

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL SABBATH IN JOHN'S APOCALYPSE: A RECONSIDERATION*

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In the period centering around the first century C.E., the Sabbath rest (meaning principally the seventh day of the week) came in for a great deal of spiritualization and metaphorization.¹ This tendency was often conflated with reflection upon the cosmic meaning of the seventh year and the Jubilee year.

1. *The Main Directions in Sabbath Speculation*

The speculation took various directions. One of these was the transcendental Sabbath of Philo—the notion of an endless archetypical Sabbath, the perfect rest of God in heaven, a rest without toil but not without activity.² This conception partly informs Heb 3:7-4:13,³ and possibly to some extent John 5:17.⁴

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¹This development obviously did not contradict observance of the literal weekly Sabbath in the case of the Jewish sources, though it was utilized by some early Christian writers, such as Pseudo-Barnabas and Justin, to explain why the observance of the weekly Sabbath rest had been, in their view, superseded. Cf. Willy Rordorf, *Sunday: The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church* (Philadelphia, 1968), pp. 47, 89.

²See, e.g., Philo *De Cherubim* 87-90; *Legum Allegoria* 1.5-6. Already in Jubilees 2:18 one finds the idea that the Sabbath is kept in heaven, but that is not said to be a perpetual Sabbath.

³See the able discussion by Harold W. Attridge, "‘Let Us Strive to Enter That Rest’: The Logic of Hebrews 4:1-11," *HTR* 73 (1980): 279-288. Another branch in the genealogy of this passage was traced by Gerhard von Rad, "Es ist noch eine Ruhe vorhanden dem Volke Gottes," *Zwischen den Zeiten* 11 (1933): 104-111 (Eng. trans. by E. W. Trueman Dicken, "There Remains Still a Rest for the People of God: An Investigation of a Biblical Conception," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* [New York, 1966], pp. 94-102).

⁴A similarity between John 5:17 and the Hebrews passage is also seen by A. T. Lincoln, "Sabbath, Rest, and Eschatology in the New Testament," in *From Sabbath*

Another direction taken was the existential Sabbath-rest idea found in Matt 11:28-30, "I will give you rest . . . and you will find rest for your souls,"⁵ which prefaces the pericope of the Sabbath controversies in chap. 12 and does for the Sabbath commandment what chap. 5 does for the commandments against murder and adultery. This conception regarded the essence of the Sabbath as a spiritual state, status, or consciousness. It was developed in a Gnostic direction in such literature as the Gospel of Thomas,⁶ the Gospel of Truth,⁷ the Gospel of Philip,⁸ and the Second Apocalypse of James.⁹

Both of those conceptions were in part secondary developments of what was by far the most common speculative interpretation of the Sabbath idea, namely, the concept associated with the notion of the Cosmic Week, according to which six millennia of human history will be followed by a millennium corresponding to the day of rest or the sabbatical year, or both. This cosmic Sabbath at the end of time was variously conceived either as being itself timeless or as being the prelude to timeless eternity.¹⁰ Aspects of this ancient idea have endured into modern times, as seen in such diverse manifestations as Abraham Heschel's vision of the Sabbath as an island of eternity set within time¹¹ and the old gospel hymn which begins, "When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more. . . ." ¹²

to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI, 1983), p. 204; but Lincoln does not connect this conception with Alexandrian Judaism, rather finding its roots in Palestinian apocalyptic thought (pp. 205-214).

⁵The literary background of this passage, of course, is Sirach 51:23-30, but the interpretation of the "rest" in the Matthaean passage is clearly not the scribe's life of comparative ease. The latter is the result of the wisdom to be acquired by enrolling in the scribal school, for which the Sirach passage appears to be an advertisement.

⁶See logia 27, 50, 60, 90; cf. POxy. 1, 654.

⁷24:20; 32:18-34.

⁸71:3-15.

⁹56:4; cf. Ernst Bammel, "Rest and Rule," *Vigiliae Christianae* 23 (1969): 88-90.

¹⁰See further discussion below.

¹¹Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*, expanded ed. (New York, 1966), p. 19, 23, 73-76, 90-91.

¹²The impression that this idea has made upon Christian hymnody is extensive. One example out of many is the John Newton hymn, "Safely Through Another

2. *Origin and Development of the Eschatological Sabbath Idea*

It has been maintained that the apocalyptic system of six aeons followed by a sabbatical aeon is to be traced to Iranian influences,¹³ but our sources display no direct support for such a hypothesis. Rather, all visible roots for this sometimes-contradictory complex of ideas are interpretations of OT themes and passages.

The basic text which, when coupled with the Genesis reference to God's rest after the six days of creation, provided the starting point for the various schemata was Ps 90:4, "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past."¹⁴ This text became useful for resolving various problems. One of these was the question of how Adam could live 930 years (Gen 5:5) when God had said concerning the tree of knowledge, "In the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Gen 2:17). Jubilees 4:30 supplied a solution: "In the testimony of the heavens a thousand years are one day, and this explains why it was written about the tree of knowledge, On the day that you eat from it, you will die. So he [Adam] did not complete the years of this day, but died during it."¹⁵ Jubilees thus becomes our earliest witness to this utilization of Ps 90:4.¹⁶ The fact that this explanation is associated with the early part of Genesis suggests how such an interpretation could become connected with the days of the creation week.¹⁷

Another scriptural peculiarity which attracted attention was the fact that though the account of each of the first six days of the creation week ends with the formula, "there was evening and there

Week" (ca. 1774), the first stanza of which concludes with the words, "Day of all the week the best, / Emblem of eternal rest."

¹³See Jean Daniélou, "La typologie millanariste de la semaine dans le christianisme primitif," *Vigiliae Christianae* 2 (1948); 2,4.

¹⁴Unless otherwise noted, the biblical quotations are from the RSV.

¹⁵Quotations from pseudepigraphical works are taken from the translations in H. F. D. Sparks, ed., *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford, 1984), and James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY, 1983-85).

¹⁶The same device is used to solve a different problem in 2 Pet 3:8. Cf. Sirach 18:10.

¹⁷Cf. Daniélou, p. 2.

was morning," no such cloture is provided for the seventh day. This peculiarity suggested endlessness.¹⁸

Still another element is important for explaining the variations in our phenomenon—namely, the pattern provided by the sabbatical year followed by the Jubilee year (Lev 25:1-25, et al.). Already in the OT these years developed eschatological overtones.¹⁹ What is important for this study is that a typological interpretation of the seventh and Jubilee years would result in a model in which the cosmic Sabbath would be followed by something more and greater. If the final millennium were identified with the seventh year more than with the seventh day, it would be a time of fallowness and desolation. Just as the captivity of Israel was intended to provide rest for the land in compensation for neglect of the sabbatical-year laws and the humanitarian commandments associated with them (Lev 26:34-35; 2 Chron 36:20-21), even so would the earth rest in the Messianic Age, during a sabbatical millennium, in compensation for all the ravages the wicked have inflicted upon it. Then, just as the seventh year precedes the jubilee year, the seventh millennium becomes the prelude for a paradisiacal eternity.

It is the interplay and tension between these two models—the weekly Sabbath, and the septennate followed by the Jubilee—which produced the variations in Sabbath eschatology. The second model results in a further problem: namely, the state or location of the righteous during the Messianic Age, if that age is identified with the sabbatical year.

Willy Rordorf distinguishes between three types of schemata: (1) the eschatological Sabbath identified with the paradise restored, the World to Come; (2) the eschatological Sabbath conceived as an

¹⁸The earliness of this idea is difficult to determine. Our unequivocal references are all Christian and Rabbinic. The more striking Patristic references are given by R. H. Charles in *APOT* 2:451, note. One of the more striking Rabbinic references is *Pirqê de R. Eliezer* 19: "He created the seventh day, (but) not for work, because it is not said in connection therewith, 'And it was evening and it was morning.' Why? For it is reserved for the generations (to come), as it is said, 'And there shall be one day which is known unto the Lord; not *day*, and not *night* [Zech. 14:7]" (translation from Gerald Friedlander, *Pirqê de Rabbi Eliezer* [reprint ed.; New York, 1971], p. 137).

¹⁹This is well traced by George Wesley Buchanan, "Sabbatical Eschatology," *Christian News From Israel* 18 (December 1967): 49-55. This article is a summary of parts of the author's provocative book, *The Consequences of the Covenant* (Leiden, 1970).

empty time following the days of the Messiah and preceding the World to Come; and (3) "hybrid forms" in which an interim Messianic period anticipates the eternal World to Come.²⁰ This classification, though plausible and heuristically helpful, is probably tidier and more analytical than what the thinking actually was, at least in first-century apocalyptic thought. If such categories are admitted, it is immediately necessary to recognize that the boundaries between them are fluid and permeable.²¹

Among the sources from the first century or soon after which seem to use or assume some variation of the idea of the eschatological Sabbath are 4 Ezra,²² 2 Baruch (Syriac Baruch),²³ the Testament of Dan,²⁴ the Apocalypse of Moses,²⁵ the Life of Adam and Eve,²⁶ Papias,²⁷ and Pseudo-Barnabas.²⁸ In Rabbinic circles perhaps the *locus classicus* for the varieties of millennial expectation is the well-known passage in b. Sanhedrin 97a-b. The ideas expressed

²⁰Rordorf, pp. 49-50. Rordorf also notes two other variations: the Rabbinic doctrine in which the sabbath rest signifies the place of departed souls (p. 50, n. 2) and the Gnostic view of the eschatological Sabbath "not as the *time* but as the *place* of consummation" (p. 95). Daniélou, pp. 2-3, sees the idea of a visible reign of the Messiah before the end of the world as a result of the combination of two Jewish conceptions of eschatology: "terrestrial" and "transcendental."

²¹Cf. Daniélou, p. 3. The ambiguity was continued in the Patristic sources. Irenaeus, e.g., equates the "seventh day," "the true Sabbath of the just," with the paradisiacal World to Come (*Against Heresies* 3.33.2); but for Augustine the seventh millennium of the reign of Christ on earth precedes the life of eternity (*City of God* 22.30.5, et passim). Rordorf, pp. 91-97, surveys the Patristic materials, noting quite correctly (p. 91) that it is difficult to make the distinction between "chiliastic" and "non-chiliastic" texts.

²²Note the "rest" in 8:52. In 7:43[114] it is stated that "the day of judgment will be the end of this age and the beginning of the immortal age to come. . . ." But 7:28 in the Latin version seems to allot only 400 years to the time of the Messiah, though the Arabic version has 1000 years.

²³Chap. 68.

²⁴5:12.

²⁵43:3.

²⁶51:1,2. This reference is especially poignant: "When they had been mourning four days the archangel Michael appeared and said to Seth, Man of God, never mourn for your dead more than six days, because the seventh day is the sign of the resurrection and the rest of the age to come, for on the seventh day God rested from all his works."

²⁷Cited in Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 3.39.

²⁸Chap. 15.

there surely go back to the time before the catastrophes of c.e. 70 and 135 caused such apocalyptic speculations, partly based on the book of Daniel, to be put on ice. Besides various schemata based on the septennates, we read of R. Kattina's dictum, "Six thousand years shall the world exist, the one [thousand, the seventh], it shall be desolate." which is countered by Abaye: "It will be desolate two [thousand]." ²⁹ The next comment begins with a formula customarily used to introduce Tannaitic sayings: "It has been taught in accordance with R. Kattina: Just as the seventh year is one year of release in seven, so is the world: one thousand years out of seven shall be fallow"; this is supported with the familiar proof texts from Ps 92 and Ps 90:4, as well as Isa 2:11. Finally, citing the Tanna debe Eliyyahu, comes the famous statement:

The world is to exist six thousand years. In the first two thousand there was desolation [no written Torah]; two thousand years the Torah flourished; and the next two thousand years is the Messianic era, but through our many iniquities all these years have been lost.

It is clear that in these schemata the tension between seventh-day and seventh-year models is acute, but the seventh-year model prevails.

3. *The Timelessness of the Millennium and/or Eternity*

We are especially concerned with that aspect of sabbatical eschatology which attributes timelessness to the end of time. As an illustration of this concept, the long recension of 2 Enoch (Slavonic Enoch) 33:1-2 has God telling Enoch:

On the 8th day I likewise appointed, so that the 8th day might be the 1st, the first-created of my week, and that it should revolve in the revolution of 7000; so that the 8000 might be in the beginning of a time not reckoned and unending, neither years, nor months, nor weeks, nor days, nor hours. . . .³⁰

²⁹Translations of the Babylonian Talmud are from Isidore Epstein, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud*, 35 vols. (London, 1935).

³⁰There is a correction to this text which seems clearly Christian: "like the first day of the week, so also that the eighth day of the week might return continually." See Charlesworth, 1:33. The addition of these words brings this passage in 2 Enoch into a close relationship with Pseudo-Barnabas 15, a chapter in which the two models we have delineated are mingled in hopeless confusion.

The provenance and dating of 2 Enoch remains a vexed question, however, and it is therefore desirable to turn to sources unequivocally Jewish. The basic Jewish reference is m. Tamid 7:4, a section that reports which Psalms were sung in the Temple on each day of the week. It concludes: "On the Sabbath they sang *A Psalm: a Song for the Sabbath Day* [the superscription of Psalm 92]; a Psalm, a song for the time that is to come, for the day that shall be all Sabbath and rest in the life everlasting."³¹ It is not clear why this thought should be attached to Ps 92,³² but this concept attached to this psalm became a commonplace throughout the Rabbinic corpus.³³

The Midrash on Ps 92, in a series of sayings about sevens, declares: "I created seven Ages, and out of them I chose for my own only the seventh Age—for six Ages are to come and go—and the seventh Age, being all Sabbath and rest, will endure through eternity."³⁴ (Then follow similar sayings about the seventh day and the seventh year.) Pirqê de R. Eliezer 19 couples the concept with Zech 14:7 ("And there shall be continuous day [it is known to the Lord], not day and not night, for at evening time there shall be light").

It seems safe to conclude that in the first century there was probably associated with both models of sabbatic eschatology the idea of timelessness, whether conceived of as endless Sabbath or conceived of as timeless eternity following the sabbatic millennium. There would be no differences between Jewish writings and Jewish-Christian thought, for there is a virtually seamless continuity of millennial conceptions which runs from intertestamental times

³¹The translation is that of Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* (Oxford, 1938), p. 589.

³²It is possible that the content of this psalm lent itself to apocalyptic expectations. Vss. 5-9 point to ultimate victory over evildoers, and vss. 12-15 suggest a paradise for the righteous.

³³The references are numerous indeed, and Strack/Billerbeck supply a great many. See Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich, 1922-), 3:687; 4/2:839-840. One place may be mentioned here: Mekilta *Shabbata* 1 (on Exod 31:13) prefaces the Mishnaic dictum by speaking of "the World to Come, which is characterized by the kind of holiness possessed by the Sabbath of this world. We thus learn that the Sabbath possesses a holiness like that of the World to Come" (translation modified from that of Jacob Z. Lauterbach, *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, 3 (Philadelphia, 1935): 199.

³⁴Translation modified from that of William G. Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms*, 2 (New Haven, CT, 1959): 110-111.

through to Augustine (in spite of the opposition of Origen and the Origenists).

4. *The Cosmic Sabbath in John's Apocalypse*

It now remains to examine the situation in the Revelation of John. It is convenient first to note the passages where we find the words *anapausis* and *anapauein*.

Anapauein and its derivatives, as well as its synonym *kata-pauein* and its derivatives, are commonly employed in the LXX to translate *shabat* and its derivatives, as well as *nwch* and its derivatives, both of which terms are used primarily in Sabbath-language.³⁵ Of particular eschatological interest is Dan 12:13 (Syro-Hexaplaric recension), where *anapauein* is used twice in association with the "end of days" (*sunteleia hemerōn*) in reference to the destiny of the righteous dead.

Anapauein/anapausis is found frequently in Sirach, but mostly in a non-theological connection. It is, however, a number of times predicated of the dead.³⁶

In the NT both sets of synonyms are frequent, but *katapauēin/katapausis* are restricted to exclusive use in Acts and Hebrews,³⁷ while *anapauein/anapausis* are consistently used in the rest of the NT. Outside of the Apocalypse and Matt 11:28-29 the words are apparently used in non-theological contexts, though sometimes with religious overtones.³⁸

³⁵Both Hebrew roots are used in the Sabbath commandment, in Exod 20:11, which is the foundational text. The numerous places where these roots are translated with *anapauein/anapausis* and *katapauēin/katapausis* can be learned from Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1897).

³⁶22:11; 38:23; 47:23.

³⁷The author of Hebrews uses *katapauēin/katapausis* because that is what he finds in the particular OT texts which he is expounding.

³⁸Religious, if not indeed theological, significance is surely implied in 1 Pet 4:14, if not also in Matt 12:43 = Luke 11:24. Among the subapostolic fathers, only Ignatius and 1 Clement use *anapauein*, and Clement just once (59:3), in an allusion to Isa 57:15. It is a favorite word of Ignatius in stereotyped expressions of commendation, where it is used in a nontechnical way in the sense of "refresh" or relieve." There is perhaps some approach to a religious meaning in Trallians 12:1 (*hoi kata panta me anepausan sarki te kai pneumatī*).

In John's Apocalypse the noun and the verb are each used twice. In 4:8 there seems to be no theological freight.³⁹ The other three places, however, are of interest. In 6:11 the souls of the martyrs under the altar, which cry out for vengeance, are told to "rest a little longer," though their evident disquietude seems dissonant with the exhortation. The usage here seems intermediate between that of Sirach and that of those Rabbinic places where the location or condition of the righteous dead is called a Sabbath rest.⁴⁰ More to the point is 14:11, 13, where the worshippers, of the beast and its image "have no rest, day or night," but the dead who die in the Lord are blessed because they "rest from their labors." The Sabbath-language is unmistakable.

Of course, the classic locus of NT millennialism is Rev 20. Satan is bound for a thousand years, after which he is to be "loosed for a little while" (vss. 1-3). Apparently at the beginning of this aeon the righteous dead are raised in what is called "the first resurrection," and they reign with Christ for the thousand years (vss. 4-6). At the end of the thousand years Satan is temporarily loosed, comes out and deceives the nations (Gog and Magog), and leads them in attacking the holy city, whereupon fire descends and consumes them all (vss. 7-10). In juxtaposition with this narrative is placed a picture of the final judgment, at which all evil is cast into the lake of fire, called "the second death" (vss. 11-15).

Two things are striking about this scenario. First, especially in view of the following chapter, this chapter conforms to the sabbatical-year and jubilee pattern: the paradisiacal new heaven and new earth follow the millennium. In that pattern, the final millennium is a time of emptiness and fallowness, like the seventh year. In the compensatory rest of the land spoken of by Jeremiah and the Chronicler, God's people were in exile. All this creates some ambiguity about the whereabouts of those who come up in the "first resurrection" and of the holy city during this aeon. It is a problem inherent in the seventh-year model. In revelation the solution, apparently, is to place the holy city (and therefore the saints) temporarily in heaven, for in the next chapter (21:2) we find that city descending from heaven at the beginning of the subsequent eternity.

³⁹There is a linguistic parallel in Gen 8:22.

⁴⁰The sentiment can be found earlier in Diaspora literature: Joseph and Aseneth 8:11.

The second thing to note about Rev 20 is its reticence about some details of the familiar schema. Contrary to what we might expect, they are omitted. Specifically, we have a final millennium without any mention of six earlier ones. We find a Cosmic Sabbath without a Cosmic Week. One gains the impression that this Apocalypse utilizes themes from the common store selectively, without accepting the whole.

Sequentially, according to the seventh-year pattern, we would expect the final two chapters of Revelation to describe the post-sabbatical jubilee, the timeless eternity. That expectation is partly confirmed, but the matter is more complex. The crucial passage to notice is Rev 21:22-26. There is no temple in the New Jerusalem, for God himself and the Lamb dwell there, with the result that there is no need for the sun or moon to shine on the city.⁴¹ The important detail is that the gates of the city "shall never be shut by day—and there shall be no night there" (vs. 25). The conjunction which the RSV translates as "and" is *gar*, which seems awkward. We should rather take the second clause as explaining the first.

Most commentators follow R. H. Charles⁴² in seeing this passages as based on Isa 60:11. Charles's conclusion is surely correct, but it is incomplete. The fact is that scriptural allusions in the Apocalypse are seldom simple, and that is the case here. There is a simultaneous allusion to Zech 14:7 and Ezek 46:1. Michael Goulder has demonstrated that there are extended parallels between John's Apocalypse and Ezekiel.⁴³ and Rev 21 is structurally and symbolically parallel to Ezek 40-48.⁴⁴ Ezek 46:1 states: "The gate of the inner court that faces east shall be shut on the six working days; but on the sabbath day it shall be opened and on the day of the new moon it shall be opened." With Ezekiel in the background, the statement in Rev 21:25 that the gates of the city shall never be shut by day and that there will be no night is the same as to declare that there will be

⁴¹The picture does not deviate from Rabbinic eschatology (mitigated though it was after 135 C.E.). Rab said: "In the World to Come there is no eating nor drinking nor propagation nor business nor jealousy nor hatred nor competition, but the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads feasting on the brightness of the divine presence . . ." (b. Berakoth 17a).

⁴²R. H. Charles, *The Revelation of St. John*, ICC, 2 (Edinburgh, 1920): 172-173.

⁴³M. D. Goulder, "The Apocalypse as an Annual Cycle of Prophecies," *NTS* 27 (1981): 342-367.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 347. Goulder lists some nine conceptual parallels of Ezekiel to Rev 21, but it is remarkable that he fails to mention the parallel to Rev. 21:25.

perpetual Sabbath. The thought is conceptually parallel to 2 Enoch 33:2 and m. Tamid 7:4.

This exegesis finds support in the Gospel of Truth 32.24-35, where we are told that the Shepherd labored for the Sheep even on the Sabbath and gave life to it, so that the Gnostic might know

what is the Sabbath, on which it is not fitting for salvation to be idle, in order that you may speak from the day from above which has no night, and from the light which does not sink because it is perfect. Say, then, from the heart that you are the perfect day and in you dwells the light that does not fail.⁴⁵

The sabbatic theology of Gnosticism, as we noted before, is a secondary development from that of Apocalyptic. Its imagery and argumentation are, accordingly, adaptations from the Apocalyptic thesaurus. It is therefore legitimate to see this Valentinian association of nightlessness and unending light with the Sabbath as constituting a mutation of what we have found in Rev 21:25.

What has been said of Rev 21:25 applies also to 22:5.⁴⁶ It remains now only to examine Rev 10:6, "*chronos ouketi estai.*" Bede interpreted this declaration literally, in the mode of 2 Enoch and m. Tamid, as promising an era of timelessness. When he prepared his separate edition of 2 Enoch, R. H. Charles supported this interpretation, but he omitted it from the notes to his great *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, and he repudiated it in his commentary on Revelation with no further explanation than the peremptory dictum, "But this explanation is wrong."⁴⁷ He has been followed in this rejection by nearly all modern scholars, who understand the meaning to be "there shall be no more delay."⁴⁸ This interpretation is also followed by virtually all modern English versions.

⁴⁵The translation is that of George W. MacRae in James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (San Francisco, 1977), p. 44.

⁴⁶There is a problem in 22:2, where we read that the tree of life, which is in the city, yields twelve kinds of fruit, a fruit each month. The city needs no light from sun or moon, and there is no night there, which would seem to eliminate all time divisions dependent upon those heavenly bodies, including the month. Either we must give more weight to the word "need" in 22:5 and 21:23, so that while their light is not *needed* they are still there to mark the passing of time; or we must ascribe the seeming dissonance to the compositeness of the imagery assembled in Revelation.

⁴⁷Charles, p. 263, n. 1.

⁴⁸Thus, e.g., E.-B. Allo, *Saint Jean: L'Apocalypse*, 4th ed. (Paris, 1933), pp. 140-141; Martin Kiddle, *The Revelation of St. John*, Moffatt New Testament

The modern interpretation has much to commend it. Rev 10:6 very likely is in part an allusion to Dan 12:7, where the angel's solemn oath is in response to the question, "How long?" And Rev 10:6 might be seen as an answer to a similar question in Rev 6:10, though an answer was already given there and much material has intervened between question and answer. Goulder sees Rev 10:1-7 as parallel to Ezek 12:21-28,⁴⁹ and there the message is, "the days are at hand, and the fulfillment of every vision" (vs. 23).

In connection with Rev 10:6 it is important, again, to keep in mind that in the symbols and allusions of the Apocalypse several streams flow together and coalesce. Though it makes translation difficult, justice can be done to the book only if multiple levels of meaning are recognized. Finally, since sabbatic eternity is, as I have attempted to show, an underlying theme in the book, it would be rash to deny the possibility of its presence in 10:6, where it is the most natural way to understand *chronos*, as contrasted with *kairos*.

In conclusion, we may summarize the eschatological-rest concept in John's apocalypse by saying that that NT book participates selectively in a tradition which sees the destiny of the righteous as rest—a rest that is timeless. Where there is no night, there can be no clock.

Commentary (London, 1940), p. 172; Martin Rist, in *The Interpreter's Bible*, 12 (Nashville, 1957): 440-441; George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1972); Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, NICNT, vol. 17 (Grand Rapids, MI, 1977), pp. 210-211; and Pierre Prigent, *L'Apocalypse de Saint Jean*, Commentaire du Nouveau Testament 14 (Lausanne, 1981), pp. 153-154.

⁴⁹Goulder, pp. 345-346.