”. This is similar to what happens in 13:8,

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<sup>1408</sup> Grant Osborne argues that John’s use in Revelation of “earth-dwellers” is analogous to the use of κόσμος in the Fourth Gospel, which refers to the human world in rebellion against God (Osborne, *Revelation*, 287). However, God sent his Son to save κόσμος (John 3:16).

<sup>1409</sup> Morales, *Christ, Shepherd of the Nations*, 325n14.

<sup>1410</sup> Morales, *Christ, Shepherd of the Nations*, 325.

<sup>1411</sup> In that sense, the phrase “the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book

where the relative clause introduced by οὗ is certainly restrictive.<sup>1412</sup> In addition, the phrase “all who dwell on earth” (13:8) is in contrast to “those who dwell in heaven” (13:6; cf. 12:12).<sup>1413</sup> Nevertheless, “those who dwell in heaven” “is a reference to God’s people,”<sup>1414</sup> but they are still on earth.<sup>1415</sup> Neither in 13:8 nor in 17:8 the phrase “those who dwell on earth” refers to people beyond salvation. In both cases, the phrase is

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of life” must be translated without a comma introducing the relative clause (see ESV, NIV, CJB, GNB).

<sup>1412</sup> It is hard to believe that John envisions that “all who dwell on earth will worship” the beast, rather than only those whose names are not written in the book of life. The expression should be seen as hyperbole.

<sup>1413</sup> A similar idea is used by Paul in Eph 2:6 and Phil 3:20.

<sup>1414</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 415.

<sup>1415</sup> The text of Revelation 13:6 is very likely backgrounded by Daniel 8:10–13 (Beale, *Revelation*, 697; also, Ladd, *Revelation*, 180; Charles, *Revelation*, 352; Duvall, *Revelation*, 181), where one sees a reference to the sanctuary and the “host of heaven” (cf. also Dan 8:24). The “host of heaven” in Daniel 8 is a symbol of God’s people on earth but with their citizenship in heaven (Gerhard Pfandl, *Daniel: The Seer of Babylon* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2004), 79; Rodríguez, ed., *Andrews Bible Commentary: Old Testament*, 1038; Jon L. Dybdahl, ed., *Andrews Study Bible Notes* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2010), 1125). The allusion to Daniel 8:10–13 in Revelation 13:6 points to the broader context of the attack on God’s sanctuary in heaven and persecution of God’s people on earth (Dan 7–8). If John has in mind Daniel 8:10–13 and its reference to the sanctuary and God’s people when writing the material of Revelation 13:6, which is likely, so the reference to God’s dwelling and the phrase “those who dwell in heaven” point to the same realities. Indeed, allusions to Daniel 7–8 abound in Revelation 13:1–8 (Rev 13:1/Dan 7:3; Rev 13:2/Dan 7:4–6; Rev 13:5a and 6a/Dan 7:8, 20, 25; Rev 13:6b/Dan 8:10–13; Rev 13:7/Dan 7:21 [also v. 7]), which enhances the idea that John is alluding to that portion of Daniel.

In addition, the grammar of Rev 13:6b is quite similar to that of Rev 11:1b, where one can find the triad τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας ἐν αὐτῷ/*the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there* as the object of μέτρησον/*measure*. While many scholars see the phrase τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας/*those who dwell in heaven* in 13:6b as an apposition to τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ/*his dwelling* since the Greek text of UBS5 and NA28 does not contain the conjunction καὶ connecting the two expressions, there is also manuscript evidence (albeit weak) of a variant reading with καὶ (a few uncials, most minuscules, and early versions. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 674). Likewise, the articular participle τοὺς σκηνοῦντας is also disputed. P<sup>47</sup> reads τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ/*his dwelling [place] in heaven*. See Philip W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary*, 842). R. H. Charles claims that if τοὺς σκηνοῦντας is original so is καὶ. He argues that βλασφημησαί in 13:6b has three objects rather than two plus an apposition to the second (Charles, *Revelation*, 353). On the one hand, if the external evidence for τοὺς... σκηνοῦντας is stronger, on the other hand, the grammatical similarity between 13:6b and 11:1b may suggest that John really intended καὶ τοὺς... σκηνοῦντας. In this case, the reading of 13:6b would be “blaspheming his name, his dwelling, and those who dwell in heaven” (Charles, *Revelation*, 352–3; Brighton, *Revelation*, 345; also, KJV, NKJV, NIV, NJB, NAB). However, it is hard to make a decision. In any case, it seems that “those who dwell in heaven” in 13:6b is tantamount to “those who worship there” in 11:1b. By worshipers in 11:1b, John meant God’s people on earth. The parallel between 11:1b and 13:6b is further enhanced by the reference to “forty-two months” in 11:2 and 13:5.

modified by the same restrictive relative clause, “whose name(s) has/have not been written in the book of life”. From Revelation 17:8 perspective, those “whose names have not been written in the book of life” are the ones who did not accept the call for repentance in 14:6–7. Finally, the term “those who dwell on earth” is negative in the sense that it represents people who may repent albeit they have not repented yet, not people beyond repentance.

Second, the term for “dwell” in 14:6 is *κάθημαι/sit, reside, live* rather than *κατοικέω/dwell*.<sup>1416</sup> Revelation 14:6 is the only reference to the earth-dwellers in Revelation with a verb different than *κατοικέω*.<sup>1417</sup> This is hardly coincidental.<sup>1418</sup> While *κατοικέω* is always negative (2:13; 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 17:2, 8),<sup>1419</sup> *κάθημαι* can be positive (e.g., 4:2, 3, 4, 9, 10; 5:1, 7, 13; 7:10, 15; 11:16; 19:11; 21:5; cf. 3:21; 20:4<sup>1420</sup>) or negative (e.g., 17:1, 3, 9, 15; 18:7). This suggests that *κάθημαι* has a neutral sense in Revelation<sup>1421</sup> and that whether it is positive or negative in 14:6 depends on the answer to the call in 14:7.<sup>1422</sup> One can infer from these data that *οἱ καθήμενοι ἐπὶ*

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<sup>1416</sup> Both verbs are used in the LXX as Greek equivalents for the Hebrew *נָשָׁב*/*sit, dwell*. See Rick Brannan, ed., *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible*, Lexham Research Lexicons (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2020), s.v. *נָשָׁב*.

<sup>1417</sup> The postulation by R. H. Charles that a scribe would have replaced *κατοικοῦντας* with *καθημένους* in order to give the phrase a neutral sense (Charles, *Revelation*, 2:13) is not sufficiently convincing (see Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 203).

<sup>1418</sup> Contra Prigent, *Apocalypse*, 439.

<sup>1419</sup> Perhaps 2:13a is an exception to this rule. The distinction between *κατοικέω* and *κάθημαι* is also observed by Morales, *Christ, Shepherd of the Nations*, 233.

<sup>1420</sup> Rev 3:21 and 20:4 have *καθίζω* rather than *κάθημαι*.

<sup>1421</sup> So Charles, *Revelation*, 2:13.

<sup>1422</sup> Morales is likely right when arguing that *οἱ καθήμενοι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*/*those who live on earth*, my translation) in 14:6 is broader than the references to the earth-dwellers with *οἱ κατοικοῦντες*, as the former refers to the inhabitants of the earth in general, including the nations (Morales, *Christ, Shepherd of the Nations*, 233). According to him, the nations will be in the New Jerusalem, while the same is not true of the

τῆς γῆς/*those who sit on earth* is broad enough to include not only the nations, but also οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς/*those who dwell on earth*. In that connection, the proclamation of the eternal gospel has all the inhabitants of the earth as its target, including the earth-dwellers—the very enemies of the gospel—as they are described in Revelation 13. God wants to save them too.<sup>1423</sup> Apparently, the earth-dwellers “whose names have not been written in the book of life” (17:8; cf. 13:8) are those who did not repent upon hearing the end-time proclamation of the gospel (14:6–13).

### Universal Scope

The universal scope of the end-time message is further emphasized by the fourfold formula. This is the sixth out of seven occurrences of the formula in Revelation and must be read with its previous occurrences in mind (5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; cf. 17:15).<sup>1424</sup> For a great multitude “*from every nation and tribe and people and language*” (7:9; cf. 5:9) to be seen before the throne of God, it is necessary to proclaim the end-time

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earth-dwellers. He is certainly right when claiming that “those who live on earth” is further defined by the fourfold formula in 14:6. However, he overlooks the similarity between 14:6 and 13:7–8. Rev 14:6 puts the phrases “those who dwell on earth” and “every nation and tribe and language and people” in exegetical relationship in the reverse order of 13:7–8. That is to say, whereas “earth-dwellers” is further defined by the fourfold formula in 14:6, in 13:7–8 the fourfold formula is further defined by “earth-dwellers.” It seems that the phrase “every tribe and people and language and nation” is tantamount to “all who dwell on earth” just like the phrase “authority was given” is tantamount to “will worship” (Beale, *Revelation*, 698). A similar phenomenon takes place in 11:9–10.

<sup>1423</sup> This is further suggested in 14:9–11 with its warning against the worshipers of the beast.

<sup>1424</sup> For a remarkable discussion on the fourfold formula with missionary implications, see Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 326–36. See also his discussion on numerical composition in Revelation, pp. 29–37. As far as the fourfold formula is concerned, Bauckham observes that four is the number of the world and seven is the number of completeness. Thus, “the sevenfold use of this fourfold phrase indicates that reference is being made to all the nations of the world” (p. 326). For more on the fourfold formula and its implications for the missionary theology of Revelation, see Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 369–86. While Bauckham is more interested in the universalistic dimensions of the formula, Schnabel discusses the individual terms and how the original audience must have understood them. If his assessment is correct, the fourfold formula indicates that “people from all ethnic, linguistic, tribal, civic, political, and social backgrounds need to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ” (p. 386). This is a matter to be taken seriously by modern missionaries, since it points to the huge extent of the missionary commission.

message “to every nation and tribe and language and people” (14:6; cf. 10:11).<sup>1425</sup>

However, just as the end-time proclamation of the gospel has a universal scope, so do the counterpropaganda, deceptions, and persecution perpetrated by the dragon and his allies (13:7; cf. 11:9; 17:15).<sup>1426</sup>

The OT background of the fourfold formula sheds light on its missionary theology. One can agree with Richard Bauckham’s contention that Genesis 10 (vv. 5, 20, 31) and Daniel (3:4, 7) provide OT sources.<sup>1427</sup> However, it seems that while the formula is more focused on Genesis 10 in Revelation 5:9 and 7:9, it is more focused on Daniel from Revelation 10:11 onwards.<sup>1428</sup> Genesis 10 is the only place in the Hebrew Bible where a fourfold phrase is used to portray the nations of the world (vv. 5, 20, 31).<sup>1429</sup>

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<sup>1425</sup> Just as Christ has conquered people “from every tribe and language and people and nation” (5:9), his followers must do the same (10:11; 14:6). In that connection, 7:9 sees in prolepsis that which is developed in 10:11 and 14:6 (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 333–34). Bauckham observes that there is a connection in terms of numeral symbolism between the fourfold formula, the Lamb, and the Spirit (p. 336). The fourfold formula occurs seven times ( $4 \times 7 = 28$ ). The term “Lamb” is applied to Christ twenty-eight times in Revelation (5:6, 8, 12, 13; 6:1, 16; 7:9, 10, 14, 17; 8:1; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1, 4 [2x], 10; 15:3; 17:14 [2x]; 19:7, 9; 21:9, 14, 22, 23; 22:1, 3). This term also occurs in 13:11, but it is applied to the second beast. The term “seven Spirits” occurs four times ( $7 \times 4 = 28$ ). Bauckham concludes that “it is to all the nations of the world that the seven Spirits are sent out, in order, through the prophetic witness of the church, to win the nations to the worship of the true God” (p. 336). If John really intended a message through these numbers, it may be that the saints’ task of proclaiming the gospel to the entire world is accomplished as they follow the Lamb in the power of the Spirit.

<sup>1426</sup> This reinforces the idea discussed in the previous chapter that the end-time proclamation of the gospel will take place amid intense opposition. This universal scope of the proclamation of the gospel—and the opposition to it—is in consonance with Jesus’ teaching as conveyed, for instance, in Matt 24:9, 14; 28:18.

<sup>1427</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 327. The verbal parallels and the fact that a fourfold phrase (threefold phrase in Daniel) is found nowhere else in the OT allows one to conclude that we are before a certain allusion.

<sup>1428</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 329.

<sup>1429</sup> Bauckham observes that the LXX of Dan 3:4 expands the threefold phrase in the MT to a fourfold phrase influenced by Gen 10 (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 328). He reports that a fourfold phrase also appears in 4 Ezra 3:7 to portray the offspring of Adam (p. 328n120). In turn, the LXX of Gen 10 has γῆ/land, γλῶσσα/language, φυλή/tribe, and ἔθνος/nation in v. 5, and φυλή, γλῶσσα, χώρα (town), and ἔθνος in vv. 20 and 31. In addition, Bauckham postulates that John uses the fourfold formula as an expansion of the phrase “out of all peoples” in Exod 19:5 (p. 328).

Remarkably, John follows the same order of terms as in Gen 10:20, 31 (LXX) in his first use of the fourfold formula in Revelation (cf. 5:9), except that he replaces the third item (*χώρα/town*) with *λαός/people*. While *λαός* appears in the other occurrences of the fourfold formula, the replacement of *χώρα* with *λαός* in 5:9 is important because the latter is a covenantal term in many of its occurrences in the LXX (“my special people” [μὸι λαὸς περιούσιος]; see Exod 19:5; cf. Deut 26:18–19).<sup>1430</sup> Such a replacement in 5:9 is not surprising because, as discussed in chapter 5 of this work, 5:9–10 clearly alludes to God’s covenant with Israel. Likewise, it has been shown that the language of 7:9 is highly covenantal, as it shares verbal parallels with the LXX of Gen 15:5; 17:4; 32:13 (MT 32:12).<sup>1431</sup> In both 5:9 and 7:9 the notion of Israel as God’s chosen people is transferred to the church. The allusion to God’s covenant with Abraham in 7:9, along with the idea that the fourfold formula in 5:9 and 7:9 is backgrounded by the fourfold phrase in Genesis 10:5, 20, 31, is relevant for the missionary theology of Revelation 10–14. The allusion to Abraham and the table of the nations (Gen 10) in 7:9 (cf. 5:9) suggests that John sees the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham as the way of reversing the effects of the tower of Babel (Gen 11). After Babel (Gen 11), the nations have been scattered (Gen 10). The end-time proclamation of the gospel “to every nation and tribe and

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<sup>1430</sup> It is especially common in the book of Exodus, and is usually the Greek alignment for the Hebrew *עַם*. As such, it expresses a special relationship between God and his people, with about 300 occurrences connected to a first-person pronoun related to Yahweh. For details, see *NIDNTTE*, 3:88–89.

<sup>1431</sup> If John’s intention to connect the material in 7:9 to God’s promise to Abraham is to be grounded only on the verbal parallels with Gen 15:5 (LXX), any assumption in that direction should be made with caution. Nevertheless, similar wording between 7:9 and Gen 17:4 (LXX) and 32:13 (LXX) seems to suggest that the Revelator was pointing to the expectation that the seed of Abraham would become as innumerable as the stars of heaven or the sand of the sea. Furthermore, sometimes a single word is enough to establish a thematic parallel with the background source (Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 182). Apparently, John did not have a specific text in mind, but alluded to the thought that God promised Abraham that his offspring would become a great multitude (Gen 15:5; 17:4–5; 32:12), an international one (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14).

language and people” (14:6; cf. 10:11) will bring them together once again.<sup>1432</sup> Nevertheless, it is somewhat puzzling that John consistently uses λαός in the next five occurrences of the fourfold formula (10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15). This can be explained from 18:4, where God refers to individuals still in Babylon as “my people.”<sup>1433</sup> The term “my people” likely refers to those in Babylon who in their sincerity show some reverence for God but are still involved in some sort of idolatry. Those who hear the call of 18:4<sup>1434</sup> by coming to a covenantal relationship with God will be called his people, and he will be their God (21:3). For that to happen, the gospel must be preached “to every nation and tribe and language and people” (14:6; cf. 10:11).

As mentioned above, while the fourfold formula in 5:9 and 7:9 is more influenced by Genesis 10, it seems clear that the Danielic threefold formula for the nations plays a crucial role in the fourfold formula in 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15.<sup>1435</sup> Just as the fourfold formula in Revelation 13:7–8, the threefold formula in Daniel 3 also occurs in the context of a call to false worship (cf. vv. 4–7, see also vv. 10–12, 14, 15, 18). Likewise, just as the fourfold formula in Revelation 14:6–7 occurs in the context of a sole call to true worship, Daniel 3 concludes with a reference to the threefold formula in relation to true worship (cf. vv. 28–29; see also 6:25–26 and 7:14). It is remarkable that just as the fourfold formula occurs seven times in Revelation (5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7;

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<sup>1432</sup> This was inaugurated in Acts 2 (see chapter 4 of this work).

<sup>1433</sup> This language of belonging possibly goes back to God’s covenant with Israel (e.g., Exod 19:5) and Abraham (e.g., Gen 17:7).

<sup>1434</sup> Rev 18:1–4 follows a paragraph where the fourfold formula is mentioned by the last time in Revelation (cf. 17:15). Rev 18:1–4 presents God’s last appeal to the inhabitants of the world to leave Babylon. Not surprisingly, the angel in 18:1 has been referred to as “an angel of the gospel” (Caird, *Revelation*, 222).

<sup>1435</sup> So Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 329. Bauckham concurs that the church, not the nations, is



14:6; 17:15), the threefold formula occurs seven times in Daniel (3:4, 7, 29; 4:1; 5:19; 6:25; 7:14). If John was aware of this phenomenon, this reinforces the idea that the book of Daniel influenced the formulation of the fourfold formula in Revelation. As discussed in our analysis of Revelation 10, Daniel 7–12 is especially important for John. As far as the fourfold formula from Revelation 10:11 onwards is concerned, Daniel 7 is particularly relevant.<sup>1436</sup> Out of the seven occurrences of the threefold formula in Daniel, Daniel 7:14 stands out for being in a context that presents a thematic parallel with Revelation 10–14, namely, the transferring of the kingdom from the beast to Christ (cf. 11:15) by means of a heavenly judgment (Dan 7:26).<sup>1437</sup> It is not surprising that Revelation 14:7 mentions that “the hour of his judgment has come” within a missionary context. For the eternal kingdom of God to come, first a judgment takes place in heaven while the end-time proclamation of the gospel takes place on earth. Judgment and mission go together.

### The Hour of Judgment and the End-Time Proclamation of the Gospel

The statement that “the hour of his judgment has come” (14:7) must be

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in view in 5:9 and 7:9 (p. 329).

<sup>1436</sup> According to Richard Bauckham, John “alludes to almost every part of that chapter at some point in Revelation, demonstrating that a consistent and complete exegesis of Daniel 7 lies behind his work” (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 329). He must be correct that when mentioning the fourfold formula from 10:11 onwards, John had in mind Dan 7:14 (pp. 329–30). Interestingly, Rev 10:11 is the only place in the book where the term βασιλεύς appears in the fourfold formula. While this term links 10:11 to Dan 7 (p. 331), its abundant use in Rev 17 (vv. 2, 10, 12, 14, and 18) indicates that it is closely related to the fourfold formula in 17:15. These data enhance the idea that the end-time proclamation is to be addressed even to the enemies of Christ and his church. Those who repent will be integrated into the new covenant community.

<sup>1437</sup> The heavenly judgment has the purpose of removing the kingdom from the little horn and transferring it not only to Christ (Dan 7:14) but also to the saints (Dan 7:27; cf. 7:18), for the judgment is in favor of the saints (Dan 7:22), as conveyed in many English translations (CJB, CSB, HCSB, ISV, NAB, NET, NKJV, NASB, NCV, NIV, NLT, The Message).

interpreted in light of Revelation 10 and its OT background in Daniel 7–12.<sup>1438</sup> When John mentions that “there will no longer be time” (Rev 10:6), he is referring to the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecies of time and, hence, pointing to the beginning of God’s judgment. Now, in 14:7 he affirms that God’s judgment has come. As stated above, the fourfold formula in 10:11 and 14:6 is backgrounded by Daniel 7:14, which mentions the transferring of dominion from the evil powers to the Son of man. However, the rest of Daniel 7 also affirms that the judgment is for the benefit of the saints (v. 22). This twofold purpose of the judgment is clearly affirmed in Daniel 7:26–27. The dominion is taken from the evil powers (v. 26), and the kingdom and dominion are given to the saints (v. 27). In other words, the judgment is good news! More than that, the connection between 14:6 with its reference to the proclamation of the eternal gospel and 10:7 with its reference to the fulfillment of God’s mystery suggests that the proclamation of the gospel and the announcement that the hour of judgment has come are integral parts of the same message.

Revelation 10 indicates an intensification of the proclamation of the gospel in the

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<sup>1438</sup> See the section “Proclamation of Imminence” in chapter 6 of this work. A close comparison between Rev 10 and its OT source indicates that the phrase “there will no longer be time” (Rev 10:6) refers to the fulfillment of the prophecies of time in Daniel (compare 12:7 with 12:9 and 8:13–14 with 8:17). When reading Dan 12 and Rev 10 side by side, one perceives a movement from secrecy to revelation and from a distant future to imminence. Dan 12 brings the eschatological section of Daniel to a climax. This can be perceived by means of several connections between Dan 12 and chapters 7–11: (1) sealing language (12:4, 9; cf. 8:26); (2) the term “time of the end” (12:4, 9; cf. 8:17; 11:35, 40); (3) the time period referred to as “time, times, half a time” (12:7; cf. 7:25); and (4) the *tamid* (12:11; cf. 8:11, 12, 13; 11:31). These data strongly suggest (1) that Dan 7–12 points to the period referred to as “the time of the end”; (2) that this period begins after the fulfilment of Daniel’s prophecies of time; and (3) that Dan 7–12 is referring to the same event, which is introduced in 7:26–27 as a judgment court but is further explained in 8:9–14 as the restoration of the sanctuary. The parallelism between Dan 8 and Dan 7 indicates that the restoration of the sanctuary mentioned in 8:14 is tantamount to the judgment mentioned in 7:26. John J. Collins, for instance, refers to Dan 8 as “a companion piece for Daniel 7” (Collins, *Daniel*, 86). He further states that “Daniel 8 is evidently designed to complement ch. 7 and shares the same conceptual and symbolic world” (p. 87). For more details, see Hasel, “The ‘Little Horn,’” 458–61.

time of the end.<sup>1439</sup> This intensification is resumed in 11:11–13<sup>1440</sup> and further developed in 14:6–13. The hour of judgment is a time for intensification of the proclamation of the gospel because this is God’s last appeal to the world before the end comes and the seventh angel sounds his trumpet (10:7). Thus, the end-time message is preached with a specific goal.

#### Goal of the Proclamation: Fear, Glorify, and Worship the True God

The threefold command for the inhabitants of the earth to fear, glorify, and worship God is grounded on the fact that he is the Creator, “who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water” (14:7b), but the reason for the implicit urgency is “because (ὅτι) the hour of his judgment has come” (14:7a).<sup>1441</sup> The passage portrays a threefold call to obedience in face of the impending judgment. The fact that “fear God and give him glory” go together and the third imperative shows up only after the announcement of the beginning of the judgment suggests that John wants the reader to consider the first two imperatives as a unit.

Fearing God and glorifying him are concepts that pervade the entire book of Revelation.<sup>1442</sup> However, they appear together in 11:11, 13, 14:7, and 15:4 (cf. 19:5, 7). Fearing God means a correct relationship with him by surrendering to his will (e.g., 1 Sam. 12:14), knowing him (Prov 9:10), loving him (Deut 10:12), avoiding evil (e.g., Job 1:1, 8; Prov. 3:7; 16:6), and keeping his commandments (Deut. 5:29; 6:2; 8:6; 10:12-13;

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<sup>1439</sup> See chapter 6 of this work.

<sup>1440</sup> See also the section “The Successful End-Time Witnessing” in chapter 7 of this work.

<sup>1441</sup> See conjunction ὅτι/*because*.

<sup>1442</sup> The idea of fearing God occurs in 11:11, 13, 18; 14:7; 15:4; 19:5, whereas the notion of glorifying God appears in 11:13; 14:7; 15:4; 16:9; 19:7; cf. 1:6; 4:9, 11; 5:12, 13; 7:12; 19:1.

17:19; 31:12; Pss. 111:10; 112:1; 119:63; 128:1; Ecc 12:13; Jer. 44:10). The idea of giving glory to God suggests repentance elsewhere in both the NT and the OT (1 Sam 6:5; Josh 7:19; Isa 42:12; Jer 13:16;<sup>1443</sup> Luke 17:18; John 9:24; Acts 12:23; Rom 4:20;<sup>1444</sup> cf. also 1 Chr 16:36; Pss 66:2; 96:7–8; 106:47). The fact that “fear language” appears in connection to “give glory” a few times suggests that John also sees “fear” as a signal of repentance and reverence.<sup>1445</sup> The syntactical construction of the phrase οὐ μετενόησαν δοῦναι αὐτῷ δόξαν in 16:9 (lit., “they did not repent to give him glory”) is internal evidence that, for John, giving glory to God is a token of repentance. The infinitive clause “to give him glory” provides a sort of explanation for “they did not repent,” implying that “giving glory” to God comes as a result of repentance.<sup>1446</sup> Accordingly, the people mentioned in 16:8–9 did not give glory to God because they did not repent. In turn, “worship” is also a signal of repentance. This is evident from the syntax of 9:20, where, in a similar construction to that found in 16:9, οὐ . . . μετενόησαν/*they did not repent* is modified by the resultative ἵνα-clause “so as not to worship demons” (NASB).<sup>1447</sup> Two

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<sup>1443</sup> In these OT passages, “give glory to God” is a call to repentance (Osborne, *Revelation*, 434).

<sup>1444</sup> See Charles, *Revelation*, 1:291–92; Ladd, *Revelation*, 159; Thomas, *Revelation* 8-22, 98–99.

<sup>1445</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 278. In the book of Acts, the idea of fearing God is frequently used to refer to Gentiles who fear the God of Israel (for details, see Stanley E. Porter, “Fear,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997], 372). In Rev 14:7 and 15:4, John applies the term in a broader sense as that found in Acts 10:35, “in every nation anyone who fears him [God] and does what is right is acceptable to him.” Although Peter is speaking to Gentiles, the phrase “every nation” is broad enough to include “anyone” who enters into relationship with God.

<sup>1446</sup> See the section “The Successful End-Time Witnessing” in chapter 7 of this work.

<sup>1447</sup> The clause “ἵνα μὴ προσκυνήσουσιν τὰ δαιμόνια” has an ecbatic sense in 9:20 just like the infinitive clause “δοῦναι αὐτῷ δόξαν” in 16:9 (see Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 998–99). That ἵνα μὴ προσκυνήσουσιν τὰ δαιμόνια has a resultative sense in 9:20 is agreed upon by various commentators (e.g., Lenski, *Revelation*, 307; Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, 570; Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 542). Remarkably, John uses ἵνα plus indicative rather than subjunctive. While this occurs only occasionally elsewhere in the NT, it is somewhat common in Revelation (F. C. Conybeare and St. George Stock, *Grammar of Septuagint Greek: With Selected Readings* [Boston: Ginn and Company, 1905], 93; H. P. V.

inferences are possible from this text: (1) the fact that they did not stop worshipping demons is the result of their lack of repentance; (2) based on that, it is possible to infer that the act of worshipping God is a sign of repentance.<sup>1448</sup> The very fact that there is a call for people to fear, glorify, and worship God is evidence that there is room for repentance. Otherwise, such a call would not make sense.

The verb προσκυνέω/*to worship* occurs twenty-four times in Revelation, with eight of these in chapters 13 and 14. The fact that Revelation 13–14 (cf. 13:4 [2x], 8, 12, 15; 14:7, 9, 11) is responsible for one-third of all occurrences of the term in the book indicates that worship plays a major role in that section.<sup>1449</sup> In a sense, “worship” summarizes what it means to “fear God” and “give him glory.” Hence, “worship” falls into the public sphere, as an external act of commitment to and acknowledgment of the true God.<sup>1450</sup> Thus, worship is not only the goal of mission but also a resource for public witness.<sup>1451</sup> The call to worship the Creator in 14:7 stands in visible contrast to the idolatry described in chapter 13.<sup>1452</sup> This call is an invitation for people to turn from the

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Nunn, *A Short Syntax of New Testament Greek* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920], 103). Whether this has any relevance for the theology of the passage or is only a matter of fading of the subjunctive is a subject for future research.

<sup>1448</sup> Worshipping God is a sign of repentance if one has been involved in idolatry. That is what is taking place in Revelation 13. It is the context of Revelation 13 that makes it possible to say worshipping God is a sign of repentance. Elsewhere in Revelation, the twenty-four elders (4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4), the four living creatures or exalted angels (7:11; 19:4; cf. 4:8-9 and 5:8-9, 14) and the angels (7:11; cf. 5:11-12) also worship God in contexts that do not suggest repentance.

<sup>1449</sup> Dean Flemming is certainly right when contending that “worship has to do with declaring allegiances” (Flemming, “Revelation and the Missio Dei,” 174).

<sup>1450</sup> This is hinted in 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16, but becomes even more evident in chapters 13–14.

<sup>1451</sup> Flemming, “Revelation and the Missio Dei,” 174.

<sup>1452</sup> This contrast is sharpened when considering that “fear God” in the OT has the nuance of obeying his commands (Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 827). While in Rev 13 the dragon’s allies not only disobey but also foment disobedience to God’s commandments, in 14:7 there is an implicit call to render obedience to God’s commandments.

false gods (created things) to the true and only God (the Creator).<sup>1453</sup> This idea is further developed in the message of the second and third angels, as we will see below. Before that, however, three important observations regarding the call to worship in 14 are necessary.

First, as mentioned in chapter 8 of this work, the reference to worship in 14:7 is the sixth of eight occurrences in Revelation 13–14, and the only one referring to the worship of the true God. Conversely, worship is mentioned in reference to the beast seven times. This suggests that Revelation 13–14 describes a moment in history when one will see a complete inversion of values. The false will look true and the true, false.

Second, the OT background to 14:7 can shed light on our understanding of its missionary theology. Three OT passages deserve consideration: 1 Chronicles 16:8–36, Psalm 96, and Exodus 20:11. Willem Altink has built a strong case for 1 Chronicles 16:8–36 as the OT source for 14:6–7.<sup>1454</sup> While the concepts of fearing, glorifying, and worshipping God can be found throughout the OT as common biblical terminology,<sup>1455</sup> Altink asserts that the four key-terms in 14:7 are found together in the OT only in 1 Chronicles 16:8–36 (LXX) and Psalm 96, namely, “fear” (cf. 1 Chr 16:25, 30; Ps 96:4), “glory” (cf. 1 Chr 16:24, 27, 28, 29; Ps 96:3, 7, 8), “judgment” (cf. 1 Chr 16:12, 14, 33;

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<sup>1453</sup> Koester, *Revelation*, 612. Hans K. LaRondelle sees in the call to “worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water” (14:7) a parallel with the ministry of Elijah and his assertion: “If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God, follow him” in 1 Kgs 18:21 (LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 250). Based on Mal 4:5, he argues that the three angels’ messages are, so to speak, the call of the Last Elijah. For details, see LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 250–51; also, Hans K. LaRondelle, *Chariots of Salvation: The Biblical Drama of Armageddon* (Washington: Review and Herald, 1987), 174–85.

<sup>1454</sup> Willem Altink, “1 Chronicles 16:8-36 as Literary Source for Revelation 14:6-7,” *AUSS* 22, no. 2 (1984): 187–96.

<sup>1455</sup> Keener, *Revelation*, 372n16.

Ps 96:10, 13), and “worship” (cf. 1 Chr 16:29; Ps 96:9).<sup>1456</sup> The psalm in 1 Chronicles 16:8–36 was composed for the celebration of the return of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem (1 Chr 16:1–7). This theological feature is significant and provides a thematic parallel with Revelation 14.<sup>1457</sup> These verbal and thematic parallels indicate a direct allusion.<sup>1458</sup> Another OT passage also plays a major role in 14:7. The clause “who made the heaven and the earth and the sea” (LEB) borrows from Exodus 20:11.<sup>1459</sup> While this is recognized by a few commentators,<sup>1460</sup> it is overlooked by most of them. This allusion to the fourth commandment fits the context of a call to worship the true God. In addition, this is in consonance with the allusion to 1 Chronicles 16:8–36 and its larger context of a thanksgiving song for the return of the ark to Jerusalem, in that the two tablets of stone

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<sup>1456</sup> Altink, “1 Chronicles 16:8–36 as Literary Source,” 188–89, 192. Altink further indicates that, in addition to these four terms, there are other linguistic and conceptual connections between Rev 14:6–7 and 1 Chr 16:8–36 (see pp. 190–92). He contends that Ps 96 lacks several features that are present in 1 Chr 16:8–36, in such a way that the latter provides the best OT background to Rev 14:6–7 (Altink, “1 Chronicles 16:8-36 as Literary Source,” 192, also 188).

<sup>1457</sup> Rev 11:19, with its reference to the heavenly temple and the ark of the covenant, and Rev 15:5 provide the theological framework from which Rev 12–14 is to be read. See the section “The Attack Against the Remnant” in chapter 8 of this work. See also Willem Altink, “Theological Motives for the Use of 1 Chronicles 16:8-36 as Background for Revelation 14:7-6,” *AUSS* 24, no. 3 (1986): 211–21.

<sup>1458</sup> David Aune accepts Altink’s assessment (Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 827) and is followed by Smalley, *Revelation*, 362, while others reject it with vague explanations (Osborne, *Revelation*, 535; Keener, *Revelation*, 372n16). G. K. Beale refers to Altink’s article but does not make any value judgment (Beale, *Revelation*, 751n421). Others argue for Ps 96 with no mention of 1 Chr 16:8–36 (e.g., Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 286–89; Tonstad, *Revelation*, 203–4), which is somewhat surprising.

<sup>1459</sup> This is similar to what happens in Acts 14:15, where people are summoned to turn from idolatry to God. Psalm 146:6 uses the same phraseology, but is clearly drawing upon Exod 20:11 (Charles A. Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, ICC [New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1986], 531). It is true that the phraseology in 14:7b is quite similar to that of Ps 146:6. However, seeing that Rev 13–14 shares with Exod 20 the same interest in the Decalogue, it is very likely that John had Exod 20:11 in mind rather than Ps 146:6. Furthermore, Ps 146:6 is itself an allusion to Exod 20:11.

<sup>1460</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 452, 455–56; Tonstad, *Revelation*, 204; Utley, *Hope in Hard Times*, 103; Garland, *A Testimony of Jesus Christ*, Rev 14:7; Alford, *Alford’s Greek Testament*, Rev 14:7. See also the margins of UBS<sup>5</sup>, 834.

containing the Decalogue were put into the ark.<sup>1461</sup> The Sabbath commandment reminds one of his/her obligations before God and that he demands faithful allegiance. The allusion to 1 Chronicles 16:8–36 and Exodus 20:11 sharpens the notion that 14:7 is an appeal for people to turn from idolatry to the worship of the true God. In chapter six of this dissertation, it was argued that the end-time message encompasses four elements, namely, the gospel, the prophecies of Daniel, the prophecies of Revelation, and the judgment in the heavenly temple. In chapter eight, a fifth element has been added, namely, the message about the validity of the Ten Commandments for Christians. Related to the fifth, a sixth element must join the list. The end-time proclamation also includes the message that the Sabbath day is to be kept in the Christian era. The call to worship the Creator in 14:7 occurs “in the context of the fourth commandment.”<sup>1462</sup> As Roy E. Gane puts it, “the Sabbath continues to remind us of our dependence on care from our Creator.”<sup>1463</sup>

Third, there is a close link between 14:7 and 15:3–4 that sharpens the connections of 14:7 with the OT. Even a skimming of 14:7 and 15:3–4 reveals the intimate relationship between the two passages. They share the four basic concepts of “fear,” “glory,” “worship,” and “judgment.”<sup>1464</sup> Revelation 15:3–4 indicates that fearing,

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<sup>1461</sup> See Exod 25:16, 21 and Deut 10:1–5.

<sup>1462</sup> Jon Paulien, “Revisiting the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 9, no. 1-2 (1998): 179-186.

<sup>1463</sup> Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians*, 380. See also pages 248-55.

<sup>1464</sup> Although the term κρίσις/*judgment*—or correlates such as κρίμα/*judgment, decision* or κρίνω/*to judge*—do not occur in 15:3–4, the concept is there. The phrase “just and true are your ways” points to God’s righteousness in his judgments (cf. 6:10; 16:7; 19:2). Moreover, the four key-concepts in 14:7—“fear,” “glory,” “worship,” and “judgment”—occur elsewhere in Revelation in addition to 15:3–4. They appear in Rev 11:11–18 (“fear,” vv. 11, 18; cf. v. 13; “give glory to God,” v. 13; “worship,” v. 16; “the time for the dead to be judged,” v. 18) and 19:1–10 (“fear,” v. 5; “give glory to God,” v. 7; cf. v. 1;



glorifying, and worshiping God (v. 4) are a response to his mighty acts, all-powerfulness, righteousness, and truth (v. 3) as well as holiness (v. 4). Although many OT passages influenced 15:3–4,<sup>1465</sup> it seems that Jeremiah 10:7 and Psalm 86:9–10 (85:9–10 LXX) provide the closest parallels. The vocative “O King of the nations” (15:3) and the rhetorical question “Who will not fear, O Lord” (v. 4) borrow directly from Jeremiah 10:7,<sup>1466</sup> while Psalm 86:9–10 (85:9–10 LXX) provides the basis for the overall phraseology.<sup>1467</sup> The connection between 14:7 and 15:3–4 allows the conclusion that the first angel’s message calls attention to God’s reputation among the nations. Also, the fact that the four basic concepts of 14:7 are resumed in 15:3–4—right after the description of

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“worship,” vv. 4; 10b; “judgment,” v. 2). These data suggest that these four basic concepts are interwoven throughout the book of Revelation.

<sup>1465</sup> In fact, the connections between 15:3–4 and the OT are manifold. Allusions suggested by several commentaries include Exod 14:31; 15; Deut 28:59; 32:4, 44 (cf. 31:19, 22, 30); Pss 86; 110; 111; 139; 145; Jer 10; and Amos 3, 4. For a helpful chart on the parallels between this passage and the Hebrew Bible, see Reddish, *Revelation*, 293. By and large, the background sources are interconnected through the exodus motif. G. K. Beale observes that “the use of the OT in vv 3–4 is not the result of random selection but is guided by the theme of the first exodus and the development of that theme later in the OT” (Beale, *Revelation*, 799). This indicates that John selects OT passages with a clear intention. As Bauckham asserts, “John’s use of the Old Testament is not a matter of plucking phrases at random out of contexts but consists in careful and deliberate exegesis of whole passages” (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 246). This does not mean that John is alluding to all the passages listed above, but to a motif that intertwines all of them. By using exodus language, he emphasizes God’s character, holiness, uniqueness, and universal sovereignty, and the notion that God’s fame is to be known among the nations. A bigger list of themes could include judgment, new exodus, redemption, eschatological pilgrimage, worship, monotheism, and God’s covenantal promises. Despite his universalist reading of this passage, Bauckham’s treatment of possible OT passages lying behind it is very insightful (see Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 296–307).

<sup>1466</sup> Interestingly, the LXX omits Jer 10:6–8. This is evidence that John does not always follow the LXX: sometimes, he translates the MT.

<sup>1467</sup> The manifold verbal parallels include the verbs δοξάζω/*glorify*, προσκυνέω/*worship*, and ἔρχομαι/*come*; the vocative κύριε/*O Lord*; the adjectives μόνος/*only* and μέγας/*great*; and the phrases πάντα τὰ ἔθνη/*all nations*, ἐνώπιόν σου/*before you*, and τὸ ὄνομά σου/*your name*. The ὅτι-clause in 85:10 right after the prediction that the nations will worship God (85:9) provides the structural parallel for 15:4, which also uses a ὅτι-clause after the statement that the nations will worship God. In fact, Ps 85:9 (LXX) is transcribed almost *ipsis litteris* in Rev 15:4. The notion of God’s uniqueness as opposed to the false gods is conveyed in Ps 86 by possible allusions to the Shema (Deut 6:4–5). Cf. Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100*, ed. Klaus Baltzer, trans. Linda M. Maloney, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 374; and Robert L. Hubbard Jr. and Robert K. Johnston, “Foreword,” in *Psalms*, ed. W. Ward Gasque, Robert L. Hubbard Jr., and Robert K. Johnston, UBCS (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 348).

the eschatological harvest in 14:14–20—suggests that 15:3–4 presents the outcome of the proclamation described in 14:6–13. In other words, those who heeded the triple imperative (“fear,” “glorify,” and “worship” God) now join those who proclaimed this message by turning from idolatry to the worship of the only true God.<sup>1468</sup> In fact, 14:6–7 invites people to have a correct relationship with God, a relationship of love. This is evidenced by the allusion to the fourth commandment, which is the heart of the Decalogue and a sort of summary of the first four commandments that calls attention to the duty of loving God above all. Since 15:3–4 emphasizes God’s character by referring to his power, justice, trueness, kingship, sovereignty, uniqueness, and righteousness, the relation between 14:7 and 15:3–4 suggests that for people to fear, glorify, and worship him, they must know him, admire him, and recognize that he is a loving, holy, and righteous God.

In a sentence, the first angel’s message summons people to enter into covenantal relationship with God by abandoning idolatry. This is such an important issue in Revelation 14 that the matter is developed in the messages of the second and third angels, as follows.

### **God Confronts Idolatry<sup>1469</sup>**

Previous studies have demonstrated that idolatry and mission are related insofar as the latter confronts the former.<sup>1470</sup> This is such an important matter that the motif is

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<sup>1468</sup> See David A. de Silva, *Seeing Things John’s Way: The Rhetoric of the Book of Revelation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 259–63, 270–74.

<sup>1469</sup> The idea that God confronts idolatry can be found in Revelation as early as in 2:4. See Fanning, *Revelation*, 155n41.

<sup>1470</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 179–87.

addressed throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.<sup>1471</sup> Idolatry is an issue to be faced because it twists the distinction between God and his creation.<sup>1472</sup> Therefore, in a sense, the fundamental purpose of mission is to restore the image of God in humanity.<sup>1473</sup> Idols strip God of the glory that is due to him alone. That is why he says, “I will not give glory to another or my praise to idols” (Isa 42:8). If, on the one hand, idolatry usurps the glory that belongs to God’s name alone, on the other hand, it negatively affects the very essence of human beings in that they fall short of fulfilling the purpose of their existence, namely, to glorify God. It is in this sense that the fundamental goal of mission is the restoration of God’s image in man.<sup>1474</sup> For that to happen, God fights against idolatry and involves us in that fight.<sup>1475</sup> For mission to be fully accomplished, idolatry must be fully confronted. This is the core of the messages announced by the second and third angels. While the first angel’s message emphasizes God’s character, holiness, uniqueness, sovereignty, and desire to be known among the nations, the messages of the second and third angels expose how terrible idolatry is in the light of who God is.

### The Message of the Second Angel

The second angel announces the fall of “Babylon the great.” The repetition of the verb *πίπτω/fall* and the futuristic use of the past tense (“fallen, fallen”) are an indication

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<sup>1471</sup> See Richard Lints’s monograph *Identity and Idolatry*. Gen 3 is the first place in Scripture where the theme of idolatry is dealt with (Beale, *We Become What We Worship*, 127–35).

<sup>1472</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 187. See also Lints, *Identity and Idolatry*, 31–34.

<sup>1473</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 172, 424.

<sup>1474</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 172.

<sup>1475</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 188.

that the fall of Babylon is certain.<sup>1476</sup> And it is certain because the hour of judgment has come (14:7). The primary purpose of God’s judgment in 14:7 is to remove the dominion of Babylon. This can be argued in two ways. First, John’s allusion to Daniel 7 strongly suggests that the goal of God’s judgment is twofold: (1) to take away the dominion of the evil powers (Dan 7:27) and (2) to transfer dominion to Christ (Dan 7:14) and, consequently, to the saints (Dan 7:27; cf. v. 22). Second, there is a linguistic connection between Revelation 14:7 and 18:10 that has been overlooked by most commentators. The clause *μῆ ὥρα ἤλθεν ἡ κρίσις σου*/*in one hour your judgment has come* (18:10, NKJV) is reminiscent of *ἤλθεν ἡ ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ*/*the hour of his*<sup>1477</sup> *judgment has come* (14:7, ESV). Hence, the judgment of 14:7 is intended to take away the dominion of Babylon. The “great Babylon” is indicted under the accusation of enticing the nations for the practice of sexual immorality (14:8b).<sup>1478</sup>

Curiously, the term Babylon occurs six times<sup>1479</sup> in Revelation and is always further portrayed as “Babylon the great” (14:8; 16:9; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21). Revelation

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<sup>1476</sup> By and large, Revelation scholars explain the proleptic aorist in 14:8 (Porter, *Idioms*, 37) as reminiscent of the Hebrew prophetic perfect, which refers to a future event as though it had already happened. Perhaps, an additional way to see the matter is by paying attention to a possibly overlooked OT background. While the phraseology of 14:8 is similar to that found in OT passages such as Isa 21:9 and Jer 51:8, where the prophetic perfect points to the future fall of Babylon, Daniel 5 actually describes its fall. In Daniel 5, the moral fall (vv. 1–5) precedes the actual fall (vv. 25–31). The same might be happening in 14:8 (so Mulholland Jr., “Revelation,” 532). As mentioned further above, the connection between 18:4 and 14:6–12 suggests that the proclamation of the three angels’ messages takes place as a response to the moral fallenness of Babylon and is supposed to be a warning for people to come out of it. Likewise, the proclamation of the first angel announces the judgment that unleashes the ultimate fall of Babylon, i.e., because of its moral fall, Babylon will fall once and for all by being utterly destroyed.

<sup>1477</sup> Obviously, αὐτοῦ (14:7) is a subjective genitive, whereas σου (18:10) is an objective genitive.

<sup>1478</sup> Fornication is used in the Bible as a metaphor for idolatry (cf. Isa 57:3–12; Ezek 16; 23; 16; Jas 4:4).

<sup>1479</sup> As Stefanovic helpfully puts it, six “is the typical number of Babylon. Six symbolizes a falling short of the divine ideal symbolized in the number seven” (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 437).

18:10 could be an exception to this rule. However, although this phrase does not occur there, Babylon is referred to as “the great city” and “mighty city.” In addition, the Greek text of 18:10 is placed within a short chiasmic structure that focuses on Babylon as the great and mighty city.<sup>1480</sup> While the phrase “Babylon the great” is reminiscent of the arrogance of Nebuchadnezzar when referring to his Babylon as “great Babylon” (Dan 4:30), at the same time this term suggests that the end-time Babylon represents a triple coalition formed by the dragon and his two allies in their opposition against God and his people. This is suggested by Revelation 16:19, where “the great city was split into three parts”.<sup>1481</sup> While Babylon is guilty of enticing the nations, this does not diminish the guilt of those who joined her. This is addressed in the third angel’s message.

#### The Message of the Third Angel

The third angel directs his warning to the worshipers of the beast and its image (14:9, 11). A sharp rebuke to idolatry is the very core of this message. This rebuke becomes even more severe when compared to the first angel’s message, which summons the inhabitants of the earth to fear, glorify, and worship God “because the hour of his judgment has come” (14:7). The verb *προσκυνέω/to worship*, therefore, establishes a link between the first and third angels’ messages, in that while the former portrays true worship (i.e., worship of the Creator), the latter rebukes false worship (i.e., worship of the creature). At the same time, *προσκυνέω* connects 14:9, 11 to 13:1–18, where worship of the beast (13:4b), 8, 12) and its image (13:15) is mentioned.

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<sup>1480</sup> ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη/*the great city*  
 Βαβυλῶν/*Babylon*  
 ἡ πόλις ἡ ἰσχυρά/*the mighty city*

<sup>1481</sup> For more details, see Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 457.

Other connections come to the surface as one compares the two passages. The reference to a mark of belonging links 14:9, 11 to 13:16, 17. In both 14:9 and 13:16 it is mentioned that this mark is placed on the hand or forehead. Likewise, one sees in both 14:11 and 13:17 that the mark is related to the beast's name. In addition, those whose names have not been written "in the book of life of the Lamb" (13:8) "will be tormented . . . in the presence of the Lamb" (14:10). Furthermore, while the blasphemies of the beast (13:1, 5) denigrate God's character and his sanctuary (13:6), the first angel extols God's reputation by emphasizing his character, holiness, uniqueness, and sovereignty, and, hence, his righteous judgment. These data suggest that (1) the activities of the dragon and his two allies as described in Revelation 13 are subjected to the scrutiny of God's righteous judgment; (2) such activities are denounced as false worship and idolatry; (3) the propaganda of the false triumvirate is an attempt to counterfeit the three angels' messages. In that connection, the three unclean spirits in 16:13 can be seen as a counterfeit of the three angels.<sup>1482</sup> Finally, Revelation 14:10, 11 summarizes how God will ultimately confront idolatry. The severity of the punishment applied to the worshipers of the beast reveals the enormity of the problem originated by idolatry. God fights against idolatry and involves us in that fight. For mission to be fully accomplished, idolatry must be fully confronted. In short, the message of 14:6–13 ripens the inhabitants of the earth for the eschatological harvest.

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<sup>1482</sup> Further evidence for this assumption may be found in 18:2, which clearly builds upon the second angel's message in 14:8 and the three unclean spirits in 16:13. The connection between 18:2 and 16:13 is noted by various commentators. See Pugh, "Revelation," 403; Beale, *Revelation*, 894; Bratcher and Hatton, *Revelation*, 257; Fanning, *Revelation*, 457; Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 317, among others.

## The Eschatological Harvest

The foregoing discussion has indicated that the three angels' messages ripen the earth for the eschatological harvest insofar as, on the one hand, they reveal God's character, uniqueness, universal sovereignty, and worthiness to be worshiped as the only and true God, whereas, on the other hand, they clearly denounce the worship of the beast as idolatry. Revelation 14:6–13 seems to suggest that before the end comes, the inhabitants of the earth will be divided into two groups, namely, the worshipers of the true God and the worshipers of the beast. Yet, several scholars argue that 14:14–20 is to be seen as a twofold narration of judgment upon the wicked<sup>1483</sup> rather than the description of two different destinies.<sup>1484</sup> This will be discussed as follows in our assessment of 14:14–20. My comments below are divided into two sections. The first section provides a brief discussion on how the immediate context can illumine one's understanding of 14:14–20, whereas the second one focuses on the passage's theological teaching on mission.

### Revelation 14:14–20 in Its Immediate Context

When reading 14:14–20, one crucial question the interpreter should ask is how this passage relates to the adjacent passages, 14:6–13 and 15:1–4. The idea that John presents a double narration of judgment is rooted in the thought that the three angels'

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<sup>1483</sup> E.g., Schnabel, "John and the Future of the Nations," 262. See also Beale, *Revelation*, 772–73; Morris, *Revelation*, 177–78; Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 843–45; Roloff, *Revelation*, 178; Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 220.

<sup>1484</sup> E.g., Lenski, *Revelation*, 446; G. B. Caird, *Revelation*, 190–91; Ladd, *Revelation*, 199; Alford, *Alford's Greek Testament*, 690–92; Swete, *Apocalypse*, 186; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 467; Ian Paul, *Revelation*, 255; Hendriksen, *More than Conquerors*, 187–88; Fiorenza, *Revelation*, 90; Brighton, *Revelation*, 391. Gerhard A. Krodel lists four different views of Rev 14:14–20 but concludes that the passage deals with a preview of the gathering of the saints (14:14–16) and judgment against the wicked (14:17–20). See Krodel, *Revelation*, 273.

messages announce the judgment without presenting the opportunity for people to repent from their worship of the beast. The foregoing discussion, however, has revealed that the content of 14:6–7 encompasses the gospel of Christ, with judgment being an integral part of that message. It has also been demonstrated that the concepts of “fear,” “glory,” and “worship” in 14:7 imply repentance (cf. 16:9 and 9:20). Nevertheless, this does not mean that every person on earth will repent upon hearing the proclamation of the three angels’ messages. The punishment mentioned in 14:10–11 is evidence that this is not the case.<sup>1485</sup> Accordingly, Revelation 14:6–13 points to a polarization that extends until the second coming of Christ. In fact, 14:14–20 deals with two destinies between which the inhabitants of the earth must choose upon hearing the proclamation of the three angels’ messages. In that sense, 14:14–20 builds upon 14:6–13. This is further evidenced by a linguistic linkage between 14:14–20 and 14:7. The clause ὅτι ἤλθεν ἡ ὥρα θερίσαι/*because the hour to reap has come* in 14:15 connects 14:14–20 to 14:7,<sup>1486</sup> where John uses the similar phrase ὅτι ἤλθεν ἡ ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ/*because the hour of his judgment has come*. This similarity suggests that God’s judgment in the heavenly temple and the proclamation of the end-time message on earth ripen the world for the eschatological harvest.

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<sup>1485</sup> Indeed, passages such as 19:20; 20:4, 10, which imply that the worshipers of the beast will have the same lot as the beast itself, along with passages such as 21:8 and 22:15, which mention that idolaters will not enter the New Jerusalem, leave no doubt that not everyone will repent upon hearing the end-time proclamation of the gospel.

<sup>1486</sup> This link is also noticed by Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 220, and Beale, *Revelation*, 774. However, they arrive at different conclusions. For instance, Beale interprets this connection as conveying that 14:14–20 deals with a double narration of judgment. This seems to be influenced by his interpretation of the judgment in 14:7. Nevertheless, since the judgment in 14:7 has both positive and negative connotations (see the previous chapter of this work), this must also be true in 14:14–20. Beale even admits that the metaphor of harvest usually has redemptive connotations (Beale, *Revelation*, 777), but he does not believe that such is the case in 14:14–20.



The idea that 14:14–20 draws upon 14:6–13 is enhanced when one considers the literary arrangement of 14:6–15:4. The description of the two destinies for the inhabitants of the earth is placed between the three angels’ messages in 14:6–13 and the vision of the overcomers of the beast in 15:2–4. As discussed above, the fact that the ideas of fearing, glorifying, and worshiping God in 14:7 are repeated in 15:3–4 suggests that 15:3–4 refers to those who accepted the message of 14:6–7 by turning from idolatry to the worship of the Creator. One should keep in mind that the ones singing the song of Moses in 15:3–4 are identified in 15:2 as the overcomers of the beast. While 15:2–4 does not mention the worshipers of the beast, it is implied that they do not participate in the celebration portrayed in that passage. Thus, those who receive the first angel’s message by fearing, glorifying, and worshiping the Creator (14:6–7) are the ones gathered in the grain harvest (14:14–16). Conversely, those who choose to keep worshiping the beast and its image “will drink the wine of God’s wrath” (14:9–10). They will be gathered in the grape harvest and thrown “into the great winepress of the wrath of God” (14:19).<sup>1487</sup>

Revelation 14:14–20 also presents a strong connection with 14:1–5,<sup>1488</sup> where the followers of the Lamb are portrayed as ἀπαρχή/*firstfruits*. This is a metaphor from the agricultural context.<sup>1489</sup> Elsewhere in the NT, it is employed mostly by Paul, and not seldom as a missionary term (cf. Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:15; 2 Thess 2:13). Indeed, the use of ἀπαρχή in 14:4 implies a later full harvest, which is portrayed in 14:14–16. The larger

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<sup>1487</sup> As Richard Bauckham observes, a similar image used earlier in chapter 14 prepares the reader to identify the image in vv. 17–20 as negative. Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 290–91.

<sup>1488</sup> Fiorenza, *Revelation*, 90.

<sup>1489</sup> In Exod 34:22, God summons Israel to observe the Feast of Weeks, when the people should offer “the firstfruits of wheat harvest.” In the NT, however, the term is applied only to human beings. See Ceslas Spicq and James D. Ernest, *TLNT*, 145–52. It is used to express a guarantee of a full harvest (see p.

NT context can also shed light on the present passage, in that this harvest is tantamount to that depicted in the Synoptic Apocalypse<sup>1490</sup> (cf. Matt 24:30–31; Mark 13:27) and in some of the so-called parables of the kingdom<sup>1491</sup> (cf. Matt 13:39b; Mark 4:29),<sup>1492</sup> where two groups are clearly portrayed (cf. e.g., Matt 13:24–30, 38).<sup>1493</sup> John 4:34–38 has also been pointed out as a parallel to the grain harvest in 14:14–16.<sup>1494</sup> These data may suggest that 14:14–16 presents the grain harvest as the apex of the mission of the disciples of Jesus as portrayed in John 4:34–38.<sup>1495</sup> The connection between 14:14–20 and the previous sections (14:1–5 and 14:6–13) indicates that the mission of the church is

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<sup>1490</sup> John J. Collins defines Apocalypse as “a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world” (John J. Collins, “Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” *Semeia* 14 (1979): 9). Following this definition, Adela Yarbro Collins contends that whether the so-called Synoptic Apocalypse can actually be considered as such “depends on whether Jesus is to be understood as an otherworldly mediator” (Adela Yarbro Collins, “The Early Christian Apocalypses,” *Semeia* 14 (1979): 97). She concludes that “the Jesus of the Synoptic gospels, in the portions prior to the resurrection accounts, is not an otherworldly being in the same sense as the resurrected Christ and the angels are, who appear as mediators in the apocalypses.” (Collins, “The Early Christian Apocalypses,” 97). According to her, Jesus “is more appropriately defined as oracle-giver or prophet than as otherworldly mediator”. (Collins, “The Early Christian Apocalypses,” 97). In any case, as she herself recognizes, Synoptic Apocalypse(s) is a term often used in scholarship to refer to Mark 13 and parallels (Collins, “The Early Christian Apocalypses,” 96).

<sup>1491</sup> Arland J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary*, ed. David Noel Freedman and Astrid B. Beck, *The Bible in Its World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 383–423; Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 179–253.

<sup>1492</sup> Fiorenza, *Revelation*, 90.

<sup>1493</sup> Elisabeth S. Fiorenza states, “Revelation expands this early Christian eschatological expectation insofar as the text follows the pattern of Joel 3:13 by paralleling the harvest image (14:14–16) with that of the vintage (14:17–20)” (Fiorenza, *Revelation*, 90). Several scholars argue that the imagery in Joel 3:13 is of judgment against the wicked only (e.g., Thomas, *Revelation* 8-22, 220). However, this is debatable. See Nichol, *SDABC*, 4:949. Also, James L. Crenshaw, *Joel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 24C (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 191; Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 118.

<sup>1494</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 552; also, Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 467; Brighton, *Revelation*, 391, among others.

<sup>1495</sup> Cf. also 14:12; 17:20; 20:21–23; 21:15–19. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the*

closely related to the eschatological harvest and is not complete until that time comes.

One should notice that the description of the grain harvest in 14:14–16 also reminds the parable of the wheat and the weeds in Matthew 13:24–30, where the wheat is preserved in the heavenly “barn” (Matt 13:30). Differently, the grapes are gathered to be thrown “into the great winepress of the wrath of God” (Rev 14:19); then, they are crushed outside the city and blood flows out of them (Rev 14:20). This imagery strongly suggests that the grain and the grapes have opposite destinies. This is similar to the description by John the Baptist that the Messiah would gather the wheat into the barn and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matt 3:12).

The brief discussion above strongly suggests that 14:14–20 is a description of two destinies the inhabitants of the earth must choose between upon hearing the three angels’ messages, rather than a double narration of judgment. Both the preceding context (14:6–13) and the following context (15:2–4) of 14:14–20 suggest that before the second coming of Christ the world will be polarized into two groups: worshipers of the beast and worshipers of the true God. These two groups are portrayed in 14:14–20 as facing different destinies.<sup>1496</sup> In the next section, this passage will be discussed with special attention to its missionary theology.

### **The Missionary Theology of Revelation 14:14–20**

The foregoing discussion has pointed out that 14:14–20 is divided into two units. The first deals with the grain harvest (14:14–16) and the second focuses on the grape

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*Disciples*, 135.

<sup>1496</sup> This passage anticipates “the final ‘gathering’ of the people of God” (Rev 21–22) and the final judgment of their opponents (Rev 17–20). See Fee, *Revelation*, 201. A similar eschatological expectation is conveyed in 2 Bar 70.2, where an eschatological harvest with two opposite groups is also portrayed.

harvest (14:17–20). While discussing the missionary theology of 14:14–20, this section will also focus on how the two units relate to each other.

### The Grain Harvest (14:14–16)

Three semantic fields of mission can be identified in 14:14–16: place of missionary work, goal of the proclamation, and accomplishment of the missionary task.<sup>1497</sup> However, the first image in this passage is of a white cloud and “one like a son of man” seated on it (14:14). From a literary point of view, this image is highly important for the meaning of the passage. Its importance is emphasized by the very position it occupies in 14:6–20. Three angels appear in 14:6, 8, 9, and three more angels are mentioned in 14:15, 17, 18,<sup>1498</sup> forming a parallel structure with the son of man in 14:14 at the center.<sup>1499</sup> This indicates that while six angels are mentioned throughout the chapter, the son of man sitting on the white cloud is the central figure.<sup>1500</sup> That the title “son of man” refers to Jesus is clear by the usage of the same epithet in 1:13.<sup>1501</sup>

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<sup>1497</sup> The term γῆ/earth (vv. 15, 16 [2x]; cf. vv. 18, 19 [2x]) is in the semantic field of place of missionary work. The verbs θερίζω/to harvest (vv. 15 [2x], 16) and the noun θερισμός/harvest (v. 15) denote the goal of the proclamation but also accomplishment of the missionary task. This latter semantic field also includes the phrase πέμπω τὸ δρέπανον/put in your sickle (v. 15; cf. v. 18).

<sup>1498</sup> Although an angel appears in v. 19, he is the same angel introduced in v. 17, where he is identified as the angel having a sharp sickle. In v. 19, he is the one who “swung his sickle.” See Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 419; also, Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 187.

<sup>1499</sup> For more details, see Herbert Kiesler, “Christ: Son of Man: Lamb,” in Holbrook, *Symposium on Revelation: Book 2*, 418.

<sup>1500</sup> The importance of the image is enhanced by the repetition of the prepositional phrase ἐπὶ τὴν νεφέλην/on the cloud. While the noun “cloud” in the phrase “a white cloud” is anarthrous, the three other occurrences of “cloud” are marked with an anaphoric article (cf. vv. 14, 15, 16). This suggests that the idea of a “white cloud” is in John’s mind throughout vv. 14–16. According to Stephen S. Smalley, the color white may be an indication of the positive nature of the event depicted in 15–16 (Smalley, *Revelation*, 371).

<sup>1501</sup> By the way, in both 1:13 and 14:14 the term υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου/son of man is followed by the adjective ὅμοιον/similar, one like. A comparison with 1:7 suggests that this imagery refers to Jesus’ second coming. The idea of Jesus’ return may be reinforced by the reference to the “golden crown.” See Swete,

Remarkably, in ANE mythology, Baal was the rider on the clouds. In Psalms, it is Yahweh that rides on the clouds (104:3; cf. 18:11–12).<sup>1502</sup> Accordingly, 14:14–16 depicts Christ as divine.

There is no doubt that the imagery in 14:14–16 builds upon Daniel 7:13, but there are also affinities with Jesus’ teaching on his coming in the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>1503</sup> One should remember that in alluding to Daniel 7:13, John intends the reader to consider the whole eschatological section of Daniel.<sup>1504</sup> By combining Daniel 7:13 with synoptic traditions, John makes it clear that the second coming is the moment when Christ will ultimately receive universal dominion (Dan 7:13–14) and the kingdom will definitely be given to the saints. Thus, it is not surprising that the second coming of Christ is depicted by John as the eschatological harvest. At this point, it is important to mention that the connections between 14:14–20 and 14:6–13 suggest that the end-time message emphasizes the second coming of Christ. Thus, to the six elements attached to the end-time proclamation as mentioned in previous chapters of this dissertation—the gospel, the

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*Apocalypse*, 185; Alford, *Alford’s Greek Testament*, 690–91; Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 219.

<sup>1502</sup> Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 398; Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150 (Revised Edition)*, WBC 21 (Dallas: Word, 2002), 45.

<sup>1503</sup> See Matt 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27; cf. Acts 1:9, 11; cf. also Matt 3:12; 13:24–43; Mark 4:29. For a helpful treatment of Dan 7:13 in Rev 14:14, see Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 840–42. Aune, nevertheless, strongly argues that John “betrays no awareness of the Son of man traditions of the Gospels” (p. 842). In a diametrically opposed direction, L. A. Vos rejects any dependence on Dan 7:13 and maintains that John draws upon Gospel traditions (Vos, *The Synoptic Traditions in the Apocalypse*, 144–52). A balanced view is presented by Beale, *Revelation*, 772. Indeed, “the vision of the Son of Man reaping earth’s ripened harvest . . . recapitulates the teaching of the OT and Jesus on the subject” (*NIDNTTE*, 2:451).

<sup>1504</sup> Further ahead in Daniel, it becomes clear that the resurrection is when the grand restoration will finally take place (Dan 12:1–3ff.). At this point, an observation by Gerhard F. Hasel is relevant: “The grand climax of the book of Daniel is not the judgment . . . Rather, the final judgment . . . and the restoration of the heavenly sanctuary . . . the actions that lead up to the resurrection and the new age with its everlasting kingdom. In God’s plan the judgment before the coming of the new age is designed to bring ultimate salvation” (Hasel, “The ‘Little Horn,’” 427–28).

prophecies of Daniel, the prophecies of Revelation, the restoration of the heavenly temple, the moral law, and the Sabbath—one must add the second coming of Jesus.

Harvest terminology abounds in 14:14–16.<sup>1505</sup> Christ is portrayed as having “a sharp sickle in his hand” (v. 14) in order to reap, “for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe” (v. 15). Then, he “swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped” (v. 16). The term “sickle” renders the Greek δρέπανον. Revelation 14:14–20 has seven of the eight occurrences of this term in the NT (vv. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 [2x], 19; cf. Mark 4:29). The phrase Πέμψον τὸ δρέπανόν σου/*send your sickle* (v. 15) is an idiom pointing to the moment when the harvest begins; in a free translation, it can simply mean “begin to harvest.”<sup>1506</sup> In Matthew 13:39, Jesus explains that “the harvest is the end of the age.” By portraying Christ as a harvester who swings his sharpened sickle across the earth, John indicates that the end has come, and, hence, it is time for the eschatological harvest. John’s use of harvest language in 14:14–20 is further evidence that judgment and mission are interconnected concepts, since the time for the eschatological harvest of the saints is also portrayed as a time of judgment against the wicked.<sup>1507</sup> The phraseology in 14:15 is very similar to that in Mark 4:29.<sup>1508</sup> This suggests that both texts were influenced by the

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<sup>1505</sup> That agricultural language is used by NT writers as a metaphor for missionary activity is clearly seen in Matt 9:35–38; Luke 10:1–2; John 4:34–38; 1 Cor 1:3–9. Although Paul does not use θερίζω or θερισμός in 1 Cor 1:3–9, he applies other terms from the agricultural context. Cf. L&N, 43.1–21. The connection between θερίζω/*to harvest* and other agricultural terms such as σπείρω/*to sow* can be seen in Matt 6:26; 25:24, 26; Luke 12:24; 19:21, 22; John 4:36–37; 1 Cor 9:11; 2 Cor 9:6 [2x]; and Gal 6:7, 8 [2x].

<sup>1506</sup> See L&N, 516–17. This suggests that the aorist imperative θέρισον/*to harvest* must be read as ingressive, “take your sickle and begin to harvest” (v. 15). So Osborne, *Revelation*, 552, and Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 219. This is enhanced by the statement “the hour to harvest has come” (Rev 14:15).

<sup>1507</sup> This is in consonance with Jesus’ usage of the metaphor, since he applies harvest language in reference to both judgment (e.g., Matt 13:30; 25:24ff.; Luke 19:20ff.) and mission (Matt 9:37–38; Luke 10:2; John 4:34–38). Louis A. Brighton is correct that “both results of God’s judgment are pictured: condemnation . . . for the wicked but . . . deliverance for the saints” (Brighton, *Revelation*, 391).

<sup>1508</sup> Compare Πέμψον τὸ δρέπανόν σου καὶ θέρισον, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα θερίσαι/*Take your sickle and*

same tradition. Indeed, as seen above, the harvest depicted in 14:14–20 is tantamount to that portrayed in the Synoptic Apocalypse and in the parables of the kingdom.<sup>1509</sup> In the Gospels, the disciples are to replicate Jesus’ ministry as they heal (Matt 10:1, 8) and preach (Matt 10:7). This suggests that for a harvest to take place, the followers of Jesus must emulate his mission. In Revelation 14, the followers of the Lamb (v. 4)<sup>1510</sup> preach the three angels’ messages (vv. 6–11) so that the earth is ripe for the eschatological harvest (vv. 14–20).

Moreover, harvesting is related to “sending” in Matthew 9:38 (cf. Luke 10:2; cf. John 4:35, 38),<sup>1511</sup> and, although more loosely, to “going” in Matthew 10:6–7. The laborers for the harvest (Matt 10:1–4; cf. 9:38)<sup>1512</sup> must go and preach in their going (Matt 10:7). Without “sending” and “going” there is no proclamation and harvest. While terms of the semantic field of activity involving movement from one place to another, such as “send” and “go,” have not been identified in Revelation 14, the foregoing

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*begin to harvest, because the hour to harvest has come* (Rev 14:15, my translation) to ἀποστέλλει τὸ δρέπανον, ὅτι παρέστηκεν ὁ θερισμός/*He takes the sickle, because the harvest has come* (Mark 14:29, my translation).

<sup>1509</sup> Particularly, Matt 9:37–38 (= Luke 10:2) and John 4:34–38 reveal the missionary tone of the metaphor of harvest in its highest expression. In Matt 9:37–38, the harvest motif serves as a transition between Jesus’ ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing (Matt 9:35–36) and the commission of the apostles (Matt 10). See Lenski, *Matthew*, 384. Also, Gundry, *Matthew*, 181.

<sup>1510</sup> For a treatment of possible connections between the reference to the followers of the Lamb in Rev 14 and some of Jesus’ sayings about the motif of following him, see Vos, *The Synoptic Traditions*, 136–44.

<sup>1511</sup> Curiously, the verb rendered as “send out” or “send forth” in Matt 10:38 and Luke 10:2 in most English versions is not ἀποστέλλω or πέμπω but ἐκβάλλω. Although somewhat uncommon, this rendering is adequate. Louw and Nida place ἐκβάλλω in the same semantic field as the compounds ἐξαποστέλλω and ἐκπέμπω, with the sense of “send out or away from, presumably for some purpose” (see L&N, 15.68); in this case, the purpose is harvest. Even the simple verb βάλλω is sometimes taken in the sense of “send,” as one can see in Matt 10:34 (ASV; KJV) and Luke 12:49 (AV; NJV). The close relationship between ἐκβάλλω and, for instance, ἀποστέλλω can be seen in Luke 10, where the author uses ἐκβάλλω in v. 2 but switches to ἀποστέλλω in v. 3. Apparently, ἐκβάλλω is used in Matt 9:38 and Luke 10:2 because it is more emphatic than ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω.

<sup>1512</sup> For this connection between Matt 10:1–4 and 9:38, see Richard B. Gardner, *Matthew*, BCBC

discussion has indicated that the proclamation of the three angels' messages ripens the earth for the eschatological harvest.<sup>1513</sup> An additional missionary element can be inferred from John 4:34–38. The metaphor of harvest points to the potential results of the Christian mission.<sup>1514</sup> This passage also conveys another important principle that can illuminate Revelation 14:14–16: The harvesters reap the fruit of sowers who went before them (John 4:36). While the idea that “the harvest of the earth is ripe” (Rev 14:15 NKJV) must be interpreted in the light of the proclamation of the three angels' messages, it is possible that this statement points not only to the harvest of the end-time generation but to the harvest of the saints of all ages.<sup>1515</sup> Those proclaiming the three angels' messages join those who have proclaimed the gospel before them and, in a sense, reap the fruit of their labors. All these connections with gospel traditions suggest that John portrays the imagery in Revelation 14:14–20 as the culmination of a harvest that began with the ministry of Jesus and his apostles.

An important datum coming from 14:14–20 is that the earth is the place of missionary work. The earth is referred to six times in this short passage with a noteworthy balance: three times in the description of the grain harvest (vv. 15, 16 [2x]) and three times in the portrayal of the vintage (18, 19 [2x]). The earth (Greek, γῆ) is a very important concept both in 14:14–20 in particular and the book of Revelation in

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(Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1991), 166–68.

<sup>1513</sup> In any case, it is noteworthy that the first angel is seen as flying and not stationary (14:6), and is followed by the second (14:8) and the third (14:9), which indicates that they are in motion too.

<sup>1514</sup> Friedrich Hauck, “Ἐπίζω, Ἐπισμός,” *TDNT* 5:133. Also, *NIDNTE*, 2:451.

<sup>1515</sup> Louis A. Brighton seems to agree: “The church is always to keep in mind that her mission on earth is intimately related to this harvest at the End. . . . The entire period from Christ's first advent to his return in glory at the End is the season of the harvest. At no time may the church on earth consider her work to be done or imagine that all opportunities have been exhausted. Until that final call for Christ to send forth his sickle, there is much work that the church must do—and do soon (cf. Rev 10:6–7, 11).”



general, which contains nearly one-third (82x) of the 250 occurrences of the term in the NT. The noun “earth” is frequently used in Revelation to refer to the entire world,<sup>1516</sup> and that must be the meaning here.<sup>1517</sup> It should also be noticed that, while 14:14–20 makes it clear that mission occurs in the earthly realm, 14:15 is the first reference to ἐξέρχομαι/*going out* of the temple. This concept is repeated further ahead in Revelation (14:17; 15:6; 16:7; cf. 19:5) and points to the fact that judgment comes from heaven and has two faces—salvation for some and condemnation for others.

#### The Grape Harvest (14:17–20)

Revelation 14:17–20 presents similarities to 14:14–16, but there are also striking differences. The similarities can easily be perceived by means of the repetition in 14:17–20 of the agricultural terms in 14:14–16. These terms include the phrase δρέπανον ὀξύ/*sharp sickle* (v. 14; cf. vv. 17, 18<sup>1518</sup>), the command πέμψον τὸ δρέπανόν σου/*take your sickle* (v. 16; cf. v. 18), and the statement καὶ ἔβαλεν . . . τὸ δρέπανον αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν/*he swung his sickle upon the earth* (v. 16, ASV), which is virtually replicated in v. 19, καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ ἄγγελος τὸ δρέπανον αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν/*and the angel swung his sickle into the earth* (ASV).

As much as these similarities stand out, the differences are more substantial. To begin with, the former refers to “the harvest of the earth” (v. 15; the grain harvest is

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Brighton, *Revelation*, 391.

<sup>1516</sup> See expressions such as “the kings of the earth” (1:5; 6:15; 17:2, 18; 18:3, 9; 19:19; 21:24), “all tribes of the earth” (1:7), “those who dwell on the earth” (3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 14:6; 17:2, 8), “four corners of the earth” (7:1; 20:8), and “four winds of the earth” (7:1), suggesting the idea of the entire earth rather than a political location such as a country, for instance.

<sup>1517</sup> This notion is reinforced by the reference to the number 1,600 in 14:20, which is a multiple of four and, hence, suggests worldwide scope. Rev 14:14–20 points to events that involve the planet earth as a whole.

implied), whereas the latter refers to “the grape harvest of the earth” (v. 19).<sup>1519</sup> In the former, it is the son of man who has a sharp sickle (v. 14), whereas in the latter, it is an angel (v. 17). The son of man swings his sickle *upon* the earth (ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, v. 16), whereas the angel swings his sickle *into* the earth (εἰς τὴν γῆν, v. 19). This alternation from “*upon* the earth” to “*into* the earth” may appear trivial at first sight, but deserves further consideration.

While ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν is a *hapax legomenon* in Revelation,<sup>1520</sup> εἰς τὴν γῆν occurs thirteen times, almost always with the sense of judgment upon the wicked or related to Satan and the evil powers.<sup>1521</sup> For example, “the stars of the sky fell *into* the earth” (6:13, my translation) in John’s description of the approaching day of the Lord (cf. Isa 13:9–10; Ezek 32:7–8; Joel 2:10–11; 2:30–31; 3:14–15). Fire, hail, and fire mixed with blood are thrown *into* the earth in 8:5, 7.<sup>1522</sup> In the context of the fifth trumpet, John sees a star

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<sup>1518</sup> In v. 18, the phrase is preceded by an anaphoric article.

<sup>1519</sup> This explains a few differences at the lexical level. The term translated as “ripe” in 14:15 is ἐξηράνθη (from ξηραίνω), whereas the term translated as “ripe” in 14:18 is ἤκμασαν (from ἀκμάζω). The term ξηραίνω is more suitable to the context of a grain harvest, since it means “dry out” or “wither,” whereas ἀκμάζω can be applied to harvests in general, since it simply means “to be at the peak” (Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, s.v. “ἀκμάζω”) or “to be at the prime” (Brannan, *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, s.v. “ἀκμάζω”). In addition, while John mentions in 14:16 that the son of man “swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped” (ἐθερίσθη, from θερίζω), in 14:19 he says that the angel “swung his sickle across the earth and gathered” (ἐτρύγησεν, from τρυγάω) the grape harvest.” The verb τρυγάω is also used in the context of the harvest of grapes in Luke 6:44, as well as in extra-biblical writers such as Aristophanes (*Pax* 912; *Ec.* 886), Plato (*Leg* 844e), Homer (*Il.* 18.566), and Herodotus (*Hist.* 4.199.1). See Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, s.v. “τρυγάω.”

<sup>1520</sup> The phrase “upon the earth” occurs twenty times in Revelation but, except for this occurrence in 14:16, this prepositional phrase always has γῆ/earth in the genitive case as the object of ἐπί. The phrase “upon the earth” with the genitive case usually has a negative sense (3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10 [2x]; 13:8 [2x], 14; 17:8), referring to the wicked. It has a positive sense in 5:3, 10, 13, referring to the saints. And it seems to have a general sense in 7:1; 10:2, 5, 8; 14:6; 16:18; 18:24.

<sup>1521</sup> The only exception is 5:6. Ranko Stefanovic has demonstrated that the context of Rev 5 has to do with enthronement. See his dissertation on “The Background and Meaning of the Sealed Scroll of Revelation 5.”

<sup>1522</sup> These vivid images have widely been interpreted as tokens of judgment. For an ample

fallen<sup>1523</sup> from heaven *into* the earth (9:1)<sup>1524</sup> and locusts come *into* the earth (9:3).<sup>1525</sup> In 12:4, a third of the stars of heaven are cast down *into* the earth at the sweep of the dragon's tail. The dragon is cast down *into* the earth in 12:9, 13. In 13:13, the earth beast is portrayed as "making fire come down from heaven *into* the earth" (my translation). In 16:1, a voice summons the seven angels to pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God *into* the earth. Obedient to that voice, the first angel pours out his bowl *into* the earth (16:2).<sup>1526</sup> As one can perceive, the prepositional phrase "*into* the earth" is applied with negative connotations throughout Revelation. Thus, it is remarkable that John switches from "upon the earth" in 14:16 to "into the earth" in 14:19. Likewise, it is equally

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discussion on that matter, see Beale, *Revelation*, 457–64, 473–75.

<sup>1523</sup> The Greek text suggests that John does not see the star falling; it has already fallen when he describes the vision. The Greek uses the perfect participle of πίπτω/fall.

<sup>1524</sup> Several commentators hold a positive view of this star, identifying it with an agent of God, perhaps an angelic being (e.g., Ladd, *Revelation*, 129; Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 27; Bratcher and Hatton, *Revelation*, 142; Morris, *Revelation*, 126; Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 525; Mounce, *Revelation*, 185). By and large, this interpretation is based on a comparison between 9:1 and 1:20; 20:1. However, the immediate context suggests that this star should be identified with an evil being, even Satan himself, since its activity unleashes gloomy consequences. This interpretation is supported by passages such as Isa 14:12, Luke 10:18, and Rev 12:9, and is maintained by a number of scholars. See especially Beale, *Revelation*, 491–93, and Moloney, *Apocalypse*, 140–45; see also J. Hampton Keathley III, *Studies in Revelation* (Galaxie Software, 2002), Rev 9:1; Patterson, *Revelation*, 215–17; Leithart, *Revelation*, 377–80, among many others.

<sup>1525</sup> Whatever the meaning of the locusts, they are a symbol of evil powers. For a summary of views, see Keener, *Revelation*, 274–76; Thomas, *Revelation 8–22*, 29–30.

<sup>1526</sup> Interestingly, except for 9:3, it seems that all these instances describe a descending motion from heaven to earth. This is clear in 8:5 ("from the altar . . . into the earth"), 9:1 ("from heaven into the earth"), 12:4 ("a third of the stars of heaven [are cast] into the earth"; cf. 12:9, 13), 13:13 ("fire from heaven into the earth"), 14:19 (an angel who came out of the temple in heaven swung his sickle into the earth). Almost always, this descending motion unleashes an event on earth. Accordingly, in 8:5, "there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake," signs of judgment. In 8:5, "a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up." In 9:1, the fallen star opens "the shaft of the bottomless pit" (9:2), which causes the darkening of the sun and the air and makes a smoke rise, from which locusts come into the earth (9:3), and cause harm to those "who do not have the seal of God" (9:4). In 12:4, 9, 13, the casting down of the dragon and his angels unleashes deceit and persecution. Deceit is also the result of the fire made by the earth beast (13:13–14). In 16:1–2, the pouring out of the bowls causes harmful and painful sores to come upon the people (v. 2). In 14:19, the swinging of the sickle by the angel causes the gathering of "the grape harvest of the earth" and, consequently, its throwing "into the great winepress of the wrath of God."

remarkable that he avoids ἐπί plus “earth” in the genitive case in 14:16, which one should expect based on his usage of that construction nineteen times elsewhere in the book.<sup>1527</sup> This is probably due to the fact that ἐπί plus “earth” in the genitive case has frequent negative overtones.<sup>1528</sup> Thus, John uses ἐπί plus “earth” in the accusative case for the first and only time in Revelation (14:16) to avoid a negative sense in his description of the grain harvest, seeing that this is the harvest of the saints. Conversely, the usage of the prepositional phrase “into the earth” in 14:19 makes it clear that 14:17–20 refers to judgment against the wicked<sup>1529</sup> and, thus, it establishes a sharp contrast to the description of the grain harvest in 14:14–16.

Other contrasts between 14:14–16 and 14:17–20 can be mentioned. The son of man has “a sharp sickle in his hand” (14:14), whereas for the angel it is simply said that “he too had a sharp sickle” (14:17). In 14:16 it is mentioned that when the son of man swung his sickle “the earth was reaped,” and nothing else is said about what happens with the grain: it is implied. But when the angel swung his sickle, he “gathered the grape harvest . . . and threw<sup>1530</sup> it into the great winepress of the wrath of God” (14:19, emphasis supplied).<sup>1531</sup> In short, the major difference between 14:14–16 and 14:17–20 is

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<sup>1527</sup> 3:10; 5:3, 10, 13; 6:10; 7:1; 10:2, 5, 8; 8:13; 11:10 [2x]; 13:8, 14 [2x]; 14:6; 16:18; 17:8; 18:24.

<sup>1528</sup> 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10 [2x]; 13:8 [2x], 14; 17:8

<sup>1529</sup> For a similar interpretation of “into the earth” in 14:19, see Mulholland, *Revelation*, 537.

<sup>1530</sup> Accordingly, while the grain harvest involves one act—reaping—the grape harvest encompasses two acts—gathering and throwing. Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 293.

<sup>1531</sup> J. Massyngberde Ford must be correct that although both the son of man and the destroying angel use δρέπανον, the meaning of this term varies from 14:14–16 to 14:17–20. He comments that it can refer to a sickle or the tool of a vine dresser, and that the latter is in view in 14:17–20. See Ford, *Revelation*, 250. This is also maintained by Lenski, *Revelation*, 447–48.

that the former has no indication of final destruction, while the latter does.<sup>1532</sup> As mentioned above, this is similar to the description by John the Baptist (Matt 3:12) that the Messiah would gather the wheat into the barn (meaning salvation) and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire (meaning destruction).<sup>1533</sup>

The image of “the great winepress of the wrath of God” (14:19) echoes the warning that the worshipers of the beast “will drink the wine of God’s wrath” (14:10).<sup>1534</sup> As discussed above, the proclamation of the three angels’ messages ripens the earth for the second coming of Christ. The worshipers of the true God are ripe for salvation, whereas the worshipers of the beast are ripe for the execution of God’s judgment.<sup>1535</sup> While the remnant is portrayed as missionary agents of the proclamation (14:1–13), it is Christ who is depicted as the eschatological reaper in 14:14–20. This suggests that his

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<sup>1532</sup> So Osborne, *Revelation*, 552.

<sup>1533</sup> To a certain extent, this is also similar to the separation of the sheep from the goats in Matt 25:32–33, which evokes an act of judgment with the heavenly Judge dividing the righteous and the unrighteous by putting the former on the right and the latter on the left. However, as Ulrich Luz puts it, “The image of the parable is not as clear as it appears to most exegetes” (Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 276).

<sup>1534</sup> The words of Jesus in Matt 26:39 (cf. 20:22–23), “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me” may lie behind this imagery” (González and González, *Revelation*, 94; also, Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 460; Davis, *Revelation*, 291n15). In Scripture, the imagery of a cup may symbolize God’s punishment (Jer 25:15–29; 49:12; Ps 75:8; Obad 16; Hab 2:16) leading to violent death (Isa 51:17, 22; John 18:11). In the case of Jesus, “drink the cup” voluntarily (Matt 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42) suggests acceptance in going through a “second death” kind of experience. Jesus did so in order that people could choose not to go through the second death.

<sup>1535</sup> The universal reach of God’s judgment is expressed in this passage. Just as in 14:6, where the worldwide scope of the end-time message is symbolized by the fourfold formula, here also the cosmic dimension comes to the forefront by means of a multiple of the number four (=1,600 stadia). See Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 30–37. Although the number 1,600 has been given different interpretations, scholars agree that it somehow points to completeness and worldwide events. Osborne mentions that “the emphasis is on the finality and terrible scope of the divine judgment on those who have so mistreated God’s people” (Osborne, *Revelation*, 556). See also Nichol, *SDABC*, 7:835. In that connection, the vineyard mentioned in 14:17–20 refers to the whole earth (Koester, *Revelation*, 625, 629). It seems that John reinterprets the prophecy of Joel to apply it to worldwide events. See also Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 468.

followers only cooperate with him.<sup>1536</sup> The linkage between “the winepress<sup>1537</sup> [of the wrath of God] was trodden” (14:19–20) and “He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God” (19:15) hints that 14:14–20—more specifically 14:14, 18–20—is a prolepsis of 19:11–21,<sup>1538</sup> where the execution of judgment against the wicked is seen in more vivid imagery. This information is important in that 19:11–21, along with Revelation 20, indicates that the wicked—Satan, the beast, and its worshipers—will be left out of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21–22). Thus, the description of the three angels’ messages, culminating with the eschatological harvest, points to the fact that mission and judgment are part of the same eternal gospel. The absence of evil in the New Jerusalem is good news!

### Conclusion

Revelation 14:6–13 is to be read in connection with 13:1–18, 14:1–5, and 14:14–20. While 14:1–5 predicts what comes in the rest of chapter 14, a comparison between 14:6–13 and 13:1–18 shows a contrast between the three angels’ messages and the propaganda of the false trinity. More than that, the data strongly suggest that the three

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<sup>1536</sup> In this regard, one observation by Richard Bauckham is worth mentioning. He argues against the idea that only the grape harvest and not the vintage is reaped by Christ. He contends that “the angel’s gathering of the grapes merely prepares for the treading of the winepress” (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 293n76). While the identity of the one who treads the winepress is not revealed in 14:20, it becomes clear in 19:15 that he is Christ (see Duvall, *Revelation*, 204; Smalley, *Revelation*, 377; Krodell, *Revelation*, 275; Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 847, among others). But, while Christ is the one treading the winepress according to 19:15, the angel is clearly the reaper of the vine according to 14:17, 19. Perhaps, one way to solve this issue is to consider that the idea of treading the winepress is developed in Rev 16 as the seven last plagues (Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 468). Thus, while the angels somehow take an active part in treading the vine, it is Christ who ultimately brings this event to a conclusion (19:15). In this case, the treading of the winepress is, as it were, a big anticipative picture of the seven last plagues, with a focus on the conclusion. In any case, although Richard Bauckham has a good point, it seems that the topic deserves more investigation.

<sup>1537</sup> John appropriates the OT imagery of a grape harvest with wine representing blood (Gen 49:11; Deut 32:14; Isa 63:3) in order to depict the punishment inflicted by God upon the followers of the beast.

<sup>1538</sup> So Roloff, *Revelation*, 174; Tonstad, *Revelation*, 212; Charles, *Revelation*, 2: 25. Tonstad and

angels' messages in 14:6–13 are God's end-time salvific effort, of which the intense propaganda of the beast in Revelation 13 is a counterfeit and manner of resistance.

Revelation 14:14–20 brings the material in 13:1–14:11 to a climax and conclusion.

The connections between 14:6–7 and 10:7, 11 indicate that the former is the counterpart of the latter and that the proclamation of the eternal gospel (14:6) and the fulfillment of the mystery of God (10:7) are closely related, showing that the commission in Revelation 10 is developed in Revelation 14. While the meaning of *εὐαγγέλιον/gospel* in 14:6 has been disputed in recent scholarship, passages such as 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11; 13:8 indicate that Revelation has much to say about the sacrifice of Jesus, and that John had it in mind when referring to the eternal gospel in 14:6. In addition, parallels with Mark 1:15; Acts 14:15; and Matthew 24:15 reinforce the idea that the gospel referred to in that passage is the same as that preached by Jesus and the apostles.

The missionary theology of 14:6–13 comes to the surface by means of various mission-related terms and themes. The verb *εὐαγγελίζω* and its cognate object *εὐαγγέλιον* indicate that the missionary task of the church implies verbal communication. The remnant of 12:17, also identified as saints in 13:7, 10; 14:12 and 144,000 in 14:1–5 (cf. 7:1–8) are the agents of mission, with the inhabitants of the earth in general as the addressees of their message. This indicates that the end-time proclamation of the gospel has a universal scope, which is further evidenced by the use of the fourfold formula (14:6; cf. 10:11). As far as the OT background of the fourfold formula is concerned, it seems that John is more focused on Genesis 10 in Revelation 5:9 and 7:9, and more focused on Daniel 7 from 10:11 onwards. Daniel 7 teaches that there will be a transference of dominion from the evil powers to the son of man and the saints by means

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Charles also see 14:14–20 as a prolepsis of 20:7–10, but the connection is looser.

of a judgment (cf. Dan 7:14, 18, 22; 26–27). This explains the phrase “the hour of his judgment has come” in 14:7 and puts it in a missionary context, given that for the eternal kingdom of God to come, first a judgment takes place in heaven, while the end-time message is preached on earth. Judgment and mission go together.

The threefold command for the inhabitants of the earth to fear, glorify, and worship God is grounded on the fact that he is the Creator, “who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water” (14:7b), but the reason for the implicit urgency is “because (ὅτι) the hour of his judgment has come” (14:7a). This threefold imperative stands out as the goal of the proclamation of the end-time message. This is a call for the inhabitants of the earth to repent, turning from the worship of the beast and its image (13:1–18) to the worship of the only and true God, the Creator (14:7). While the dragon and his allies use force and deceit in their efforts to prevent the saints from fulfilling their missionary task—as discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation—God’s mission employs an appeal in the form of a call to true worship. Worship plays a major role in Revelation 13–14 as an external act of commitment. In that connection, it is not only the goal of mission but also a resource for public witness.

The connection between 14:7 and 15:3–4 as well as the OT texts lying behind these passages indicate that the three angels’ messages reveal God’s character, uniqueness, universal sovereignty, and desire to be known among the nations. In a word, the three angels’ messages focus on God’s reputation. They identify two great revelations of God’s character of love: his commandments and the faith/faithfulness of Jesus (14:12). Revelation 14:7 and 15:3–4 emphasize “fear,” “glory,” “worship,” and “judgment” (cf. also 11:11–18 and 19:1–10), suggesting that fearing, glorifying, and worshipping God is



the proper answer to him in the face of his judgment. However, for people to fear, glorify, and worship him, they must know him, admire him, and recognize that he is a loving, holy, and righteous God. Worshiping anything or anyone other than the true God blurs the distinction between God and his creation.

Therefore, in a sense, the fundamental purpose of mission is to restore the image of God in humanity. Idols strip God of the glory that is due to him alone. That is why he does not share his glory with others (Isa 42:8). Idolatry usurps the glory that belongs to God's name alone and negatively affects the very essence of human beings in that they fall short of fulfilling the purpose of their existence, namely, to glorify God. Mission deals with the restoration of God's image in man in that it teaches people to fear, glorify and worship God alone. For that to happen, God fights against idolatry and involves us in that fight. For mission to be fully accomplished, idolatry must be fully confronted. In that regard, the Sabbath commandment plays a crucial role in the proclamation of the end-time gospel insofar as it contains the call to true worship (cf. Exod 20:11).

The message of 14:6–13 ripens the inhabitants of the earth for the eschatological harvest (14:14–20). Revelation 14:14–20 portrays the end of history by means of two contrasting images—“the harvest of the earth” and “the grape harvest of the earth.” While the former depicts the salvation of the saints, the latter describes the execution of judgment against the wicked. The discussion above has indicated that this passage presents strong connections with previous sections that shed light on its interpretation.

Thus, the statement “because the hour to reap has come” (14:15) is reminiscent of “because the hour of his judgment has come” (14:7). This similarity suggests that God's judgment in the heavenly temple along with the proclamation of the end-time message on

earth are God’s tools for ripening the world for the eschatological harvest. In that connection, one should notice the literary position of the narrative of the eschatological harvest (14:14–20), which is placed between the three angels’ messages (14:6–13) and the vision of the overcomers of the beast (15:2–4), suggesting that those who repented from their idolatry by fearing, glorifying, and worshiping God are the ones gathered in 14:14–16. They are reaped in the eschatological harvest foreshadowed by the “firstfruits” (14:4). Conversely, those who choose to keep worshiping the beast and its image “will drink the wine of God’s wrath” (14:9–10); in other words, they will be gathered in the grape harvest and thrown “into the great winepress of the wrath of God” (14:19). The connections between 14:14–20 and the previous sections also indicate that the mission of the church is closely related to the eschatological harvest and is not complete until that time comes. Related to this, the connections between 14:14–20 and 14:6–13 suggest that the end-time proclamation includes the message of the second coming of Christ. Therefore, to the six elements attached to the end-time proclamation as mentioned in previous chapters of this dissertation—the gospel, the prophecies of Daniel, the prophecies of Revelation, the restoration of the heavenly temple, the moral law, and the Sabbath—one must add a seventh one, the second coming of Jesus.

The son of man sitting on the white cloud is the central figure of 14:6–20. This image and that of the harvest present strong connections with some of Jesus’ teaching in the Gospels, suggesting that the imagery in 14:14–20 represents the culmination of a harvest that began with the ministry of Jesus and his apostles. Harvesting is the task of the church throughout the Christian era. However, while the remnant is portrayed as missionary agents of the proclamation of the end-time message (14:1–13), it is Christ

who is depicted as the eschatological reaper in 14:14–16. This suggests that his followers only cooperate with him.

In addition to the connections between 14:14–20 and the adjacent passages, one can learn from the similarities and differences between 14:14–16 and 14:17–20. The similarities indicate that these two passages refer to the same event, and the discrepancies indicate that they refer to two different groups. Like the messages of the three angels, Revelation 14:14–20 supports that mission and judgment are interconnected concepts in Revelation, insofar as it indicates that the time for the eschatological harvest of the saints is also portrayed as a time of judgment against the wicked. This is also part of the gospel message, in that exclusion of the wicked is good news.

Finally, while 14:6–20 points to the accomplishment of the missionary task and brings the material of Revelation 10–14 to its climax, the completion of God’s mission is more definitively portrayed in another passage in that section of Revelation, namely, 11:15–18, especially the statement “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever” (v. 15). We will turn to this passage now.

## CHAPTER 10

### COMPLETION AND TRIUMPH OF MISSION

The previous chapter indicated that 14:6–20 points to the accomplishment of the missionary task of the remnant and brings the material of Revelation 10–14 to its climax. It also showed that, while God’s end-time people play an active part in God’s mission by proclaiming the three angels’ messages, Christ is the eschatological reaper. The saints only cooperate with him. Although 14:14–20 points to the accomplishment of the missionary task on earth, a bigger picture is portrayed in 11:15–18, especially the announcement of the seventh angel at the blowing of his trumpet, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ” (v. 15). This points to the completion and triumph of God’s mission, given that this passage proclaims God’s ultimate victory. Thus, while 14:14–20 brings the material in chapters 12–14 to its climax by portraying the second coming of Christ after a description of the final events, 11:15–18 goes a little further by serving as a prolepsis of the final events leading to the establishment of the eternal kingdom of God.<sup>1539</sup> This explains why this passage will be treated here rather than between the Chapter on 11:3–14 and the Chapters on 12–14.

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<sup>1539</sup> This is only hinted in Rev 14:14–20, since it stops with the description of punishment of the wicked. And yet, 14:14–20 prepares the reader for what comes next in Revelation (see Fee, *Revelation*, 201).

Following the perspective of the semantic fields of mission, this section will address the announcement in 11:15, its reference to κόσμος/*world*, and other mission terms in 11:18. The word κόσμος fits in the semantic field of the place of missionary work and will serve as our starting point of discussion. Then, we will focus on 11:18, where one can find at least four semantic fields of mission: subjects of missionary work, addressees of missionary work, goal of the proclamation, and reward for the missionaries.

### **The Universal and Eternal Kingdom of the Davidic King**

The announcement “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever” (11:15) is unique in the whole Bible. The phrase “the kingdom of the world”<sup>1540</sup> is a *hapax legomenon* in the NT with no single occurrence in the LXX, which brings some difficulties to its interpretation.<sup>1541</sup> To make matters even more challenging, 11:15 contains one of the only three occurrences of κόσμος in Revelation (cf. 13:8; 17:8). However, its usage elsewhere in the NT may shed light on its meaning here. The term appears predominantly in the Johannine corpus (105 times<sup>1542</sup> out of 185 occurrences in the SBLGNT),<sup>1543</sup> followed by the Pauline corpus (47 times). By and large, both John and Paul use κόσμος in the sense of the world system in opposition to God,<sup>1544</sup> but also as the object of his love and work

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<sup>1540</sup> The genitive “τοῦ κόσμου” is likely objective, “the kingdom over the world” (Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 115; Mathewson, *Revelation*, 152).

<sup>1541</sup> The closest to this can be found in 2 Macc 7:9 and 4 Macc 16:18 (Brighton, *Revelation*, 304).

<sup>1542</sup> 78x in John, 24x in the Letters, and 3x in Revelation.

<sup>1543</sup> The UBS<sup>5</sup> (also NA<sup>28</sup>) has 186 occurrences, since it includes κόσμος in Matt 13:35, although in brackets. The term must have been added by a scribe based on its occurrence in Matt 25:34. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 28. The Committee attributed to it degree of certainty C.

<sup>1544</sup> The term κόσμος appears in the NT more frequently in the sense of (1) universe (Acts 17:24), (2) the earth as the place where humankind dwells (Mark 4:8), (3) world system in its godless standards

of redemption and reconciliation in Christ (e.g., 2 Cor 5:19).<sup>1545</sup> In 11:15, κόσμος can be understood as meaning the planet earth as the place where mankind dwells<sup>1546</sup> or the world system.<sup>1547</sup> In any case, the κόσμος has now been conquered by God. Thus, κόσμος “designates the place and object of God’s saving activity.”<sup>1548</sup> It is not surprising that the term appears several times in the NT in a context where the proclamation of the gospel is involved and in the sense of the universal scope of the church’s missionary activity.<sup>1549</sup> In 11:15, κόσμος becomes the scope of the sovereignty and dominion of God and his Messiah.

The term Χριστός/*Christ* occurs seven times in Revelation. In 11:15; 12:10; 20:4, 6, it refers to the fulfillment of the messianic expectation since it is articular and occurs alone.<sup>1550</sup> This is not precisely the case in 1:1, 2, 5, where it appears in the compound

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(Gal 6:14); (4) people, even those associated with the world system (1 Cor 6:2; John 3:16); and (5) adornment (1 Pet 3:3). See James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), s.v. “κόσμος”.

<sup>1545</sup> *EDNT*, 2:311–13. Also, *NIDNTTE*, 2:735; Paul, *Revelation*, 208. According to Balz and Schneider, in John there is both the general idea of the sum of all that is created by God and particularly the notion of world as referring to humankind, without a clear distinction between the two (*EDNT*, 2:312). This ambiguity (or ambivalence) is likely present in Rev 11:15 as well (so Paul, *Revelation*, 208). For more details on the similar usage of κόσμος in Revelation and the Fourth Gospel, compare the word study of κόσμος by L. A. Brighton (Brighton, *Revelation*, 304–6, 308–9) to that of Lars Kierspel (see Lars Kierspel, *The Jews and the World in the Fourth Gospel: Parallelism, Function, and Context*, WUNT [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006], 155–80). Kierspel states that κόσμος almost always means “humanity” in the Fourth Gospel (p. 213).

<sup>1546</sup> *BDAG*, 561-62.

<sup>1547</sup> *L&N*, 507.

<sup>1548</sup> *NIDNTTE*, 2:734.

<sup>1549</sup> Matt 5:14; 13:38; 26:13 = Mark 14:9; Mark 16:15; Rom 1:8; Col 1:6; Phil 2:15; 1 Tim 3:16. See Vincent Henry Stanton, “WORLD,” in *A Dictionary of the Bible: Dealing with Its Language, Literature, and Contents Including the Biblical Theology*, ed. James Hastings et al. (New York; Edinburgh: Charles Scribner’s Sons; T. & T. Clark, 1912), 4:940.

<sup>1550</sup> For more details, see Osborne, *Revelation*, 441.

name “Jesus Christ” (1:1, 2, 5).<sup>1551</sup> The reference to the Messiah in 11:15 is important as this passage points to the transfer of universal dominion to Christ. This is suggested by John’s use of the aorist ἐγένετο/*has become*,<sup>1552</sup> and confirmed in 12:10,<sup>1553</sup> where ἐγένετο serves as the predicate of “the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Messiah . . . because the accuser of our brothers has been cast out” (my translation). The rulership of the world is transferred to God and his Messiah because Satan has been cast out.<sup>1554</sup> In turn, 11:15 portrays the authority of Christ in its fullest expression (cf. 3:21; 5:9–14; 12:10; Matt 28:18). Both 12:10 and especially 11:15 point to the ultimate establishment of the long-awaited messianic kingdom as foretold in the OT.<sup>1555</sup> The κόσμος is recovered by God through the work of Christ. Through Christ the world is brought back to its appropriate relationship to God

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<sup>1551</sup> In this case, “Christ” should be understood not as a title but as a name assigned to Jesus. See BDAG, 1091. This does not mean that every time the term “Christ” is attached to the name “Jesus” it cannot be read as the title “Messiah.” The context must decide.

<sup>1552</sup> The verb γίνομαι has an essentially ingressive meaning, pointing to the entrance into a new state or event. The ingressive sense of the passage has been adopted by most English versions, hence the translation of the aorist form ἐβασίλευσας as “begun to reign” (v. 17).

<sup>1553</sup> The parallels between the passages are widely recognized by Revelation scholars. These two passages indicate that for Christ to receive universal dominion, the dominion had to be taken from Satan.

<sup>1554</sup> The concept of rulership is present in the four passages where Χριστός is used as a title: “he shall *reign* (βασιλεύσει)” (11:15); “the *kingdom* (βασιλεία) of our God and the authority of his Christ” (12:10; “kingdom” and “authority” are in parallelism); “they *reigned* (ἐβασίλευσαν) with Christ” (20:4); “they will *reign* (βασιλεύσουσιν) with him” (20:6). Interestingly, there is a progression of thought from 11:15 and 12:10 to 20:4, 6: while 11:15 and 12:10 portray the Messiah as co-ruler with God, 20:4, 6 portrays the saints as co-rulers with the Messiah. This is in consonance with the Danielic idea that the son of man receives “dominion and glory and a kingdom” (Dan 7:14) and that “the kingdom and the dominion . . . shall be given” to the saints (Dan 7:27).

<sup>1555</sup> For more details, see Beale, *Revelation*, 611; Beale and Gladd, *The Story Retold*, 481; Walter Grundmann et al., “Χρίω, Χριστός, Αντίχριστος, Χρῖσμα, Χριστιανός,” *TDNT* 9:573. However, it seems that 12:10 points to the inauguration whereas 11:15 points to the consummation of God’s kingdom.

(1:5b–6; cf. John 3:16, 19)<sup>1556</sup> and is now again completely under his kingship.<sup>1557</sup>

In that regard, 11:15 shares with other hymns in Revelation<sup>1558</sup> the function—*inter alia*—of contrasting worship of God and Christ with worship of the dragon and the beast.<sup>1559</sup> In a sentence, 11:15 and other hymns throughout the book indicate that Jesus is worthy of receiving universal worship<sup>1560</sup> because he completed his messianic mission successfully. It is not surprising that covenantal language is found in some of these hymns. God’s covenant with Israel is alluded to in 1:5b–6 and 5:9–10, the covenant with

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<sup>1556</sup> God’s sending his son into the world results in eternal life for those who believe in him (John 3:16) but also judgment against those who do not accept him (John 3:19). In her commentary on the Fourth Gospel, Margaret Barker argues that John 3:15–19 is a summary of John’s theology and that this passage is, as it were, “the substance of the heavenly acclamation” in Rev 11:15–18, namely, reward for the saints and judgment against the enemies. Margaret Barker, *King of the Jews: Temple Theology in John’s Gospel* (London: SPCK, 2014), 204.

<sup>1557</sup> Brighton, *Revelation*, 305.

<sup>1558</sup> There is no consensus in Revelation scholarship on the list of hymns in the Apocalypse of John. For suggestions of lists, see David E. Aune’s excursus on *Hymns in Revelation* (Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 314–17); David R. Carnegie, “Worthy Is the Lamb: The Hymns in Revelation,” in *Christ the Lord: Studies in Christology Presented to Donald Guthrie*, ed. Harold H. Rowdon (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1982), 243–56. A helpful chart with a suggestive list pointing out the singers, action, content, object, and literary form of the songs in Revelation is offered by Mark Wilson (1:5–6; 4:8, 11; 5:9–10, 12, 13, 14; 7:10, 12; 11:15, 17–18; 12:10–12; 14:3; 15:3–4; 16:5–6, 7; 19:1–2, 3, 4, 5, 6–8). See Wilson, *Charts on the Book of Revelation*, 74–75.

<sup>1559</sup> David R. Carnegie argues that Rev 13:4b intentionally follows the form of a hymn “corresponding to the hymns of praise offered to God and the Lamb” (Carnegie, “Worthy Is the Lamb,” 254; see also H. W. Gloer, “Worship God! Liturgical Elements in the Apocalypse,” *Review and Expositor* 8, no. 1 [2001]: 35–57). Gloer remarks that hymns were used not only by the Hebrew cult, but also in the Greco-Roman world. Hymns were sung in praise of emperors. This is also emphasized by B. K. Blount in his excursus on “The Hymns of Revelation as Songs of Resistance” (Blount, *Revelation*, 95–98). Thus, the hymns in Revelation are corrective against false worship (N. Elliott et al., “Introduction to Hebrews, the General Epistles, and Revelation,” in *The New Testament*, ed. Margaret Aymer, C. B. Kittredge, and D. A. Sánchez, FCB [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014], 749). As R. S. Smith remarks, most scholars analyze the hymns in Revelation based on John’s historical situation in Asia Minor and, hence, interpret them as a response to the imperial cult (Robert S. Smith, “Songs of the Seer: The Purpose of Revelation’s Hymns,” *Themelios* 43, no. 2 [2018]: 196). While this should be taken into consideration, one must keep in mind that there is something bigger in Revelation, something of cosmic dimensions (see Tonstad, *Revelation*, 8–20). The conflict in Revelation is not between God and the emperor, but between God and Satan. Ultimately, it is the worship of the dragon (13:4) that is denounced as false.

<sup>1560</sup> Carnegie, “Worthy Is the Lamb,” 243–56. See also Mark S. Krause, “The Seven Hymns of Revelation 4, 5 and 7,” *Leaven* 17, no. 4 (2009): 177–83; Jan A. du Rand, “Now the Salvation of Our God Has Come ... A Narrative Perspective on the Hymns of Revelation 12–15,” *Neotestamentica* 27, no. 2 (1993): 313–30.



Abraham is alluded to in 5:9; 7:9–10; 19:1, 6, and, as we will see below, 11:15 alludes to the covenant with David. That John is interested in God’s covenant with David and sees Jesus as the ultimate Davidic King can be seen in 3:7; 5:5; 22:16, where, respectively, Jesus is portrayed as the one “who has the key of David,” “the Root of David,” and “the Root and the descendant of David.”

The language of 11:15 presents connections with several OT passages (e.g., Exod 15:18; Pss 2:2; 10:16; Dan 2:44; 7:14, 27; Obad 21; Zech 14:9), some with more preeminence than others. The phrase “our Lord and his Messiah” is borrowed from Psalm 2:2, “the Lord and . . . his Anointed.” David E. Aune observes that this language is also similar to that of 1 Samuel 12:3.<sup>1561</sup> Indeed, the idea that the anointed is the Lord’s anointed is pervasive in 1–2 Samuel (1 Sam 2:10; 12:3, 5; 16:6; 24:6, 10; 26:9, 11, 16, 23; 2 Sam 1:14; 19:21; cf. 1 Sam 2:35; 2 Sam 22:51). However, further parallels between 11:15–18 and Psalm 2 seem to indicate that John had the latter in mind. The phrase “the nations raged” (Rev 11:18) recalls “Why do the nations rage” (Ps 2:1); and the phrase “your wrath came” (Rev 11:18) is likely reminiscent of “he will speak to them in his wrath” (Ps 2:5; cf. v. 12). In addition, in both Revelation 11:15b, 18a and Psalm 2 (vv. 1–2, 5, 10–12), the Lord and his anointed judge the nations in response to their sin.<sup>1562</sup> Thus, it seems evident that John follows not only the wording but also the order of Psalm 2.<sup>1563</sup>

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<sup>1561</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 639.

<sup>1562</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 615.

<sup>1563</sup> That this psalm was read as messianic by the early church can be seen through its quotation in Acts 4:26. Mark D. Futato argues that this is the natural reading of Ps 2. He explains that this psalm portrays the nations plotting to free themselves from vassalage to God and his Anointed. However, “since there was never a time when God ruled all nations of the earth through the Davidic monarchy, we are not to

Nevertheless, although Psalm 2 offers the strongest parallels for both the phrase “the Lord and his Messiah” (Rev 11:15b) and the language of Revelation 11:18b, the constant references to “the Lord’s anointed” in 1–2 Samuel should not be disregarded. Toward the end of 1–2 Samuel, in his final words (2 Sam 23:1–7), David mentions God’s covenantal promises to him in terms of an “everlasting covenant” (v. 5), thereby pointing to the coming of the ideal Davidic King whom David, the Lord’s anointed (2 Sam 22:51; 23:1), only foreshadowed. In that connection, David E. Aune must be correct that “forever” in 11:15 is reminiscent of God’s covenant with David,<sup>1564</sup> which implied an eternal dynasty (2 Sam 7:13, 16) with global dimensions (“instruction for humankind”; cf. 2 Sam 7:19). Revelation 11:15 points to the fulfillment of God’s promise that David’s house, kingdom, and throne would endure forever (2 Sam 7:16). That God’s eternal kingdom is meant to humankind is conveyed by the phrase “the kingdom of the κόσμος.”<sup>1565</sup> Indeed, John’s use of Psalm 2 elsewhere in Revelation indicates that Jesus will rule all the nations (compare Rev 12:5a; 19:15a with Ps 2:8–9) and share his kingdom with the overcomers (compare Rev 2:26–27b with Ps 2:8–9).

In a sense, by highlighting the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, John points to the fulfillment of all God’s covenantal promises. As seen in Chapter 3 of this work, the narrative from Genesis to Kings revolves around the establishment of Israel as a nation

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interpret this text as a description of some particular *historical* situation” (Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 75, original italics).

<sup>1564</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 640. For the use of “forever” language in reference to God’s covenant with David throughout the canon, see 2 Sam 22:51; 1 Kgs 2:45; 1 Chr 22:10; 28:4; 2 Chr 6:16; 7:18; 13:5; Pss 45:6; 61:7; 89:3–4, 35–37; Isa 9:7; Jer 33:17; Ezek 37:25; Luke 1:33; Heb 1:8.

<sup>1565</sup> See comments above on the meaning of κόσμος.

and the coming of a royal deliverer.<sup>1566</sup> Accordingly, the covenant with Israel (Exod 19:4–6) serves as a transition between God’s promises to Abraham (12:1–3) and the covenant with David (2 Sam 7),<sup>1567</sup> whereas God’s promise to David of a “seed” (2 Sam 7:12) serves as a token that his desire to make himself known to the nations—referred to many times in the book of Exodus—is still in motion. The reference to David’s “seed” (2 Sam 7:12) connects the Davidic covenant to God’s promise to Abraham (Gen 12:7; 13:15; 15:5, etc.). It is through the “seed” of David that the blessing promised to Abraham will reach the nations (Gen 12:1–3). Revelation 11:15 considers all these covenantal promises as fulfilled.

However, the book of Daniel also plays a major role in the composition of 11:15b. The establishment of God’s everlasting kingdom is a thematic parallel linking Daniel 2:44; 7:14, 18, 27 and Revelation 11:15b.<sup>1568</sup> Revelation 11:15b shares with Daniel 2:44 (LXX) the noun βασιλεία/*kingdom* and the idiom εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας/*forever*, with Daniel 7:14 (LXX) the noun βασιλεία/*kingdom* and one word from the αἰών-root,<sup>1569</sup> with Daniel 7:18 (LXX) the noun βασιλεία/*kingdom* (2x) and the idiom αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων/*forever*, and with Daniel 7:27 (LXX) the noun βασιλεία/*kingdom*, the verb βασιλεύω/*to rule*, and

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<sup>1566</sup> Alexander, “Genesis to Kings,” 119.

<sup>1567</sup> The covenant with David of a royal dynasty was a sub-covenant of the covenant with Israel (Abraham’s descendants) at Sinai. Allusions to the covenant with David refer to the promise of kingship, which would refer to Christ, the Messiah, as the Son of David. All these components of the one unified eternal covenant are bound together in Christ. As O. Palmer Robertson puts it, “as fulfiller of all the messianic promises, he [Christ] achieves in himself the essence of the covenantal principle: ‘I shall be your God and you shall be my people.’ He therefore may be seen as the Christ who consummates the covenant” (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980), 272-73).

<sup>1568</sup> Although these are not uncommon phrases in the Septuagint (see 1 Sam 13:13 [1 Kgdms 13:13]; 2 Sam 7:16 [2 Kgdms 7:16]; 1 Kgs 9:5 [3 Kgdms 9:5]; 1 Chr 17:14; 22:10; 28:7; 2 Chr 13:5; Tob 13:2; 1 Macc 2:57; Ps 144:13 [145:13]; Wis 17:3; Isa 9:6 [9:7]), John’s usage of Daniel 7–12 in Revelation 10 strongly suggests that he has Daniel 7 in mind when writing the material of Revelation 11:15.

one word from the αἰών-root.<sup>1570</sup> These verbal parallels slightly favor Daniel 7:18 and 27. If this is correct, one must take into account the larger context of Daniel 7:13–27. This is further enhanced by the similar language of Daniel 7:14 and Daniel 7:27. The context of Daniel 7:13–27 has to do with the heavenly judgment (vv. 22, 26; cf. v. 10) and the transfer of dominion from the evil powers (v. 26)<sup>1571</sup> to the son of man (vv. 13–14) and the saints (vv. 18, 22, 27) as the result of that judgment. Indeed, the heavenly judgment brings all the kingdoms of the world to an end. This is hinted at in that the “four kings” in Daniel 7:17 refer to the four kingdoms of Daniel 2,<sup>1572</sup> a connection clearly visible in the Greek and Latin readings of Daniel 7:17, which have “kingdoms” rather than “kings.”<sup>1573</sup> By the way, this understanding is consistent with “kingdom” and “kingdoms” in Daniel 7:23. Daniel 2:44–45 mentions that the everlasting kingdom of God will break “in pieces *all these* kingdoms and bring *them* to an end” (italics supplied). In both Daniel 2:44 and 7:14, it is emphasized that God’s kingdom “shall never be destroyed.” Conversely, the little horn<sup>1574</sup> will be “destroyed to the end” (Dan 7:26; cf. vv. 20–21). This is, indeed, the

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<sup>1569</sup> The adjective αἰώνιος in Dan 7:14 (LXX) becomes the noun αἰών in Rev 11:15b.

<sup>1570</sup> Again, Dan 7:27 (LXX) has an adjective, whereas Rev 11:15b has a noun.

<sup>1571</sup> The evil powers are represented in Dan 7 by “the other horn” (v. 20), which has basically the same characteristics as the little horn in Dan 8:9. For the identity of the horn, see Hasel, “The Little Horn,” 378–425; Gerhard F. Hasel, “Fulfillments of Prophecy,” in Holbrook, *The Seventy Weeks*, 319–21; Shea, *Selected Studies*, 31–66.

<sup>1572</sup> This is widely recognized by Daniel scholars. As put by the SDA Bible Commentary, “There is general agreement that these four beasts represent the same four world powers symbolized by the metallic image of ch. 2” (Nichol, *SDABC*, 4:820).

<sup>1573</sup> Collins, *Daniel*, 311–12.

<sup>1574</sup> The term “little horn” does not occur in Dan 7. It is referred to as “the other horn” (out of the ten) on the head of the fourth beast (v. 20), which is further portrayed as having “eyes and a mouth” and seeming “greater than its companions” (v. 20). However, it seems clear that this is the horn referred to as “little horn” in Dan 8:9.

end of all earthly kingdoms. As for the saints, they will possess the kingdom (Dan 7:22, 27).

The OT backgrounds to 11:15 indicate that all God's covenantal promises will be fulfilled in the ultimate establishment of the eternal and universal kingdom of God and his Messiah. Therefore, the seventh trumpet anticipates the completion of God's mission and his triumph over the kingdoms of the earth, as hinted in Psalm 2 and more openly expressed in Daniel 2 and 7. Thus, the worship in 11:16–17 is not surprising. In the context of the seventh trumpet, God is worshiped because he began to reign (11:17b). The completion and triumph of God's mission is marked and celebrated with worship. In that sense, 11:16–17 anticipates 15:4 (cf. 14:7). John's use of Psalm 2 and Daniel 2 and 7 also hints that the establishment of a universal and eternal kingdom is God's task through his Messiah, not the church's.<sup>1575</sup> However, the saints have a major role to play—that of proclaiming the end-time message. This will be further explored below as we discuss missionary terms in 11:18 and the events related to the seventh trumpet. As we will see, 11:18 portrays the final events leading to the establishment of the universal and eternal kingdom of the Davidic King (11:15–17).

### **The Seventh Trumpet and the Final Events**

Revelation 11:18 is still part of the hymn of praise introduced in 11:17 and sung by the twenty-four elders (11:16) in response to the solemn announcement in 11:15. In other words, the events mentioned in the five statements in 11:18—(1) The wrath of the nations; (2) The wrath of God; (3) The judgment of the dead; (4) The rewarding of the saints; (5) The destruction of those who destroy the earth—are somehow related to the

seventh trumpet. These five statements serve as a sort of outline of the second half of Revelation.<sup>1576</sup>

One important issue regarding the seventh trumpet is the relationship between 11:19 and 11:15–18, which may shed light upon the missionary teaching of the passage. Virtually all English versions and commentators consider 11:15–19 to be a unit. This has led some to believe that the blowing of the seventh trumpet started at the beginning of the heavenly pre-advent judgment.<sup>1577</sup> This assumption resorts to 10:6–7, where “the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet” (v. 7, NIV) follow the announcement that “there will no longer be time” (v. 6), which, in turn, points to the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecies of time.<sup>1578</sup> While the assumption that the blowing of the seventh trumpet begins with the beginning of the heavenly judgment sounds tempting, it must face some obstacles. First, although the statement “the nations raged” points to chapters 12–14, which is framed by allusions to Yom Kippur (i.e., 11:19 and 15:8)<sup>1579</sup>, the subsequent statement “but your wrath came” indicates that the emphasis lies

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<sup>1575</sup> So, Reddish, *Revelation*, 227. Reddish, however, does not include Dan 2 and 7 in his analysis.

<sup>1576</sup> Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 337–39. Following Paulien, Ranko Stefanovic provides a very helpful table showing the relationship between Rev 11:18 and Rev 12–22 (see Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 374). A more concise table can be found in Jon Paulien, *What the Bible Says about the End-Time* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1994), 107. Roughly speaking, “the nations raged (ὠργίσθησαν)” anticipates 12–14; “your wrath came” anticipates 15–18; “the time for the dead to be judged” anticipates 20:11–5; the time for “rewarding your servants” anticipates 19:1–10; 21–22; and the time for “destroying the destroyers of the earth” anticipates 19:11–20:15. For a similar treatment of Rev 11:18, see Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 188.

<sup>1577</sup> See Nichol, *SDABC*, 7:805–6.

<sup>1578</sup> Indeed, there is a close connection between 10:6 and 10:7 from a syntactical point of view, in that the conjunction ὅτι introduces not only “there will no longer be time” at the end of v. 6 but also the material in v. 7. Thus, the oath of the angel in 10:6–7 is twofold: (1) the end of Daniel’s prophecies of time; (2) the accomplishment of the mystery of God. See the section “Proclamation of Imminence” in chapter 6 of this work.

<sup>1579</sup> Rev 11:19 and 15:8 point, respectively, to the opening and conclusion of the intercessory ministry of Christ in the most holy place. See “The Attack against the Remnant” in chapter 8 of this work.

on the punishment resulting from the heavenly judgment rather than on the process itself. Accordingly, it seems that the seventh trumpet focuses on events after the end of the time of grace.<sup>1580</sup>

Second, the syntax of 11:18 seems to indicate that ἦλθεν/*came* serves as the predicate not only of ὀργή/*wrath* but also of καιρός/*time*. In turn, this noun is modified by three infinitives: κριθῆναι/*to judge*, δοῦναι [τὸν μισθὸν]/*to give reward*, and διαφθεῖραι/*to destroy*.<sup>1581</sup> In other words, God's response to the wrath of the nations is his own wrath and time for judging the nations, rewarding the saints, and destroying the earth's destroyers. These events are related to the second coming and its aftermath rather than to the pre-advent judgment.<sup>1582</sup>

Third, it seems better to read 11:19 with 12:1–17ff. than with 11:15–18.<sup>1583</sup> One may argue that 11:19 is a springboard passage, but it seems that 11:18 plays this role, connecting the material in 11:15–17 with the second half of Revelation. Yet, it seems that

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<sup>1580</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 366. Indeed, many scholars hold that the third woe in 11:14—a reference to the seventh trumpet—anticipates the seven plagues (see Bratcher and Hatton, *Revelation*, 174). Even if the seven last plagues are not intended by the third woe, they are certainly included in the seventh trumpet.

<sup>1581</sup> These infinitives provide the main ideas for the last three out of the five statements found in Rev 11:18. In a sense, they find their counterpart as early as in 14:6–20, since the themes of judgment, reward, and destruction of the wicked are present in there. However, more particularly, they point to material further ahead in the book. Jon Paulien has called attention to lexical and linguistic connections between the five statements in 11:18 and sentences in the rest of the book, as follows: (1) the nations were angry (ὀργίσθησαν) / the dragon became furious (ὀργίσθη, 12:17); (2) your wrath came (ἡ ὀργή σου) / the wrath of God (ὁ θυμὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, 15:1); (3) the time for the dead to be judged (ὁ καιρὸς τῶν νεκρῶν κριθῆναι) / the dead were judged (καὶ ἐκρίθησαν οἱ νεκροί, 20:12); (4) [the time] for rewarding (δοῦναι τὸν μισθὸν) / my reward is with me (καὶ ὁ μισθός μου μετ' ἐμοῦ ἀποδοῦναι, 22:12); (5) [the time] for destroying those who destroy the earth (διαφθεῖραι τοὺς διαφθείροντας τὴν γῆν) / corrupted [or destroyed] the earth (ἐφθειρεν τὴν γῆν, 19:2). Accordingly, it seems that the infinitives point more precisely to the events portrayed in chapters 19–22.

<sup>1582</sup> This is enhanced by the switch from the present tense “we give thanks” (εὐχαριστοῦμέν) in 11:17 to aorist-tense forms in 11:18 (ὀργίσθησαν/*raged* and ἦλθεν/*came*). The present tense in 11:17 represents the time frame of God's beginning to reign (11:15–16), whereas the aorist-tense forms refer to events right before the second coming and aftermath.

11:19 plays a similar role by binding the first half of Revelation (1–11) with its focus on the *tamid* liturgy to the second half (12–22) with its focus on the *Yom Kippur* liturgy.<sup>1584</sup> In this case, while 11:18 introduces the events to be further described in 12–22, 11:19 provides the theological framework through which one should interpret those events. Thus, although both 11:18 and 11:19 relate to previous material, 11:18 is linked to the immediate context (11:15–17), whereas 11:19 seems to be connected with the larger context, especially other scenes introducing the major visions in the first half (1:9–20; 4:1–5:14; 8:2–6). In sum, 11:19 is connected to previous material in the sense that, just as 1:9–20; 4:1–5:14; and 8:2–6, it introduces a major vision. It is better read 11:19 along with 12:1–17ff. Thus, 11:19 is not directly connected with the seventh trumpet.

Fourth, the syntax of 10:7 may indicate that the text points primarily to the imminence of the seventh trumpet rather than to its beginning.<sup>1585</sup> Although this is rejected by a number of scholars, it is not only possible but also likely for at least three reasons. First, the more natural way of translating the verb μέλλω in the clause ὅταν μέλλῃ σαλπίζειν is “to be about to,” hence, “he is about to blow the trumpet.”<sup>1586</sup>

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<sup>1583</sup> See Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 660–62.

<sup>1584</sup> See Paulien, “The Role of the Hebrew Cultus,” 245–64.

<sup>1585</sup> The Greek text “ἀλλ’ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ ἑβδόμου ἀγγέλου, ὅταν μέλλῃ σαλπίζειν, καὶ ἐτελέσθη τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ” can run as in the NIV, “But in *the days when* the seventh angel is *about to* sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished” (emphasis supplied). This rendering conveys the idea that the mystery of God is accomplished before the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

<sup>1586</sup> The meaning of the clause ὅταν μέλλῃ σαλπίζειν, especially the verb μέλλω, has been debated by commentators. This verb occurs thirteen times in Revelation and almost always in the sense of “to be about to.” Exceptions may include 3:16, where μέλλω can be simply a periphrasis for future (“will”)—though the sense of imminence (“be about to”) is maintained in various English versions (e.g., LEB, NIV, NRSV)—and 1:19 and 6:11, where μέλλω likely refers to that which is inevitable (BDAG, 628). The sense of “to be about to” in 10:7 is aligned with the use of μέλλω in 8:3, “the three angels are about to blow!” (emphasis added), which is undisputedly taken as meaning imminence. In the same paragraph, μέλλω is again taken as meaning imminence, “I was about to write” (10:4). Even those who reject this sense in 10:7 acknowledge that this should be the natural way of understanding μέλλω. Beale says, “the majority of the



Therefore, the mystery of God is accomplished in the days when the angel is about to blow the trumpet, i.e., before the blowing of the seventh trumpet.<sup>1587</sup> Secondly, ὅταν/*when* seems to be functioning as a relative conjunction, “the days when.”<sup>1588</sup> This enhances the first reason. In a subject-predicate-temporal frame order, 10:7 is affirming that “the mystery of God will be accomplished in the days *when the seventh angel is about to sound the trumpet.*” When the mystery of God is accomplished, the seventh trumpet has not yet begun to sound. Thus, 10:6–7 seems to indicate that the end of Daniel’s prophecies of time will bring the imminence of the blowing of the seventh trumpet, not its beginning. Between the end of Daniel’s prophecies of time and the seventh trumpet, there will be a period for the end-time preaching of the gospel. This takes us to the third reason. As seen in Chapter 6 of this work, the term “the mystery of

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uses of μέλλω with an infinitive in the Apocalypse could support this understanding” (Beale, *Revelation*, 540–41). In turn, C. H. Charles admits, “It must be confessed this is the usual meaning of μέλλειν in the Apocalypse” (Charles, *Revelation*, 1:264–65). Beale simply affirms that “will” is a better translation for μέλλω in 10:7, and Charles contends, “This is against every reasonable meaning that can be assigned to the μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ in this context” (Charles, *Revelation*, 1:265), which is true if one takes his broad interpretation of “the mystery of God” as meaning “the whole purpose of God in regard to the world” (Charles, *Revelation*, 1:265; emphasis added). But it is possible if one takes “the mystery of God” in the more particular sense of the gospel (see chapter 6 of this work).

<sup>1587</sup> Some may protest against this interpretation by saying that the content of the blowing of the trumpet is what the blowing points to, and, thus, if the mystery of God is fulfilled before the blowing of the seventh trumpet, this breaks the pattern of the six previous trumpets. However, one cannot forget that 10:7 does not convey the content of the seventh trumpet. Its content is presented in 11:15–18, not in 10:7. Only in 11:15 it is said, “Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet” (cf. the pattern in 8:7, 8, 10, 12; 9:1, 13). Revelation 10:7 points to the imminence of the blowing of the seventh trumpet. It is not the blowing itself. By the way, Rev 10:7 is within an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets. In fact, the events portrayed in 10:1–11:13 are more closely related to the sixth trumpet (11:14; cf. 8:13; 9:12).

<sup>1588</sup> Or “the days in which.” This is not an unexpected use of ὅταν. See the eschatological use of ἡμέραι ὅταν (“days when” + τότε [“then”] + future) in Matt 9:15 (= Mark 2:20). See BDAG, 731. John uses a similar structure in Rev 10:7 that is semantically tantamount to those in Matt 9:15 and Mark 2:20, namely, “ἡμέραις . . . ὅταν + consecutive καί [“then”] + aorist). The differences can be explained by John’s different style. While Matthew and Mark use the consecutive particle τότε, in Revelation parataxis predominates. The conjunction καί in ὅταν μέλλῃ σαλπίζειν, καὶ ἐτελέσθη τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ (10:7) is certainly consecutive. As J. H. Moulton and W. F. Howard remark, the clearest examples in the NT of consecutive καί in parataxis come from Revelation (Moulton and Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 2:422). That John is aware of traditions associated to eschatological sayings of Jesus and interacted with them can be seen from his usage of ὅταν μέλλῃ. Such a Greek expression “is connected with the Day of summation” in Mark 13:4 and Luke 21:7 (see Edwin A. Abbott, *Johannine Grammar* [London: Adam

God” in 10:7 refers to the good news that, in Christ, God’s plan for saving humanity is accomplished. In a word, “the mystery of God” is the gospel. The gospel will be preached more intensively in the days between the end of Daniel’s prophecies of time and the blowing of the seventh trumpet. However, John’s allusion to Daniel 2 and Amos 3 in 10:7 suggests that the preaching of the gospel is only part of the accomplishment of the mystery of God, which will be completely fulfilled with the events portrayed in 11:15–18. This indicates that the end-time proclamation of the gospel prepares the world for the final events leading to the second coming of Christ and its aftereffects. This may explain why one can find various missionary terms in 11:18. At least four semantic fields of mission can be identified, namely, subjects of missionary work, addressees of missionary work, goal of proclamation, and reward for the missionaries. We will briefly comment on each as follows.

### Subjects of Missionary Work

It is very hard to determine the syntactical relationship between the designations “servants,” “prophets,” “saints,” “those who fear your name,” and “small and great.” Scholars debate whether these five terms represent *one* group<sup>1589</sup> (the whole church); *two* groups<sup>1590</sup> (your servants the prophets, and the saints, with two appositions); or *three* groups<sup>1591</sup> (your servants the prophets; the saints; and “those who fear your name”). The

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and Charles Black, 1906], 385).

<sup>1589</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 616–18. He claims, “Just as the fourfold formula ‘peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations’ in 11:9 refers to all unbelieving humanity, so the descriptions in v 18 refer equally to the entire community of faith” (p. 617).

<sup>1590</sup> See especially Mounce, *Revelation*, 227. Also, Fanning, *Revelation*, 341; Thomas, *Revelation* 8–22, 111; Ladd, *Revelation*, 163; Lenski, *Revelation*, 356; Bratcher and Hatton, *Revelation*, 178; Osborne, *Revelation*, 446.

<sup>1591</sup> Michaels, *Revelation*, Rev 11:15–19; Morris, *Revelation*, 149; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:296;

internal evidence of Revelation and the external evidence of the rest of the NT favor the three-group view, as follows.

That the first group consists of “your servants the prophets” (τοῖς δούλοις σου τοῖς προφήταις) is clear from John’s use of the same phrase in 10:7 (τοὺς . . . δούλους τοὺς προφήτας).<sup>1592</sup> This is the group to whom the mystery of God has been announced. While God’s servants the prophets (10:7; 11:18) are usually identified with the prophets of the OT and NT,<sup>1593</sup> the saints are, by and large, identified with ordinary believers.<sup>1594</sup> In Revelation 10–14, the saints are identified with the remnant (12:17; cf. 13:7, 10; 14:12). The difference between two and three groups resides in whether “those who fear your name” is an apposition to saints or refers to a different group. The second view is preferable. In the context of Revelation 10–14, those who fear God are the ones who turned from idolatry to worship of the true God upon hearing the three angels’ messages (14:7; cf. 15:4).<sup>1595</sup> Also, the immediate context (11:3–13) uses “fear” language (vv. 11, 13) in reference to the end-time conversion of people in response to the testimony of the two witnesses.<sup>1596</sup> If this is correct, the data suggest, first, that the saints conquer

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Swete, *Apocalypse*, 141; Pugh, “Revelation,” 313; Alford, *Alford’s Greek Testament*, 666.

<sup>1592</sup> The different cases are explained by the different valences of the verbs εὐαγγελίζω (10:7) and δίδωμι (11:18). This phrase has its root in the OT (2 Kgs 9:7; 17:13, 23; 21:10; 24:2; Ezra 9:11; Jer 7:25; 25:4; Ezek 38:17; Dan 9:6, 10; Amos 3:7; Zech 1:6). See Fanning, *Revelation*, 341n90.

<sup>1593</sup> For arguments, see Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 71.

<sup>1594</sup> Michaels, *Revelation*, Rev 11:15–19.

<sup>1595</sup> In that sense, J. R. Michaels is correct that they are “unbelievers who learned to fear and worship God” (Michaels, *Revelation*, Rev 11:15–19). See previous comments on 14:7 and 15:3–4 in chapters 9 and 10 of this work. This idea is enhanced by the fact that 11:18 is proleptic in nature. This usage of the term “fear” is similar to that in the book of Acts, where it is often applied to refer to Gentiles who accepted the God of Israel (10:2, 22, 35; 13:16, 26, 43, 50; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7). See Porter, “Fear,” 372. In Acts 10:35, those who fear God do what is right and are acceptable to him. It seems that the idea is the same in Rev 14:7 and 15:4.

<sup>1596</sup> See the section “The Successful End-Time Witnessing” in chapter 7 of this work.

unbelievers for God through their testimony. While God’s servants the prophets are surely agents of missionary work, Revelation 10–14 focuses on the saints. Second, there is a progression in the transmission of God’s message from the prophets to the saints and from the saints to the unbelievers, so as to lead them to belief.<sup>1597</sup> This takes us to the goal of proclamation.

### Goal of the Proclamation

The reference to “those who fear your name,” associated with the idea that these are people conquered for God through the missionary work of the saints, indicates that the goal of mission is to call people back to a proper relationship with the one true God. This is hinted in 11:11 (cf. 11:13) and more openly expressed in 14:7 (cf. 15:4). G. B. Caird must be right when claiming that the mention of “those who fear your name” is part of John’s exegesis of Psalm 2,<sup>1598</sup> where the kings of the nations (Ps 2:1–2) are

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<sup>1597</sup> This indicates that the message proclaimed by the saints is based on the Word of God. The relationship between 11:15–18 and 10:7 can shed more light on this idea. In 10:7, God’s servants the prophets are the original recipients of the gospel. However, the mystery of God will be fulfilled “in the days when the seventh angel is about to blow his trumpet.” This takes us to the period between the end of Daniel’s prophecies of time and the final events leading to the second coming of Christ. In that period, the saints—or remnant—proclaim the three angels’ messages, the last word of warning to the world. In that sense, the saints are the missionary agents on earth by means of whom the proclamation of the gospel will be brought to its conclusion. As seen in chapter 6 of this work, the statement “as he announced to his servants the prophets” (Rev 10:7) comes from Amos 3:7. However, John replaces the Septuagintal ἀποκαλύπτω with εὐαγγελίζω, for obvious reasons. In declaring that God’s servants the prophets are the original recipients of God’s mystery, John is in tune with the same idea found elsewhere in the NT, specifically in Pauline literature. In Rom 6:25–26 Paul says that “the revelation (ἀποκάλυψις) of the mystery” has been disclosed (φανερῶ) and made known (γνωρίζω) to all nations “through the prophetic writings,” i.e., the OT prophecies. In Eph 3:3, the “mystery” was made known (γνωρίζω) to Paul by revelation (ἀποκάλυψις), and it was revealed (ἀποκαλύπτω) to the holy apostles and prophets—obviously including John (v. 5). But, Eph 3:10 mentions that the wisdom of God (see “the plan of the mystery” in v. 9) is “made known (γνωρίζω) to the rulers and authorities” through the church. And in Eph 1:9, Paul says that the “mystery” has been made known (γνωρίζω) to “us”—a reference to believers in general (Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC 42 [Dallas: Word, 1990], 30). In other words, there is a progression in Paul’s thought running from the OT prophets to the apostles and then to believers in general. It seems that the same progressive transmission of God’s mission is present in Rev 11:18. The fact that the mystery was revealed to the holy apostles and prophets enhances the idea above.

<sup>1598</sup> Caird, *Revelation*, 143.

summoned to “serve the Lord with fear” (“δουλεύσατε τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν φόβῳ,” Ps 2:11 LXX). This includes a call for worship.<sup>1599</sup> However, “those who fear your name” is not a call to fear the Lord, but an assertion that such an attitude already exists. Revelation 11:18 uses a different term to refer to addressees of missionary work.

### Addressees of Missionary Work

Revelation 11:18 shows a movement similar to that in Psalm 2. The nations rage against God and his anointed in Psalm 2:1–2, they become the heritage of the Son in Psalm 2:8, and their kings are summoned to “serve the Lord with fear” in Psalm 2:11. Thus, the very nations plotting against God and his anointed are the objects of God’s salvation-oriented warning in Psalm 2:10–12a.<sup>1600</sup> Conversion to the God of Israel must be in view.<sup>1601</sup> Similarly, in Revelation 11:18 “those who fear your name” are likely those among the nations who turned to God in repentance. Thus, the “nations” raging against God and his Messiah are the addressees of the saints’ missionary work. Interestingly, one can find a sort of fourfold formula in Psalm 2:1–2: the psalmist mentions nations, peoples, kings, and rulers.<sup>1602</sup> This likely suggests that all of humanity is represented

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<sup>1599</sup> C. H. Bullock, *Psalms 1–72*, ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton, TTCS 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015), 22–23.

<sup>1600</sup> B. K. Waltke, J. M. Houston, and E. Moore, *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 174. That Ps 2 foreshadows important events in the history of redemption can be attested by its use in the NT (e.g., vv. 1–2; cf. Acts 4:25–26; v. 2; cf. Rev 11:15; v. 7; cf. Matt 3:17 = Mark 1:11 = Luke 3:22; Matt 17:7 = Mark 9:7 = Luke 9:35; John 1:49; Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5; v. 8–9; cf. Rev 2:26–27; v. 9; cf. Rev 12:5; 19:15; etc.).

<sup>1601</sup> Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary*, ed. Peter Ackroyd et al., OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1998), 115. Indeed, this psalm ends with a note of grace in v. 12b, “blessed are all who take refuge in him” (Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 15 [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1973], 69–70). That the nations in Ps 2:1 have an opportunity for repentance is clear from the adjectival pronoun כָּל/all. However, the restrictive participial clause בֹּיָהוּ/who take refuge in him indicates that salvation is available only for those who enter into a covenantal relationship with God.

<sup>1602</sup> The LXX has ἔθνη/nations, λαοί/peoples, βασιλεῖς/kings, and οἱ ἄρχοντες/rulers. The first

here.<sup>1603</sup> More than that, this represents humankind in rebellion against God, which must also be the sense of the term “nations” in 11:18. God wants to save those in rebellion against him and his Messiah. But he also has a reward for those involved in that process.

### Reward for the Missionaries

The rewarding motif in Revelation is very broad. It is conveyed especially by the verb δίδωμι/*to give* (2:7 [cf. 22:14], 10 [cf. 3:11], 17, 26 [cf. 20:4], 28; 3:12,<sup>1604</sup> 21; 21:6) and its compound ἀποδίδωμι/*to recompense* (22:16)<sup>1605</sup> as well as the noun μισθός/*recompense* (11:18; 22:16). Terms such as “white robes” (6:11; cf. 7:9, 13, 14; 22:14) and “crown” (2:10; 3:11) must also be included. The nature of the rewards in Revelation is highly debated. Suggestions include vindication,<sup>1606</sup> the salvific benefits,<sup>1607</sup> the New Jerusalem and God’s presence,<sup>1608</sup> and eternal life.<sup>1609</sup> Very likely, these suggestions should be viewed as complementary rather than mutually exclusive. That these rewards are given in response to the perseverance of God’s people seems to be

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three terms occur in the fourfold formula of Rev 10:11. Further research is necessary to investigate whether its phraseology was influenced by Ps 2:1–2 and the possible implications of that.

<sup>1603</sup> R. D. Phillips rightly states, “In those words the entirety of human history can be charted” (Phillips, *Revelation*, 334). Psalms scholars usually focus on the four verbs describing the conspiracy (“conspire,” “plot,” “rise up,” “band together”; cf. Bullock, *Psalms 1–72*, 21), but overlook the fourfold description of the subjects involved in that process. As any person familiar with the OT should know, the number four indicates comprehensiveness (*NIDOTTE*, 1:495). While this is more evident in Apocalyptic literature, the number four may be loaded with this symbolism elsewhere in the OT (*NIDOTTE*, 1:495).

<sup>1604</sup> Here, John uses ποιέω rather than δίδωμι, but the sense is one of rewarding as well.

<sup>1605</sup> BDAG, 110.

<sup>1606</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 615; Osborne, *Revelation*, 445–46; Williamson, *Revelation*, 202.

<sup>1607</sup> Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 644.

<sup>1608</sup> Mounce, *Revelation*, 227.

<sup>1609</sup> R. H. Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 1033; Paige Patterson, *Revelation*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 2012), 255; Blount, *Revelation*, 222.

clear. Nevertheless, one important question is whether they involve mission connotations, in the sense that God's people are recompensed for their missionary efforts.<sup>1610</sup>

One piece of evidence comes from 2:5, 7. In 2:5, the warning “do the works you did at first” is presented to the members of the church of Ephesus under the threat that they could have their lamp removed. This means that they shine as they do missionary work for God (cf. Matt 5:16). Accordingly, the overcomers in 2:7 are likely those who keep their lamp shining. In 11:18, the reward is given (δοῦναι τὸν μισθὸν) to God's servants the prophets, the saints, and “those who fear your name.” If, as seen above, “those who fear your name” are not subjects of missionary work but addressees, it is hard to maintain that μισθός refers primarily to a reward for missionaries. In any case, given the evidence in 2:5, 7, and since God's servants the prophets and the saints in 11:18 are rewarded too, a mission connotation should not be discarded. As mentioned elsewhere in this work, one should allow John to use certain terms ambiguously. That μισθός can be used in an ambiguous way is clear from 22:12. Since μισθός there likely refers to the rewarding of two classes of people in 22:11, it has both positive and negative connotations.<sup>1611</sup> Whether the positive side involves mission connotations is another matter for discussion. This is possible, nevertheless, in light of 2:23, where the Resurrected Christ states that he “will give to each of you [the churches] according to

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<sup>1610</sup> This seems to be the understanding of some commentators. See Yeatts, *Revelation*, 209; Bratcher and Hatton, *Revelation*, 178; Swete, *Apocalypse*, 141; and Thomas and Macchia, *Revelation*, 212.

<sup>1611</sup> That the idea of rewarding each one according to his works (22:12) may have positive and negative connotations can be seen elsewhere in Revelation (cf. 2:23; 14:13; 18:6; 20:12–13). Grant Osborne reminds us that this ambivalent use of the rewarding motif is frequent in the OT (2 Chr 6:23; Job 34:11; Pss 28:4; 62:12; Prov 24:12; Jer 17:10; Ezek 18:20; Hos 12:2) and the NT (Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6; 2 Cor 11:15; 2 Tim 4:14; 1 Pet 1:17; cf. 2 Cor 5:10). See Osborne, *Revelation*, 788.

your works,”<sup>1612</sup> and 14:13, where the labors and works of the saints must be somehow related to the proclamation of the three angels’ messages.<sup>1613</sup> Thus, it is conceivable that the positive side of “according to his work” (22:12 NKJV) denotes—or includes—mission connotations. If this evaluation is correct, the usage of μισθός in 11:18 and 22:12 is similar to that in John 4:36 (cf. 1 Cor 9:18), where μισθός figuratively describes the results of missionary work.<sup>1614</sup> In that sense, the mention of God’s servants the prophets in 11:18 may be reminiscent of the “two prophets” in 11:10.<sup>1615</sup> After their “resurrection,” “great fear fell on those who saw them” (11:11). In fact, their resurrection symbolically points to a successful witnessing in the time of the end (11:11–13).<sup>1616</sup> Now, it is time for them to be rewarded (11:18) in the face of the mission results. Therefore, while the notion that the rewarding motif in Revelation conveys mission connotations may not be exegetically compelling, it is exegetically defensible.

### Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the missionary theology coming from 11:15–18. Five semantic fields of mission have been identified in this passage. The term κόσμος fits in the field of place of missionary work, whereas subjects of missionary work, addressees of missionary work, goal of proclamation, and reward for the missionaries are other semantic fields identified in 11:18.

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<sup>1612</sup> At least as far as the church of Ephesus is concerned, their works correspond to being lights for others (compare with 2:5, 7).

<sup>1613</sup> See the section on Rev 14:12–13 in chapter 8 of this work.

<sup>1614</sup> *EDNT*, 2:432.

<sup>1615</sup> So, Beale, *Revelation*, 616. Beale, however, comes to a different conclusion. He argues that the five subject designations in 11:18 refer to the whole church rather than different groups in the church.



As it does elsewhere in the NT, in 11:15 κόσμος refers to the human world in opposition to God, but at the same time it is the object of God's love and work of redemption and reconciliation in Christ. Through Christ the world is brought back to its appropriate relationship to God and is now again completely under his kingship. The allusions to the OT in 11:15–18—especially to Psalm 2 and Daniel 2 and 7—indicate that John sees the establishment of God's eternal kingdom as the ultimate fulfillment of God's covenant with David and, by extension, the consummation of all God's covenantal promises. The OT allusions also hint that the establishment of a universal and eternal kingdom is God's task through his Messiah, not the church's. Yet, the saints have a major role to play in proclaiming the end-time message. In fact, the conclusion of the proclamation of the gospel prepares the world for the last events leading to the second coming and its aftermath (11:15, 18). This may explain why one can find various missionary terms in 11:18.

God's servants the prophets and the saints are subjects of missionary work. However, the focus lies on the saints, who conquer people for Christ by means of their testimony. Likely, "those who fear your name" are the ones conquered (11:11, 13; 14:7; 15:4). They turned from idolatry to the worship of the one and true God. Thus, fearing God is the goal of proclamation. The mention of "those who fear your name" points to people after their conversion. Indeed, the "nations raging against God and his Messiah" are the addressees of the saints' missionary work. Here, one sees the influence of Psalm 2, where the kings of the nations raging against God and his anointed (Ps 2:1–2) are summoned "to serve the Lord with fear" (Ps 2:11). This suggests that "those who fear the

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<sup>1616</sup> See the section on "The Successful End-Time Witnessing" in chapter 7 of this work.

Lord” are people from the wrathful nations who heard the end-time gospel and responded by repenting from their sins. God wants to save even those in open rebellion against him and his Messiah, and he involves the saints in that process and promises them a reward. The reward is recompense for their perseverance, but it likely has mission connotations in the sense that, figuratively, the saints will harvest the results of their missionary work.

Finally, it seems that the announcement at the blowing of the seventh trumpet, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever (Rev 11:15),” is a summarizing statement that points to the end of all things as a sort of new beginning. This is what will take place when all the events outlined in 11:18 and developed in the second half of the book are fulfilled. The conclusion of the proclamation of the gospel unleashes the final events leading to the second coming of Christ and all that comes next, and the remnant is commissioned to play a major role in God’s plan of salvation (Rev 10:11).

### **Summary and Conclusion of Chapters 6–10**

The discussion on Chapters 6–10 of this dissertation has shown that Revelation 10 is a turning point in the book and is crucial for one’s understanding of Revelation 12–22. Revelation 10:11 constitutes the climax of Revelation 10 and points, as it were, to the commission of the end-time church. According to 10:1–11:2, the end-time church has been given a calling to proclaim the end-time message “to many peoples and nations and languages and kings” (10:11). From the reading of 10:7 in connection with 11:1–2, one can arrive at the conclusion that the preaching of the gospel on earth and the pre-advent judgment in heaven prepare the world for the second coming of Christ.

Revelation 11:3–13 continues the thought introduced in chapter 10 in the sense that while 10:1–11:2 focuses on the mission of the end-time church, 11:3–13 indicates how it is to be accomplished, namely, by faithful witness. Revelation 10–11 suggests that John’s commission for prophesying is accomplished by means of the two witnesses. The act of witnessing implies verbal proclamation of the end-time message but also resistance in the face of hostile opposition. Even the suffering of God’s people can be divinely used to accomplish mission. Furthermore, the analysis of 11:3–13 has confirmed an idea deriving from 10:6–7, that is, the proclamation of the gospel would be intensified in the time of the end and would be successful. However, the faithful witness of God’s end-time people unleashes hatred and persecution. This becomes even clearer in Revelation 12–14.

Indeed, although the martyrdom language of Revelation has been widely emphasized in recent scholarship, little attention has been given to the missionary activity of God’s people as a likely reason for that. Our brief analysis of a few passages in 12–14 has shown that such must be the case. Nevertheless, this section of the book also shows that God would lead his people when going through the attack of the dragon and his allies. It indicates that the saints are missionary agents in God’s plan and that they labor and work faithfully just as Christ did, which provokes opposition and persecution. Despite that, they will fulfill their commission. This is better visualized in 14:6–13.

The three angels’ messages in 14:6–13 are God’s end-time salvific effort, of which the intense propaganda of the beast in Revelation 13 is a counterfeit and manner of resistance. These messages, along with the remaining material of Revelation 14, serve as a counterpart of Revelation 10 in that the former develops the latter. More particularly, while Revelation 10 deals with the commission of the remnant, Revelation 14 reveals the

content of such a commission with its last call to the worship of the only true God.

Indeed, the message of 14:6–13 ripens the inhabitants of the earth for the eschatological harvest in 14:14–20. In turn, 14:14–20 with its portrayal of the second coming of Christ brings the material in 13:1–14:13 to a climax and conclusion.

While 14:6–20 points to the accomplishment of the missionary task and brings the material of 10–14 to its climax, the completion of God’s mission is more definitively portrayed in another passage in that section of Revelation, namely, 11:15–18, especially the statement “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever” (v. 15). This announcement is a summarizing statement that points to the end of all things. John sees the establishment of God’s eternal kingdom as the ultimate fulfillment of God’s covenant with David and, by extension, the consummation of all God’s covenantal promises. The establishment of a universal and eternal kingdom is God’s task through his Messiah, not the church’s. However, the saints have a major role to play in proclaiming the end-time message. The proclamation of the gospel unleashes the final events leading to the second coming of Christ and all that comes next, and the remnant is commissioned to play a major role in God’s mission.

## CHAPTER 11

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this dissertation was to study the theology of mission in Revelation, with a focus on the people of God as participants in the mission of God—who they are, what they do, how they do it, their message, and outcomes of their missionary action. Two essential questions related to the purpose above oriented the research: (1) What images, words, ideas, and passages in Revelation connect to the story of God’s mission in the OT and NT? (2) In what sense and in what way does Revelation present the “final chapter” of mission in the biblical story and provide a prophetic description of the accomplishment of the Christian mission as it is referred to in the rest of the NT?

#### **Summary**

Although this research considered the entire book of Revelation, its immediate attention was directed to chapters 10–14. Mission concepts were identified in many passages throughout the book by employing a semantic field approach. However, dealing equally with them would be difficult in one dissertation. In addition to the fact that Revelation 10–14 contains a large number of mission ideas, many scholars agree about the centrality of these chapters for the understanding of the book’s overall message.

Chapters 1–2 offered the background of the research on mission in Revelation. Most scholarly interest has concentrated on the destiny of the nations or the witnessing motif. The relationship between mission and themes such as covenant, discipleship, resistance, worship, monotheism, Zion motif, repentance, judgment, the heavenly temple, etc., has also been mentioned in some of these studies but in a concise way. Despite acknowledgment on the part of biblical scholars that Revelation contains the last chapter of the biblical story of God’s mission, there was not much advance in the past three decades, and no work has focused directly on Revelation 10–14.

Chapters 3–5 focused on possible biblical backgrounds to mission in Revelation 10–14. Thus, Chapter 3 concentrated on the OT background, with special attention to God’s covenant with Abraham (Gen 12:1–3) and Israel (Exod 19:4–6), and the reuse of those passages in later OT passages and even in the NT. Chapter 4 turned toward mission in the NT outside the book of Revelation, and Chapter 5 narrowed down the discussion by focusing on the Revelation context of mission outside Revelation 10–14, namely, the preceding context (Rev 1–9) and the following context (Rev 15–22). These chapters aimed at identifying mission-related concepts. However, it was not expected that all of them would appear in Revelation. The intention was to provide a summary of the biblical theology of mission in order to make it easier to identify possible missional features that Revelation 10–14 might share with the rest of the Scripture.

Chapters 6–10 made up the central part of this dissertation. Chapter 6 provided an overview of Revelation 10:1–7, with attention to the phrase *χρόνος οὐκέτι ἔσται*/*there will no longer be time* (10:6), and an exegesis of 10:8–11 and 11:1–2 in order to better understand the command in 10:11, “You must prophesy again,” and related issues.

Chapter 7 looked at the prophetic mission of the two witnesses with an exegesis of 11:3, 7, 9–10, 13, to indicate how the missionary activity of the two witnesses relates to the commission in 10:11 and its expansion and accomplishment in 12–14. Chapter 8 focused on the theme of opposition to mission and the endurance of the saints, with a study of 12:11, 17; 13:9–10; 14:12–13. Chapter 9 began with an exegesis of 14:4 that aimed to show briefly how discipleship relates to mission in Revelation. Next, it examined the three angels' messages (14:6–13), including the discussion of whether the nature of the gospel proclaimed by the first angel regards judgment or good news, or even both. Chapter 9 also analyzed 14:14–20, its connection to the proclamation of the three angels' messages in 14:6–13, and whether it brings a double narration of judgment or a prophetic description of two different destinies. Finally, Chapter 10 offered an exegesis of 11:15–18, seeking to demonstrate how Revelation depicts the completion and triumph of mission.

## **Conclusion**

### Covenantal Language and Commission of the Christian Church

The survey on the OT and NT has shown that Christology is crucial for understanding the biblical theology of mission. Without a correct understanding of Jesus' identity and work, it is not possible to arrive at an accurate view of the church's mission. Because salvation in Christ has universal consequences, the gospel is to be taken to the ends of the earth. This teaching is conveyed mainly in the NT, and is present in Revelation. In accordance with the rest of the NT writings, the church in Revelation is expected to fulfill its missionary vocation by giving continuity to the mission of Jesus. The book opens with highly covenantal language. Revelation 1:5–6 introduces the church

as the new covenant community. The metaphor of light is abundantly used in chapters 1–3 (e.g., 1:12, 20; 2:5) in order to set the missionary lens through which the rest of the book is to be read. The Davidic King described in 1:5–6 commissions the church by portraying its missionary role in the world as “the seven lampstands” (1:20).

Revelation can be seen as a sort of continuation of Acts. Whereas Acts focuses on the activity of the apostolic church, Revelation begins with the apostolic era and goes beyond by showing how the church will bear testimony until the second coming. In a sense, Revelation 4–5 is the Johannine version of the Pentecost. Notably, while chapter 4 shows that God’s will is acknowledged in heaven, chapter 5 indicates how this will happen on earth, namely, through the worthiness of Jesus on account of his sacrificial death (5:6) and the faithfulness of his people as a kingdom of priests (5:9–10).

#### Commission of the End-Time Church

Revelation 10 is a turning point in the book of Revelation and is crucial for understanding mission concepts in the ensuing material. Revelation 10:11 constitutes the climax of Revelation 10. While Revelation 1 (vv. 5–6; 19–20; also 5:9–10) presents, as it were, the commission of the Christian church, in 10:11 one can find the commission of the end-time church. The notion that the end-time church finds its missionary calling here derives not only from 10:11 but also from the passage’s immediate context (10:1–11:2). There is scholarly consensus that Revelation 10:1–7 strongly alludes to Daniel 12:7 and its broader context (chapters 7–12). The phrase “there will no longer be time” suggests that Daniel’s prophecies of time have reached their fulfillment and the period in history referred to as “the time of the end” (Dan 8:17; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9) has come. More specifically, Revelation 10:1–7 points to the end of the prophecy in Daniel 8:13–14 and,



consequently, what comes next, i.e., the experience of John in 10:8–11:2, represents the experience of the end-time church in fulfilling the mystery of God through missionary activity (10:7).

The phrase “the mystery of God” ultimately applies to the gospel (Rom 16:25; Eph 6:19; Col 1:27; 2:2). The fact that “the mystery of God” will be fulfilled only in the days of the trumpet of the seventh angel, after the fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel 8:13–14, indicates that there will be an intensification of the proclamation of the gospel in the time of the end, which is confirmed in 11:11–13. According to Revelation 10:1–11:2, the end-time church has been called to proclaim the end-time message “to many peoples and nations and languages and kings” (10:11). In that regard, our discussion in chapter six has revealed that the best way of conveying the idea expressed by ἐπί in 10:11 is the preposition “to.” First, the prepositional phrase introduced by ἐπί seems to be functioning as an indirect object, such as in 14:6. Second, there is a switch of emphasis from the first to the second half of Revelation. While the first half focuses on the church, the second half focuses on the nations. This suggests that for people *from* all nations to be integrated into the church (5:9; 7:9), it is necessary to preach the gospel *to* all nations (10:11; 14:6). Third, the phrase προφητεύω ἐπί means “prophesy to” in Ezekiel 37:4, 9. John alludes to Ezekiel 37 in 11:11, and he likely has that passage in mind as early as 10:11. Nevertheless, the notion that judgment is also addressed in 10:1–11:2 is not denied. This is especially seen in 11:1–2 and its allusion to the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16 as well as to Daniel 8:11–14. Revelation 10:8–11:2 hints that the end-time message involves the announcement of judgment. The judgment, however, is announced with the purpose of leading people to repent. Judgment and mission go together!

## How the End-Time Church's Commission Is Accomplished

Revelation 11:3–13 continues the thought introduced in Revelation 10 insofar as, while Revelation 10:1–11:2 focuses on the commission of the end-time church, Revelation 11:3–13 indicates how it is to be accomplished, namely, by faithful witness. It seems clear that the act of witnessing implies verbal proclamation of the end-time message (cf. 11:3 [cf. 10:11]; 11:5 [cf. Jer 5:14]; 11:6 and its allusion to Moses and Elijah). Witnessing also implies resistance in the face of hostile opposition. Indeed, witnessing awakes persecution and suffering. But even the suffering of God's people can be divinely used to accomplish mission.

The relationship between 11:3–13 and 10:8–11:2 suggests that John's commission for prophesying (10:11) is accomplished by means of the two witnesses. This can be seen at least in three ways. First, the connection between 10:11–11:2 and 11:3. Just as John is summoned to prophesy again (10:11), the two witnesses are given authority to “prophesy for 1,260 days.” Second, the bitter experience of the two witnesses in prophesying “clothed in sackcloth” (11:3) parallels John's own bitter experience after eating the scroll (10:8–11). Third, both John (4:1) and the two witnesses (11:12) heard a voice out of heaven saying, “come up here” (11:12). Furthermore, the connections between 11:3–13 and 10:11–11:2 indicate that the two witnesses' prophesying is somehow related to judgment and the restoration of the heavenly temple. The end-time gospel includes the message of restoration of the heavenly temple. This message is Christ-centered, which is evident from the fact that the mission of the two witnesses is shaped by the story of Jesus. They are supposed to follow the footsteps of Christ in the fulfillment of their mission, in

faithful discipleship, even in the face of death. Revelation 11:3–13 makes it clear that the faithfulness of the two witnesses unleashes persecution.

### Opposition to Mission

Revelation 12–14 develops the idea that persecution is a consequence of the faithful witness of the end-time church. Although the martyrdom language in Revelation has been widely emphasized in recent scholarship, little attention has been given to the missionary activity of God's people as a likely reason for that. Our analysis of a few passages in Revelation 12–14 has shown that such must be the case (12:4–5, 11, 17). This section of Revelation should be read against the OT background of the Yom Kippur liturgy. The appearance of the ark of the covenant in 11:19 suggests that God's gracious offer of salvation still stands and that he will faithfully lead his people as they go through the attack of the dragon and his allies. On the other hand, the ark also serves as a reminder that God requires steadfast allegiance, even if this raises severe persecution.

Revelation 12 opens with a woman adorned with the sun, moon, and stars. Taking into account the metaphor of light applied by John in the early chapters, as well as the background of Isaiah 66:6–7 and its larger context (Isa 56–66), it is likely that the image of a shining woman conveys missionary overtones. By reflecting the light of God, the church is to attract the attention of the world to him. This woman is the means by which the Davidic King will come into the world. The fact that her male child will shepherd the nations (12:5) is the reason for the dragon's attack against him (12:4). The dragon wants to prevent the Messiah from fulfilling his mission and, consequently, prevent God from fulfilling his covenantal promises. This suggests that the dragon's attack against the remnant is also provoked by the faithful fulfillment of their commission (12:17).

That witnessing awakes persecution is also seen in 12:11, where the phrase “the word of their testimony”—whether it means “the word, namely, their testimony” or “the message that their testimony communicates”—points to words and actions as integral parts of the testimony. The persecution element is clear in the clause, “they loved not their lives even unto death.” The content of their proclamation seems to be given in 12:10, namely, the salvation of God and the authority of Christ. From 12:11b, “by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death,” one can imply that μαρτυρία encompasses verbal proclamation with the flavor of martyrdom, but this is not the whole thing. To persecution, the dragon adds deception. This is clear in the reference to an overflowing flood coming out of the mouth of the dragon (12:15). The term “mouth” in Revelation is a recurrent metonym for speech (e.g., 14:5). In this case, it represents deceptive discourse in the form of a propaganda campaign led by the dragon in consonance with his two allies in chapter 13. Thus, the way the dragon and his allies oppose God’s mission encompasses persecution and false doctrines. While deceptive discourse is used to obtain the allegiance of the inhabitants of the earth, persecution is the strategy against the saints.

#### Faithful Missionary Activity of the Remnant Even in the Face of Opposition

The saints are described in 12:17 as “those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus.” While it is not stated in 12:17, the reader knows, based on 1:9, and especially 6:9 (cf. 20:4), that μαρτυρία/*testimony* is the reason why they are persecuted. Consequently, the intense opposition in chapter 13 must be interpreted as the result of the remnant’s fidelity implied in 12:17. By describing the remnant as “those who keep the commandments,” John makes it clear that the end-time warning to the world

includes the message about the validity of the Ten Commandments for Christians. The remnant is hated and persecuted because of the message they proclaim to the world. This calls for endurance and faithfulness (13:10; 14:12). They are urged to endure in the midst of a false Pentecost (13:13–14), counterpropaganda (13:5–6, 11, 14, 15), and an environment submerged in idolatry (13:4, 8, 12, 15). In fact, Revelation 13, especially vv. 1–5, seems to describe a sort of great commission in reverse. The dragon gives his authority to the beast, just as Jesus received universal authority from his Father (Matt 28:18).

The parallelism between 13:10 and 14:12 suggests that one should read 13:11–14:11 with the notion of endurance (ὕπομονή) in mind. In this context, ὑπομονή means not only steadfastness in the face of trials but also a firm position concerning missionary labor. This can be seen through John’s usage of the triad ὑπομονή/*endurance*, κόπος/*labor*, and ἔργον/*work* in 14:12–13. This triad also appears in 2:2 (cf. 2:5) and 1 Thessalonians 1:3 with strong missionary connotations. The nouns κόπος/*labor* and ἔργον/*work* and cognate words are recurrent elsewhere in the NT as missionary terms. It is very likely that “labors” and “works” (14:13) are related to the proclamation of the three angels’ messages (14:6–13). This is suggested by a connection between 14:12–13 and 6:9–11. These two passages have the only occurrences of ἀναπαύω/*to rest* in Revelation. In both passages, the saints are given rest after they preached the word of God (6:9), and they did so by means of labors and deeds (14:13). Just as in 6:9–11 the saints are given rest after they gave testimony, the same must be true in 14:13. The very fact that the rest and beatitude in 14:12–13 follow the voices of the three angels (14:6–11) enhances this idea. The saints are missionary agents in God’s plan. They labor and

work faithfully just as Christ did, and this provokes opposition and persecution.

### The Eternal Gospel and the Missionary Theology of the Three Angels' Messages

While Revelation 10:1–11:2 is the place where one finds the commission of the remnant (i.e., “you must prophesy again,” 10:11), and Revelation 11:3–13 is where one finds a description of how such a commission is accomplished (i.e. by faithful witness, including verbal communication and resistance in the face of persecution), Revelation 14:6–13 is where one finds the end-time message to be preached to the world. Thus, the commission of Revelation 10 is developed in Revelation 11 and 14. Revelation 12–13 indicates that the cosmic conflict is the theological framework through which one is to understand the mission of God’s end-time people. That a further development of the commission in Revelation 10 is found in Revelation 14 can be seen through a comparison between the two. In 10:11 John is told to prophesy to “many peoples and nations and languages and kings”. In 14:6 John mentions that the eternal gospel is to be preached “to every nation and tribe and language and people”. The fourfold formula is introduced by ἐπί in both 10:11 and 14:6. In both cases, ἐπί follows a verb of communication. An allusion to Exodus 20:11 can be seen in both 10:6 (cf. 5:13) and 14:7. In 10:6 the angel says that “there will no longer be time,” whereas in 14:7 the angel says that “the hour of his judgment has come.” In 10:8 and 14:2, John mentions that he heard a voice from heaven. In addition, 10:7 and 14:6 are the only places where εὐαγγελίζ-*root* occurs in Revelation and the only places in the NT where εὐαγγελίζω/*preach the good news* occurs in the active voice. These data reveal that Revelation 14 is the counterpart of Revelation 10.

Revelation 14:6–13 is to be read in connection with 13:1–18, 14:1–5, and 14:14–20. While Revelation 14:1–5 predicts what comes in the rest of chapter 14, a comparison between 14:6–13 and 13:1–18 shows a contrast between the three angels’ messages and the propaganda of the false trinity. More than that, the data strongly suggest that the three angels’ messages in 14:6–13 are God’s end-time salvific effort, of which the intense propaganda of the beast in Revelation 13 is a counterfeit and manner of resistance. The connections between 14:6–7 and 10:7, 11 indicate that one cannot understand the former without the latter. Thus, the proclamation of the eternal gospel (14:6) and the fulfillment of the mystery of God (10:7) are closely related. While the meaning of εὐαγγέλιον (gospel) in 14:6 has been disputed in recent scholarship, passages such as 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11; 13:8 indicate that Revelation has much to say about the sacrifice of Jesus, and that John had it in mind when referring to the eternal gospel in 14:6. In addition, Revelation 14:7 presents connections with Mark 1:15, Acts 14:15, and Matthew 24:14, which suggests that the gospel in Revelation 14:7 is the same as that preached by Jesus and the apostles.

The missionary theology of Revelation 14:6–13 comes to the surface by means of various mission-related terms and themes. The verb εὐαγγελίζω and its cognate object εὐαγγέλιον indicate that the missionary task of the church implies verbal communication. The remnant of 12:17, also identified as saints (13:7, 10; 14:12) and 144,000 (14:1–5; cf. 7:1–8), are the agents of mission, with the inhabitants of the earth in general as the addressees of their message. This indicates that the end-time proclamation of the gospel has a universal scope, which is further evidenced by the use of the fourfold formula (14:6; cf. 10:11). As far as the OT background of the fourfold formula is concerned, it

seems that John is more focused on Genesis 10 in 5:9 and 7:9, and more focused on Daniel 7 from 10:11 onwards. This puts Revelation 10–14 in the context of the judgment predicted by Daniel 7 (cf. vv. 7:13–14, 18, 22; 26–27). This explains the phrase “the hour of his judgment has come” in 14:7 and puts it in a missionary context, given that for the eternal kingdom of God to come, first a judgment takes place in heaven, while the end-time message is preached on earth. Judgment and mission go together.

The impending judgment lends a tone of urgency to the threefold command, “fear,” “glorify,” and “worship” God (14:7). This threefold imperative stands out as the goal of the proclamation of the end-time message. This is a call for the inhabitants of the earth to repent, turning from the worship of the beast and its image (Rev 13:1–18) to the worship of the only and true God, the Creator (Rev 14:7). Worship plays a major role in Revelation 13–14 as an external act of commitment. The connection between Revelation 14:7 and 15:3–4, as well as the OT texts lying behind these passages, indicates that the three angels’ messages reveal God’s character, uniqueness, universal sovereignty, and desire to be known among the nations. In a word, the three angels’ messages focus on God’s reputation. They identify two great revelations of God’s character of love: his commandments and the faith/faithfulness of Jesus (14:12). Both Revelation 14:7 and 15:3–4 emphasize “fear,” “glory,” “worship,” and “judgment” (cf. also 11:11–18 and 19:1–10), suggesting that fearing, glorifying, and worshipping God is the proper answer to him in the face of his judgment. However, for people to fear, glorify, and worship him, they must know him, admire him, and recognize that he is a loving, holy, and righteous God (15:2–4). Worshiping anything or anyone other than the true God blurs the distinction between God and his creation. Therefore, in a sense, the fundamental purpose



of mission is to restore the image of God in humanity. Idolatry usurps the glory that belongs to God's name alone and negatively affects the very essence of human beings in that they fall short of fulfilling the purpose of their existence, namely, to glorify God. Mission deals with the restoration of God's image in man in that it teaches people to fear, glorify and worship God alone. Thus, God fights against idolatry and involves us in that fight. For mission to be fully accomplished, idolatry must be fully confronted. In that regard, the Sabbath commandment plays a crucial role in the proclamation of the end-time gospel insofar as it contains the call to true worship (cf. Exod 20:11).

#### The End-Time Message and the End

The message of Revelation 14:6–13 ripens the inhabitants of the earth for the eschatological harvest (14:14–20). Revelation 14:14–20 portrays the end of history by means of two contrasting images—“the harvest of the earth” and “the grape harvest of the earth.” While the former depicts the salvation of the saints, the latter describes the execution of judgment against the wicked. The discussion above has indicated that 14:14–20 presents strong connections with previous sections. The statement “because the hour to reap has come” (14:15) is reminiscent of “because the hour of his judgment has come” (14:7). This similarity suggests that God's judgment in the heavenly temple along with the proclamation of the end-time message on earth are God's tools for ripening the world for the eschatological harvest. In that connection, one should notice the literary position of the narrative of the eschatological harvest (14:14–20), which is placed between the three angels' messages (14:6–13) and the vision of the overcomers of the beast (15:2–4), suggesting that those who repented from their idolatry by fearing, glorifying, and worshiping God are the ones gathered in 14:14–16. They are reaped in the

eschatological harvest foreshadowed by the “firstfruits” (14:4). Conversely, those who choose to keep worshiping the beast and its image “will drink the wine of God’s wrath” (14:9–10); in other words, they will be gathered in the grape harvest and thrown “into the great winepress of the wrath of God” (14:19). The connections between 14:14–20 and the previous sections also indicate that the church’s mission is closely related to the eschatological harvest and is not complete until that time comes. So, the second coming of Christ is an integral part of the end-time message.

In fact, this study of Revelation 10–14 has shown that the end-time message integrates seven major elements as follows: (1) The good news of salvation by means of Jesus’ atoning death on the cross (14:6; cf. 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11; 13:8); (2) The prophecies of Daniel (10:6: cf. Dan 7–12, especially 12:7); (3) The prophecies of Revelation (see *πάλιν* in 10:11); (4) The restoration of the heavenly temple (11:1–2); (5) God’s moral law as (i) an expression of his loving and righteous character and (ii) valid for Christians today (12:17); (6) the Sabbath as a memorial for humankind of its obligation toward the Creator, the true and only God worthy to be worshiped (14:7); and (7) the second coming of Christ (14:14–20).

The son of man sitting on the white cloud is the central figure of Revelation 14:6–20. This image and that of the harvest present strong connections with some of Jesus’ teaching in the Gospels, suggesting that the imagery in 14:14–20 represents the culmination of a harvest that began with the ministry of Jesus and his apostles. Harvesting is the task of the church throughout the Christian era. However, while the remnant is portrayed as missionary agents of the proclamation of the end-time message

(14:1–13), it is Christ who is depicted as the eschatological reaper in 14:14–16. This suggests that his followers only cooperate with him.

In addition to the connections between 14:14–20 and the adjacent passages, one can learn from the similarities and differences between 14:14–16 and 14:17–20. The similarities indicate that these two passages refer to the same event, and the discrepancies indicate that they refer to two different groups. Just as the messages of the three angels, 14:14–20 supports that mission and judgment are interconnected concepts in Revelation, insofar as it indicates that the time for the eschatological harvest of the saints is also portrayed as a time of judgment against the wicked. This is also part of the gospel message, in that exclusion of the wicked is good news. However, while 14:6–20 points to the accomplishment of the missionary task and brings the material of Revelation 10–14 to its climax, the completion of God’s mission is more definitively portrayed in 11:15–18, especially the statement “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever” (v. 15).

The missionary theology of 11:15–18 comes to the fore by means of terms deriving from five different semantic fields of mission. The term κόσμος in v. 15 fits in the semantic field of place of missionary work, whereas subjects of missionary work, addressees of missionary work, goal of proclamation, and reward for the missionaries are other semantic fields (v. 18). As elsewhere in the NT, in Revelation 11:15 κόσμος refers to the world in opposition to God, but at the same time it is the object of God’s love and work of redemption and reconciliation in Christ. Through Christ, the world is brought back to its appropriate relationship to God and is now again completely under his kingship. The allusions to the OT in 11:15–18—especially to Psalm 2 and Daniel 2 and

7—indicate that John sees the establishment of God’s eternal kingdom as the ultimate fulfillment of God’s covenant with David and, by extension, the consummation of all God’s covenantal promises. The OT allusions also hint that the establishment of a universal and eternal kingdom is God’s task through his Messiah, not the church’s. Yet, the saints have a major role to play in proclaiming the end-time message (10:7). The conclusion of the proclamation of the gospel prepares the world for the last events leading to the second coming and its aftermath (11:15, 18). This explains why one can find various missionary terms in 11:18, as follows.

God’s servants the prophets and the saints are subjects of missionary work. However, the focus lies on the saints, who conquer people for Christ by means of their testimony. Likely, “those who fear your name” are the ones conquered (11:11, 13; 14:7; 15:4). They turned from idolatry to the worship of the one and true God. As elsewhere in Revelation, fearing God is the goal of proclamation. The mention of “those who fear your name” points to people after their conversion. The “nations raging against God and his Messiah” are the addressees of the saints’ missionary work. This is similar to Psalm 2, where the kings of the nations raging against God and his anointed (Ps 2:1–2) are summoned “to serve the Lord with fear” (Ps 2:11). Thus, “those who fear the Lord” are people from the wrathful nations who heard the end-time message and responded to it by repenting from their sins. God wants to save even those in open rebellion against him and his Messiah. He involves the saints in that process and promises them a reward. The reward is a recompense for their perseverance, but it likely also has mission connotations in the sense that, figuratively, the saints will harvest the results of their missionary work. The announcement at the blowing of the seventh trumpet, “The kingdom of the world has

become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever (11:15),” is a summarizing statement that points to the end of all things as a sort of new beginning. This is what will take place when all the events outlined in 11:18 and developed in the second half of the book are fulfilled. The conclusion of the proclamation of the gospel unleashes the final events leading to the second coming of Christ and all that comes next.

### **A Summary of Revelation’s Missionary Theology**

By and large, Revelation resumes various mission-related topics already addressed in the rest of the NT. However, Revelation adds two important pieces of information to the NT theology of mission. First, Revelation works as a sort of extension of the book of Acts in the sense that it extends its timeline from the first century to the end. Second, Revelation extends the NT theology of mission from this world to the whole universe. Without Revelation, the cosmic conflict motif would be very difficult, if not impossible, to discern in the rest of the Bible.

Particularly, the missionary theology of Revelation can be summarized as follows. Revelation 1–3 contains a sort of Johannine version of the commission of the Christian church. This can be seen through John’s portrayal of the Christian church as the new covenant community (1:5–6; cf. Exod 19:5–6) as well as his abundant use of the metaphor of light, very likely backgrounded by Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, and 60:1–3, etc. As Luke in the book of Acts, John also begins his Apocalypse where the Gospels stopped, i.e., with the Risen Lord commissioning the church. Revelation 4–5 is John’s version of the Pentecost. This introductory scene to the seals’ section indicates that the sealing is a time for salvation (7:10), a time for preaching the gospel of the crucified and resurrected

Lord (5:6, 9, 12). Whereas one finds the commission of the Christian church in Revelation 1–3, Revelation 10 reveals the commission of the end-time church, God’s remnant (12:17). Whereas the commission itself is found in chapter 10, chapter 11 shows how such a commission is accomplished—i.e., by faithful witnessing even amid severe persecution—and 14:6–13 shows what is the message to be proclaimed. In short, the commission is found in 10:8–11:2, the task is found in 11:3–13, and the content of their preaching is found in 14:6–13.

Revelation 12–13 indicates that the cosmic conflict between God and Satan is the theological background underlying the missionary activity of God’s end-time people. It makes clear that a false trinity composed of the dragon and its two allies oppose to the missionary efforts of the saints. They try to deceive the world with intense counterpropaganda, a sort of great commission in reverse. However, no matter how much opposition the saints face, they remain faithful to their calling even to the point of death. They preach the three angels’ messages, and this prepares the world for the eschatological harvest (14:14–20).

While 14:14–20 portrays a picture of the end, this picture is given, as it were, in a proleptic way in 11:15–18. In fact, 11:15–18, especially verse 18, serves as an outline of the second half of Revelation (chapters 12–22). This passage points to the ultimate completion and triumph of God’s mission, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever” (v. 15). This is visualized in more detail in Revelation 21–22, in the New Jerusalem, where the nations will walk (21:24), in the light of God’s Lamb (21:23). Until then, the inhabitants of the world must hear the message that, for them to start their pilgrimage to the New

Jerusalem, they must come out of Babylon (18:4). Indeed, idolatry must be confronted (14:6–13) because it shadows the distinction between the Creator and his creation. After all, the fundamental purpose of mission is to restore the image of God in humanity, and Revelation points to just that! The Apocalypse of John really presents the final chapter of the beautiful story of the mission of God!

Table 2. A Summary of Revelation’s Missionary Theology

1:5–6	Commission of the Christian church (cf. 1:19–20; 2–3)
4–5	John’s version of the Pentecost (cf. 5:6)
6–9	Sealing is a time for salvation (cf. 7:10), for preaching the gospel! God wants to save even the enemies of His people, but many will not repent (9:20–21)
10:1–11:2	Commission of the end-time church, the remnant (cf. 10:11)
11:3–13	The way the commission of the remnant is accomplished
11:15–18	A prolepsis of the completion and triumph of mission (cf. 12–22)
12–13	Opposition to the mission of the remnant (cf. 16:13–14)
14:6–13	The content of the remnant’s commission (cf. 18:1–4)
14:14–20	The eschatological harvest and the end of earth history (cf. 15:2–4; 19:1–21)
21–22	The gathering of the nations in the New Jerusalem

### Recommendations

This dissertation investigated the theology of mission in Revelation, with a focus on chapters 10–14 and special attention to the people of God as participants in the mission of God. Further studies can apply the semantic field of mission in Revelation, as proposed in this work, to those sections of the book that have been analyzed only in a brief manner, namely, the preceding context (Rev 1–9) and the following context (Rev 15–22). One can even explore Revelation 10–14 with the focus on God himself as a missionary agent. References to God abound in this section of Revelation, some of which

may have strong missional connotations. For instance, in 10:7 God is the subject of εὐαγγελίζω. In addition, he is the Creator God in 10:6 (cf. 11:11), the One commissioning the two witnesses (11:3), the Sovereign Lord (11:4, 15), the God of heaven (11:13), who will ultimately be worshiped because he brought the entire universe into peace again (11:17). He rewards his servants (11:18), did a covenant with his people (11:19; cf. “the commandments of God” in 12:17 and 14:12), reacts against sin with his wrath (11:18, 14:10, 19), and preserved his church in the wilderness (12:5). As the sovereign Lord, he is to be feared, glorified, and worshiped by all creation (14:7; cf. 11:11, 13, 18).

This dissertation has evidenced the importance of the OT for understanding Revelation’s theology of mission. However, a step further is to analyze how John contextualizes OT material to the ears of a Greco-Roman audience. That is to say, what principles does he use? This can offer several biblical principles about how to contextualize the Scripture for modern audiences. There are many examples of contextualization in Revelation, but this has not been studied in a systematic way. Likewise, it has been demonstrated that mission in Revelation dialogues with various mission-related themes such as covenant, discipleship, resistance, worship, monotheism, Zion, repentance, judgment, the heavenly temple, creation, and new creation. The relationship between mission and some of these topics can be further explored, especially if one investigates other portions of the book beyond chapters 10–14. Themes such as discipleship, Zion, creation, and new creation were treated very briefly. Further studies can also explore how the theology of mission in Revelation, as exposed in this dissertation, can shed light on one’s understanding of the theology of the book itself.



Also, the relevance of Revelation's theology of mission for contemporary missiology is another fertile soil for further research.

Finally, this dissertation is by no means the final word on mission in Revelation 10–14, much less in the entire Apocalypse of John. Different methodologies may shed light on the theology of mission in this section of the book. It is believed, however, that the present work has demonstrated that Revelation has much more to say about mission than many believe it does. Future researchers can use this dissertation as a starting point for deepening one's understanding of Revelation as the last chapter of the story of God's mission.

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