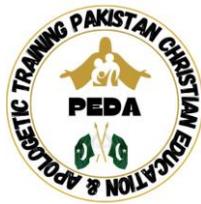


Trinity in the Book of Revelation



In the opening chapter of John's Revelation, John uses two verses that are derived from the Old Testament: "Grace to you and peace from Him who is, who was and who is to come..." (Rev. 1:4a)¹ and "I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8). These verses take us back to Exodus 3:14 where Yahweh describes Himself as "I am who I Am." In Isaiah 41:4, God asks: "Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he." These descriptions are also found in Isaiah 43:10, 44:6 and 48:12. Isaiah 43:10 provides further clarification that "Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me" as well as Isaiah 44:6 "besides me there is no god." There is no ambiguity that the God of Israel is the one true God. In Revelation 1:7-18 that same phrases "first and last" is applied to Jesus who "was dead and behold I am alive forevermore." The Son, not the Father, also the one coming. These descriptions, as well as others, will be used by John and applied to Jesus. In this paper I will show the intentional high Trinitarian theology in Revelation that would leave readers no doubt that Yahweh is the Father, Son and Spirit.

HIGH CHRISTOLOGY

Dr. Michael S. Heiser provides a full grammatical exegesis of the opening verses in Revelation regarding the connection between the *Alpha and Omega, First and Last* and Exodus 3:14.² Heiser notes John is accomplishing two goals with the opening passages. The first is

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the New America Standard Bible (NASB).

² Dr. Michael S. Heiser, *The Old Testament in Revelation* (Las Vegas, Nevada: Naked Bible Press, 2021), 7-21.

that “John wants readers to know that the God of Moses, the God of Israel, who is, was, and is coming, will deliver believers under persecution as he delivered the remnant of Israel in the past. And more than that, for John, this God became the man in Jesus Christ. John will specifically link his description of God in Revelation 1:4a and 1:8 with Jesus in Revelation 1:17...who died and yet lives and has the keys to everlasting life and death...”³ Jehovah Witnesses will say that God is referred to as “Almighty” but Jesus is only referred to as “mighty.” Although there are numerous issues with that assertion, in Revelation 1:8 the Alpha and Omega is called Almighty and also “who is to come.” We can ask, “is the Father coming?” Revelation 1:7 just explained that it is the Son who is coming and who was pierced. All of the strongest titles used for Yahweh: Almighty, Alpha and Omega, First and Last, cloud rider, the one who is and who was and who is to come, etc. are applied to the Son.

Dr. Bruce Metzger expands on the opening of Revelation noting that in the pagan world, Zeus was their chief god, and in *Pausanias 10.12.10* says “Zeus was, Zeus is, Zeus shall be, O mighty Zeus.”⁴ Metzger comments on the use of Exodus 3:14 and says John “extends it in a polemical competition with pagan claims. God, not Zeus, is the eternal one. In a major twist, John proclaims not merely a God who ‘shall be,’ but a God who ‘is coming’-in judgement upon those who give God’s glory to another (Rev. 9:20-21;14:6-7).”⁵ Heiser also adds that Zeus was considered the Most High god so “John was making a specific, bold, theological claim in the Greco-Roman world: that the God of Israel was what Zeus claimed to be: the one who is, was,

³ Ibid., 15.

⁴ Dr. Bruce M. Metzger, *Breaking the Code: Understanding the Book of Revelation* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2019), 30.

⁵ Ibid., 30.

and who is coming...the source of true existence, who existed from eternity, and will always exist, not Zeus. As such, the God of Israel is the true Most High.”⁶ Since John further links Jesus with the Alpha and Omega, he is stating Jesus is the Most-High. This is high Christology.

In Daniel 7, there is a scene in the throne room where the *Ancient of Days* is described as having “clothes like white snow and hair on his head like pure wool” (Dan. 7:9-10). This figure is Yahweh. The fiery throne with wheels matches Ezekiel’s vision of a human on the throne (Ez. 1:26-27). Commentator Steve Moyise writes “John’s use of Ezekiel’s vision involves abbreviation, some recasting and some expansion, particularly under the influence of Isaiah 6.”⁷ In Isaiah 6:1-3, Isaiah saw God on his throne. John connects Christ with this in John 12:41-43 “These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.” Charles R. Swindoll expands on Isaiah 6 passage connection: “As John continued to peer into the open temple, he saw it, ‘filled with smoke from the glory of God’ (Rev. 15:8). As in the days of Moses after the earthly tabernacle was completed (Ex. 40:33-35), the heavenly tabernacle was filled with the glorious holy presence of God. Similarly, when Isaiah witnessed the Lord sitting on his throne ‘lofty and exalted’ (Is. 6:1), he saw the heavenly temple ‘filled with smoke’ (Is. 6:4).”⁸ John’s high Christology is apparent. In the tabernacle we have the throne room with the Ark (Father),

⁶ Heiser, *The Old Testament in Revelation*, 13.

⁷ Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation* (New York, New York: Bloomsbury, T&T Clark, 1995),70.

⁸ Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll’s Living Insights: New Testament Commentary Revelation, Vol 15* (Tyndale Publishing House, 2014), 226.

the bread table (Son) and Holy Spirit (Lampstand)⁹ which were there before the tent (heavens) and courtyard (earth) were constructed. The lampstand had seven lamps which illuminated the room just like the Spirit illuminates the Father and Son (John 14:26; Eph. 1:17-18; 1 Cor. 2:10-13; John 16:12-15). In Revelation 1:12-13 the golden lampstand appears again while John was “in the Spirit” (v. 10) but they are assigned to the churches, and the seven “stars” are the angels (messengers) which are the pastors of the churches (Rev. 1:20). The Holy Spirit gifts the church and leaders (1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12; Eph. 4) so the perfect number “7” also represents the church of Christ and the Holy Spirit that dwells in the body of Christ that is giving them light through their pastors. Revelation 2:16 Jesus tells them to hear “what the Spirit says to the churches.” Brandon D. Smith notes for Revelation 3:1-6 that there is a change in the greeting: “The one who’ language here resembles the Father...”¹⁰ He then cites Bruce Metzger that this phrase “indicates his sovereign control over the churches and the source of spiritual power.” Smith notes that this may be taken further that “Jesus’ separate control over the seven spirits may have a more specific application, signifying his inseparable activity with the Holy Spirit. This connection to the Spirit is especially pertinent considering that he speaks to the church(es) alongside the Spirit (3:6).”¹¹ Smith points out that the role of the Spirit may appear less robust than of Jesus, but it is the Spirit who “brings John into the vision (1:10 and guides him through the visionary journey (4:2; 17:3;

⁹ William Brown, *The Tabernacle: Its Priests and its Services* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1996), 58-83.

¹⁰ Brandon D. Smith, *The Trinity in the Book of Revelation: Seeing the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit in John’s Apocalypse* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2022), 107-108.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 151.

21:10).” He then quotes John Christopher Thomas who notes “The Spirit gives John’s Apocalypse its structure, ‘making clear that the work attributed to the Spirit in the Apocalypse is at the same time the work of God’ and ‘the Spirit is the means by which the revelation of Jesus Christ takes place.’”¹² Some may suggest that the Spirit is not as prominent and does not appear in the throne room in the same way the lamb is. Smith outlines a structure where John has different ways of associating the Spirit with God’s identity and power and John’s claim that he is “in the Spirit” is like saying the Spirit acts as a guardian in the throne room. The Spirit deserves worship in the liturgical formula in Rev. 1:4.¹³ In addition, the Spirit is leading him like Ezekiel 37 and has the ability to see all as in Proverbs 15:3 and Zechariah 4:1-3. John’s use of the Spirits is more than can be attributed to angelic messengers. He says “John makes a point to show how the Spirit is not just another messenger of God but is of the same nature as the Father and Son in his worthiness to receive worship and the power to perform revelatory functions”¹⁴ The seven spirits of God used in verses like Rev. 3:1 is a “repeated connection of Jesus and the seven spirits to God’s throne might be a clear indication that John wants his audience to notice how intimately connected their identities and activities are.”¹⁵ The Spirit gives life and is involved in judgement or removal of God’s blessing and in Acts 7:55 the Spirit allows Stephen to see Heaven while he

¹² John Christopher Thomas, “Revelation,” in *A Biblical Theology of the Holy Spirit*, ed. Trevor J. Burke and Keith Warrington (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade, 2014), 258 as quoted in Brandon D. Smith, *The Trinity in the Book of Revelation*, 152.

¹³ Smith, *The Trinity in the Book of Revelation*, 153.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 158.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 159.

was “full of the Spirit” (Acts 7:55-56) parallels John’s “in the Spirit” language as well as the work of the Spirit in Ez. 3:12 and Ez. 11:24 and the Spirit speaking (Rev. 2:7) parallels John’s. Confessing or acknowledging Jesus as Lord is the work on the Spirit (1 Pet. 1:21) and the Spirit in Revelation is guiding John to see the Lamb on the throne in a place of equality.

Daniel 7 continues with the *Son of Man* who is approaching Yahweh and is “given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion shall be everlasting...and shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13-14). God is often referred to as a *cloud rider*. The Old Testament uses passages such as God, “rides through the heavens” (Duet. 33:26), and “who rides in the highest heavens” (Ps. 68:32-33), “who makes the clouds his chariot” (Ps. 104:1-4), and “rides on a swift cloud” (Is. 19:1) which all demonstrate a cloud rider motif. Daniel 7:13 now notes that it is the Son of Man is coming on the clouds. John applies this motif in Rev.1:7 where Jesus is “coming on the cloud” (Rev. 1:5-7). Heiser elaborates that “John proceeds in verses 12-15 to identify the Son of Man with Yahweh himself, the Ancient of Days. In effect, he fuses the imagery of the two into one.”¹⁶ In Revelation 1:15 and again in Revelation 2:18 the Son’s feet are described with feet like burning bronze.” This, again, goes back to the tabernacle and the altar of burnt offering which was covered in brass. This is a sign of divine judgement.

Commentator G.K. Beale also connects Daniel with Revelation. In Daniel 2:28 “he showed...what things must take place in the latter days” and “what would take place in the

¹⁶ Heiser, *The Old Testament in Revelation*, 27.

future...”(Dan. 2:29) and Dan. 2:45 “God has made known to the king what will take place in the future...” These are used in the same way in Rev 4:1 “I will show you what must come to pass after these things.”¹⁷ Beale writes “the Apocalypse contains more Old Testament references that any other New Testament book”¹⁸ and that “when the Old Testament context of each allusion is studied one finds that, without exception, they are all from descriptions of theophany scenes, which function as introductory sections to an announcement of judgement either upon Israel or the nations.”¹⁹ He contrasts:

- (1) Rev. 4:2 with Is. 6:1 and 1 Ki. 22:19;
- (2) Rev. 4:3 with Ez. 1:28
- (3) Rev. 4:5 with Ez. 1:13 and Ex. 19:16
- (4) Rev. 4:6 with Ez. 1:22 and Ez. 1:5
- (5) Rev. 4:7 with Ez. 1:10 and Is. 6:2
- (6) Rev. 4:8 with Is. 6:3 and
- (7) Rev. 4:9 with Is. 6:1.²⁰

Beale summarizes that “the dominant influence of Dan. 7:9-13 throughout Revelation 4-5...this clearly common motif is all the Old Testament allusions points toward a more intentional thematic formulation of texts to describe a similar theophany in Revelation.”²¹ Revelation 5:13 is a throne room scene where John is describing what he is hearing: “And I heard every created

¹⁷ G.K. Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* (New York, New York: Bloomsbury, T&T Clark, 1998), 173.

¹⁸ Ibid., 60.

¹⁹ Ibid., 65.

²⁰ Ibid., 64.

²¹ Ibid., 65.

thing which is in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, or on the sea, and all the things in them, saying, ‘To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be the blessing, the honor, the glory, and the dominion forever and ever.’” In Revelation 5:8 and 5:14 John says that “when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders threw themselves to the ground before the Lamb.” Throwing yourself on the ground is a form of worship. Later in Rev. 19:9 we see John fall to the ground in front of an angel who instructs John, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.” In Ezekiel 2:9-10 God opens a scroll. Smith notes that the Lamb “is not among those in heaven and on earth or under the earth unable to open the scroll or look at it (Rev 5:3-4) but instead he is on the throne and therefore able to open the scroll (Rev. 5:5-6).”²² This act is normally reserved for God, In this high Christology motif, we see that we are to worship God alone and the Lamb is being worshipped, therefore, John, again is telling His audience that Jesus is God, who can be worshipped, because He is worthy. Smith notes that some people will object that worship can be a broad category and can embrace polite acknowledgement of a superior, however “the relationship between the Lamb and the throne in 7:9-10...Jesus receives worship alongside God without any sense of restraint or impropriety...more than mere obeisance of an emperor over a people-it is a hymnic worship of a deity offered to both God and Jesus equally.”²³ God’s presence was their in the tabernacle and the “throne room is a centering place of worship in the Jewish tradition, where YHWH is worshipped and given praise and honor-and in John’s Apocalypse, Jesus shares in the worship

²² Smith 114.

²³ Smith, 117.

reserved for the one on the throne.”²⁴ He is tabernacling over them (Rev 7:17) like a tent. This is very symbolic of the tent tabernacle with God’s presence in the room in the midst of the people.

Returning to Revelation 4:5-5, John connects the seven lampstands and the “seven Spirits of God.” G.E. Jones notes that the number “24” is often linked with priests and priestly clothes and functions so the reference in Rev 4 could be the royal priesthood of believers in the room (c.f. Rev. 5:10).

Commentator Paige Patterson says John starts the prologue with the divine authority of Christ. In John’s gospel John refers to Jesus as the Word of God, who is God, and who created all things and became flesh to dwell (i.e., tabernacle) among us (John 1:1-14). In Revelation 1:1 John says God gave Him the revelation of Jesus Christ and that this testimony of Jesus was the word of God (Rev. 1:1-2). Paige writes “Here the author is claiming that this ‘revelation [from] Jesus Christ’ is a direct word from God, and unveiling of his plan and purpose. This claim excludes the possibility that this prophecy is human speculation or mere religious refection.”²⁵ The opening benediction “grace and peace...” is from God and from Jesus Christ who is the ruler of the kings of the earth. God spoke to Moses in Ex. 19:6 and said “And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.” We see in Rev. 1:5 it is Jesus “who by his blood freed us from sin and made us into a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father.” John is connecting Jesus with the same verses the God of Israel is associated with. Other connections that are made include Isaiah 44:24, “I am the LORD, who makes all things, who stretches out the heavens all alone, who spreads abroad

²⁴ Smith 118.

²⁵ Paige Patterson, *Revelation: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture. The New American Commentary* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2012), 52.

the earth by Myself’ Yet John writes earlier that Jesus creates all things (John 1:3) and again in Revelation 4:11: “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.” In Revelation 14:7, the angel says to “fear God” and to “Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all the springs of water.” Since Jesus is the creator of all things, and we are to worship him who creates all things, John is connecting Jesus as God the creator. God is also the Savior: Isaiah 43:11 states ...” I am the Lord and apart from me there is no savior” yet John writes that Jesus “released us from our sins by his blood” (Rev. 1:8) which aligns with earlier writings from John: “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world” (Jn. 4:42) and “We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world” (1Jn. 4:14). Jesus does the things only God can do therefore John is communicating Jesus is God of the Old Testament.

In Revelation 1:5, John refers to Jesus as the “firstborn” (*prototokos*). Commentator David E. Aune says that the term was an “important and debated Christological term in early Christianity.”²⁶ The term means *preeminent*. First born does not mean first created. David was called firstborn (Ps. 89:20) but was the youngest son of Jesse. In Ex. 4:22 God says “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD: Israel is My son, My firstborn’” but we know Israel was not the first nation in the world. Jeremiah 31:9 records “For I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn” and we know Ephraim was not the first son of Joseph; Manasseh was (Gen. 41:51-52). Jesus, in His human nature, was to be firstborn (Ps. 89:27) as a descendent of David who’s “throne as the days of heaven.” Also, Paul writes in Col. 1:18 that Jesus is

²⁶ David E. Aune, *Word Biblical Commentary Revelation 1-5*, ed. David E. Aune, Glenn W. Barker, John D.W. Watts, Ralph P. Martin (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1997), 38.

firstborn of the dead. He is not the first dead person. This verse is referring to Jesus as the preeminent of the resurrected dead. With this in mind, Aune writes “the figurative extensions of meaning are based primarily on the great prestige and status enjoyed by the firstborn son in a family and involves notions of primacy in time and rank and privilege in inheritance and succession (Deut. 21:15-17).”²⁷ Aune emphasize adoption rather than birth and “the point of the metaphor is the exalted status of the king by virtue of his special relationship to God.”²⁸ Aune also references “a functionally equivalent phrase about Christ is found in Revelation 3:14...’the beginning of God’s creation.” In Colossian 1:15, *prototokos*, “appears to have been borrowed from, or at least influenced by, Jewish Wisdom speculation, which used language of primacy and priority to speak of Wisdom as the first of God’s creation and even as preexistent (Prov. 8:22).”²⁹ The author of Hebrews also talks of the Son of God as being the heir of all things, through who also He made the world. And he is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of his nature, and upholds all things by the word of his power” (Heb:1:1-3). This high Christology is using the terms of inheritance similar to one that is firstborn. Hebrews 1:6 then says “And he again brings the firstborn into the world, he says. ‘And let the angels of God worship him.’” John says only God is worshipped (Rev. 19:9). Another term often used with firstborn is “begotten” (*Monogeneses*) which means unique one or one of a kind (Rev. 1:5). Jesus is the unique one-of-a-kind savior, which bolsters the preeminent title. He has the same “DNA” from the Father.

In Revelation 8 the altar of the tabernacle is referenced again with the incense burning as a reference to the prayers of the saints filling the air before the throne. In the Old Testament there

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

was a veil or curtain separating the Ark (Father) and the altar but the smoke from the incense would have made its way into the throne room so God always hears the prayers. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit dwells in us (1 Cor. 6:19) and we are a kingdom of priests who have direct access to approach the throne boldly (Heb. 4:16) because the veil/curtain was ripped (Matthew 27:51). The final blood sacrifice has accomplished the payment for sin and the ultimate high priest, Jesus, is our intermediary (1 Tim. 2:5). In Revelation we see the tabernacle picture again where God is dwelling on earth with us (Rev. 21:2-4) but also walls where outsiders cannot come in (Rev. 22:15) because they do not have the “washed robes” (Rev. 22:14). The imagery of the tabernacle gates and walls to keep outsiders separated. However, inside the tent where the lampstand, bread table and throne room were once not fully accessible to believers but they now have their ultimate fulfillment so that we have access (Rev. 22:3-5). The lampstand which provided light is not needed “because the Lord God will illumine them” (Rev. 22:5).

Revelation 12 utilizes astrological imagery that has been a debated discussion for scholars, especially in the age of computers. With modern astrology computer programs, it is possible to recreate the night sky in the past as far back as the 1st century. Revelation 12 has references to constellations that, if true, can shed some light on the date of Christ’s birth. In Matthew 2 there is a reference to “wise men” or Magi who historically have been assumed to be ancient astronomers, who were following a “star” which some think was a large planet like Jupiter. Using the constellational references in Revelation 12 and Matthew 2, a date in September in 3 BC is calculated. Michael Heiser presents a summary of the scholarly discussion

and significance of this in his podcast.³⁰ Heiser first notes that Paul asks the question in Romans 10:14 “How will they call upon Him in whom they have not believed...How will they hear without a preacher.” Paul then answers this question in Romans 10: 18 by citing Psalm 19:4 which is general revelation. The heavens are speaking to people. But how do we connect the general revelation in nature to Jesus specifically? Heiser makes the connection using Revelation 12 and Matthew 2 by noting the September in 3BC date “was also the beginning of the Jewish new year in 3 B.C. (Rosh Ha-shanah, Tishri 1, the Day of the Trumpets, the Feast of Trumpets). Tishri 1 was also the day that many of the ancient kings and rulers of Judah reckoned as their inauguration day... that day also meant a renewal of creation...” Heiser continues with a parallel to the Flood account in Genesis that “Jewish tradition took this chronology to mean that Noah’s birthday was Tishri 1—the first month... the same day as the birth of the Messiah, Jesus. So, to many Jews, they would have believed that the Messiah (Jesus) and Noah shared a birthday. If we take Revelation 12 as indicating the celestial signs present at his birth, then the Messiah born on Tishri 1 would inevitably have created mental and theological associations between Noah and Jesus.”³¹ In Genesis 1:14 God created the lights in heaven for “signs and for seasons.” If we take that to include the speech in Psalm 19 and tie it to Revelation 12 and Matthew 2, the Jews and “wise men” who were familiar with the various cultures and their traditions, including the Jewish scriptures, would have put all this together that the true King had arrived and it was plain for everyone who knew about these signs before hearing the specifics about Jesus. Psalm 19:5 even includes a reference to a bridegroom which is a common theme in the New Testament and the

³⁰ Dr. Michael Heiser, “Naked Bible Podcast Transcript Episode 138, What Day Was Jesus Born?” December 25, 2016.” <https://nakedbiblepodcast.com/podcast/naked-bible-138-what-day-was-jesus-born/> (Accessed January 16, 2025).

³¹ Ibid.

Book of Revelation to Jesus and the church. This is a debated area in scholarship, but if true, is yet another place where the Tri-une God is found in the Book of Revelation, this time through the book of nature.

The Almighty God is coming (Rev. 1:4, 7-8). In Revelation 14:14-20 John continues providing the details: “Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, ‘Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.’ So, he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.” Harvesting is a motif in the New Testament (e.g. Matt. 13:24-43). Good seed (wheat) and bad seed (tares) growing together until the harvest, when angels (reapers) separate them for burning (tares) and storing (wheat). This motif is in the old testament as well: Isaiah 17:5-7 the Lord God refers to judgement as a “reaper gathering the stranding grain and Joel 3:13 uses “pull in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe...” Amos 9:13-14: "...the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman, and the thresher by one treading grapes... they will plant vineyards and drink their wine...”.

In Mark 14:62, Jesus was asked by the high priest, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” Aune observes the connection between Daniel 7:13 and Ps. 110:1³² Christ is both seated and coming in these verses. In Psalm 110:1: “The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.” The Messiah is also seated on the throne. In Matthew 24:36 Jesus says about His coming, “But about

³² David E. c, *Vol. 52B*, ed. David E. Aune, Bruce M. Metzger, John D.W. Watts, James W. Watts, Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie (Nashville, Tn: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 841.

that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.” In Revelation 14:15, another angel (messenger) comes out and Heiser notes “Here’s when the Father says, ‘Now is the time.’”³³ Aune adds that “This angel emerges from the heavenly temple implies divine authorization of his command to the ‘one sitting on the cloud’ to begin the harvest.”³⁴ Beale reminds us that “the coming of the Son of man on clouds in the Synoptic eschatological discourses and elsewhere is always Christ (Matt. 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27; also Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:62; the Messiah in 4 Ezra 13:1ff.)”³⁵ In Joel 3:12-13, Yahweh is going to judge the nations and will use a sickle. In Rev. 14:14, it is Jesus using the sickle. Joel references the fullness of the wine vats from the presses and this same imagery. Aune says “This clause is an allusion to Is. 63:1–6, which depicts the Lord as the divine warrior coming with garments stained with the blood of his enemies, compared with the garments of one who treads grapes in the winepress... The identity of the one who treads the winepress is also not made clear... However, in Rev. 19:15 it is the rider on the white horse (i.e., the exalted Christ returning with his heavenly armies in judgment) who treads the grapes in the winepress of God’s wrath.”³⁶ Revelation 2:20 references Jezebel which is also in Ezekiel 23 for spiritual adultery where the phrase “and they will know that I am the Lord” is used multiple times (e.g. Ez. 23:49) when Yahweh is judging. In Rev. 2:19 Jesus “knows their deeds” and “I am He who searches the minds and hearts” (v. 23) is a similar formula to Jer. 17:10 where it is God who declares the

³³ Dr. Michael S. Heiser, “Naked Bible Podcast Transcript Episode 384 Revelation 14 July 10, 2021,” <https://nakedbiblepodcast.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/NB-384-Transcript.pdf>, page 14 (accessed December 5, 2025).

³⁴ Aune, *Word Biblical Commentary Revelation 6-16*, 842.

³⁵ Heiser, <https://nakedbiblepodcast.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/NB-384-Transcript.pdf>, page 15.

³⁶ Aune, *Word Biblical Commentary Revelation 6-16*, 846-849.

ability to know the hearts and minds.³⁷ Jesus has the book of life and control over it and this is an inseparable act with the Father and Spirit (Job 33:4; Ps, 104:30; Jn. 6:63). The Son is coming in judgement and to blot people out from the book of life. Heiser summarizes the Christological point:

When the Messiah returns, all of the contexts are apocalyptic and cast in terms of divine warrior judgment stuff. And this is another one. So, by virtue of John doing this, he's telling you who he thinks the wine-treader back in Isaiah 63 is. And if other people want to say he's God, well, John would be okay with that, because Jesus is God anyway. It's one of these things where there's an oblique reference to this character—this figure—in the Old Testament. And in John's mind, this is the Lord. The Lord is the divine warrior. And the divine warrior in the Old Testament, there's only one of those. It's God, or the Angel of the Lord, the captain of the Lord's host. The captain of the Lord's host would be the Lord of the hosts, ...³⁸

In the Old Testament, the Day of the Lord, is the day of Yahweh. In Psalm 75:7 “But it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another.” Psalm 50:6 and 96:13 also confirms it is God who judges. Isaiah 33:22 also says “For the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our king; he will save us.” Moses wrote in Genesis 18:25, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” These are just a few places where Old Testament authors clearly attribute judging of the earth to Yahweh. But it is John who says “The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son” (Jn. 5:22). The person who is judging, who is not the Father, is the Son. The Son who added a human nature (Jn. 1:14; Phil. 2:6-10) and

³⁷ Smith, Brandon D., *The Trinity in the Book of Revelation*, 106-107.

³⁸ Heiser, <https://nakedbiblepodcast.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/NB-384-Transcript.pdf>, page 19.

atoned for the sin of the world is now the warrior who is judging. Skip Heitzig writes: “The Day of the Lord is the dark time in earth’s history when God will deal with the planet in wrath and judgement. Think of this as heaven’s harvest time....One day Christ will judge the earth...he comes with a sickle. He intends to reap the harvest of the earth...when next he comes, he will arrive as a sovereign king...as the Commander.”³⁹ As God and judge, it will be Christ on the *bema* [judgement] seat. Ed Hinson writes “Every believer must stand before the judgement seat of Christ to receive his or her rewards.”⁴⁰ God is the judge and John connects Christ as sitting on the judgement seat judging as God.

In Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar blessed the Most-High God and said “His dominion is an everlasting dominion” (Rev. 4:34), Beale and Carson write, “The basis for the Lamb’s victory in Rev. 17:14 is that ‘he is Lord of lords and King of kings.’ The same title occurs only twice in biblically related material prior to the New Testament (1 Enoch 9:41; Dan. 4:27 LXX).”⁴¹ Daniel 4:37 LXX reads “because he himself is God of gods and Lord of lords and King of kings.” Beale and Carson assert that John is influenced by the Septuagint (LXX) and Rev. 17:14b says of Jesus “because he is Lord of lords, and King of kings.” The God Nebuchadnezzar gave that title to, is Christ. One final connection is the seven trumpets for judgement which take us back to Joshua 6 and the destruction of Jericho where the seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams and blew

³⁹ Skip Heitzig, *You Can Understand the Book of Revelation: Exploring Its Mystery and Message* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2011), 155.

⁴⁰ Ed Hinson, *The Harvest Handbook of Biblical Prophecy: A Comprehensive Survey for the World’s Foremost Experts*, Edited by Ed Hinson, Mark Hitchcock, Tim LaHaye (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2020), 186.

⁴¹ G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson, ed., *Commentary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 1139.

them for seven days until the walls fell.

The final chapter in John's Revelation opens with a combined "prophetic pictures of a spring or river of 'living water' flowing out of latter-day Jerusalem (Zech. 14:8) and its temple (Ez. 47:1-9)."⁴² In Genesis 2:10-12 "a river was going forth from Eden" and there was gold and bdellium and onyx stone around the water. John also describes precious stones surrounding the river in Rev. 22:1. Revelation 21:10-27 describes the new Jerusalem coming down with the same type of brilliant colors and stones and with the number "12" for the gates and angles and tribes written on the gates with four groups of 3 gates on each side reflecting the layout of the way the camps were positioned around the tabernacle. There are twelve foundation stones and the twelve names of the apostles. Paul writes that in Eph 2:20 that God's church "having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone." The dimensions of God's city utilizes is "12" again with 12,000 stadia and is a perfect square just like the Holy of Holies. No special room or sanctuary to enter since God will be everywhere (Rev. 21:22-23). The walls keep the outsiders away (Rev. 21-27). Just as the priests served in the tabernacle, the royal priesthood of believers will serve him (Rev 22:3, 9).

Beale and Carson note that "God will make the end like the beginning...As in Ez. 47, the living water flows from the temple, though now God and the Lamb are the temple (21:22)."⁴³ The parallels continue with the fertile land and river and tree that will bear fruit each month with leaves for healing. This is modeled after Genesis 2:9-10 and matches Revelation 22:1. In the Garden in Genesis, the seen God walked in the garden in the cool of the day (Gen. 3:8). John

⁴² Ibid., 1153.

⁴³ Ibid., 1154.

says “God is Spirit” (Jn. 4:24) and that “no one has seen the Father” (Jn. 1:18; 2:46) but God was seen in the Old Testament (Gen 17:1; Genesis 22:11; Gen 32:22-30; Ex 6:2-3; Ex 24:9-11; Exod. 3:1-2; Jos. 5:14). Jesus said in John 5:46 - "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me." In Revelation 21, God once again creates the garden. The new Heavens and earth. John says he heard a voice from heaven saying “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and he will dwell among them, and they shall be his people and God himself will be among them.” God the Son, who has been seen, who Moses wrote about, is once again with the people. John again uses “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and then end” and Jesus says to the person who overcome “I will be his God and he will be my people.” Beale writes that there are a number of other relevant Old Testament passages that contain similar themes. One is “Lev. 26:11-12 which reads, ‘And I will make my abode...among you, and you shall be my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.’”⁴⁴ Jesus concludes a second time with the title of God: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End...I Jesus...”(Rev. 22:13-16).

In Revelation 22 God is illuminating the city and “the lamp is the lamb” (v23). Revelation 22:5 simply combines the two as “the Lord God will illumine them.” Rev. 1:1 “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His slaves...” However in Rev. 22:3 “...the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him; and they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.” John has no problem showing the united throne and using these terms interchangeably with the Father and Jesus/Lamb referred to as

⁴⁴ David E. Aune, *Word Biblical Commentary Revelation 17-22*. ed. David E. Aune, Glenn W. Barker, John D.W. Watts, Ralph P. Martin (Grand rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1997), 1123.

“His.”

CONCLUSION

Throughout John's Gospel and Revelation, John consistently connects the Holy Spirit and Jesus with God. The Book of Revelation has high trinitarian theology and leaves no doubt that the three persons are at work in the united effort as God. Specifically highlighted in Revelation, the second person of the Trinity, who became flesh (Jn. 1:14) and dwelled among us, is the same eternal Son who created all things, was the visible Yahweh Moses wrote about, is the judge and King of kings, Lord of Lords of the Old Testament, who saves. Only God can do the things of God, the Son does the things of God, therefore the Son is God.

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