

How to Read Revelation as a Vision

Genre

Images and Symbolism of Reve



Many people believe that Revelation is about the End of the world.




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CAUTION!
ZOMBIES!
AHEAD!!!



He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."
5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" (Rev 21:4-5)

How Should We Think of Revelation?

- Revelation a Vision given to John.
- The Vision is About Jesus (Rev. 1:1)
- The Vision Gives us a Glimpse of Heavenly Realities
- The Vision is Given to the Church
- The Vision Depicts the Return of Christ and the Renewal of Creation.
- The Vision Promotes our Worship of God and our Faithfulness to Christ.


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Sombrero Galaxy • M104

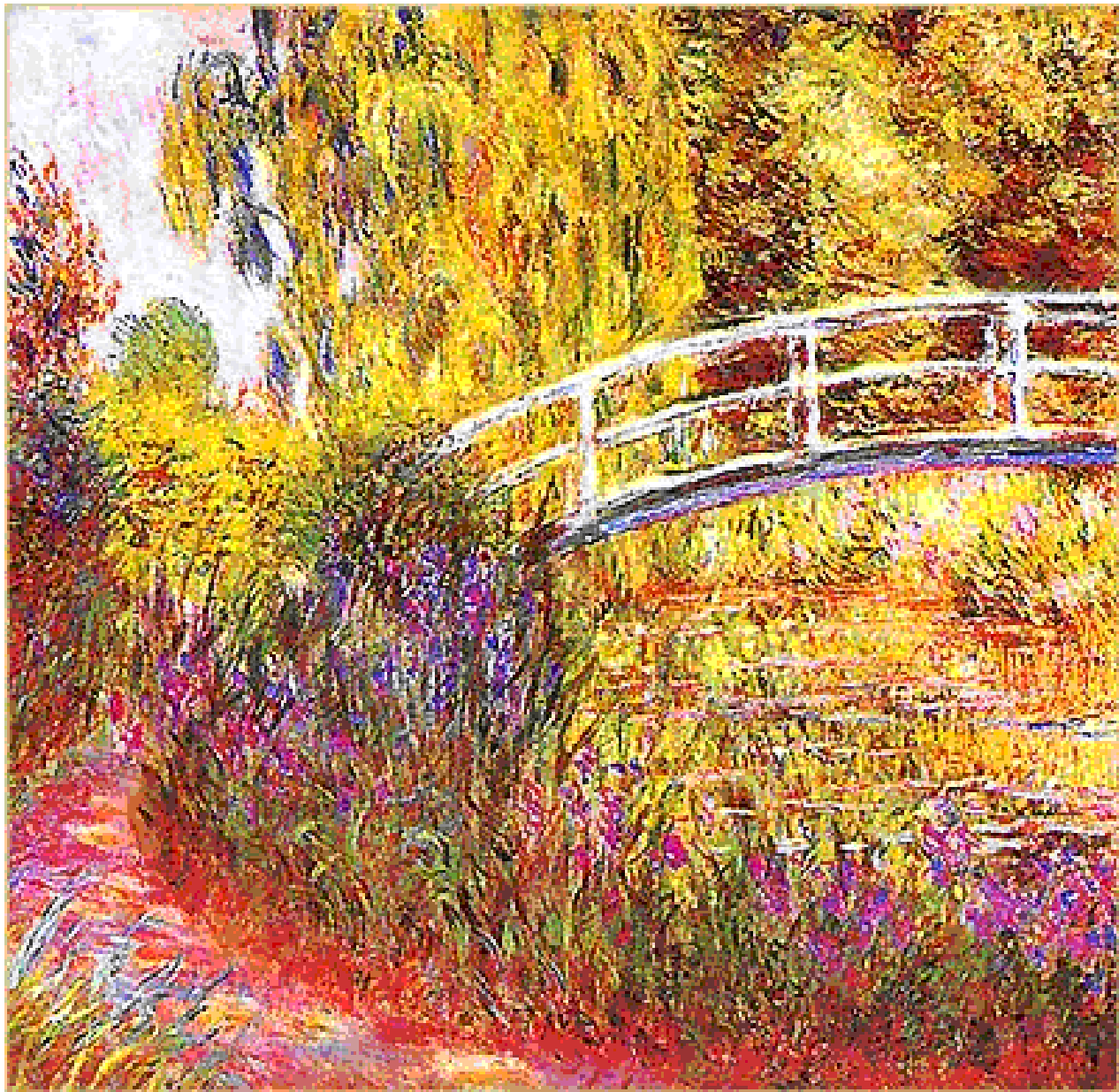


Hubble Heritage

NASA and The Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA) • Hubble Space Telescope ACS • STScI-PRC03-28

Revelation as Visionary Communication

- Think of the book of Revelation as an **impressionistic painting instead of a video recording of the future world.**



Revelation as Visionary Communication

- His descriptions are **intended to evoke a sense of wonder, awe, and worship** as well as communicate prophetic end-time expectations.



Theological Features

- "Look, he is coming with the clouds," and "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him"; and all peoples on earth "will mourn because of him." So shall it be! Amen. (Rev 1:7)



Theological Features

- "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll." (Rev 22:7)



Theological Features

"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. [13] I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. (Rev 22:12-13)

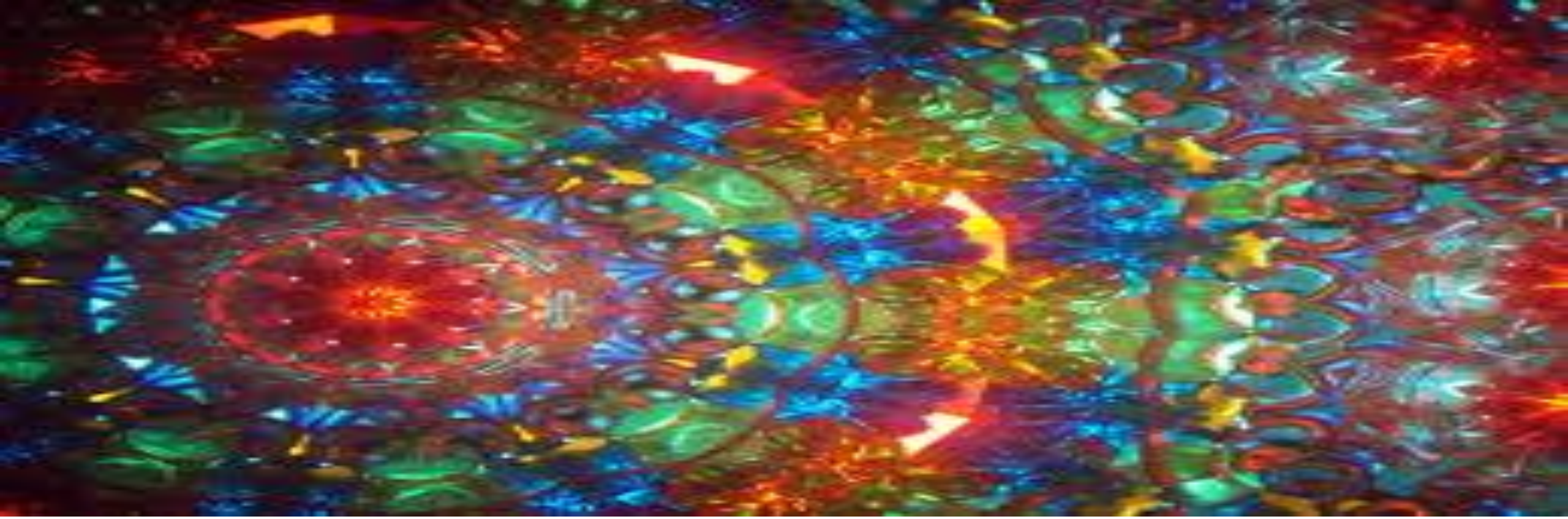


Theological Features

- What is Revelation's central theme?

  - **Jesus the Lord of history will return without fail to earth to bring history to its proper conclusion**





How to Read a Vision

Understanding how Revelation Communicates through Visions and Symbols

Revelation as Four Vision Reports

- Revelation consists of four separate interrelated visions introduced by the phrase “in the Spirit” (*en pneumati*), all of which occur within a single day (Rev 1:10).

- The phrase indicates a shift of setting from Patmos (Rev 1:9) to the heavenly throne room (Rev 4:1–2) into a desert (Rev 17:3) and finally to a great high mountain (Rev 21:10).

- The phrase “I will show you” (*deixō soi*) occurs three times (Rev 4:1; 17:1; 21:9) in close proximity to *en pneumati* (Rev 4:2; 17:3; 21:10), suggesting that these two phrases are used in conjunction with each other to signal major structural transitions.

(1) Rev 1:10–3:22 envisions the glorified Christ who investigates his churches

(2) Rev 4:1–16:21 portrays the divine court proceedings and the trial of the nations;

(3) Rev 17:1–21:8 describes the sentencing and destruction of Babylon; and (4) Rev 21:9–22:4 presents the vindication and reward of the saints comprised of the new heaven and new earth.

(4) Rev 21:9–22:4 presents the vindication and reward of the saints comprised of the new heaven and new earth.

PROLOGUE (1:1–8)

I. VISION ONE (ON PATMOS): THE GLORIFIED CHRIST WHO INVESTIGATES HIS CHURCHES (1:9–3:22)

II. VISION TWO (IN HEAVEN): THE DIVINE COURT PROCEEDINGS AND THE TRIAL OF THE NATIONS (4:1–16:21)

III. VISION THREE (IN THE DESERT): THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON AND THE RETURN OF CHRIST (17:1–21:8)

IV. VISION FOUR (ON A MOUNTAIN): BELIEVERS' REWARD AND THE RENEWAL OF CREATION (21:9–22:5)

EPILOGUE (22:6–21)

How To Read Revelation

- We want to read Revelation without thinking we **already know** what it says.



How to Read Revelation

- Seek to understand what it ***meant*** for the original audience, before determining what it ***means*** for your contemporary audience.

How to Read Revelation

- *The symbol and the cultural-historical context.*

- If someone writing in the year 2026 refers to “smoke ascending from the twin towers.” People would instantly recall the dreadful events of September 11, 2001 and the World Trade Center.

- Fast forward two thousand years into the future, someone in China reads the reference to “twin towers” and he or she may completely miss the allusion to those events.



How to Read Revelation

- Focus primarily on the ***forest*** more than focusing on the individual ***trees***.





How to Read Revelation

- Look for the ***main point*** of the ***text***, rather than focusing secondary details and speculation.

How to Read Revelation

- Understand the nature and power of ***symbolism*** in Revelation ***for communicating God's word*** through visionary means.

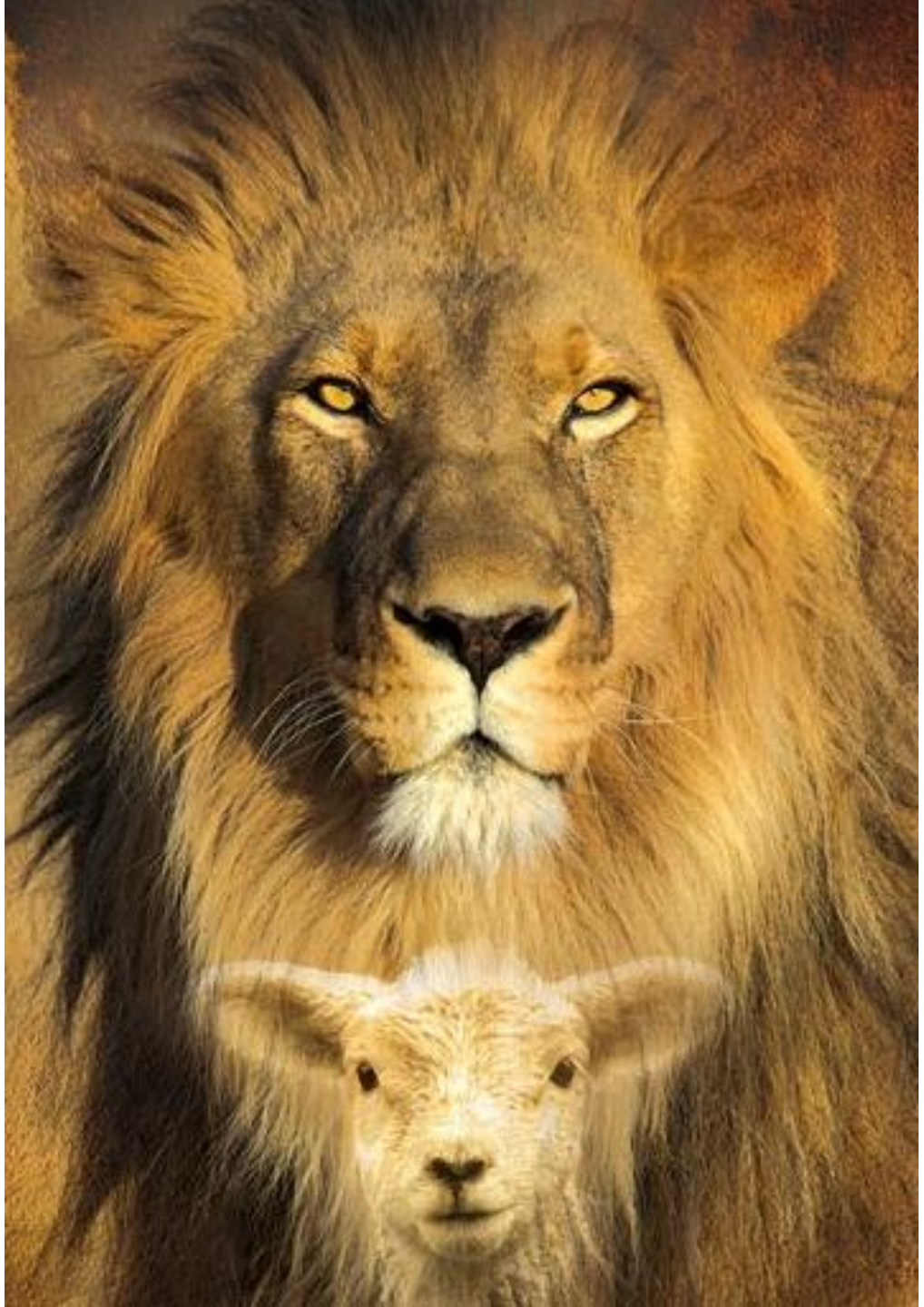
The Slain, but Standing Lamb





The Slain Lamb

- Lion of the Tribe of Judah = Military language
- The Lamb Standing as if Slain = Sacrificial language
- Meaning: **The way of victory is the way of the cross.**
- This victory relates back to the 7 messages to the 7 churches as way to understanding what it means to "overcome" or who the "overcomers" are.



The Slain Lamb

- The Lamb:

(1)Apocalyptic Lamb – the horns suggest a military connotation (1 Enoch 90.9-12; T. Jos. 19.8).

(1)Paschal Lamb – the slain lamb suggest sacrificial connotation (Exod 11-12; Isa 53:7; John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Peter 1:19).



The Slain Lamb

- Seven horns = **Omnipotence:** Power and Strength (Dan 7:7, 20; Rev 12:3; 13:1, 11; 17:3, 7, 12, 16).

- Seven Eyes = **Omniscience** : All-seeing (Zech 4:10). Also the **Seven Spirits** (Rev 1:4; 4:5).



How to Read Revelation

- Carefully consider the imagery in light of figurative language, the use of the Old Testament, the Historical background, and interpretive clues internal to the book itself.

Interpreting Symbols

- In Rev 1:12–13, John sees Jesus standing among seven lampstands.

- These seven lampstands are identified as the seven churches of Asia (Rev 1:20).

- The lampstands may evoke the image of a menorah, but its meaning is restricted by the direct one-to-one correspondence to the churches.



Interpreting Symbols

- In Rev 17:9–10, the seven heads of the beast represent “**seven hills**” and also “**seven kings**.”



The Whore of Revelations

7 HILLS OF ROME

Tiber River (Tiberis)

Quirinal Hill (Collis Quirinalis) 7

Viminal Hill (Collis Viminalis) 6

Field of Mars (Campus Martius)

1 Capitoline Hill (Collis Capitolinus)

Esquiline Hill (Collis Esquilinus) 5

2 Palatine Hill (Collis Palatinus)

Tiber Island (Insula Tiberina)

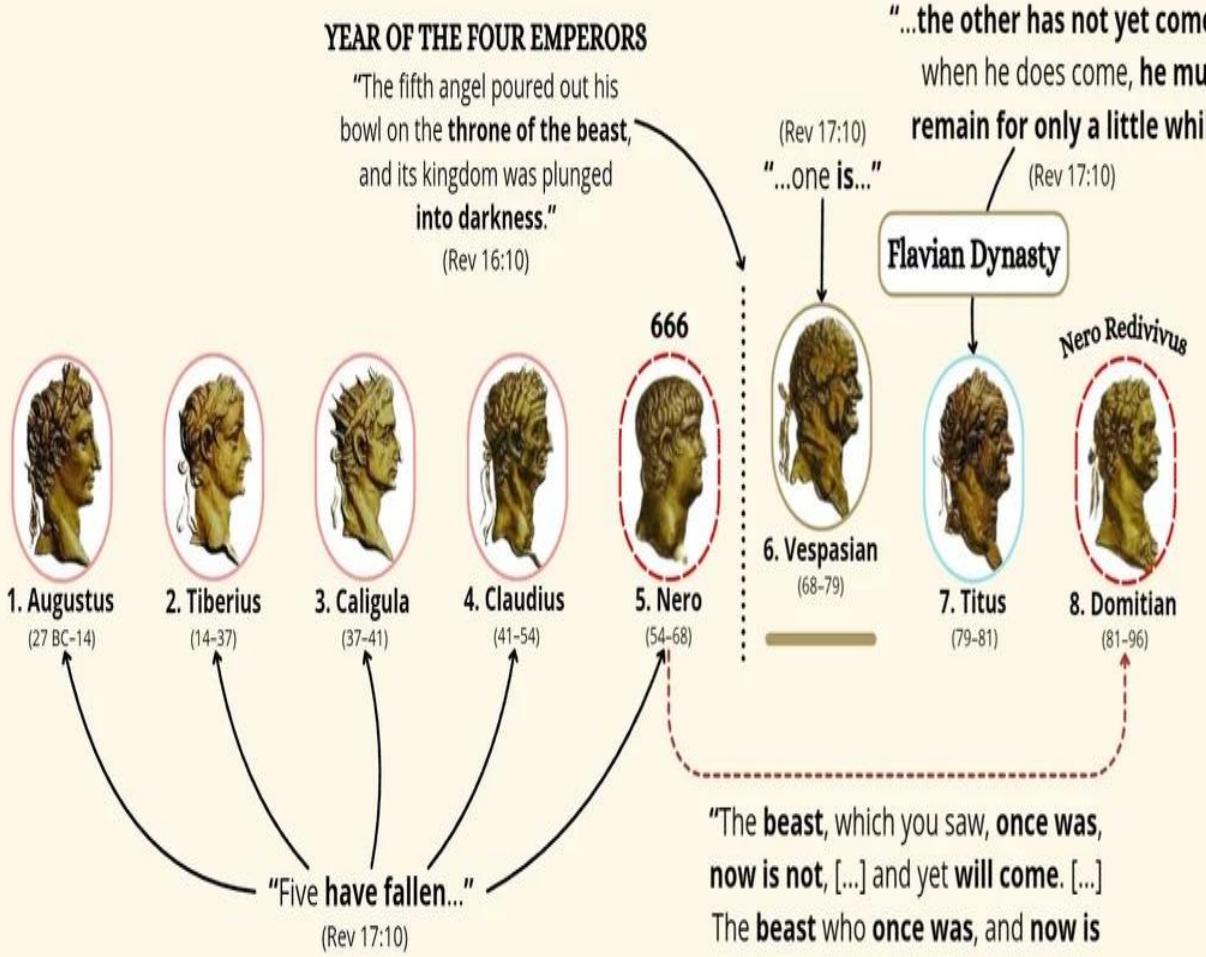
Caelian Hill (Collis Caelius) 4

3 Aventine Hill (Collis Aventinus)

Servian Wall (Murus Servii Tullii)

"The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman (church) sitteth."
Revelation 17:9

WHO ARE THE 8 "KINGS" OF REVELATION 17:9-11?



Reference	Symbol	Interpretative signal	Symbol Identified
Rev 1:20	Seven stars	“they are”	the seven angels of the churches
Rev 1:20	Seven lampstands	“they are”	the seven churches
Rev 4:5	Seven lamps before God’s Throne	“which are”	the seven spirits of God
Rev 5:6	The seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb	“which are”	The seven spirits of God sent into all the earth
Rev 5:8	Gold bowls full of incense	“which are”	The prayers of the saints

Reference	Symbol	Interpretative signal	Symbol Identified
Rev 7:14	The multitude in white robes	“these are”	The saints coming out of the tribulation
Rev 11:4	The two witnesses	“these are”	the two olive trees and two lampstands standing before the Lord
Rev 14:4	The 144,000	“these are”	Those who did not defile themselves and they followed the Lamb
Rev 17:9	The seven heads of the beast	“they are”	They are seven hills (Rome) and also seven kings (emperors?)
Rev 19:8	The pure white robes of fine linen	“for . . . is”	The righteous deeds of the saints



Reading Revelation in Context

The Social, Historical, Cultural, and Religious Context of Revelation

Historical Background: Greco-Roman Religion

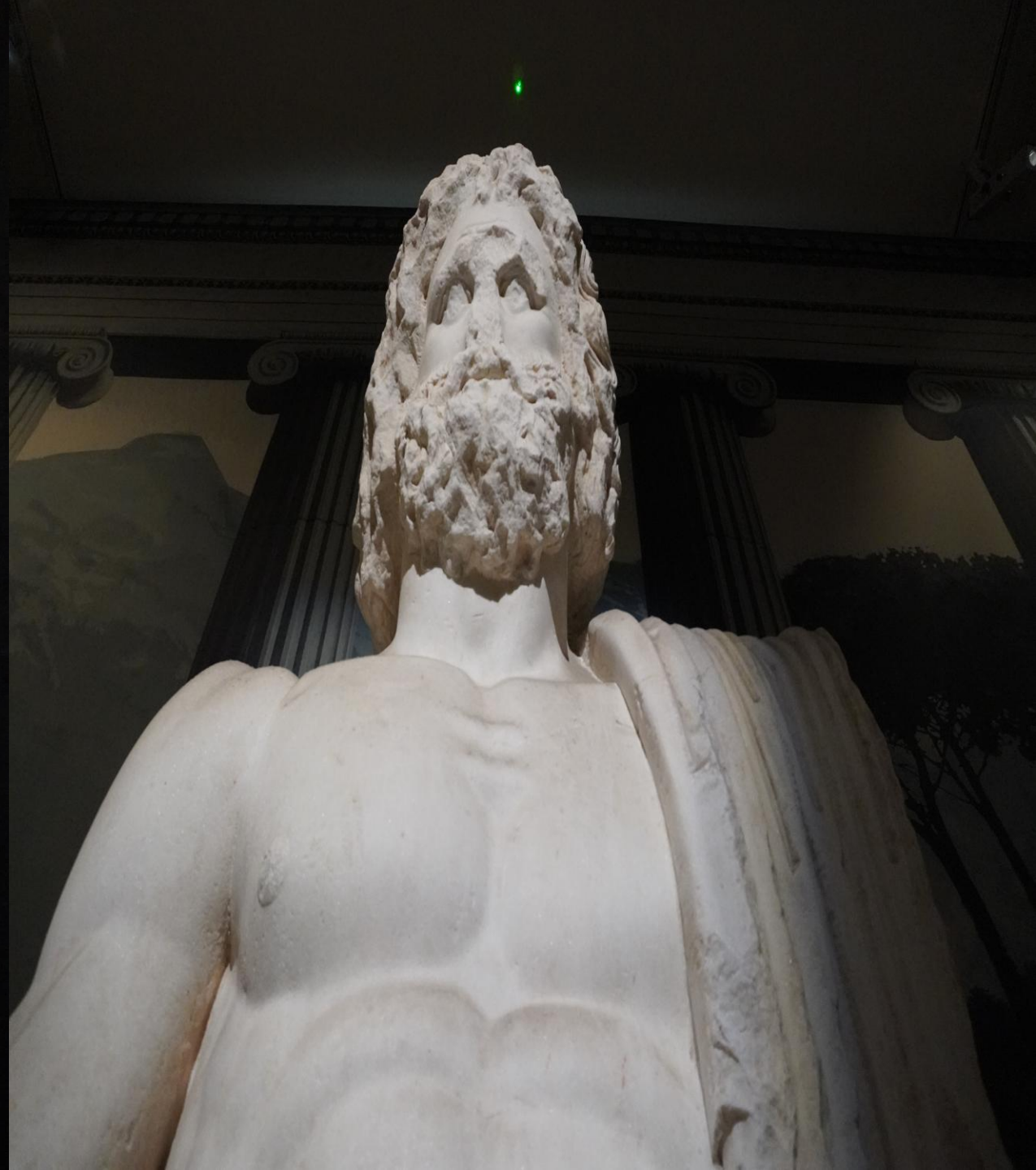




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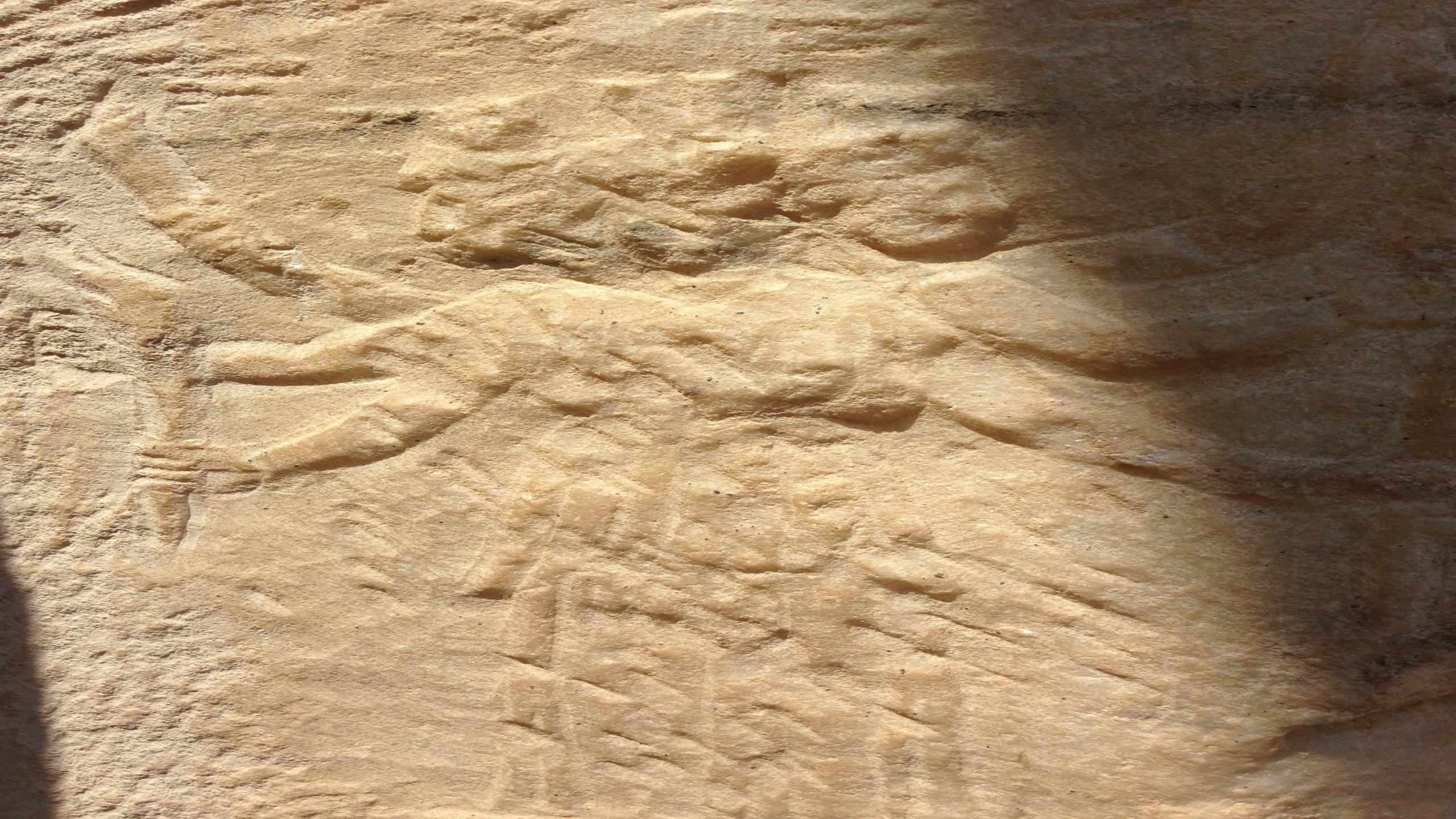

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THE STATUE OF HECATE 1st CENTURY A.D.






ΔΙΟΝΥCΟΦΑΚΑΗ







YORGUN HERAKLES











Imperial Imagery

Power, Honor, and Worship








İmparator Hadrianus Heykeli
Bronz
MS 117-138
Hierapytna (Girit, Yunanistan)
Statue of Emperor Hadrian
Bronze
117-138 CE
Hierapytna (Crete, Greece)









Imperial Cult

The Divine Claudius as Lord of the Earth and Sea (from museum in Aphrodisia)





Apotheosis of (transformation into a god) Antoninous Pius (ca. AD 161)



The Location of Trajan’s Temple In Pergamum



The Location of Augustus's Temple in Troas



Sebasteion (Emperor Chapel) in Aphrodasisa



Sebasteion (Emperor Chapel) in Aphrodasisa



The Location of Domitian’s Temple (Flavian Family) in Ephesus

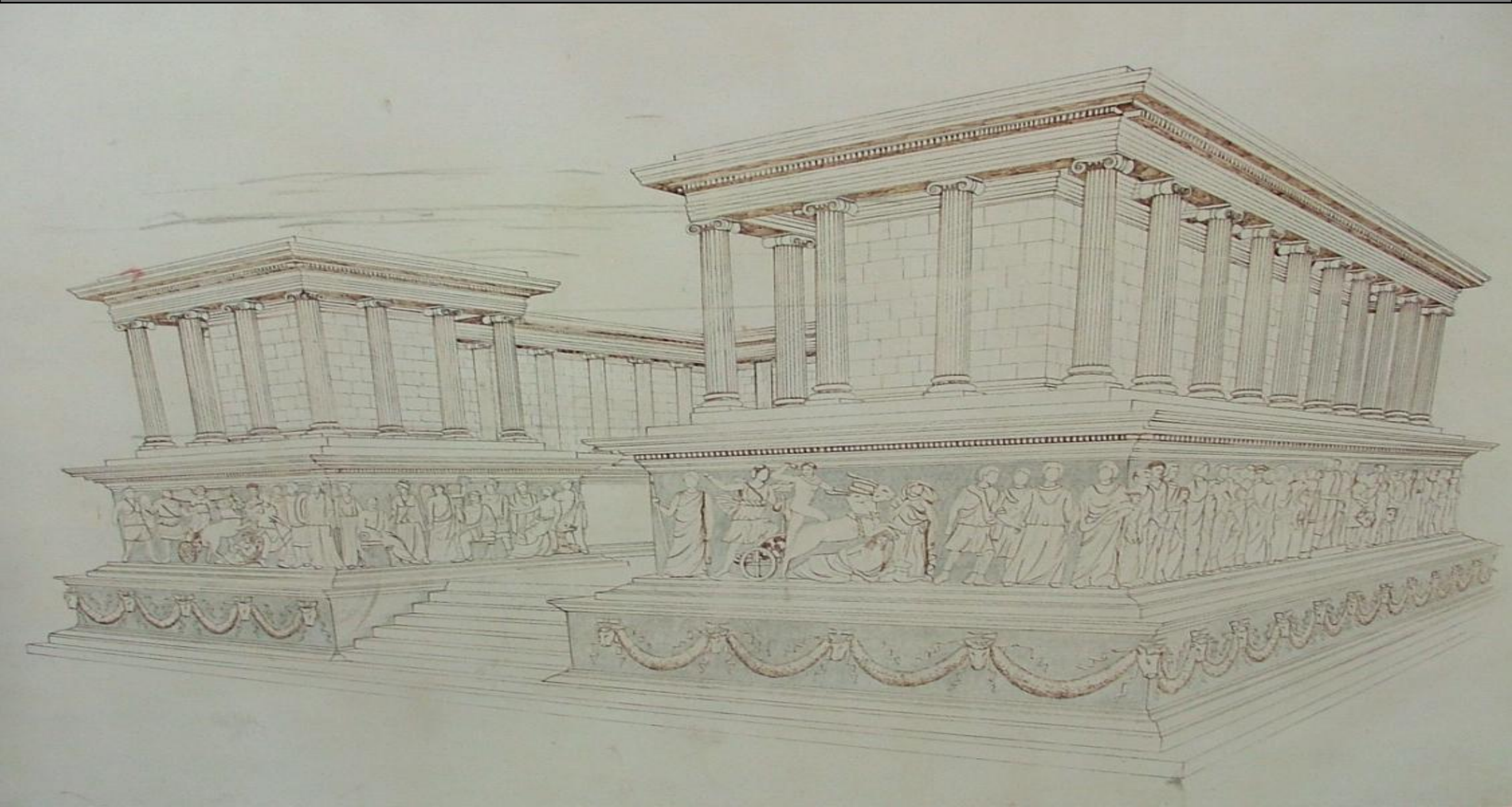


The Location of Domitian's Temple (Flavian Family) in Ephesus





The Location of Domitian’s Temple (Flavian Family) in Ephesus













Imperial High Priest





Imperial Altar (Ephesus)











Reading Revelation as a Message to the Church

The Seven Messages

How All of Revelation is to the Church

Why Revelation Matters

1) The Book of Revelation is intended for the Church (Rev. 1:1-11; 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6; 13, 22)



Why Revelation Matters

2) The Book of Revelation promises a blessing to those who hear and obey the message of the book (Rev. **1:3**; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; **22:7**, 14).



Why Revelation Matters

3) As Prophecy, the Book of Revelation calls believers to active obedience and to do something in response to the message (i.e. overcome, repent, endure, worship).



Why Revelation Matters

4) The Book of Revelation contrasts present circumstances with eternal realities.



The Inaugural Vision of Christ
(Rev 1:9–1:20)




Ο
ΑΓΙΟΣ
ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ
Ο
ΘΕΟΛΟΓΟΣ
ΕΝΑΡΧΗ
ΗΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ
ΟΛΟΓΟΣΗΝ
ΠΡΟΣΤΟΝΘΝ
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ΤΒΓΕΝΕΤΟ
ΚΑΙΧΩΡΙΣ
ΕΓΕΝΕΤΟΔΕΝ
ΟΜΕΓΟΝΗΕΝ


Kios
Smyrna/Izmir
Ephesus
Aegean Sea
Samos
Turkey
Miletus
Patmos
Didyma
Greek Islands
Dodecanese Islands
Cos
Rhodes
Mediterranean Sea
holylandphotos.org


IKARION SEA
Livadi
Kalogiron
Lambi
Lefkes
Kambos
Patmos
Meloi
Merichas
Skala
Patmos
M. Ag. Ioanni
Chiliomodi
Grikos
Tragonissi
Diakofti
DODECANESE






Σπήλαιο Αποκάλυψης
Cave of the Apokalypsis






Γ
ΟΣΙΩ
ΕΝΑ
Φ Μαυρίδης














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Verse	Physical Feature	Characteristic	OT Antecedent	Referent (OT)	Symbolic Meaning
1:13a	being	someone "like [o[moion] a son of man"	Dan 7:13	Son of Man	eschatological king and judge
1:13b	clothes	long robe with golden sash around chest	Dan 10:5; Ezek 9:2; cf. Ex 28:4; 39:29	Man dressed in linen or a heavenly being	priest or royal dignitary
1:14a	head and hair	as [w`j] white as [w`j] wool and snow	Dan 7:9; cf. Lev 19:32; Prov 20:29	Ancient of Days	wisdom in judgment
1:14b	eyes	as [w`j] blazing fire	Dan 10:6	Man dressed in linen or a heavenly being	penetrating judicial insight
1:15a	feet	like [o[moioi] glowing bronze	Dan 10:6; Ezek 1:7, 27; cf. Dan 3:25	Man dressed in linen or a heavenly being	judicial testing or refining fires
1:15b	voice	as [w`j] many rushing waters	Ezek 1:24; 43:2; cf. Dan 10:6	Yahweh	overwhelming authoritative voice
1:16a	right hand	holding seven stars	none	Roman Emperor (?)	cosmic sovereignty
1:16b	mouth	protruding sharp double-edged	Isa 11:4; 49:2	Divine warrior	judicial authority
1:16c	face	shining as [w`j] the sun	Dan 10:6; Matt 17:2	Angelic being or Transfiguration	majestic and glorious splendor



DOMITIA, wife of Domitian. AR Denarius (3.51 gm). Struck 82-83 AD. DOMITIA AVGVSTA IMP DOMIT, draped bust right / DIVVS CAESAR IMP DOMITIANI F, infant seated left on globe with arms open; seven stars in field. RIC II 213 (Domitian); BMCRE 63 (Domitian); BN 71 (Domitian); RSC 11. EF. Rare. ($5000)

Christ and the Seven Churches

Ephesus	*Smyrna*	*Pergamum*	*Thyatira*	*Sardis*	*Philadelphia*	*Laodicea*
The one who holds the seven stars and walks among the lampstands (Rev 2:1)	**The "first and the last" and who died and rose again (Rev 2:8)**	**The one with the sharp double-edged sword (Rev 2:12)**	**The one with eyes like fire and feet of burnished bronze (Rev 2:18)**	**The one who holds the seven spirits and seven stars (Rev 3:1)**	**The one who is holy and true and holds the keys of David (Rev 3:7)**	**The "Amen," the "faithful and true witness," and "the ruler of God's creation" (Rev 3:14)**

Structure of the Seven Oracles

1) Address (To the Angel of the Church Write).
2) Prophetic formula (“Thus say’s” coupled with a Christological predication).
3) The *oida*, A speech of commendation (“I know your works”), if applicable.
4) The *oida*, B speech of accusation (“but I have this against you”) if applicable.
5) An admonition laden with imperative verb forms.
6) An exhortation to listen (”let the one who has ears hear”).
7) An eschatological promise of salvation (”to the one who overcomes, I will give…”).

	Ephesus 2:1–7	Smyrna 2:8–11	Pergamum 2:12–17	Thyatira 2:18–29	Sardis 3:1–6	Philadelphia 3:7–13	Laodicea 3:14–22
Characteristic of Christ	Holding seven stars and walking among the lampstands	The words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again	Sharp double-edged sword out of mouth	Eyes like fire and feet of burnished bronze	Holding the seven spirits and seven stars	The one who is holy and true and holds the keys of David	The "Amen," "faithful and true witness," and "the ruler of God's creation"
Commendation	Works, labor, endurance, examining false apostles, rejecting the teachings of the Nicolaitans	Faithfully endured tribulation, poverty, and slander	Holding on to his name and did not deny faith in Christ	Increasingly great works, love, faithfulness, service, and endurance	None	Works, little strength, not denied his name, obedient, and endurance	None
Accusation	Abandoned first love	None	Some hold to the teachings of a false prophet and the Nicolaitans	Some hold to the teachings of a false prophetess and commit sexual immorality	Reputation of being alive but spiritually dead	None	Lukewarm, self-sufficient, and self-deluded when in reality they are spiritually pitiful, poor, blind, and naked
Admonition	Repent, remember, and return to prior good works	Be faithful unto death	Repent	Repent and do not hold to her teachings	Be alert, strengthen what remains, remember what you heard, and repent	Hold on to what they have	Receive from Christ refined gold, pure clothes, and eye ointment
Warning	Remove lampstand	None	Quickly fights them	Cast the prophetess	Come against them	None	Christ rebukes those he loves
Promise to Overcoming Victors	Right to eat from the Tree of Life in God's Paradise	Never be harmed by the second death	Hidden manna and a white stone with new name	Authority over the nations	Dressed in white and name secure in the Book of Life	Made a pillar in God's sanctuary and the name of God and his city on them	The right to sit on the throne with the Father and Son


THRACE
Nicea
BITHYNIA
Cyzicus
Abydos
Troas
MYSIA
Assos
Pergamum
Mitylene
Thyatira
ASIA
Aegean Sea
Sardis
Smyrna
Philadelphia
Ephesus
Hierapolis
SAMOS
Laodicea
Colossae
Priene
Miletus
PATMOS
Halicarnassus
COS
LYCIA
Rhodes
Patara
RHODES
0
100 mi
0
100 km


PERGAMUM
THYATIRA
SARDIS
SMYRNA
PHILADELPHIA
AEGEAN SEA
EPHESUS
LAODICEA

The Church of Ephesus

- In the first century, it was the most important commercial center of the Roman province of Asia, the *de facto* capital with perhaps 300,000 residents.

- It was a truly splendid city with a broad street lined with columns (Arcadian Road) and an amphitheater seating 25,000. It was home to the temple to Artemis (About 400 ft long and 200 ft wide, supported by 127 columns 60ft tall—one of the seven wonders).

- Paul established the church in Ephesus (Acts 19). Timothy was sent to Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3). It was also the headquarters for the Apostle John (where he wrote his gospel and three epistles.

















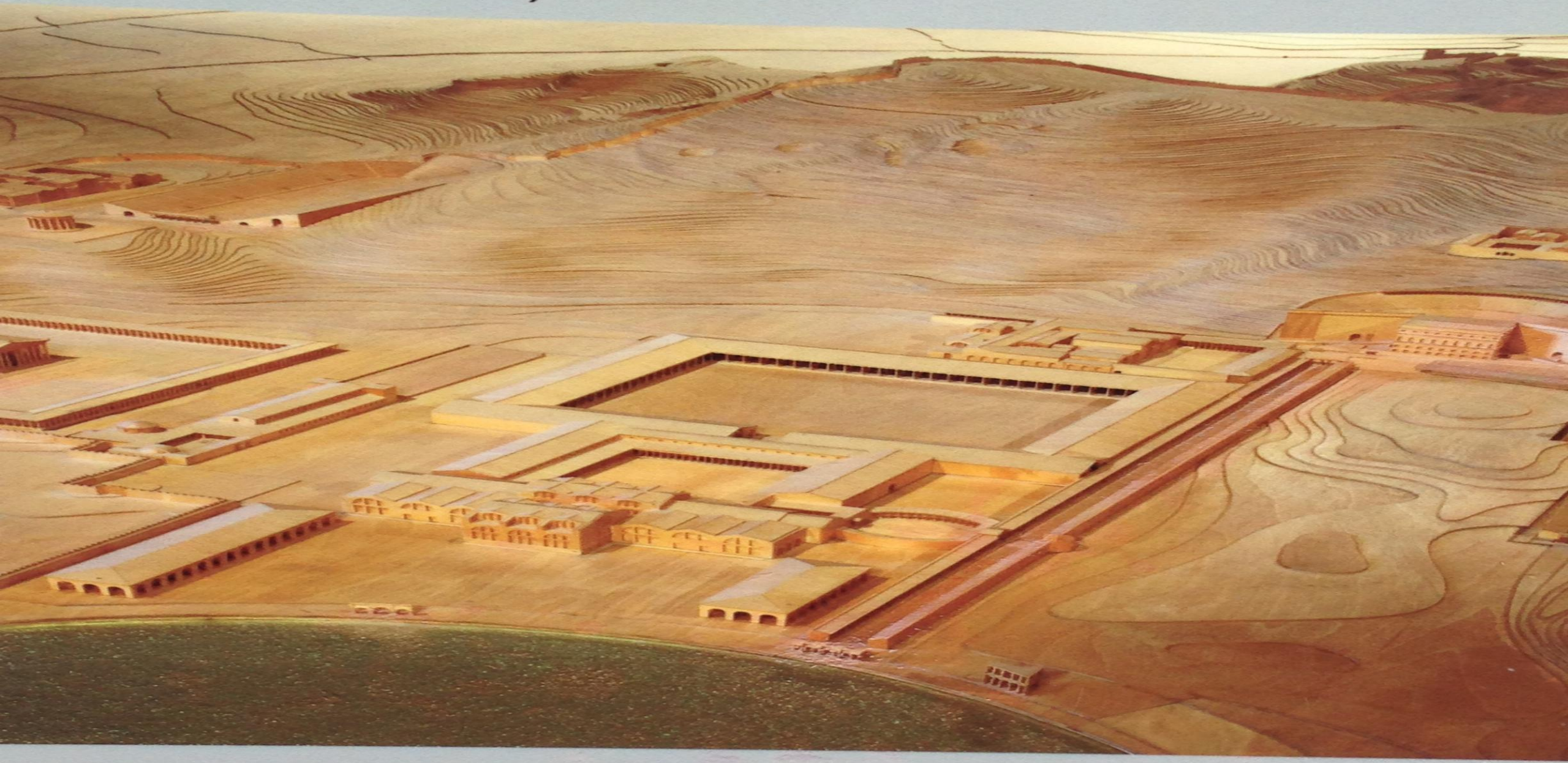




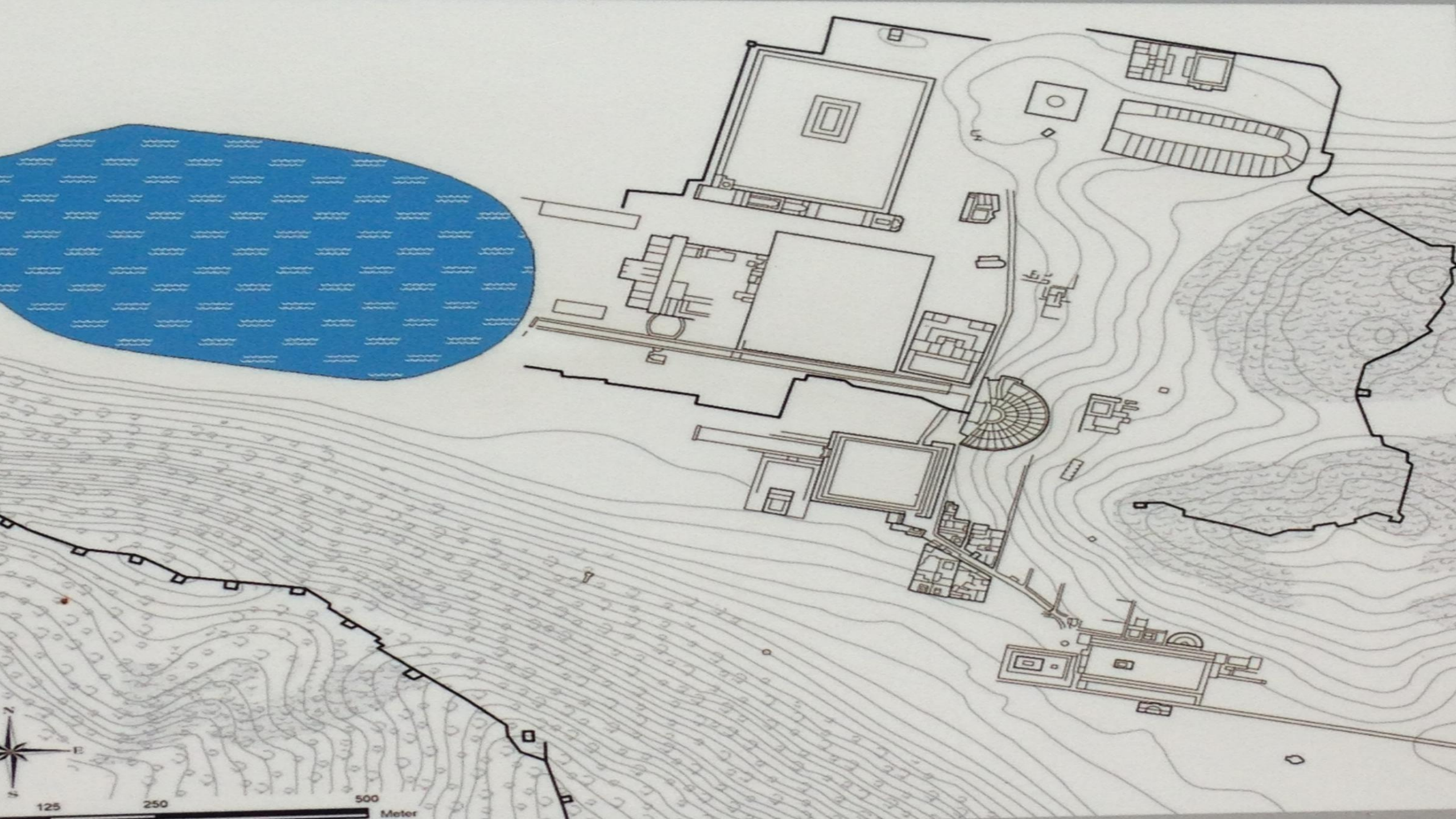




s Hafenbeckens (2010)



- Liman arazi (Kunsthistorisches Museum-Wien)
of the port area (Kunsthistorisches Museum-Vienna)
des Hafengebietes (Kunsthistorisches Museum-Wien)


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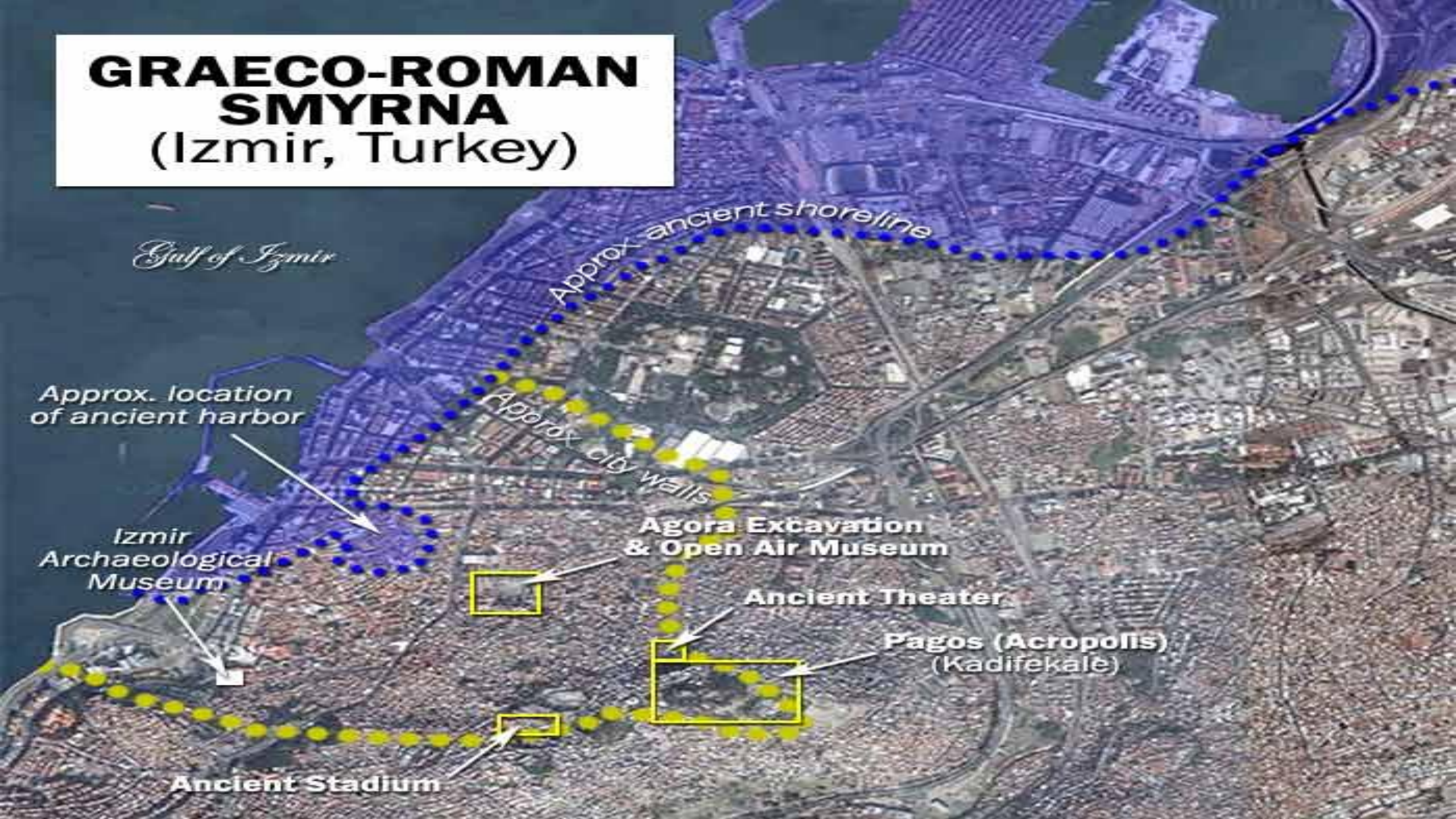
Message to Ephesus (2:1-7)

"Love One Another Greatly"

- Address walks among the lampstands
- Oida A: good deeds
- Oida B: forsaken first love
- Admonition: remember and repent
- Warning: remove lampstand
- Vindication: will eat from the Tree of Life

The Church at Smyrna

- Important seaport about 25 miles north of Ephesus with a population of about 200,000. (birth place of Homer)
- It was destroyed in A.D. 178 by a severe earthquake. Rebuilt and known today as Izmir.
- It was the first city in Asia to build a temple to the goddess Roma (195 B.C.), and it A.D. 26, because of its loyalty to Rome it beat out 10 other cities for the privilege of building a temple to emperor Tiberias. In succeeding decades it became a center of the imperial cult.
- Paul established the church in Smyrna (Acts 19:10).
- Home to Polycarp (a disciple of John) who was martyred around A.D. 150.


GRAECO-ROMAN
SMYRNA
(Izmir, Turkey)
Gulf of Izmir
Approx ancient shoreline
Approx. location
of ancient harbor
Approx city walls
Izmir
Archaeological
Museum
Agora Excavation
& Open Air Museum
Ancient Theater
Pagos (Acropolis)
(Kadifekale)
Ancient Stadium












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Message to Smyrna (2:8-11)

"Be steadfast in persecution"

- Address the First and the Last
- Oida A: patient in afflictions
- Oida B: none
- Admonition: do not be afraid
- Warning: None
- Vindication: second death will not hurt

The Church at Pergamum

- 55 miles north of Smyrna and 15 miles inland from the sea. The name *Pergamum* means “citadel” because it was built on the slope of a rising hill. Served as the official capital of the Roman province from 133 B.C. Known today as Bergama.

- The poor lived at the base of the mountain; the next level was the business district; above that the rich lived in their villas; at the top were the important public buildings and temples.

The Church at Pergamum

- The Temple of Zeus (120ft by 112ft).
- The Temple to Emperor Augustus (first temple built to honor an emperor around 29 B.C.)
- The Temple-hospital of Asclepion (people came from all over to be healed by the god Asclepius whose symbol are two snakes twined around a pole).
- Pergamum's Library held over 200,000 scrolls







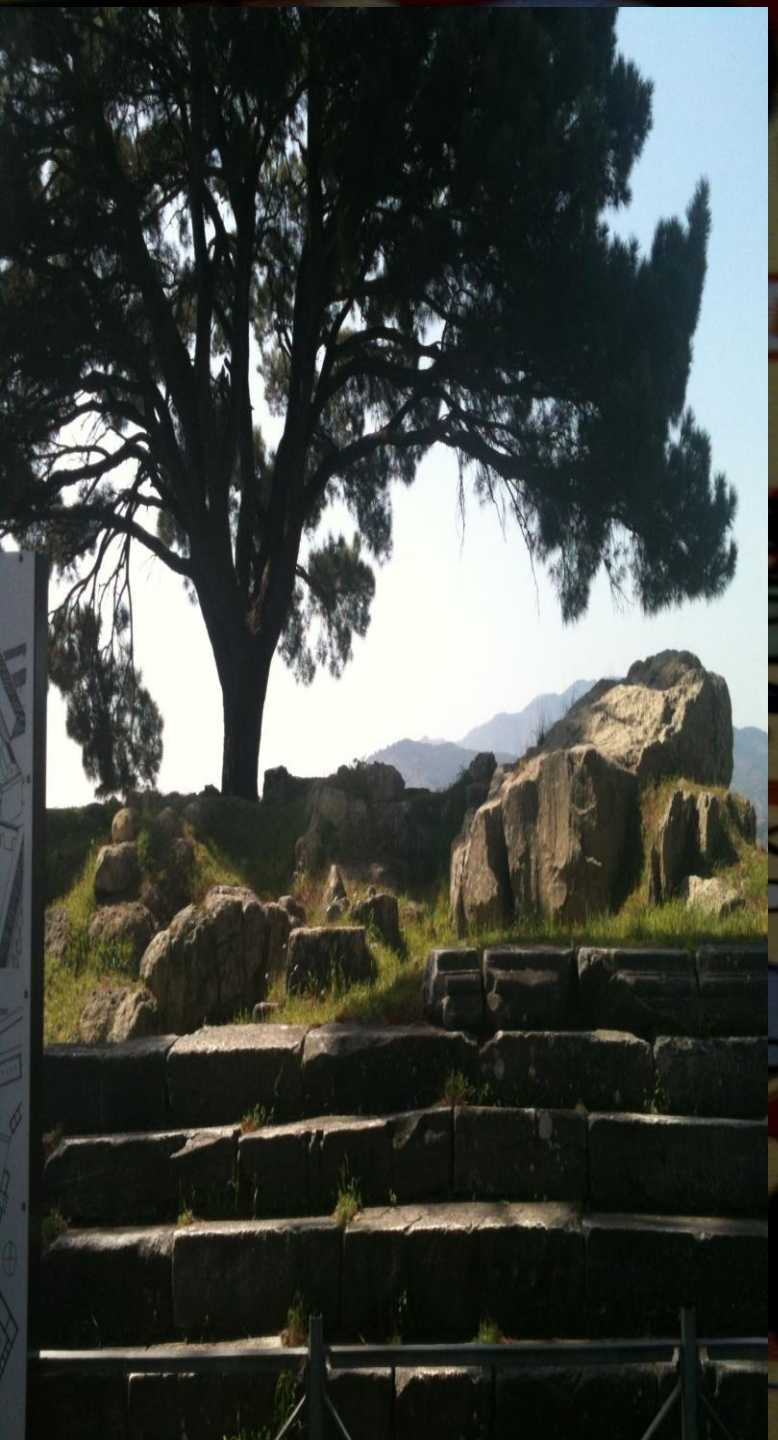












Temple to Zeus

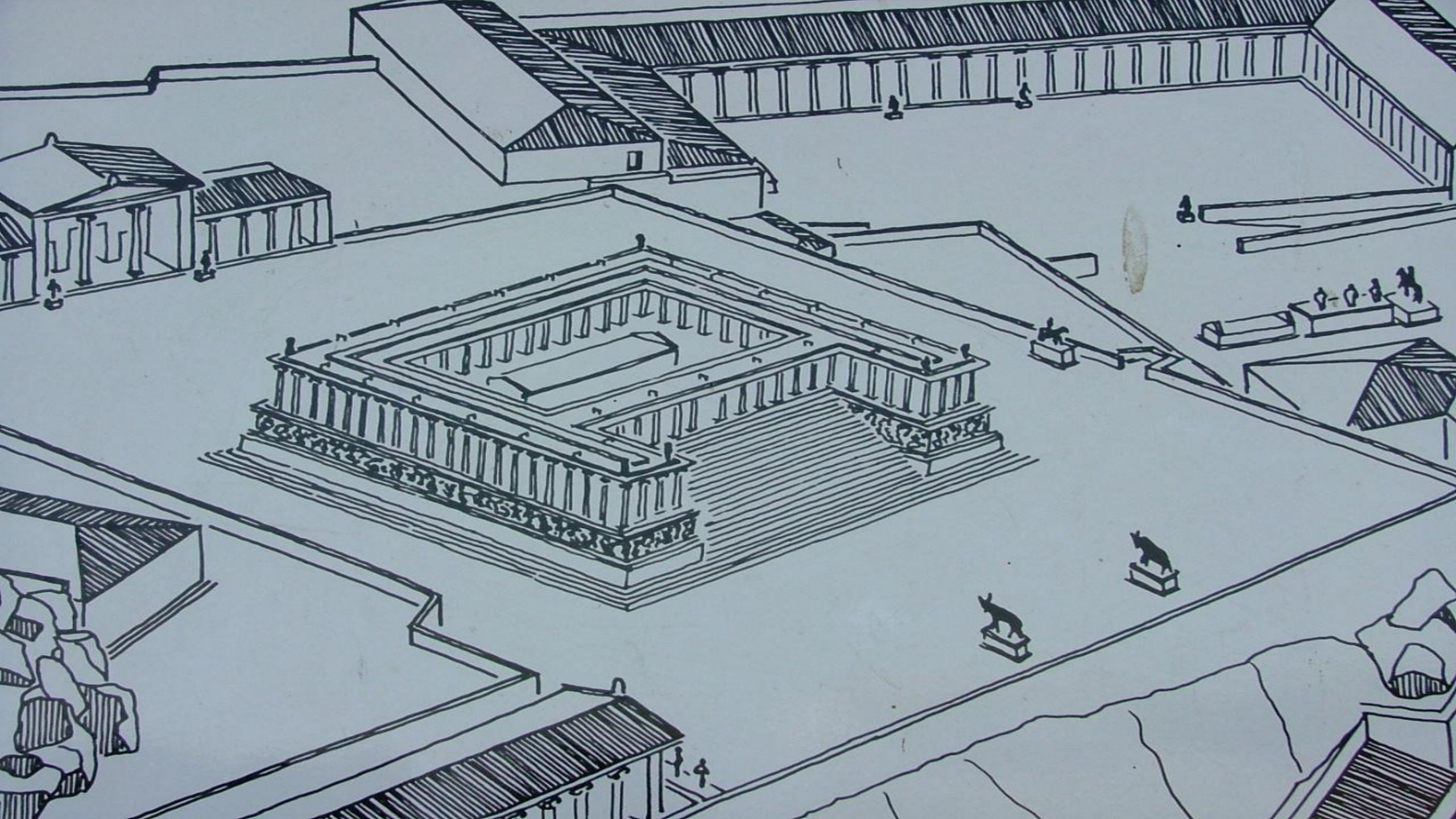
- The majority of the temple has been relocated to the German museum in Berlin but the altar remains.
- It is the largest altar in antiquity dating back to 170BC.
- Considered by scholars to be the “throne of Satan” mentioned in Revelation 2:13















Pergamum Library



- The library of Pergamum is located right next to where the Temple of Athena used to be
- It was established by Eumenes II (197-160 BC)
- The word “Parchment” derives its name from Pergamum.
- It is reported to have contained around *200,000* scrolls. Making it the second largest library at the time after the library of Alexandria





Temple of Trajan

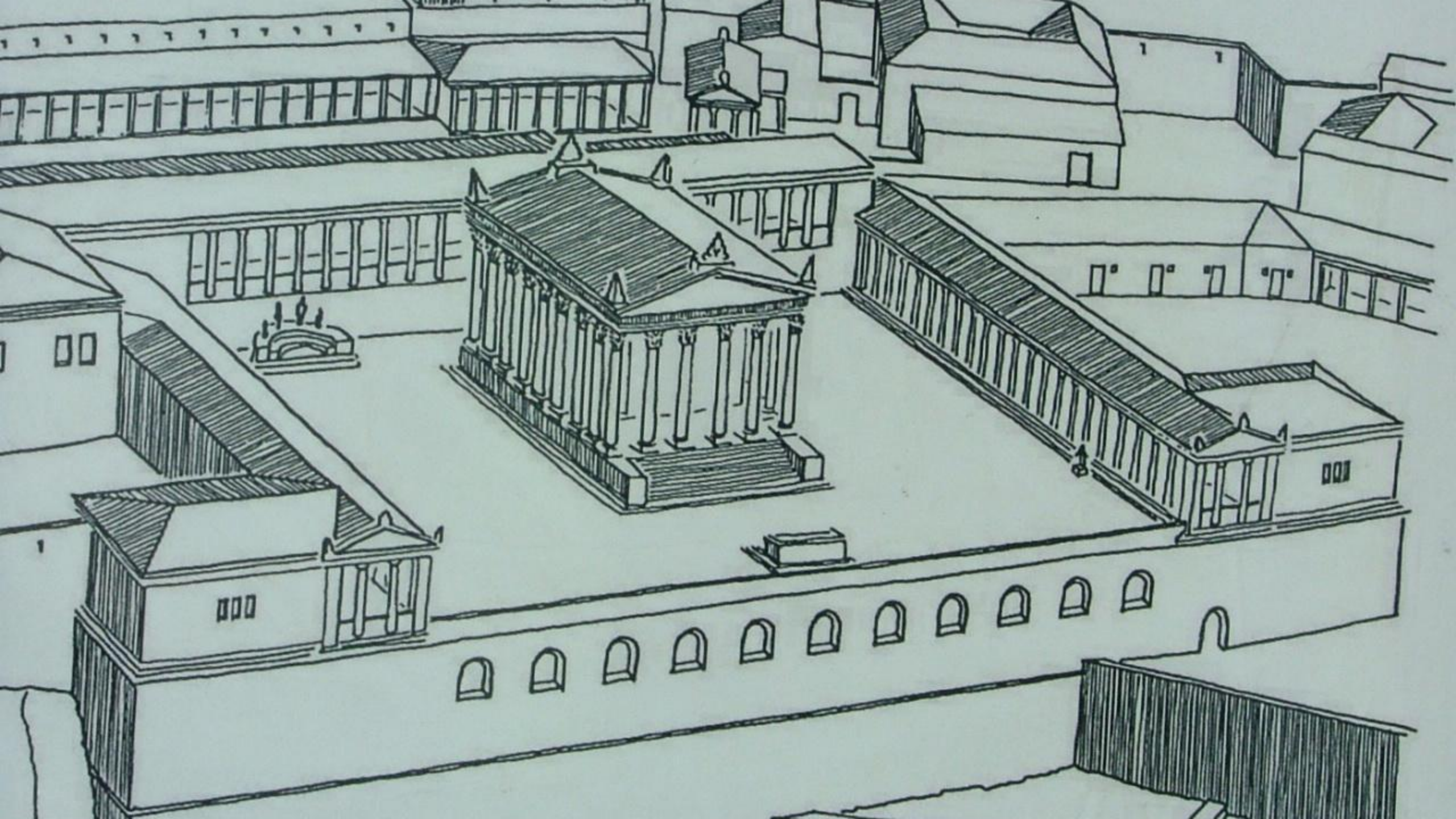
- It is the only Roman structure in the upper city
- The temple was initially constructed by the emperor Hadrian in honor of his predecessor
- First temple in Asia dedicated to the emperor and was authorized by Augustus in 29 BC
- It was one of the many Temples in the ancient worlds that was completely made out of marble



















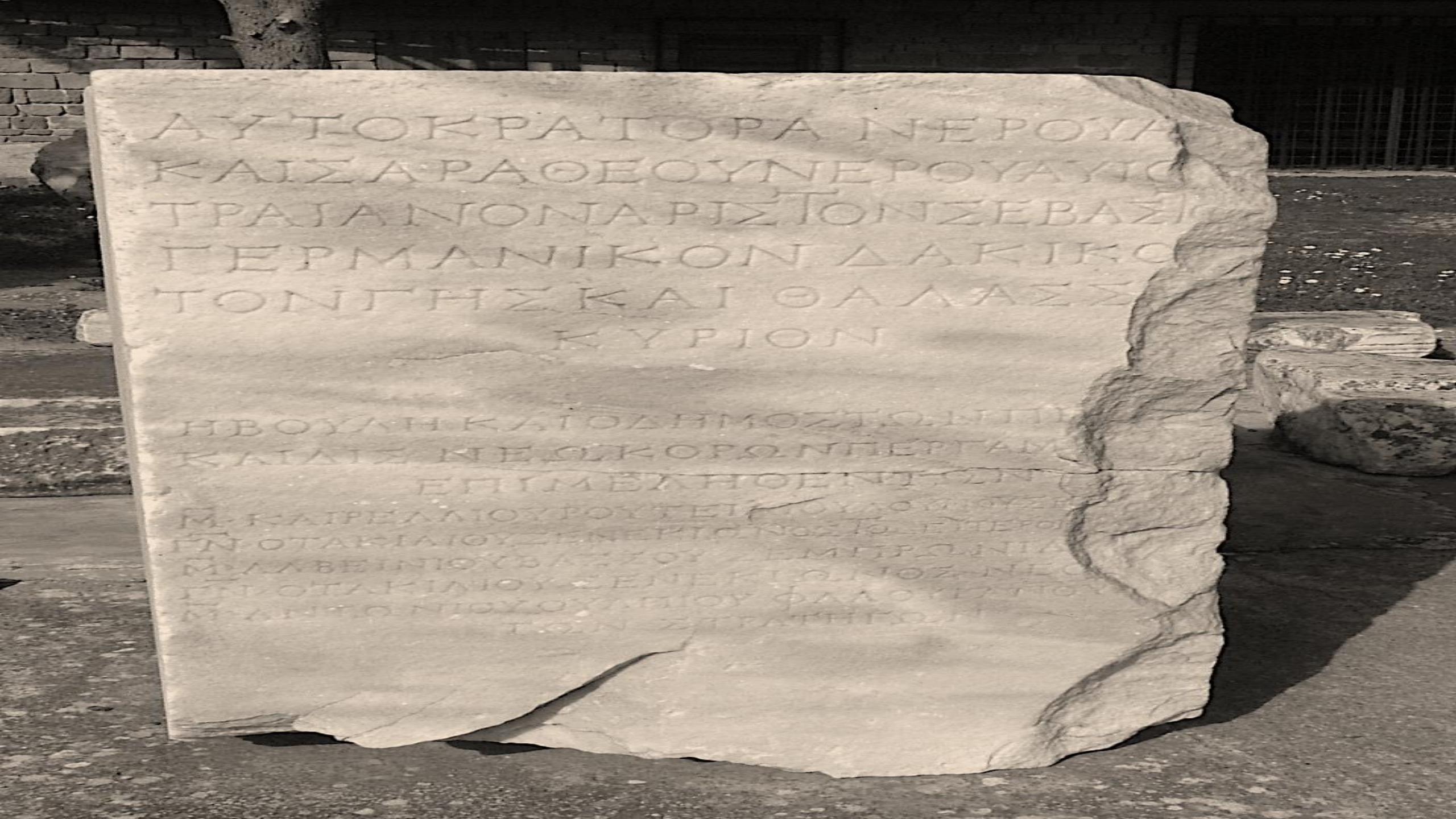











ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΑ ΝΕΡΟΥΑ
ΚΑΙΣΑΡΑΘΕΟΥΝΕΡΟΥΑΥΙΟ
ΤΡΑΙΑΝΟΝΑΡΙΣΤΟΝΣΕΒΑΣ
ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙΚΟΝΔΑΚΙΚΟ
ΤΟΝΓΗΣΚΑΙΘΑΛΑΣΣ
ΚΥΡΙΟΝ

Theater

- The theater is said to have been able to contain upwards of 10,000 people.
- It is considered to be the steepest theater of the ancient world.
- Construction began in 3C BC, rebuilt by Eumenes II and later again by the Romans.







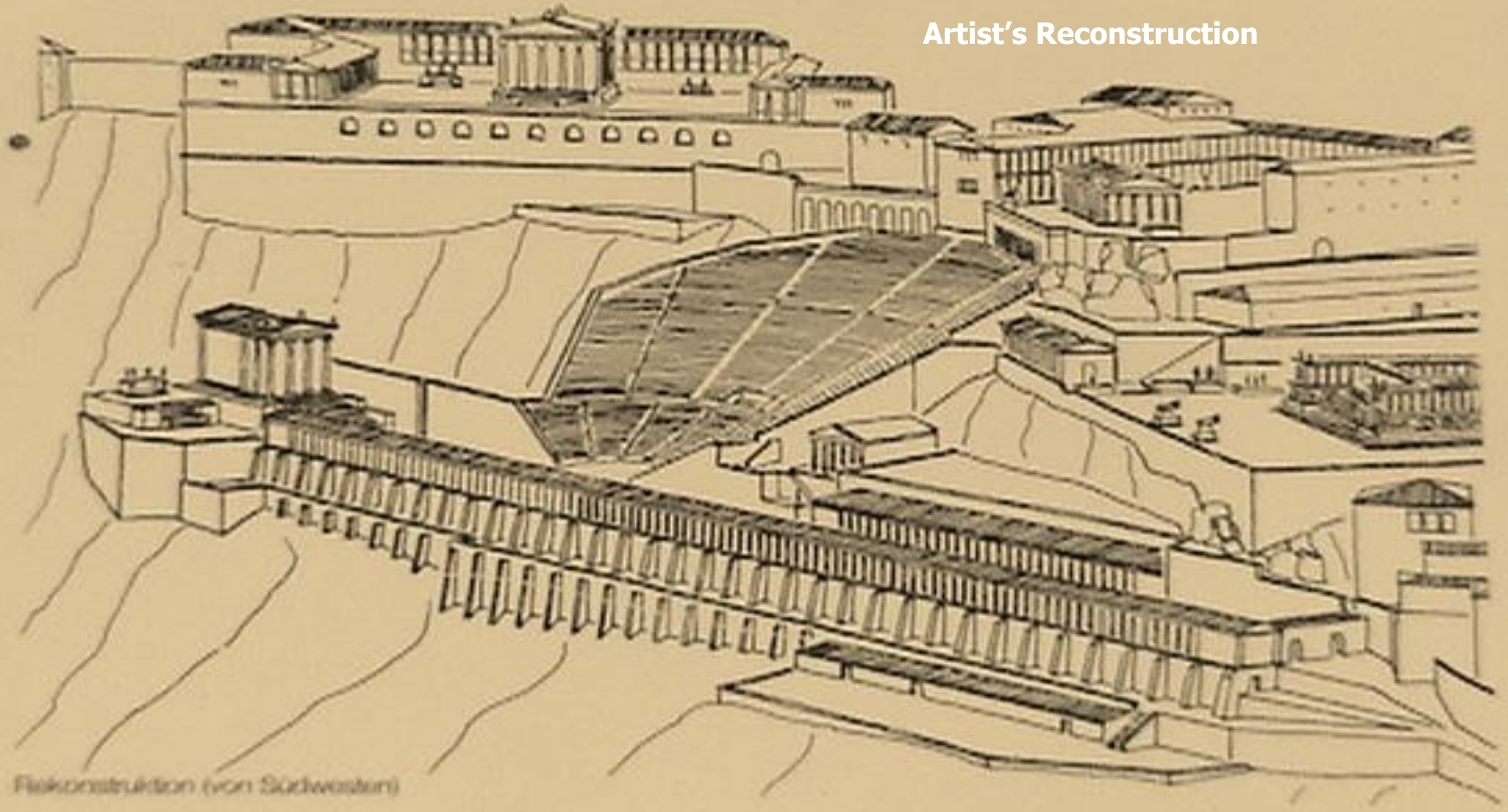








Artist's Reconstruction



The Asklepieion



Entryway into the Asclepium

- Found at the base of the Acropolis; named after the Greek god of healing- Asclepius.

- Primary place people came who were ill because the water that flowed through the city was thought to be useful in the healing of the infirm

gtum

ordu. Kuzey batıda 3.500 kişilik
bşede imparatorluk kültü
r. Meydanın





Healing Tunnel

- Build around naturally and continuously running water lines
- At least 20° cooler than the outside temperature
- Holes were placed every 9 or 10 feet so that people could talk to those who were sick inside as a kind of psychotherapy treatment



















Message to Pergamum (2:12-17)

“Hold to the truth”

- Address wielder of the sharp sword
- Oida A: true to Jesus’ name
- Oida B: tolerance of falsehood
- Admonition: repent
- Warning: quickly fights them
- Vindication: will receive manna and a white stone

The Church at Thyatira

- A minor town, 20 miles southeast of Pergamum. It was a military outpost until it came under Roman rule in 133 B.C. Today it is known as Akhisar.

- Lydia, a seller of purple (Acts 16:14) was a native of Thyatira.

- It was famous for its successful trade guilds of coppersmiths, fabric weavers and dyers (highly colored fabric was rare, desirable, and expensive. Purple dye was derived from the murex shellfish; a red dye came from certain roots).

- Participation in local trade guilds was important for business success in the town. This association probably included eating meals together at pagan temples and other unbridled excess.

AKHISAR (THYATERIA)
TEPE MEZARLIĞI RUIN
II-VI CENTURY BAZILIKA

The ruins which was revealed as a result of the excavations,done in Akhisar (Thyateira) ancient town in 1974-1975 ; it was seen in many west and South west Anatolian ancient cities in Roman Empire Period,a street that surrounded with the pillars on both sides of it and a colossal construction with the abscissa and various functional size stretching in the west side of the street.

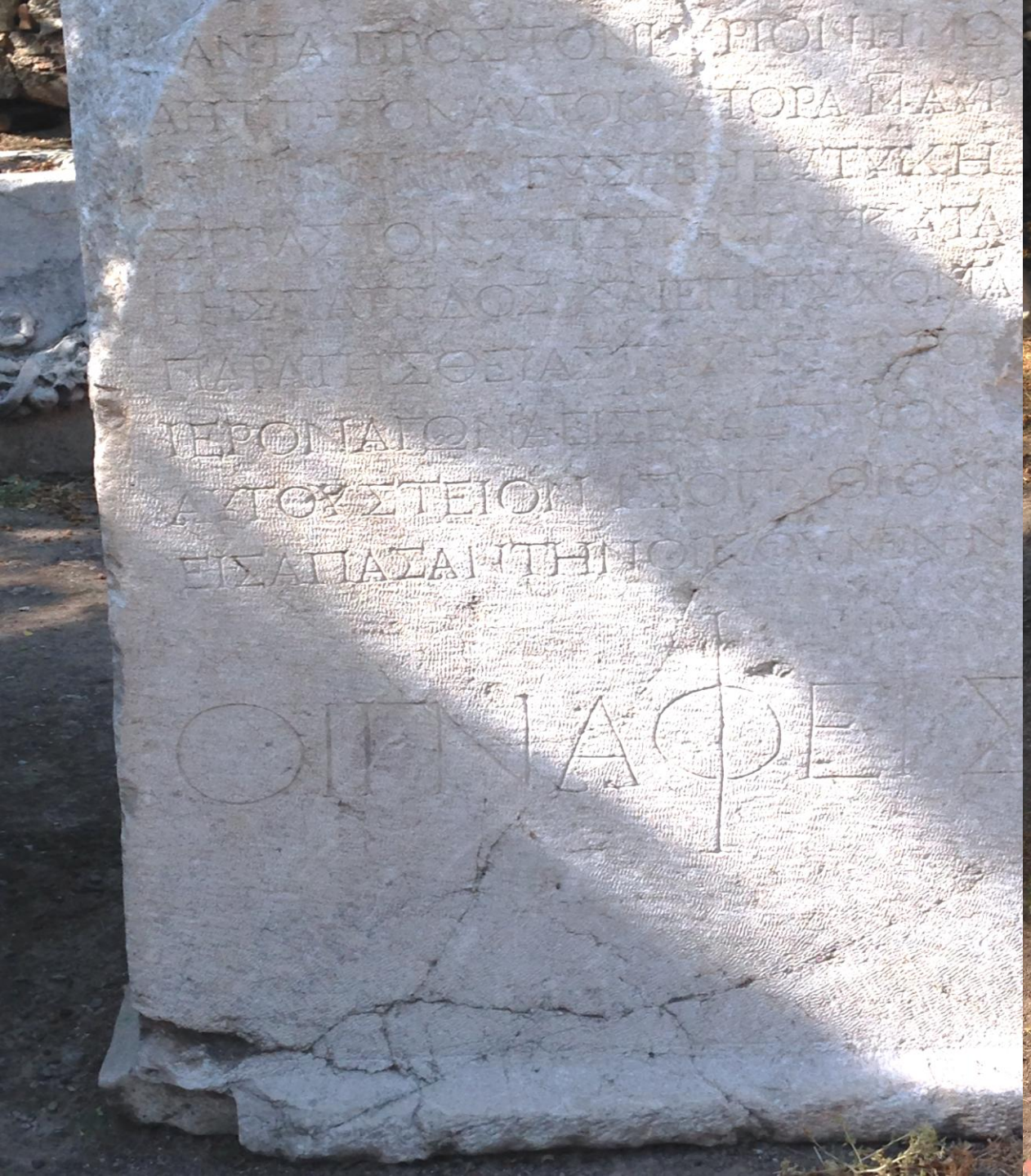
The North-South location and going in to the Acropolice of the ancient town,the road has got Ion and Korint style heads and it is told in the ancient sources that the road which has a hundred pillars decorated with 25 eros,From the road which is known as Hekatonstyle to the abscissa construction; and the enterance is between the double pillars and the two postament.The abscissa colossal construction which was done in the late Roman Age with plaster and brick is constructed with the central navé and related places

The construction which is thought as a church according to the national and foreign aut horities is mostly like Basilica+Agora


KA
002








ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΝ
ΜΟΝΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΡΩΤΟΝ
ΘΙΛΑΝΑΡΙΟΙ
ΕΠΙΜΕΛΗΣΑΜΕΝΟΥ ΑΥΡΗΛΙΟΥ
ΑΝΟΥΑΜΜΙΑΝΟΥ

Message to Thyatira (2:18-29)

“Be morally pure”

- Address: blazing eyes and burnished feet
- Oida A: increasing in good works
- Oida B: tolerance for immorality
- Admonition: hold fast to purity
- Warning: cast the prophetess upon a bed of suffering
- Vindication: will rule nations and receive a star

The Church at Sardis

- 30 to 40 miles southeast of Thyatira. Was one of the most ancient and glorious cities. It lay at the foot of Mt. Tmolus (1,500 ft). The acropolis was a natural citadel. It’s ancient wealth under King Croesus is legendary.

- Sardis fell to the Persians un Cyrus in 546 B.C., Alexander the Great captured it as well. Antiochus III also conquered this city.

- In the first century it had a population of 120,000. But in A.D. 17 was devastated by an earthquake.

- Modern day town of Sart in Turkey.









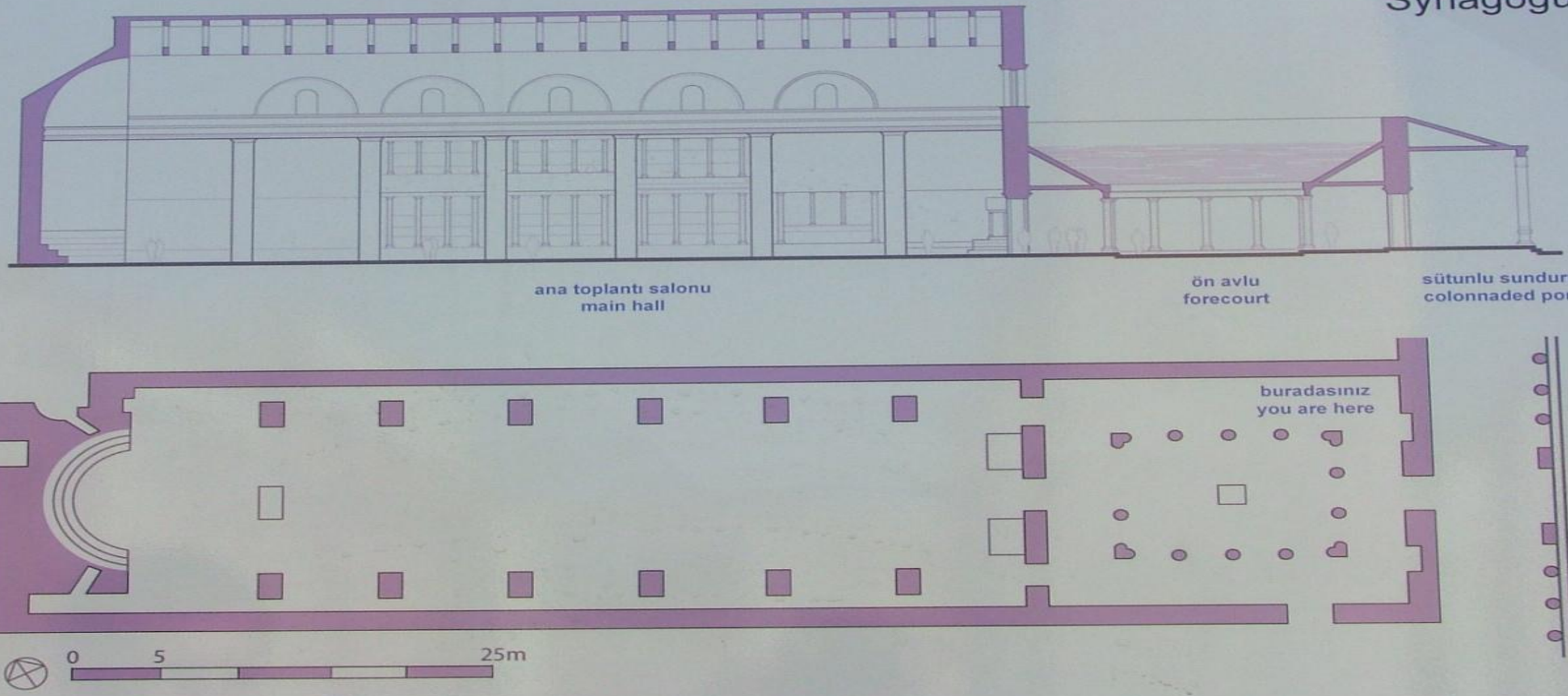







SART HAVRASI
SYNAGOGUE OF SARDIS

Havra (Sinagog
Synagogue



Bu abidevi havra, Geç Roma döneminde, Musevi toplumunun dini merkezi olarak kullanılmaktaydı. 1962 yılında ortaya çıkarılan bina ve süslemeler kısmen restore edilmiştir.

This monumental synagogue was the center of Jewish religious life at Sardis during the Late Roman period. Discovered in 1962, the building and its decorations have been partly restored.



































ΛΙΜΕΝΟΣ



Message to Sardis (3:1-6)

“Return to spiritual life”

- Address: holds the seven spirits and the seven stars
- Oida A: none
- Oida B: spiritually dead
- Admonition: wake up
- Warning: come against them
- Vindication: will receive white clothes and a name

The Church at Philadelphia

- “The City of Brotherly Love”. Was foundined by Eumenes II in the 2d century B.C. and his brother Attalus II was very loyal and devoted to him.
- 30 miles inland from Sardis on a fertile plateau (volcanic soil). Famous for its vineyards. Was a major city for commerce and nicknamed as the “gateway to the east.”
- Leveled by the A.D. 17 earthquake.
- Modern day Alashehir in Turkey


PHILADELPHEIA
St. JEAN CHURCH
(CA: A.D: 600)
ST. JEAN KİLİSESİ





Message to Philadelphia (3:7-13)

“Be sure of the kingdom”

- Address: holds the key of David
- Oida A: kept Christ’s name patiently
- Oida B: none
- Admonition: hold on
- Warning: none
- Vindication: will be an inscribed column in God’s temple



The Church at Laodicea

- 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia and last stop on the postal route (Ephesus was 100 miles due west).

- Laodicea was one of three cities in the Lycus River valley: Colossae (with it's famous cold springs) and Hierapolis (with it's hot springs). No fresh water supply in Laodicea. It had to pipe it's water in from Colossae and Hierapolis.

- Laodicea was a very wealthy and successful city. It was a banking center. Had a textile industry famous for it's black wool. They also produced a expensive medical eye salve.

- Was devastated by an earthquake in A.D. 60. Nero offered financial help, but the city declined because they had plenty of money.























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Buradasınız
You Are Here







Water Distribution Terminal I (Plan Nr. 3):

Located to the east of the stadium and the South Baths complex, the Water Distribution Terminal I (castellum aquae) lies at an altitude of 278m. above the sea level. Built with travertine blocks, the structure sits on a base of approximately 6 x 10m. and extends in the north–south direction. Its preserved height is about 7m. The water came to this terminal from the Başpınar spring in Denizli via the twin travertine pipeline on the west slopes of Eskihisar village on the south. The distribution tank is located on top of the terminal and this tank has baked clay pipes for distributing the water, of various diameters and at various heights from the bottom, on the north, east and south sides. Some of these pipes are filled with sinter (lime) and this indicates that most were replaced with new ones in time. To the west of the terminal is a small fountain next to the vaulted passageway.







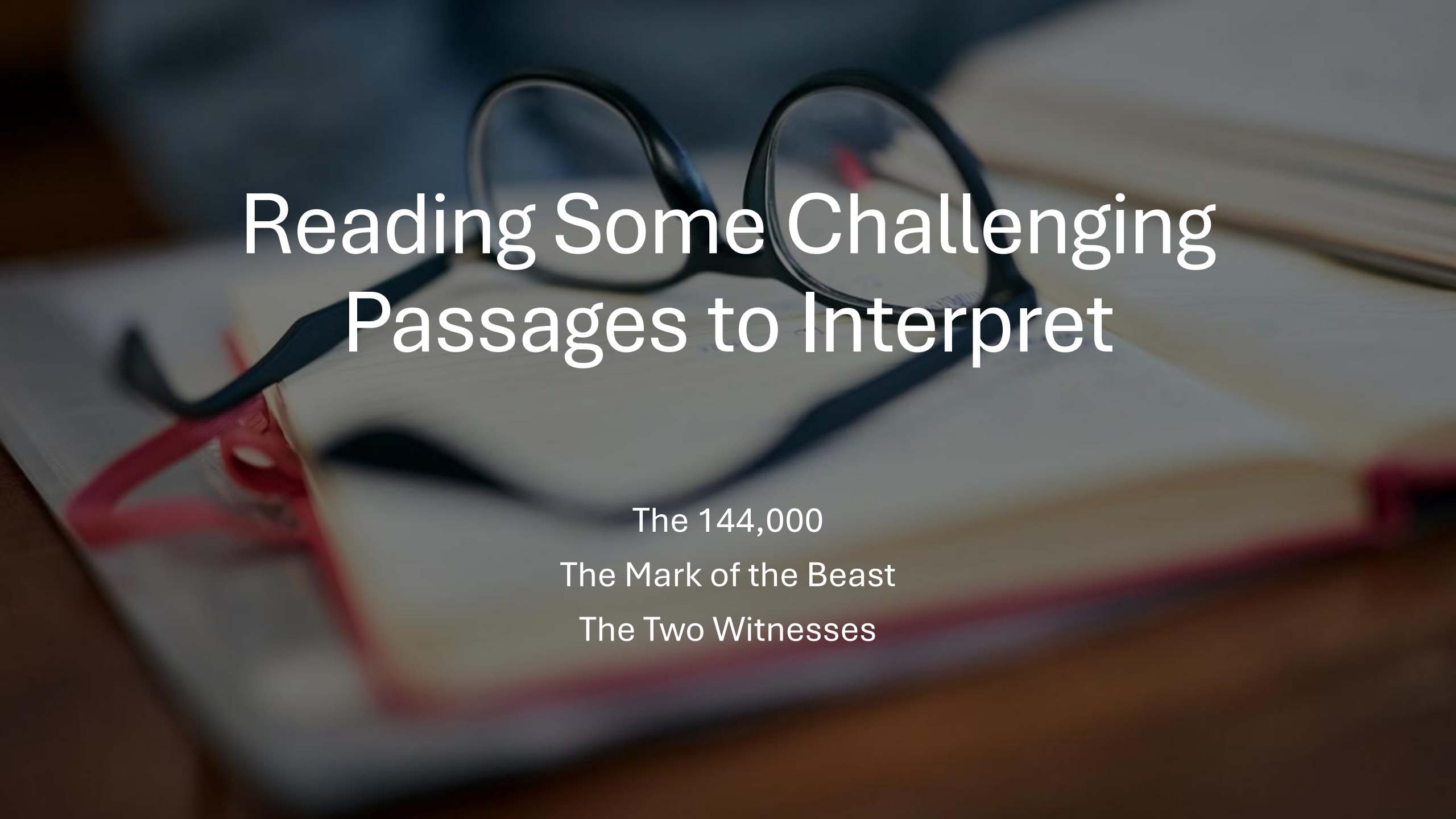




Message to Laodicea (3:14-22)

"Repent of self sufficiency"

- Address: true witness and ruler of creation
- Oida A: none
- Oida B: spiritual ineffectiveness and poverty
- Admonition: receive Christ's spiritual provision and person
- Warning: Christ rebukes those he loves
- Vindication: will sit with Christ on his throne



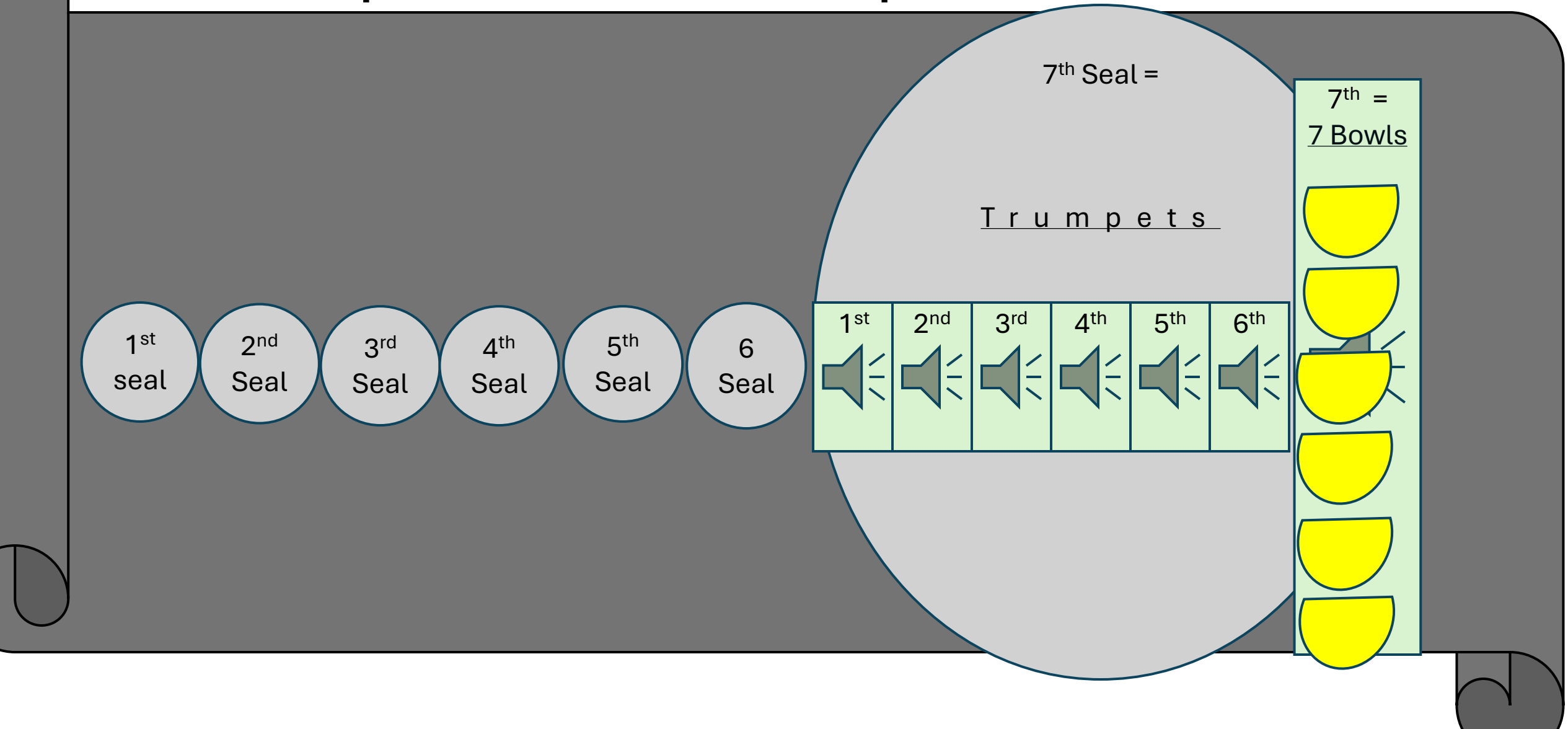
Reading Some Challenging Passages to Interpret

The 144,000

The Mark of the Beast

The Two Witnesses

The Telescopic View of the Septets

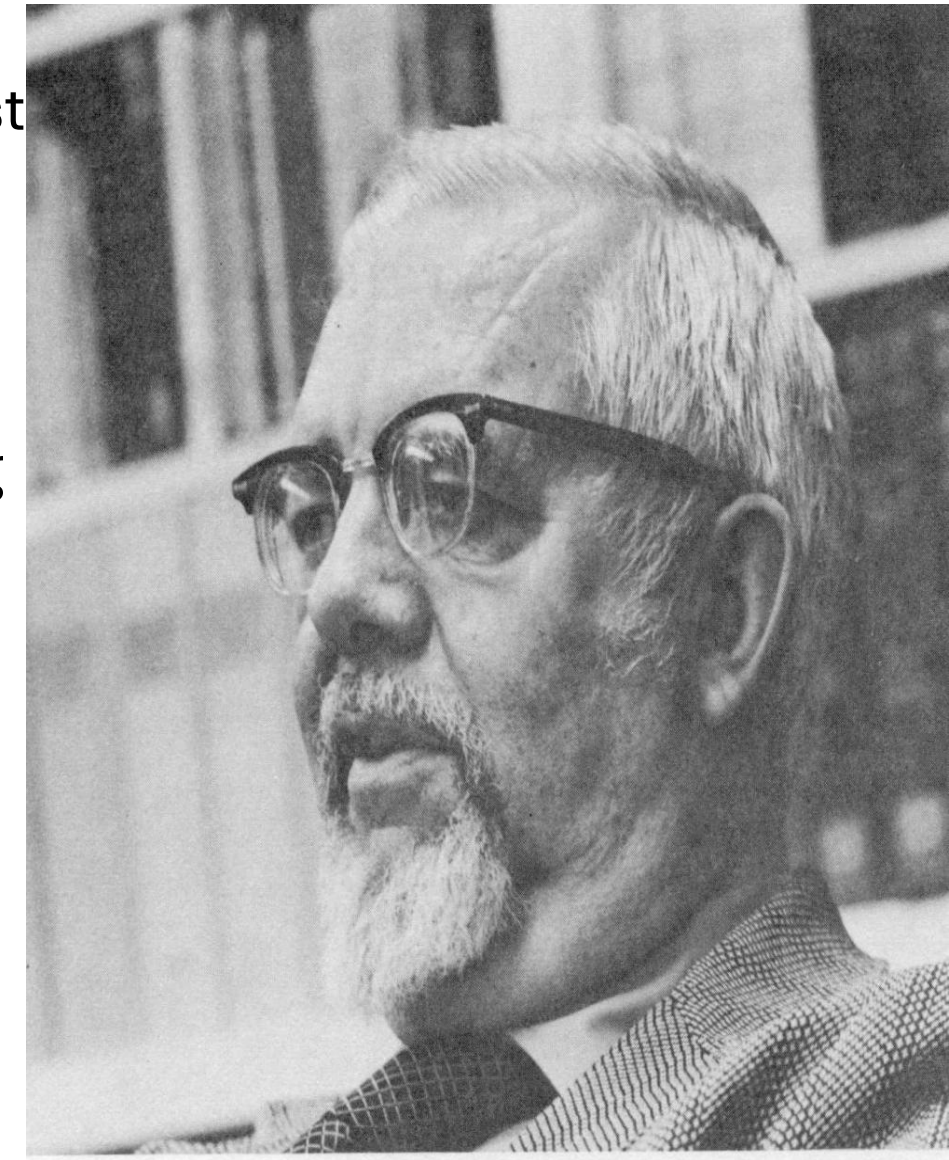


Eschatology and the Septets

- George Ladd: “We may conclude that a moderate futurist interpretation understands the seven letters to be addressed to seven historical churches that are representative of the entire church.

- The seals represent the forces of in history, however long it lasts, by which God works out his redemptive and judicial purposes in history leading up to the end.

- The events beginning with chapter 7 lie in the future and will attend to the final disposition of the divine will for human history.” (NT Theology, 675)



GEORGE ELDON LADD

Eschatology and the Septets

- The **seals** correspond to the inauguration of the *eschaton* initiated shortly after Christ's ascension to his throne. The seals represent the continuous nature of the "already/not yet" tensions characteristic of the intervening time between "this age" and the consummation of the "age to come."

- The **trumpets** correspond to the period known as the Great Tribulation. Hence, prior to the first trumpet an interlude occurs pertaining to the "sealing" of God's people to protect them from the judgments inflicted on the earth's inhabitants during this period (cf. Rev 7:1–3).

- The **bowls**, then, represent the outpouring of God's wrath upon the nations in full judgment. The bowl judgments, most likely, occur in rapid-fire succession as indicated by the third vision (Rev 17:1–21:8).

- In other words, the seals introduce the coming wrath of God and the Lamb while the trumpets announce his impending wrath, but the bowls actually constitutes the execution of his wrathful judgment.

The Meaning of the Interludes for the People of God

- God’s People are Sealed for Protection from His Judgments (Rev 7:1-17)

- God’s People as Prophetic Witnesses (Rev 10:1–11:13)

- God’s People engaged in Holy War (Rev 12:1–15:8)

The Placement of the First Interlude

- Prior to the tribulation, the first of several interludes interwoven between the series of septets assures the believers of their protection from divine judgment and ultimate salvation (7:1–17).

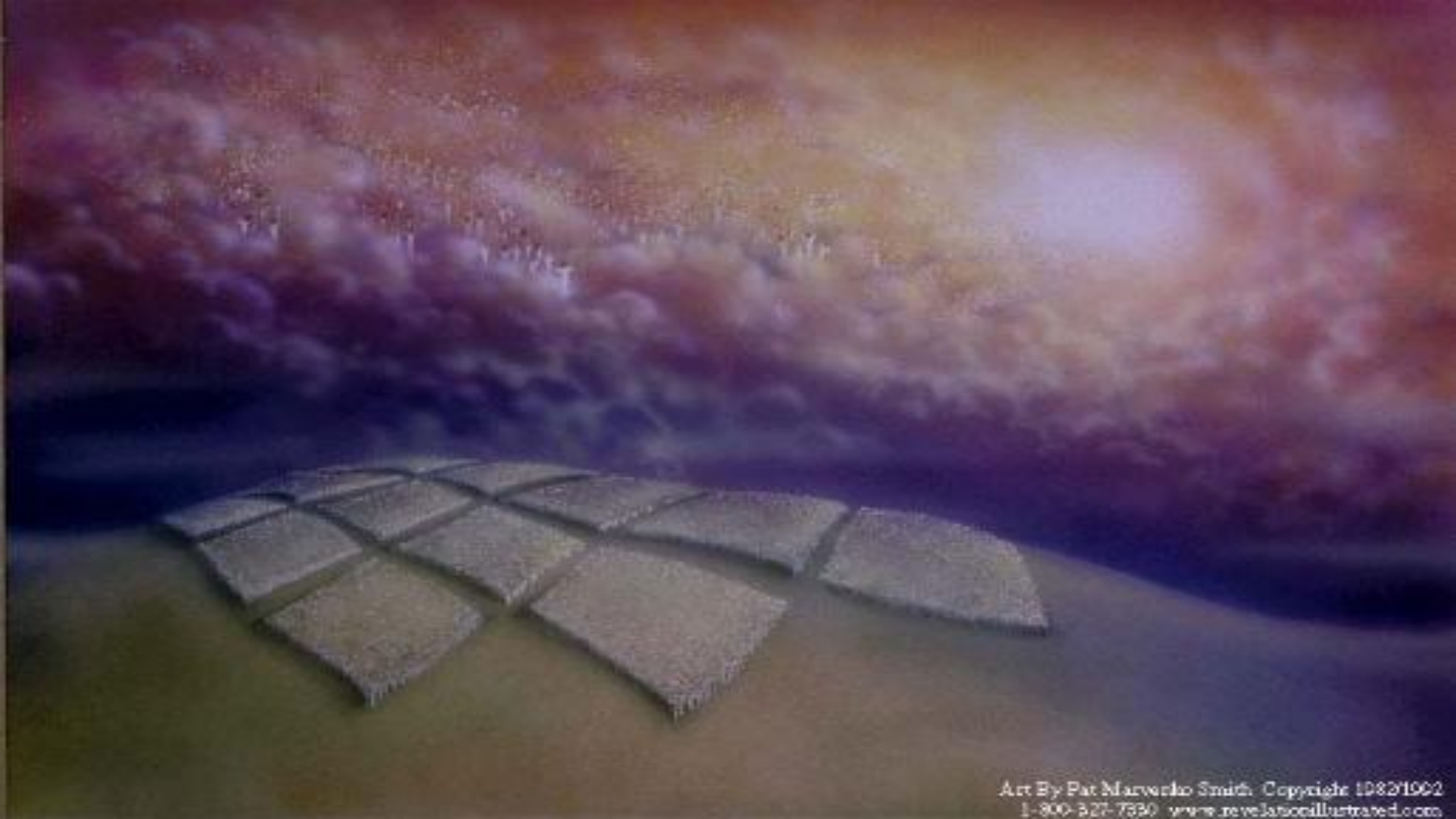
- John placed the interlude between the breaking of the sixth and seventh seals (see 6:12; 8:1).

The Placement of the First Interlude

- This is the first of several interludes interwoven between the series of septets.

- The sixth seal unleashes devastating catastrophes causing the earth's inhabitants to scurry about as they flee into caves praying for death. In their terror they cry out concerning the wrath of God and the Lamb asking, "Who can stand?"

- The succeeding narrative (7:1–17) answers this question by depicting the protective sealing and salvation of God's people.


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The Placement of the First Interlude

- The interlude is divided into two separate but related segments (7:1–8,9–17).

- The first unit pertains to the sealing of the 144,000 for protection prior to the tribulation (see 7:1,14; see **Ezek 9:4–6**).


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Sealing as a Sign of Divine Protection

- The first segment, Rev 7:1–8, pertains to the sealing of the 144,000 for protection prior to the Tribulation (cf. Rev 7:1, 14).

- The idea of their protection from God's punitive judgment (i.e., the trumpets) is supported by three observations.

  - First, four angels hold back the winds as another angel prevents the them from harming the earth until the servants of God have been sealed.

    - Winds, in the OT, often functioned as agents of divine judgment (Ps 18:10; 104:3–4; Isa 40:7, 24; Jer 23:19; Ezek 5:12; cf. *1 Enoch* 76:1–14).

    - The punitive nature of this divine judgment is bolstered by the fact that these four angels had been giving authority to harm the earth and sea.

Sealing as a Sign of Divine Protection

- Second, the concept of sealing the foreheads of the servants of God also connotes divine protection.
  - As with the scroll, the primary purpose of sealing something is to protect the contents by demonstrating proper ownership.
  - The parallels between this passage and **Ezekiel 9:4–6** further support the idea of marking the heads of the faithful to protect them from divine punitive judgments.

Sealing as a Sign of Divine Protection

- Finally, in **Rev 9:4**, the fifth trumpet unleashes a plague of locust that utterly torments the nations, but they are specifically instructed not to harm those with the seal of God on their foreheads.

  - Interestingly, God protects his people from the plagues of the Tribulation in a similar manner to the way he protected his people in Goshen during the Exodus plagues (Cf. **Exod 8:22–23; 9:6, 26; 11:7**).

  - The purpose was not merely to protect his people, but also to make a distinction between them and the Egyptians.

Interpretive Questions

- How can we account the order and selection of the twelve tribes?
- Is the number 144,000 literal or symbolic?
- What is the relationship between the 144,000 and the numberless multitude?

The Numberless International Multitude

- The second segment of the interlude (Rev 7:9–17) focuses on the salvation of God's people from every nation, tribe, people, and language.

- While John heard the number 144,000 (7:4), what he saw was an international multitude of redeemed Christians who have come out of the Great Tribulation (7:9).



The Numberless International Multitude

- That this group is standing before God's throne answers the question of who can stand during the day of wrath asked in 6:17.

- They are "from every nation, tribe, people and language" (Rev 7:9; see also 5:9)

- John uses this phrase and its variations to denote the universals composition of the redeemed from all nations

The Numberless International Multitude

- An elder, one of the members of the divine council, not only informs John concerning the identification of the multitude he also declares the certainty of their vindication in salvation (Rev 7:14–17).

- It also draws firm distinction between the people of God and the rest of humanity.


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The Relationship between the 144,000 and the Numberless Multitude

- While John hears the number, what he sees comprises an international multitude of redeemed Christians who have come out of the Great Tribulation.

- This interlude offers two perspectives regarding the same group of people (i.e., the 144,000 and the multitude).

The Relationship between the 144,000 and the Numberless Multitude

- The 144,000 represent the entire new covenant community of God's people about to enter the Tribulation, whereas the international multitude standing before the throne represents the entire congregation of the redeemed coming out of the Tribulation.

- John essentially provides a before and after snapshot of the church as an assurance that God capably protects and saves his people during those days of distress.

144,000 as the Numberless Multitude

- The identification of the redeemed multitude with the 144,000 sealed servants of God as representing the church entering the Great Tribulation rests on several exegetical and theological arguments.

- Although the 144,000 are composed of 12,000 from 12 tribes of Israel, this group most likely represents the church rather than ethnic Israelites.

144,000 as the Numberless Multitude

- **First**, they are explicitly called servants of God (*tous doulous tou theou*), which everywhere else in the Apocalypse refers to Christians (both Jewish and Gentile).

  - The term *doulos* occurs a total of fourteen times (**Rev 1:1; 2:20**; *6:15*; **7:3**; **10:7; 11:18**; *13:16*; *15:3*; **19:2, 5,** *18;* **22:3, 6**).

  - Many of the uses of servants may specifically refer to prophets, but it does also denote Christians in general.

- **Second**, the list of tribes provided (Rev 7:5–8) is unlike any other known list of tribes in the OT.

  - The primary differences include:
    (1) Judah heads the list, rather than Reuben;
    (2) the combination of Joseph with Manasseh, rather than Ephraim;
    (3) the omission of Dan; and
    (4) the inclusion of Levi has also been discussed as unusual.

  - This suggests that John intentionally altered the list because he wanted to present the church as the continuation of the true Israel.

- Richard Bauckham observes:

- “To the Lion *of the tribe of Judah* . . . corresponds a list of the sealed of the tribes of Israel, headed by those *of the tribe of Judah* . . .
- To the Lamb standing (5:6), who has ransomed people from every tribe, tongue, people and nation (5:9), corresponds the multitude from all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues, standing before the Lamb (7:9).

- The correspondences imply that the 144,000 are the Israelite army of the military Messiah of David, while the international multitude are the followers of the slaughtered Lamb.”

- **Thirdly**, in Rev 5:5–6, John hears about the Lion of Judah, but he sees the Lamb slain.

  - This indicates a pattern whereby the audition and vision refer to the same thing by using different images.

  - As such, a parallel exists in that John ***hears*** the number of 144,000, but he ***sees*** (an innumerable international multitude.

- **Finally**, the symbolic nature of 144,000 as indicative of completeness strongly favors not taking it too literally (cf. Rev 14:1–5; 21:16–17).

  - Certain numbers used in the Book of Revelation have certain meanings. For example, the numbers 3 equals divine perfection while, 7 means spiritual perfection. 6 is the number of man or imperfection, or the man of sin.
  - 1,000, a multiple of 10 X 10 X 10, is the number of divine completion.

  - 144,000 is a multiple of 12 (governmental perfection) X 12, X 1,000, Divine perfection. (See Numbers in Scripture by E.W. Bullinger.)

#	Meaning	Examples	Reference
1	Unity	God Apostolic unity Marriage The Church	Dt. 6:4 Jn. 17:11 Gen. 2:24 I Cor. 12:12
2	Division, Enmity	Double-minded	Jas. 1:8 Jas. 4:8
3	Completeness	Deliverance from death Resurrections	Mk. 10:34 Jonah 1:17 Rev 20:1-15
4	The Earth Or A foundation on which to build	First 4 commandments 4 gospels	Ex. 20 Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

Number	Meaning	Examples	Reference
5	God's grace	5 smooth stones The 5th empire	1 Sam. 17:40 Dan. 2:44
6	Man	Man created Man labors	Gen. 1:26-31 Dt. 5:13
7	Spiritual perfection and completion	7th day Sabbath 7 holy days 7 seals 7 trumpets 7 plagues 7 prophetic times	Gen. 2:2-3 Lev. 23 Rev. 8 Rev. 11:15 Rev. 16 Lev. 26:18
10	Laws for judgment	Commandments Tithing	Ex. 20; Dt. 5 Lev. 27:30
12	Perfection in government	12 tribes of Israel 12 apostles New Jerusalem	Gen. 49 Mt. 10 Rev. 21

The New Jerusalem Revelation 21	
12 gates leading to the city	v. 12
12 angels attending the gates	v. 12
12 pearls constituting the gates	v. 21
12 tribes written on the gates	v. 12
12 foundations	v. 14
12 apostles on the foundations	v. 14
12 precious stones	v. 19-21
length of city: 12 thousand furlongs	v. 16
breadth of city: 12 thousand furlongs	v. 16
height of city: 12 thousand furlongs	v. 16
height of city wall (144 cubits; 12 x 12)	v. 17
12 manner of fruit on the tree	Rev. 22:2

Rev 13:16-18
The Mark of the Beast











The Mark of the Beast

Rev 13:15-18

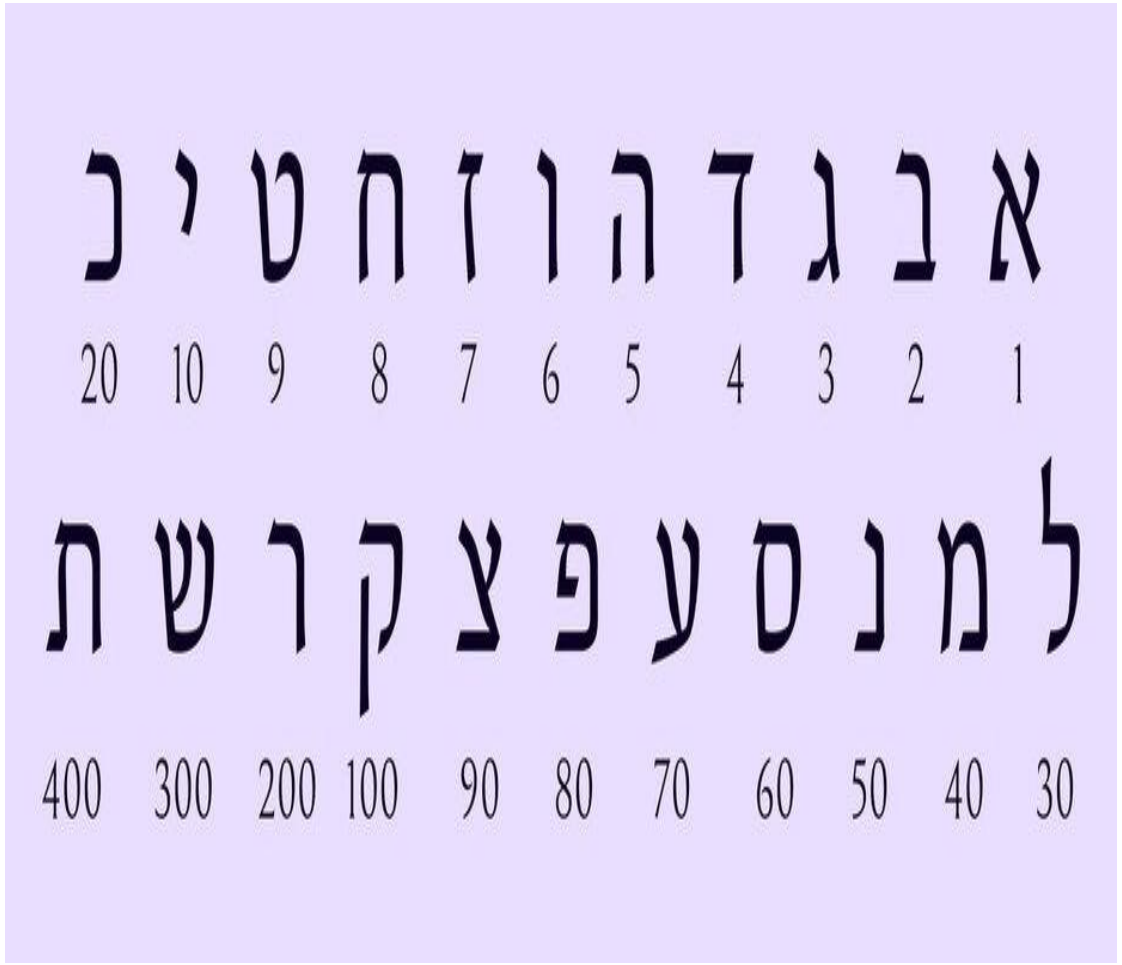
The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. [16] It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, **to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads,** [17] so that they could not buy or sell unless they had **the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.** [18] This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. **That number is 666.**

Gematria

- Jewish rabbis also accepted and employed gematria as a hermeneutical principle (rule 29 of the 32 *middot*).

- Epistle of Barnabas (9.8):
  - “And Abraham circumcised from his household eighteen men and three hundred.” What then was the knowledge that was given to him? Notice that he first mentions the eighteen, and after a pause the three hundred. The eighteen is I (= ten) and H (= 8)—you have Jesus [IH = the first two initials of *Iēsou*]—and because the cross was destined to have grace in the T [Greek symbol for 300] he says “and three hundred.”

- Sibylline oracles gives the numerical value of Jesus name as 888:
  - Then indeed the son of the great God will come, incarnate, likened to mortal men on earth, bearing four vowels, and the consonants in him are two. I will state explicitly the entire number for you. For eight units, and equal number of tens in addition to these, and eight hundred will reveal the name.



Ancient Greek numbers

Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta	Epsilon	Zeta	Eta
Α α	Β β	Γ γ	Δ δ	Ε ϵ	Ζ ζ	Η η
1	2	3	4	5	7	8

Theta	Iota	Kappa	Lamda	Mu	Nu	Xi
Θ θ	Ι ι	Κ κ	Λ λ	Μ μ	Ν ν	Ξ ξ
9	10	20	30	40	50	60

Omicron	Pi	Rho	Sigma	Tau	Upsilon	Phi
Ο ο	Π π	Ρ ρ	Σ σ ς	Τ τ	Υ υ	Φ ϕ
70	80	100	200	3	4	20

Chi	Psi	Omega	Digamma	Stigma	Koppa	Sampi
Χ χ	Ψ ψ	Ω ω	F	Ϛ	ϟ	ϡ
40	50	80	6	200	90	90

“I **love** the woman whose number is **545**.”



[Mylo]s (Μυλος) [545]

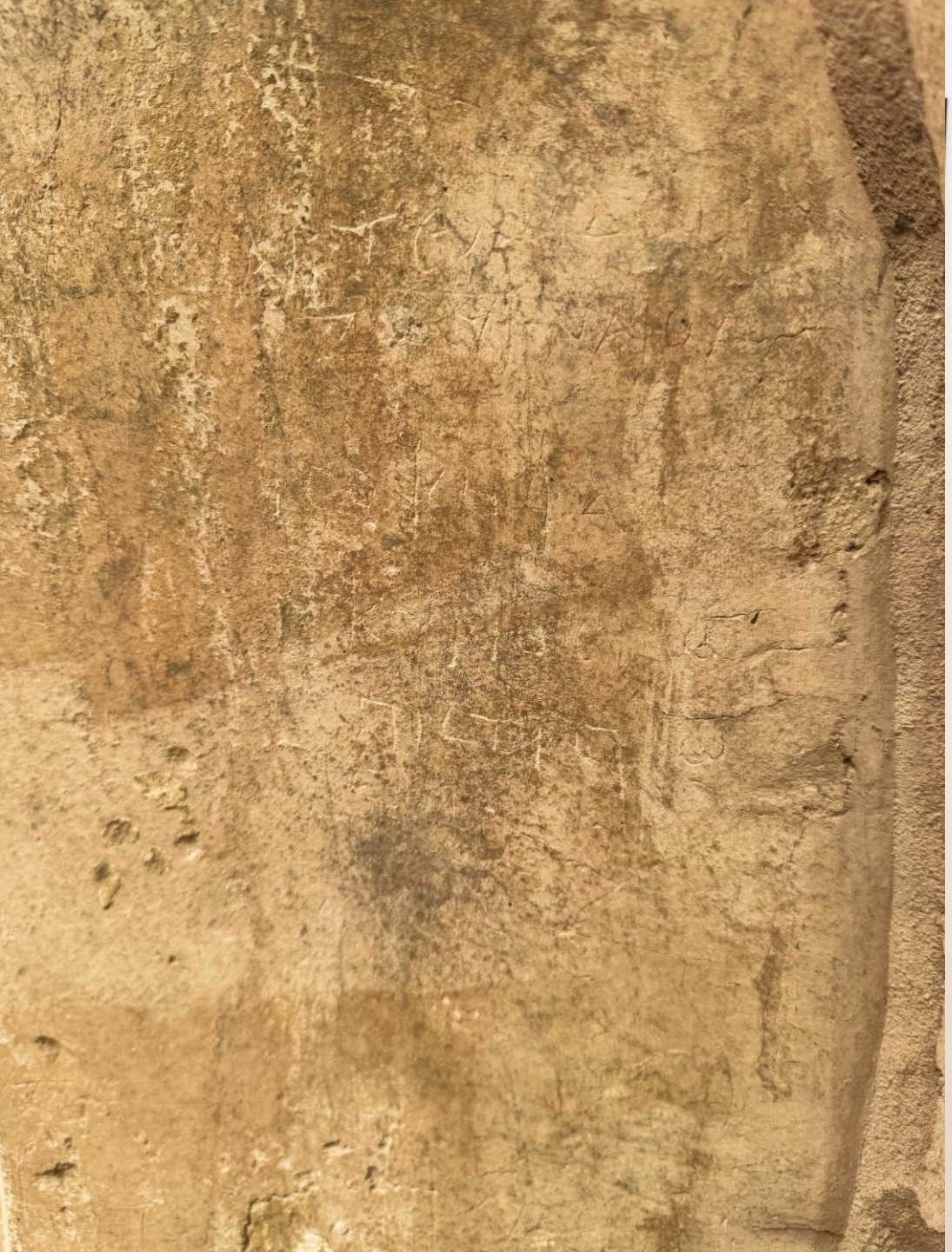
“Brain.”

Φιλω ης αριθμος φμε

(Philo) (is) (arithmos) (fme)

Love **her** **number** **545**

— Anon (**1880A**/+75), Pompeii graffiti



Ἀρτεμιδώρου
Ζμυρναίου

ἰσόψηφα
κύριος ω
πίστις ω

"of Artemidoros from Smyrna"

"Equal in value:

lord, 800;

faith, 800."

An isopsephisms:

κύριος (20 + 400 + 100 + 10 + 70 + 200) = ω (800)

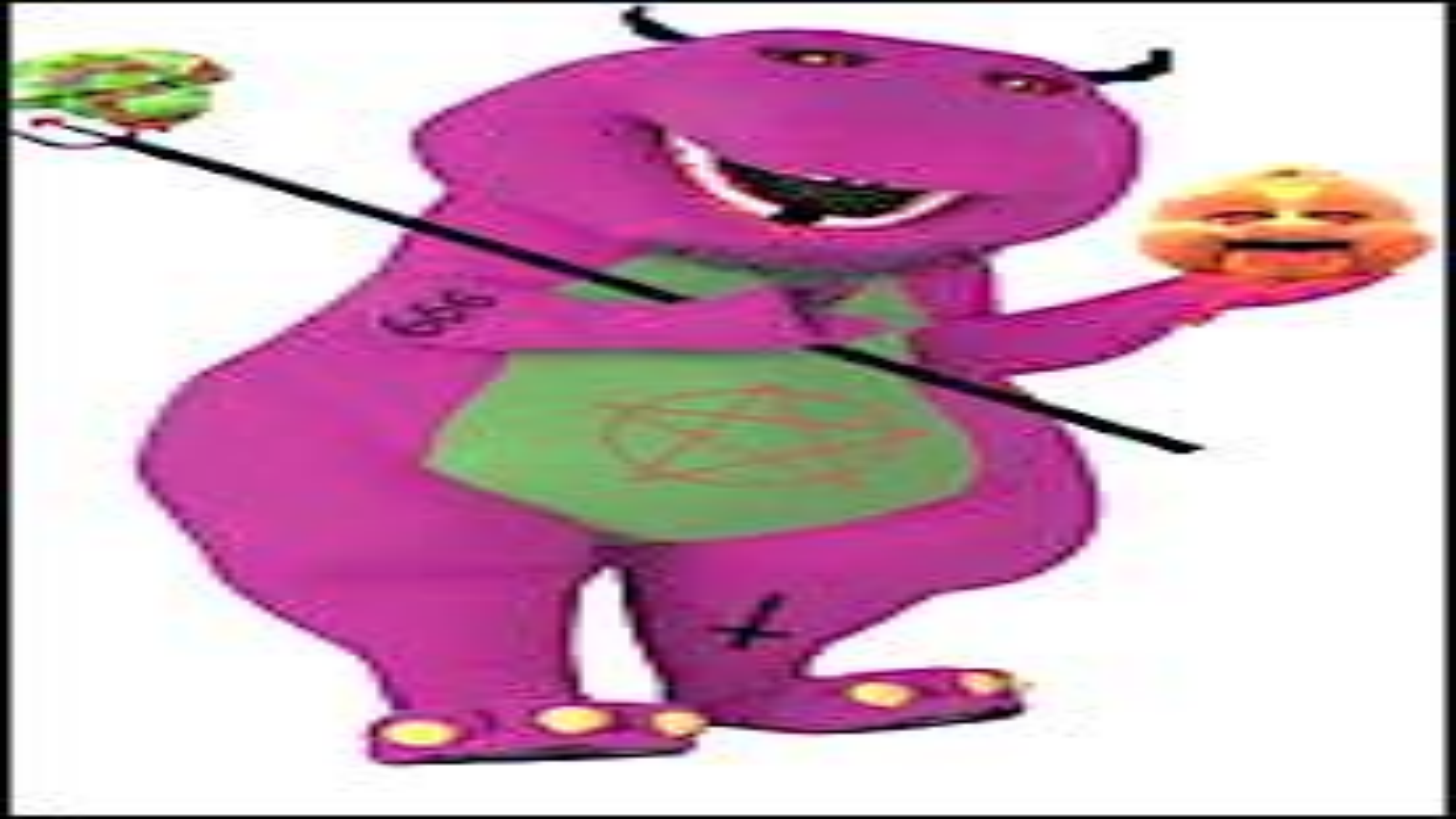
πίστις (80 + 10 + 200 + 300 + 10 + 200) = ω (800)

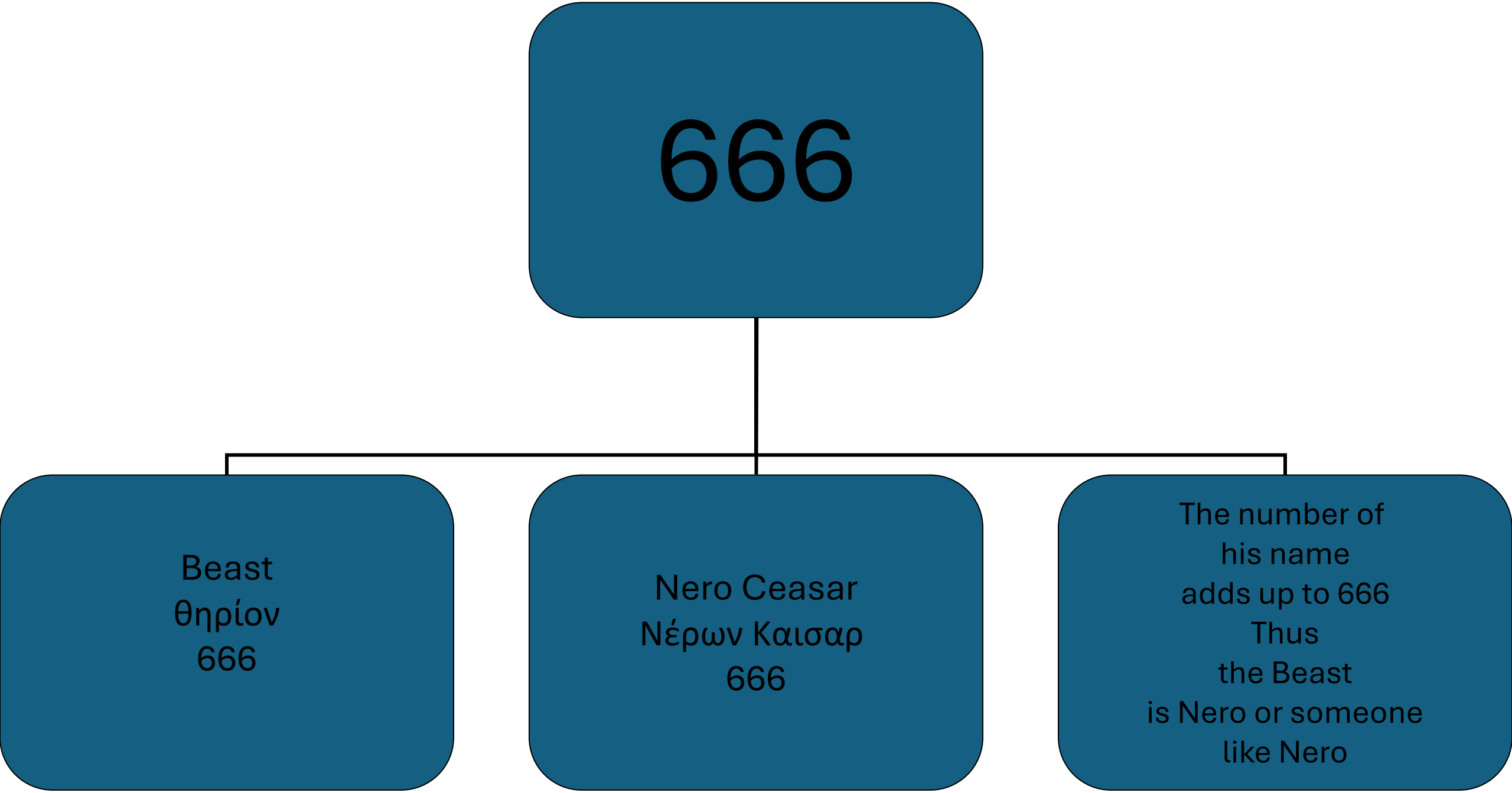
The collocation of "lord" and "faith" and the emphasis on their equal value is inescapably Christian.

Christians were fond of such equations, as with the value 284 common to θεός and ἅγιος, "God" and "holy."

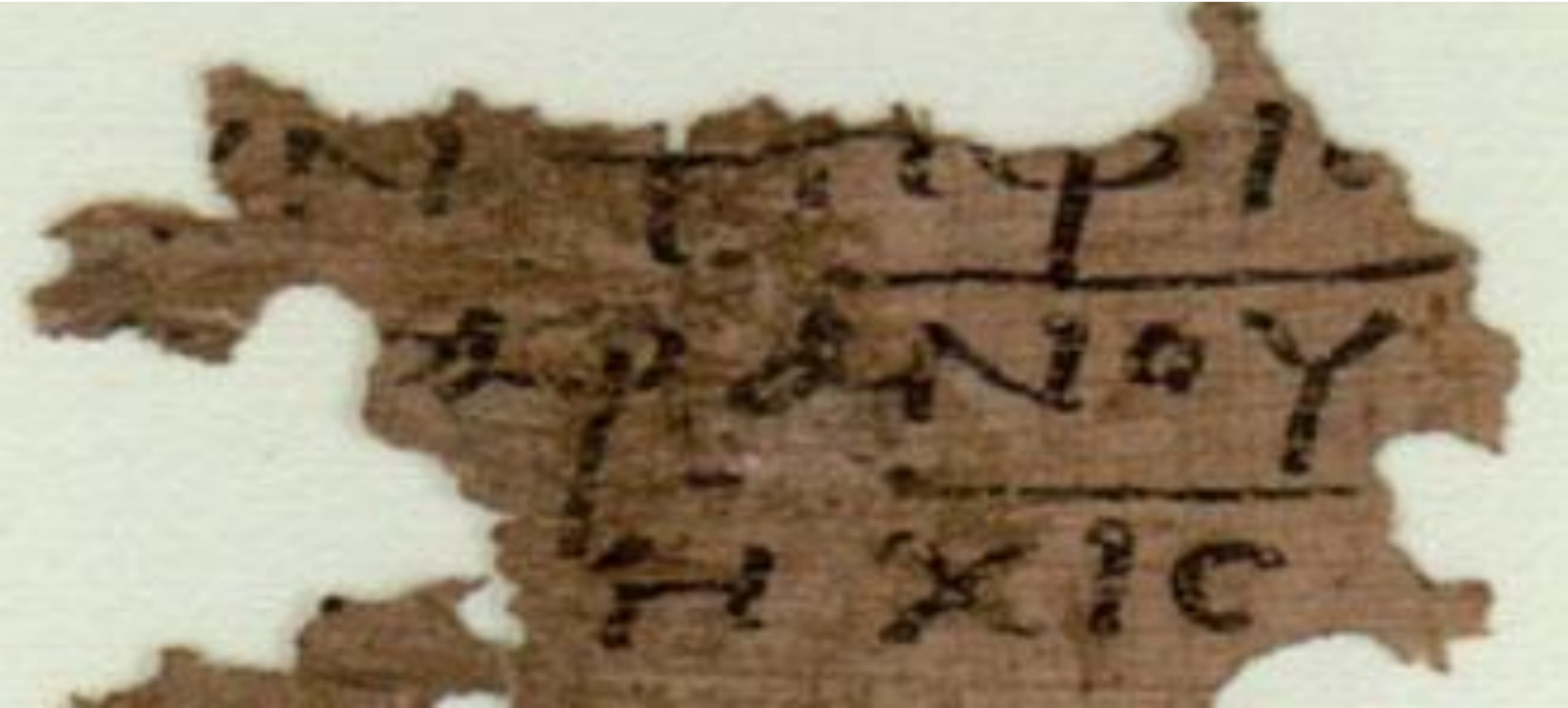
Abusing Gematria

- CUTE PURPLE DINOSAUR
- Latinize by changing the Us to Vs = CVTE PVRPLE DINOSAVR
- Extract all Roman Numerals = C V V L D I V
- Convert to Arabic values = 100 5 5 50 500 1 5
- Add them up = 666
- Conclusion = Barney is the Antichrist!




666
Beast
θηρίον
666
Nero Ceasar
Νέρων Καισαρ
666
The number of
his name
adds up to 666
Thus
the Beast
is Nero or someone
like Nero

Textual Variant = 616



The Two Witnesses?



The Two Witnesses and their Prophetic Ministry before the Nations

- Revelation 11:1–13 forms the heart of this interlude by depicting the ministry of the two witnesses as God continues to conduct his trial against the nations.

- John is given a rod to measure the temple. He is told to exclude the outer court, because it has been given to the gentiles to trample underfoot for forty-two months .

- Concordant to this three-and-a-half year period God will give his two witnesses to prophesy for 1,260 days. The time frame corresponds to the times, time, and half a time of Dan 7:25 and 12:7 denoting the intense but limited period of suffering.

- Bauckham suggests that the reason John alternates between these two temporal designations to refer to the same period of time is to contrast forty-two months of the beast's reign with the 1,260 days of saints' prophetic ministry.

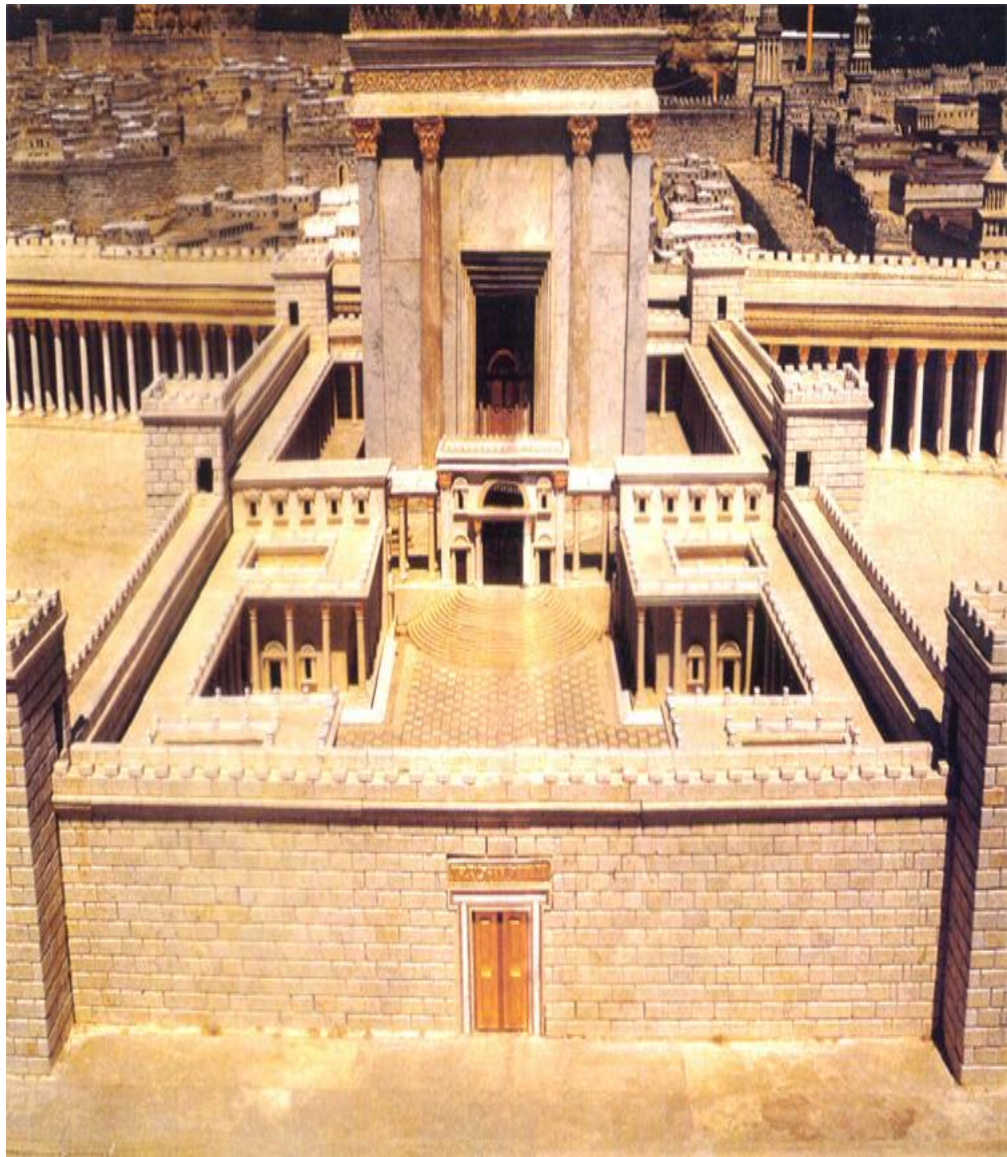
Measuring the Temple

- Scholars have postulated three possible explanations for the explicit reference to the temple.

- **First**, early date proponents assert that this clearly presupposes that the temple in Jerusalem is still standing.

- **Second**, other scholars suggest that Rev 11:1–2 was written prior to A.D. 70 but was included in a later redaction during the reign of Domitian.

- The **third** option views the temple as a symbolic reference and thereby invalidates the need for a literal temple still standing in Jerusalem at the time of composition.



- The Book of Revelation, due to its genre, frequently employs figurative language and symbols. There are no reasons to suppose that Rev 11:1–2 should be interpreted any differently from the rest of the vision.

- Measuring, in the OT, was sometimes used to connote destruction (2 Sam 8:2; Isa 28:16–17; 34:11; Lam 2:8; Amos 7:7–9;) but also implied divine protection (Jer 31:38–40; Zech 1:16; 2:1–2; Ezek 40:1–6; 42:20). Ezekiel 40–48 and Zech 2:1–2 are typically identified as the specific backdrop for this text, but Dan 8:11–14 also casts an important shadow on this passage.

- John is instructed to measure the temple/sanctuary of God (τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ), the altar (τὸ θυσιαστήριον), and the worshippers (τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας ἐν αὐτῷ), but to exclude/cast out (ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν) the outer court (because it was given to the Gentiles along with the holy city to trample for forty-two months. The image is of the holy place (containing the holy of holies), the innermost court of the biblical temples (court of the priests), and the altar of incense together with those worshipping in the sanctuary.

- The terms used for the temple bespeak a non-literal usage. John's language regarding the temple could just as easily denote a heavenly or symbolic temple as it could a literal temple.

A Non-Literal Temple

- The word used for temple, *naos*, refers specifically to the temple sanctuary rather than the entire temple complex (*hieron*).

- John uses *naos* throughout the Book of Revelation to refer to the heavenly temple (Rev 3:12; 7:15; 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8; 16:1, 17). The term, *thysiastērion*, also frequently occurs denoting the heavenly altar of incense (Rev 6:9; 8:3, 5; 9:13; 14:18; 16:7).

- Since the typical usage of temple language refers to spiritual realities instead of earthly institutions, it seems likely that the temple in Rev 11:1–2 symbolically represents the people of God.

A Non-Literal Temple

- In addition, the outer-court and “holy city” also may be understood as references to the people of God.

- That all these images symbolically depict the Christian community is supported by the fact that the Qumran community conceived of themselves as God’s temple (1QS 5.5–6; 8.4–10; 9.3–6; 11.8; 4QFlor 1.6; 4QMMT; CD 3.19–4.5), which is clearly represented in early Christian writings (1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:10; 2 Cor 5:15; Eph 2:21–22; 1 Pet 2:5; Rev 3:12; Ignatius, *Eph*. 9.1; *Barn*. 4.11; *2 Clem*. 9.3).

The Description of the Two Witnesses

- **Clothing**: Sackcloth evokes familiar OT images related to times of individual and national mourning and repentance.
  - Donning sackcloth in times of excessive grief and mourning was a very common practice throughout the OT, especially as a result of divine judgment (cf. Gen 37:34; 2 Sam 3:31; 21:10; 2 Kgs 6:30; Esth 4:1-4; Job 16:15; Ps 30:11; 35:13; Isa 3:24; 15:3; Jer 49:3; Lam 2:10; Eze 7:18; 27:31; Joel 1:8, 13; Amos 8:10).
  - People also wore sackcloth as a means to demonstrate their repentance in order to prevent the outpouring of divine judgment (cf. 1 Kgs 20:31-32; 21:27; 1 Chron 21:16; Neh 9:1; Isa 22:12; 32:11; 58:5; Jer 4:8; 6:26; 48:37; Jonah 3:5-8; Matt 11:21; Luke 10:13).
  - Sometimes the use of sackcloth involved both ideas of mourning and repentance (cf. 2 Kgs 19:1-2; Isa 37:1-2; Dan 9:3).
  - Prophets often wore sackcloth when calling people to repentance or mourning over the destruction warranted by the people's sin. **Although protected from divine judgment, these two witnesses visibly mourn over the fate of the earth's inhabitants as they continue to call them to repentance. This mourning starkly contrasts the glee and delight that the earth's inhabitants express over the death of these two witnesses (Rev 11:10).**

- **Displays of Power**
  - Their prophetic message is accompanied with supernatural displays of power reminiscent of Moses and Elijah.
  - During the days appointed for them to prophesy they are divinely protected from any physical harm. If someone attempts to harm them, fire issues forth from the mouth of the witnesses and consumes their enemies.
  - While Elijah demonstrated the ability to call down fire upon his opponents in 2 Kgs 1:9–16, it more likely refers to Jer 5:14 in that the word of God is like a fire that consumes people. As such the fire figuratively represents “the legal pronouncement of the ensuing judgment of the enemies.”
  - Their commission to prophesy grants them the authority to exercise power like Elijah to prevent rain and like Moses by turning the water to blood along with inflicting any kind of additional plagues on the earth.
  - Both witnesses apparently share these abilities equally since no distinction is made regarding which witness can perform which miracle. Interestingly, turning the water to blood along with any other kind of plagues suggest that their ministry occurs contemporaneously with the other judgment plagues in the Apocalypse.
  - These supernatural displays of power validate their testimony and verify them as true prophets speaking in Christ’s behalf.


The Identity of the Two Witness

The Identity of the Two Witness

- **Two Individuals**

  - The most natural explanation is to identify them as the eschatological return of Moses and Elijah or a least two future individuals like them.

  - The clear allusion to the ministries of Elijah and Moses coupled with the Jewish expectation of their return lends credibility to this view (Deut 18:18; Mal 4:5–6; cf. Sir 48:10).

  - Jewish tradition posited the expectation of the eschatological return of figures like Moses, Elijah, and Enoch (On the return of Moses see *Sifre Deut*. 357.10.5; *T.Moses* 11:8. On the return Elijah see *Sifre Deut*. 41.4.3; 342.5.2. On the return of both Enoch and Elijah see *Apoc. Elijah* 4:7; *Apoc. Dan*. 14:1–3; *Apoc. Paul* 20; *Apoc. Peter* (Ethiopic) 2; *Acts of Pilate* 25. On the return of Moses and Elijah see *Deut. Rab*. 3.17.).

  - Since the witnesses are presented as two eschatological prophets it is possible that John envisioned two future Christian prophets coming in the spirit and power of Israel's two greatest prophets.

  - However, John offers a clue to identification in Rev 11:4.

Two Witnesses as a Group of People: Contextual Background

- **In Rev 11:4, John states that these two witnesses are the two olive trees and two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the Earth.**

- The positive asseveration that “these are” followed by the two plural nouns with the article suggest that John expected his readers to figure out their identity.

Two Witnesses as a Group of People: Contextual Background

- This verse constitutes a direct allusion to Zech 4:1–14 regarding Joshua (the post-exilic high priest) and Zerubbabel (the post-exilic Davidic descendent). Zechariah sees one lampstand with seven lamps sitting upon it) and seven oil channels keeping the lamps supplied with olive oil. An olive tree stood flanked on the left and right side of the lampstand. The trees provide the olives to keep the bowl of the lampstand supplied with oil. **The interpreting angel explicated the meaning of the image that it is the Holy Spirit who accomplishes the task of rebuilding the temple.**

- Zechariah inquires as to the exact identity of the two olive trees and discovers that they are the two anointed ones (Zerubbabel and Joshua) who serve the Lord of all the earth. Despite the obvious lexical parallels between Zech 4:1–14 and Rev 11:4, John diverges from Zechariah's vision in that the sees two lampstands instead of one. John also equates the trees with the lampstands, but in Zechariah they are kept distinct. This suggests John modified the imagery so as not to equate his vision as simply a rehashing of Zechariah's.

John’s Vision Contrasted with Zechariah

- The alteration from one lampstand into two comprises the most striking differences between Rev 11:4 and Zech 4:2.

- The reason for this shift probably rests with the fact that the symbol of lampstands in the Apocalypse is clearly used to denote the churches (Rev 1:20). If John intended to use lampstand to denote any other entity or individual he fails to make this usage explicit. **He assumes his readers would readily recognize that “two lampstands” refers to the churches in some way or another**.

John’s Vision Contrasted with Zechariah

- John probably does not intend to equate the witnesses with all the churches since he restricts their number to only two out of seven. The use of two also reinforces the notion of the church as a witness giving legal testimony.

- One plausible solution is to equate these two lampstands with the churches in Smyrna and Philadelphia. Both churches were commended for their faithfulness and endurance despite persecution and hardships. These are the only two churches free from any accusations from Christ. As such they may represent the churches who faithfully maintain their witness of Christ in the midst of persecution. What is more, Beale makes the interesting connection between Zerubbabel and Joshua with the church in its kingly and priestly function commonly posited in the Book of Revelation.

The Execution and Vindication of the Two Witnesses

- Their spirit inspired prophetic testimony before the nation's reaches completion in Rev 11:7–10. They finish their testimony before the nations and are subsequently murdered.

- In Rev 11:7, John avers that the beast from the abyss will wage a war against the two witnesses. This proleptically anticipates the war against the saints instigated by the beast in Rev 13:1–18. As such it is possible that the two witnesses of Rev 11:3–12 refers to the same group of saints in Rev 13:7.

  - Note the parallels between Rev 11:7 and 13:7. The beast, in Rev 11:7, will respond to the two witnesses when he "make ware with them and he will conquer them and kill them."

  - This same beast, in Rev 13:7, will seek to eliminate the saints in that "authority was given to him" he will wage ware against the saints and he will conquer them."

- After three and one half days, at a time corresponding with the seventh trumpet, God vindicates his witnesses through an awesome public display of resurrection and ascension (Rev 11:11–12). The voice inviting them to “come up here” while their enemies watched conveys the idea of divine acceptance and vindication.

- What is more, at the same hour a tremendous earthquake took the lives of seven thousand citizens in the that city. The survivors quaked with terror and gave glory to God, which may possibly indicate that some repented. The time for testimony is completed and now the time for judgment has arrived.



Reading Revelation as the Climax of Prophecy

The Culmination of Redemptive History and the New Creation

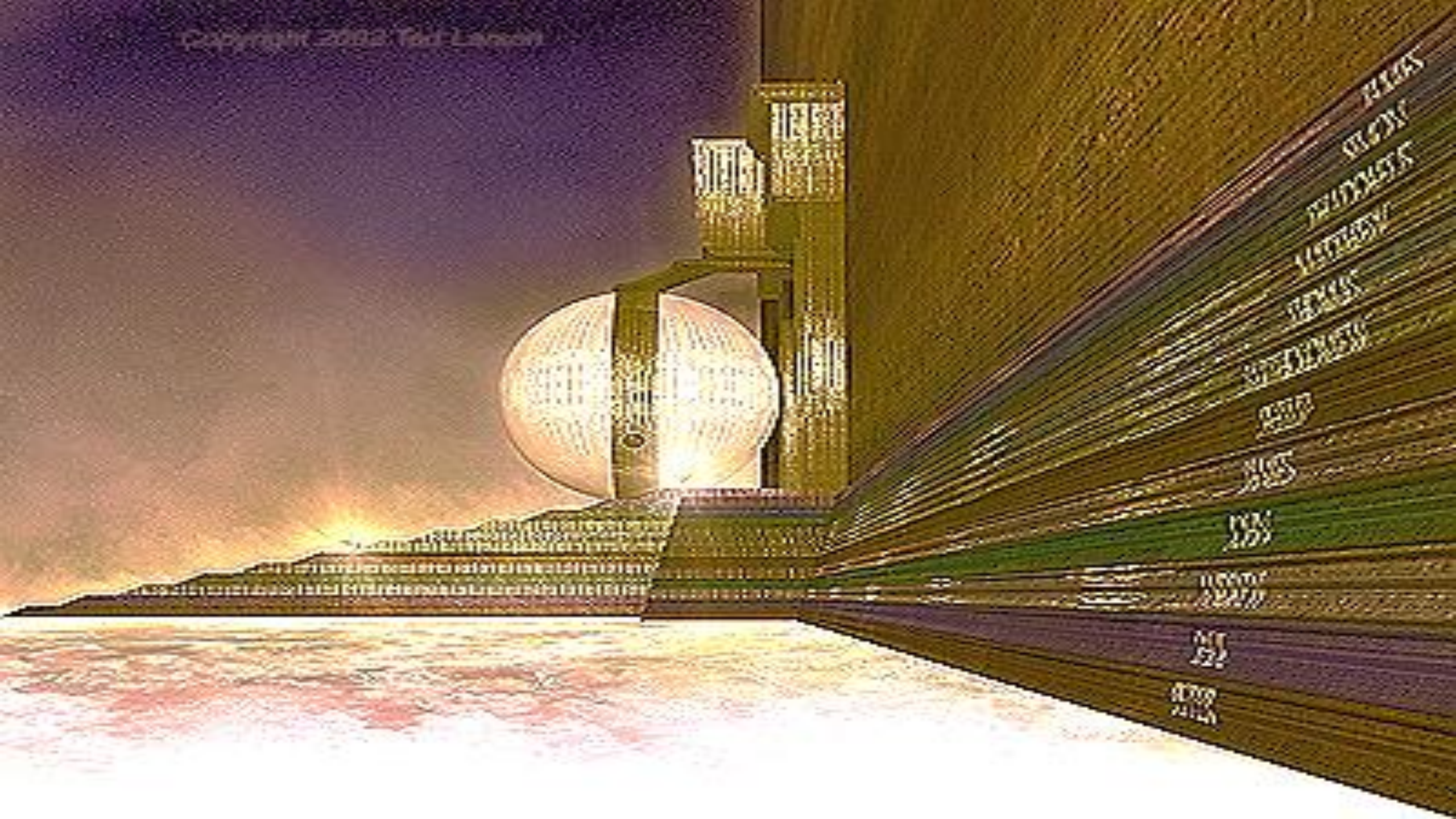
Vision Four (On a mountain): The Saints Reward and the Renewal of Creation (Rev 21:9–22:4)

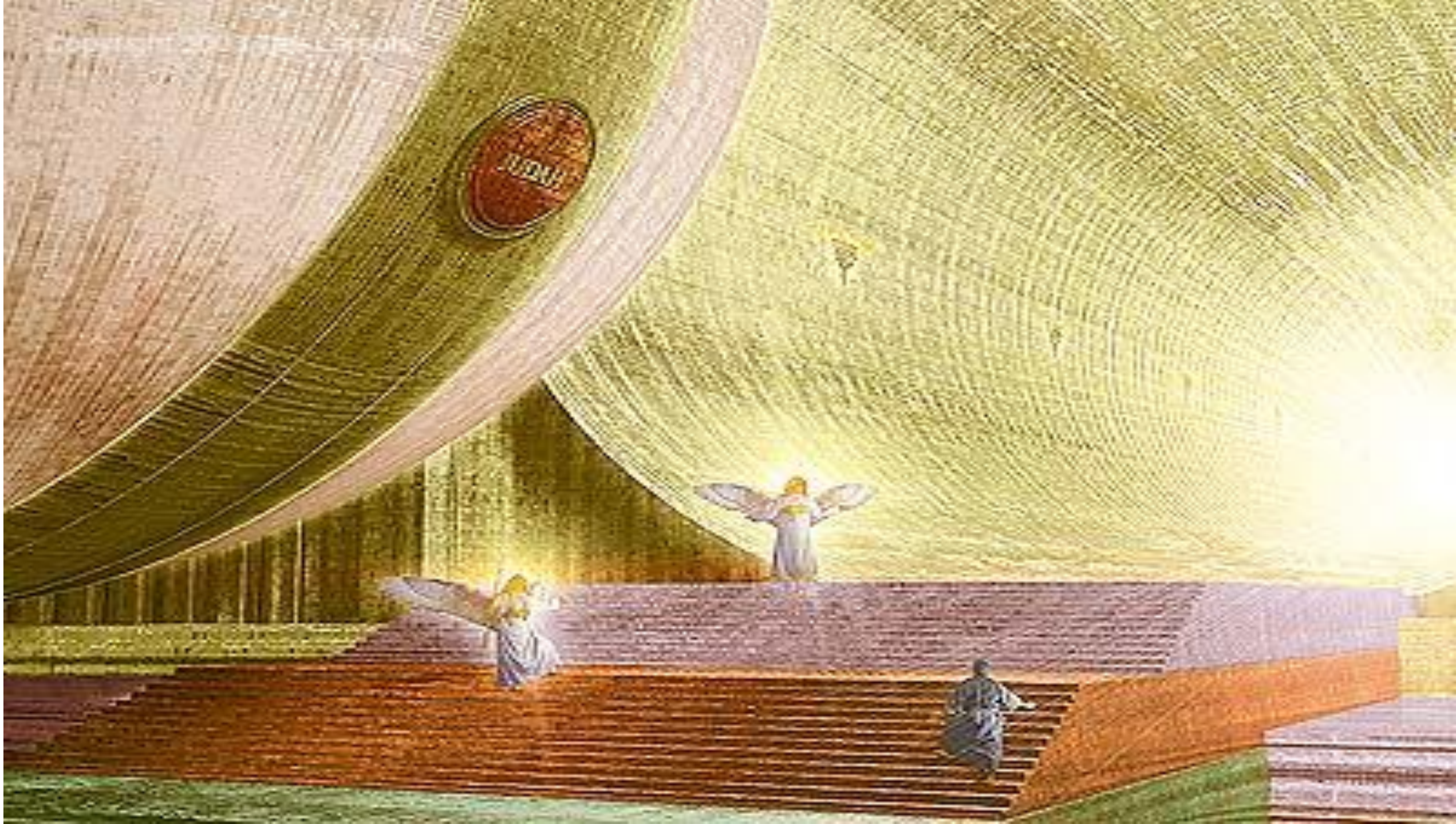
- Transition: “Come, I will show you the bride” (21:9–10)

- The Description of the New Jerusalem Descending from Heaven (21:11–27)

The Beauty of the Bride City (21:11–15)

- Glowing with the Glory of God
- Shinning with the Brilliance of a Precious Gem Stone
- Clear as Crystal
- A High Wall with Twelve Gates (3 on each of the four directions of the compass) – each with a name of one of the twelve Patriarchs
- Twelve Foundation Stones – each with a name of one of the twelve Apostles





The Dimensions of the Bride City (21:15–17)

- An Angel with a Measuring Rod

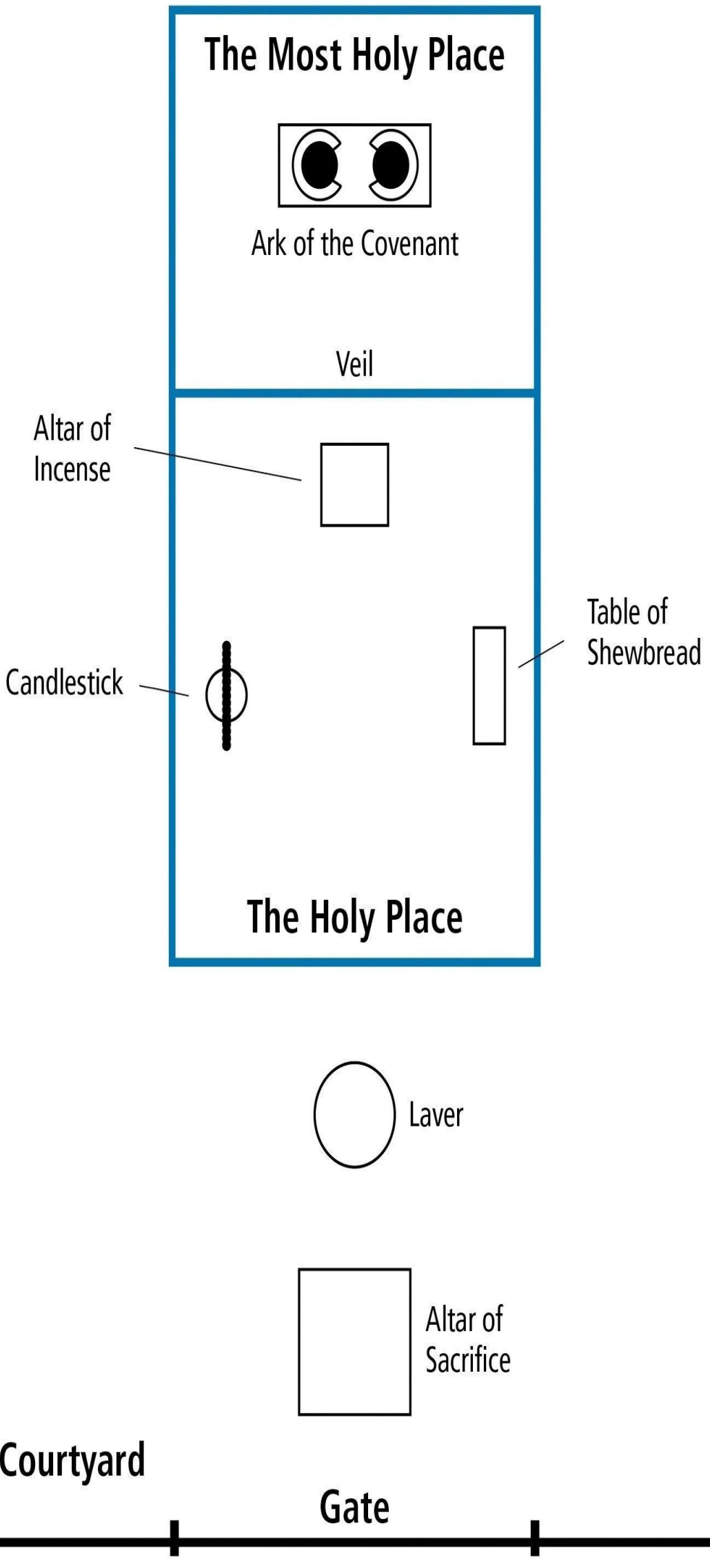
- The City is a Perfect Cube
  - The Holy of Holies (1 Kgs 6:19)

- 12,000 stadia = 1400 miles (roughly the distance from Dallas to L.A.).
  - 12,000 = A Mathematically perfect number (12 times 10 cubed).
  - A cube as 12 edges and each edge measures 12,000 stadia making a total of 144,000.

- The walls are 144 cubits thick = 200 feet.


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The Tabernacle




ALASKA
CANADA
Seattle
WASH.
Portland
OREG.
IDAHO
MONT.
N. D.
MINN.
Great
OTTAWA
ME.
N.H.
MASS.
R.I.
CONN.
Boston
New York
Philadelphia
DEL.
MD.
Milwaukee
Detroit
IOWA
NEB.
Chicago
TOM.
Pittsburgh
Baltimore
W. VA.
WASH.
Denver
Kansas City
MO.
ILL.
IND.
Cincinnati
KY.
St. Louis
KANS.
TENN.
ARK.
Oklahoma City
OKLA.
Atlanta
ALA.
GA.
Dallas
TEXAS
LA.
MISS.
Houston
New Orleans
FLA.
Orlando
Tampa
San Antonio
Gulf of Mexico
BAHAMAS
ATLANTIC OCEAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
San Francisco
San Jose
CALIF.
Los Angeles
NEV.
UTAH
Salt Lake City
ARIZ.
Phoenix
San Diego
HAWAII
MEXICO
Tropic of Cancer
UNITED STATES

The Composition of the Bride City (Rev 21:18-21)

- The Entire City was made of Pure Gold—Like Pure Glass
- The holy of holies was solid gold
- (Picture of Fort Knox)

Foundation and Walls Bedecked with Precious Stones

- Jasper – a *green*, *reddish, earthy* stone
- Sapphire – a blue stone, maybe *lapis lazuli*
- Chalcedony – a grey or green stone
- Emerald – a green stone
- Sardonyx – a yellow stone
- Carnelian – a red stone
- Beryl – a blue-green stone
- Topaz – a yellow or brownish stone
- Chrysoprase – a yellow-green stone
- Jacinth – a blue stone
- Amethyst – a purple

































Pearly Gates and Streets of Gold



The Bride City as God's Residence On Earth with His People (21:22–27)

- No Temple! Because God and the Lamb Dwell There.
- No Sun or Moon. Because the Glory of God and the Lamb will Light the city
- Nations will bring their tribute (treasures)
- The Gates with Never Close
- No Night
- Nothing impure or shameful will ever enter it.
- Only those whose names are in the Book of Life can enter


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The Paradise of God: The Renewal of Creation (22:1–5)

- A New Eden – *Urzeit als Endzeit*
- The river and trees of life (22:1–2)
- No more curse (22:3a)
- The saints as priests eternally serving in God's presence (22:3b–5)


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Epilogue (Rev 22:6–21)

- Affirmation of the prophecy's truth (22:6)
- Blessing for those who obey (22:7)
- John's testimony (22:8–11)
  - Revelation 22:10 Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near.
  - Daniel 12:4 But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge."
- Jesus' testimony (22:12–16)

Epilogue (Rev 22:6–21)

- **The testimony of the Spirit and the bride (22:17)**

- Prophetic warning (22:18–20) Cf. Deuteronomy 4:2 Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

- Final testimony (22:20–21)


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