

**Endings/W05 Assignment for Fri. Mar. 4: Revelation 12.1 to end.**

**Friday, March 4**

**Reading: Revelation, 12.1 to end.**

**(As always, the Harris section on Revelation is very informative.)**

**Writing: Below are a whole bunch of little questions meant only to make you pause over details in Revelation. Having paused over them (and over others that you notice on your own, I hope), you will be in a position to create the interesting essay/discussion questions that we really want to talk about.**

**Read and try to answer each question. In writing, answer just the ones with in bold face and with an asterisk (\*). Answers must be typed and ready in class by Friday at ten.**

12.1-6 Please read the fascinating introductory footnote to this section. From which mythological traditions does this material draw? How is it reinterpreted here in Revelation?

12.7-9 War in heaven! Who leads the good guys? Who leads the bad guys? Note that “dragon” and “serpent” here mean the same thing. *Don't* read the footnote to 12.9! It could lead you to think that Satan is referred to in Genesis 3.17. A faith tradition looks back and believes that the serpent there is Satan disguised, but nothing in the immediate Genesis context suggests that the original writer has in mind anything other than a talking serpent.

12.10-12 The “comrades” referred to must be the martyrs who are now in heaven with God, Christ, and the angels. How did they conquer?

12.13-17 The dragon loses in his efforts to destroy the woman who gave birth to the male child. What does he do?

13.1-4 Just be clear that this beast represents Rome and combines the powers of the four beasts in Dan. 7. Its rising from the sea connects it to Babylonian monster mythology. “The apocalyptic authors used the ancient Near Eastern combat myth, which saw the formation of the world as the result of the victory of the divine warrior over the monsters of the watery chaos, to give meaning to present and future events. Thus in the apocalypses myth and history became inextricably intertwined as the “old story” of the myth and the “new story” of recent history enriched and transformed each other like two voices in a line of polyphony” (Barnard McGinn, “Revelation,” in Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, ed., *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987. This excellent volume is in the NSCC library.)

**\*13.5-10 A number of interesting issues here. (a) How are God's total sovereignty and control implied here? (b) If someone's name is in the "book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered," how did it get there? By the person's living a life of faith and good behavior? (Don't offer an opinion; just read the lines.) (c) Where have we encountered the idea in 13.9-10 applied to all of Israel?**

13.666 Actually, it's 13.11-18. Exactly what does the mark of the (second) beast – 666 – do to those who bear it? If A = 6, B = 12, C = 18. . . what do O, M, P, U, T, E, R equal? Can you get along without a COMPUTER today? Add up the values of those letters. You got it!! Same value as MARK OF BEAST and NEW YORK CITY! What is the financial capital of the world, I ask you? And don't even get me started on bar codes. (The A = 6, B = 12 stuff is from Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992.)

14.1-3 How does this connect to what just went before? And note the soundtrack again!

14.4 So the 144,000 redeemed are only males?

14.10 In 13.14-15, those who do not worship the Beast are threatened with death. What are they threatened with here if they *do* worship the Beast? Anybody for death?

14.14-20 The eschatological harvest – truly vintage writing! *Probable test question:* When the sickles have done their job, just how high will the river of wine (blood?) rise, and for what distance?

**\*15.1-16.21 Which details in this section do you find most striking?**

**\*16.16 You should know the etymology of Armageddon (see footnote).**

17.1-18 Just a reminder: what city does "Babylon" really stand for? You will recognize the imagery here. Ho (hum).

17.9.18 As the chapter goes on with its ten horns, the book of Daniel will certainly come to mind. The reference to the Lamb as "Lord of lords and King of kings" seems new, however. What element of apocalyptic gets expressed in 17.16-18?

**\*18.1-24 At 18.11, does it seem reasonable to hear an echo of Isaiah 3.18, the list of anklets, headbands, pendants, etc., worn by the rich "daughters of Zion" (Jerusalem)? Does the context echo Isaiah in any way?**

19.1-18 Choral soundtrack accompanying a wedding. Who is the bride of the Lamb? (What would her more catty high school friends be saying?)

19.11-16 Who rides the white horse? Why is he associated with military imagery?

19.17-21 Where else have we seen birds invited to gorge on human flesh?

**\*20.1-15 This is an important chapter. Please list for yourself a chronology of what is predicted to happen when and to whom.**

1. One thousand years: Satan bound in the pit; Christ reigns together with . . .
2. Satan released
3. etc.

21.7-8 It has been several chapters since we last saw a reference to “those who conquer.” Who are they? In the dualistic thinking of apocalyptic, we are now down to two kinds of folks – “those who conquer” and . . . who?

21.9-21 A beautiful description of the bride of the Lamb – Jerusalem. How might this (especially 21.19-21) relate to 18.9-19?

21.22-27 More on Jerusalem. What will it lack?

22.1.5 More on lovely Jerusalem. What won't it lack? Fruit!

22.8-21 Final instructions to John concerning this book.

**\*Please compose *one* really good essay-discussion question on Revelation. (It may cover just the last half or all of Revelation; it may refer to other readings. Please put some effort into making it broad and focused at the same time. “Find connections between Rev. and Ezekiel “ is too broad. Change it to “Fine connections between Revelation and Ezekiel’s imagery for God” is better.) Along with the question, please give citations for *at least three* places in the book which would provide help in answering the question. Typed, please.**