

# The Full Gospel and the Apocalypse

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## Abstract

As we seek to chart a way forward into our second century, many Pentecostals are re-looking at the fundamentals that have defined them as a stream within Christianity. Thus, some Pentecostal theologians are re-examining and redefining the 'full gospel', the fourfold or fivefold revelation of Jesus Christ as Savior, Healer, Sanctifier, Spirit Baptizer, and Coming King. In this article, the author surveys these discussions on the 'full gospel' and looks into the book of Revelation for a fresh perspective on this topic. It is argued that each aspect of the fivefold revelation of Jesus is reflected in Revelation to some degree, but not always in the way Pentecostals have taught it. Therefore, a dialogue between classic Pentecostalism and Revelation opens up new ways of looking at both.

## Keywords

full gospel – fivefold gospel – Pentecostalism – theology

Modern Pentecostalism is just over a century old. It has grown from being a somewhat despised sect of under-educated people to a massive force within the Christian movement with an estimated 500 million or more people identifying as Pentecostal, charismatic, or similar names.<sup>1</sup> Moreover there is a collection of industries associated with the Pentecostal world, including gospel

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1 The exact numbers are hard to determine and depend on definitions to some degree. Cf Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 1, 10–12.

music recordings, schools, charities, NGO's, journals, and ministry training colleges. This movement has 'come of age'. But this very process is now causing Pentecostals<sup>2</sup> to review and sometimes modify their earlier ideas. Classical Pentecostals<sup>3</sup> in particular came to be associated with several distinctive beliefs such as a post-conversion baptism in the Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues, the availability of physical healing in today's world, and an expectation of the imminent premillennial return of Christ.<sup>4</sup> Many of them summarized their convictions or 'distinctives' with phrases such as 'the full gospel'<sup>5</sup> and the 'the fourfold (or fivefold or foursquare) gospel',<sup>6</sup> which referred to the revelation of Jesus Christ as Savior, Healer, possibly Sanctifier,<sup>7</sup> Baptizer in the Holy Spirit and (soon) Coming King.

There is currently a process of review going on in connection with all these distinctive beliefs as Pentecostals transition into their second century as a sophisticated, numerous, and influential Christian stream. In this article, I engage this process by looking at the connections between these beliefs and the Book of Revelation, a text which mainly influenced the last of these christological revelations and undergirded the premillennial eschatology which was

2 I am using this word generically in most cases to refer to all Christians who are open to the modern moving of the Spirit with supernatural manifestations, whatever their different theologies may be. I notice that Yong is now using the word 'renewalist' to capture this broad group (cf Amos Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity* [Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014], pp. 5–6).

3 This phrase is used to denote those who would most use the term 'Pentecostal' to identify themselves and trace their roots to the early twentieth-century events such as the Azusa St revival of 1906–1908.

4 Though not all of the early Pentecostals necessarily held to all these tenets (cf Frank D. Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010], pp. 86–92).

5 For a longer version of this phrase, see Glen W. Menzies, 'A Full Apostolic Gospel Standard of Experience and Doctrine', *AJPS* 15, 1 (2012), pp. 19–32.

6 William Oliverio, Jr, *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p. 32; D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel* [JPTSUP 10; Blandford Forum, UK: Deo, 2009], pp. 28–30, 229–30. The classic North American Pentecostals used various names to describe themselves such as 'Full Gospel', 'Apostolic Faith', 'Latter Rain', and 'Pentecostal' (Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, pp. 56, 60–61).

7 The early North American Pentecostals were divided between those of a Wesleyan persuasion who favoured a post-conversion crisis sanctification experience and advocates of the 'finished work' view, who saw sanctification as part of the initial conversion experience followed by gradual growth (cf Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 229–70; Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, pp. 45–47; Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, pp. 21–23; Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century* [JPTSUP 28; London: T & T Clark, 2004], pp. 14–17).

adopted by nearly every Pentecostal group.<sup>8</sup> Are these five revelations found in, or at least implied by, Revelation? I expect that Pentecostal thinking may shed some fresh light on the text and that the text may shed some light on Pentecostalism. But first I survey the current discussions about the full gospel.

### Some Recent Pentecostal Thinking on the Fivefold Gospel

A number of contemporary North American scholars have approached the 'fivefold' gospel from a range of perspectives and with a variety of aims. For example, Frank D. Macchia attempts to build a Pentecostal soteriology centered on the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which he sees as 'the "crown jewel" of all Pentecostal experiential and doctrinal concerns'.<sup>9</sup> In his *Justified in the Spirit*,<sup>10</sup> Macchia integrates justification, sanctification, and Spirit baptism into a unified concept of salvation-regeneration that joins together what most classical Pentecostals sought to separate.<sup>11</sup> By placing Spirit baptism at the heart of God's work of salvation and justification (which he defines pneumatically), Macchia questions the distinctively *successive* Pentecostal experience of salvation, sanctification, and Spirit baptism. In his earlier *Baptized in the Spirit*,<sup>12</sup> Macchia criticizes 'a compartmentalization of the Pentecostal understanding of Spirit baptism as a post-conversion charismatic empowerment'<sup>13</sup> and interprets a range of theological truths through a prism of Spirit baptism; this broadens the concept of Spirit baptism in surprising (and convincing) ways but also has the effect of blurring the differences between the five elements of the 'full gospel'.<sup>14</sup>

8 Cf Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 96–114 on the historical background to this. See also Mathew K. Thompson, *Kingdom Come: Revisioning Pentecostal Eschatology* (JPTSUP 37; Blandford Forum, UK: Deo, 2010), pp. 52–53.

9 Frank D. Macchia, 'Baptized in the Spirit: Towards a Global Pentecostal Theology', in Steven M. Studebaker (ed.), *Defining Issues in Pentecostalism* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2008), p. 22.

10 Frank D. Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).

11 Though see Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 289–90, on how this stance was modified by followers of the 'New Issue' in North America. See also Amos Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002), pp. 30–31.

12 Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006).

13 Macchia, *Baptized*, p. 59; see also p. 80.

14 For example, see Macchia's discussion of regeneration, Christian initiation, and Spirit baptism (*Baptized*, pp. 150–54), 'Spirit-baptized justification' (pp. 129–40), and his linkage between Spirit baptism and sanctification (pp. 140–44).

With a different goal in mind, John Christopher Thomas, in the introduction to *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel*,<sup>15</sup> repeated a call he made twelve years earlier for ‘an exploration of Pentecostal ecclesiology informed by the fivefold gospel’.<sup>16</sup> The rest of that volume consists of an outworking of this call by a group of Pentecostal scholars originally in the form of papers given at a conference in Wales. In the longest essay in the volume,<sup>17</sup> Kenneth J. Archer urges that, ‘the Fivefold gospel could and should function as the heart of a Pentecostal narrative theology’<sup>18</sup> and that the ‘sacramental nature of the signs associated with the Fivefold gospel ... take on a spiritual-metaphorical-narrative nature’.<sup>19</sup> Building on Thomas’ original proposals towards the sacramental aspect of the five elements in this full gospel, Archer suggests an alignment may also be seen with the fivefold ministry gifts of Christ as seen in Eph. 4.11.<sup>20</sup>

Still another approach is Amos Yong’s magisterial *In the Days of Caesar*, which attempts to create a Pentecostal theology of the political realm. In this project, he uses the five elements of the ‘full gospel’ as starting points for articulating a fresh vision of what the world could be if the Holy Spirit was allowed free rein. Specifically he explores the concept of salvation as including deliverance from powers of darkness (including in the economic and political arenas), the idea of holiness as leading to a ‘vocational mission to the world’<sup>21</sup> and a ‘sanctified theology of culture’;<sup>22</sup> the baptism in the Holy Spirit as empowering Christians to take a prophetic political stand, the Pentecostal view of health and wealth as a source of a ‘theology of economics’<sup>23</sup> which includes healing and economic sharing, and the expectation of the coming King as inspiring efforts towards international reconciliation and environmental restoration in the power of the Spirit. Yong’s efforts show that the fivefold gospel as a theological construct is capable of being broadened from its original individualist

15 John Christopher Thomas (ed.), *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010).

16 Thomas, *Ecclesiology*, p. 4.

17 Kenneth J. Archer, ‘The Fivefold Gospel and the Mission of the Church: Ecclesiastical Implications and Opportunities’, in Thomas, *Ecclesiology*, pp. 7–46.

18 Archer, ‘Fivefold Gospel’, p. 36.

19 Archer, ‘Fivefold Gospel’, p. 37.

20 Archer, ‘Fivefold Gospel’, pp. 38–39.

21 Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), p. 354.

22 Yong, *Days of Caesar*, p. 166.

23 Yong, *Days of Caesar*, p. 257.

context and becoming a source of illumination for a variety of questions facing the world and the church.<sup>24</sup>

Larry McQueen, from a different angle, claims to offer ‘the first articulation of Pentecostal eschatology framed around the fivefold gospel’.<sup>25</sup> Arguing that the Wesleyan stream of early Pentecostalism was more open to discussion of eschatological themes than the ‘Finished Work’ fourfold stream,<sup>26</sup> and thus less dominated by dispensationalism, McQueen urges that ‘the fivefold ‘full gospel’ paradigm that emerged in the early Wesleyan Holiness stream provides the best narrative context in which to discern the way forward’.<sup>27</sup> He seeks ‘to inquire how each of the elements of the fivefold gospel might appear when viewed from the perspective of Jesus as Coming King’<sup>28</sup> with a special focus on Revelation 21–22.

However, not everyone finds the classical fivefold model to be a suitable paradigm for analyzing Pentecostalism today. For example, a recent journal article by a sympathetic Anglican scholar<sup>29</sup> surveys the origins of the ‘full gospel’ concept in late nineteenth-century American evangelicalism and early English Pentecostalism. Andy Lord argues that the attempt of several scholars to make the fivefold gospel a kind of organizing center for Pentecostal theology has not made much progress, because the pattern is too limiting, both in terms of interpreting early Pentecostal origins and in terms of Pentecostalism as a contemporary international phenomenon with a diverse contextualized theology and a developing sophistication in biblical study.

Lord argues that, ‘contemporary research in an area of northern India has suggested that pentecostal Christology is framed in terms of Jesus as Healer, Exorcist, Provider and Protector’.<sup>30</sup> In a similar way, Wonsuk Ma studies how David Yonggi Cho developed his distinctive Korean Pentecostal theology from the original ‘fivefold gospel’ model, substituting Blessing for Sanctifier with a focus on material prosperity, partly derived from 3 John 2.<sup>31</sup>

24 See also the frequent references to this fivefold gospel in his *Renewing Christian Theology*.

25 Larry McQueen, *Towards a Pentecostal Eschatology* (JPTSup 39; Blandford Forum, UK: Deo, 2012), p. 295. Matthew Thompson might disagree since something similar is going on in his *Kingdom Come*.

26 McQueen, *Eschatology*, p. 203.

27 McQueen, *Eschatology*, p. 214.

28 McQueen, *Eschatology*, pp. 219, 279–80.

29 Andy Lord, ‘Good News for All? Reflections on the Pentecostal Full Gospel’, *Transformation* 30. 1 (2013), pp. 17–30.

30 Lord, ‘Good News for All?’ p. 24.

31 Wonsuk Ma, ‘David Yonggi Cho’s Theology of Blessing: Basis, Legitimacy, and Limitations’, *Evangelical Review of Theology* 35. 2 (2011), pp. 140–59.

Does a Pentecostal reading of Revelation have anything to offer this conversation? Are these five elements of classical Pentecostal Christology to be found in this text?

### The Five Gospel Elements in Revelation

John Christopher Thomas in his recent commentary on Revelation<sup>32</sup> begins with a mention of ‘the five-fold gospel that proclaims Jesus is Savior, Sanctifier, Holy Spirit Baptizer, Healer, and Soon Coming King’.<sup>33</sup> However, he doesn’t develop that theme in the commentary itself. What might such an attempt look like? In the rest of this article, I will explore this question systematically, looking at each of the proclamations in turn.

#### *Jesus as Savior*

This truth is embraced by Pentecostals and all other Christians, and found clearly in Revelation. While Revelation does not have a highly developed theology of the atonement, unlike Paul or the author of Hebrews (for instance), it clearly portrays Jesus as the Savior of the world. Early in the text, John describes Jesus as ‘him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood’ (Rev. 1.5).<sup>34</sup> He portrays him as the one who holds ‘the keys of Death and Hades’ (Rev. 1.18), implying that Jesus can release believers from these powers and give them eternal life.<sup>35</sup> In the first dramatic scene in heaven, Jesus is portrayed as ‘a Lamb standing as if it has been slaughtered’ (Rev. 5.6) and then the heavenly beings sing about him, ‘you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed<sup>36</sup> for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation’ (Rev. 5.9).

32 John Christopher Thomas, *The Apocalypse: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2012).

33 Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. ix. See also John Christopher Thomas and Frank D. Macchia, *Revelation. The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), p. xv.

34 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 93–94; Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 75; G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), p. 191; Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005), pp. 35–36.

35 Cf Craig R. Koester, *Revelation* (Anchor Yale Bible; New Haven; Yale University Press, 2014), p. 254.

36 Or purchased (Gr. ἡγόρασας from ἀγοράζω, a word with commercial overtones; cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 231). As Thomas points out, ‘the language ... implies ownership

This language gathers up Old Testament sacrificial language (such as the Pass-over), in a similar way to Hebrews, and perhaps John's Gospel,<sup>37</sup> to interpret Jesus' crucifixion as a saving act bringing freedom from guilt and evil powers.<sup>38</sup>

In the vision of the uncountable international multitude (Rev. 7.9), we hear that, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!' (Rev. 7.10): thus, salvation is not won by Jesus in defiance of God but in a 'joint effort',<sup>39</sup> and it extends to the whole world (compare 1 Jn 2.2). As Thomas points out, this passage 'appears to focus upon salvation in its most comprehensive, eschatological sense'.<sup>40</sup> This saving activity is also associated with the language of the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 3.5; 13.8; 20.12, 15). Having one's name written in that book appears to be essential to salvation (Rev. 20.15).<sup>41</sup>

Hence, Revelation portrays Jesus' saving activity in several ways found in other parts of the New Testament and taken up by the post-apostolic church:

1. release and cleansing: forgiveness of sins (Rev. 1.5), cleansing (Rev. 7.14; 22.14), even the beatific vision (Rev. 7.15; 22.3–4), which implies that the worshipper is clean and free to enter God's presence.<sup>42</sup>
2. eternal life: release from death and Hades (Rev. 1.18), access to the tree of life (Rev. 2.7; 22.14, 19), release from the second death (Rev. 2.11; 20.12–15), access to the new Jerusalem (Rev. 3.12; 22.14), release from afflictions of this life (Rev. 7.16–17; 21.4), and enjoyment of the water of life (Rev. 7.17; 22.1, 17).<sup>43</sup>
3. deliverance and victory: victory over Satan and his accusations (Rev. 12.10–11),<sup>44</sup> ransom of the saints from every place (Rev. 5.9),<sup>45</sup> redemption

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of those purchased' and indicates that 'the sacrificial death of the Lamb makes possible such a purchase' (Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 232).

37 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 225, 231. However, Smalley points out that 'the sacrifice of Christ in this hymn appears to be untypically Johannine, since its character is objective, and indeed Pauline' (Smalley, *Revelation to John*, p. 137).

38 Cf Laszlo Gallusz, *The Throne Motif in the Book of Revelation* (Library of New Testament Studies 487; London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 153.

39 Cf McQueen, *Eschatology*, p. 221.

40 Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 269.

41 Cf Smalley, *Revelation to John*, p. 519.

42 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 663.

43 Cf McQueen, *Eschatology*, pp. 221–25.

44 Cf McQueen, *Eschatology*, pp. 227–28.

45 Though the text does not specify from what or whom they are ransomed.

from humankind<sup>46</sup> (Rev. 14.4), and dominion with Christ (Rev. 1.6; 2.26–28; 3.21; 5.10; 22.5).

So, the Pentecostal understanding of salvation from sin and Satan is clearly expressed. But the substitutionary atonement preached by most classical Pentecostals<sup>47</sup> is at best *implied* by the language of slaughter, blood, cleansing, and redemption; perhaps Revelation's 'atonement theology' is closer to that of the 'Christus Victor' model<sup>48</sup> with its focus on deliverance from evil powers,<sup>49</sup> a theme that also resonates with Pentecostal thinking.

### *Jesus as Healer*

There is some tension in this case. The language of healing is not absent from Revelation but is mainly associated with the eschaton, whereas the classical Pentecostal confession of Jesus as Healer (derived from other parts of the New Testament) included an expectation of physical healing in the present era.<sup>50</sup>

John tells his readers that in the new order,

he [God] will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
 Death will be no more;  
 Mourning and crying and pain will be no more,  
 For the first things have passed away  
 REV. 21.4<sup>51</sup>

This seems to be speaking of life in the resurrection, after the last judgment. Healing is promised, but not yet. Similar language is found in Rev. 7.16–17, telling of the multitude in heaven.<sup>52</sup>

46    Implying that they are purchased from out of the general run of humanity.

47    E.g. Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles, CA: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1987), pp. 180–91; Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London: T & T Clark, 2008), p. 36.

48    As proposed by Gustaf Aulén in *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement* (London: SPCK, 2010).

49    See J. Denny Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 2011), pp. 20–35, and Darrin W. Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice and Peace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), pp. 425–26.

50    Cf Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, pp. 58–59.

51    Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 624–25; Smalley, *Revelation to John*, p. 539; McQueen, *Eschatology*, p. 249.

52    Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 275–77; Beale, *Revelation*, pp. 441–44.



We also read in the new Jerusalem of the water of life and the tree of life, the leaves of which 'are for the healing of the nations' (εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν, Rev. 22.2). Whether this 'healing of the nations' (or Gentiles) is physical healing of individuals in the resurrection or healing of national or ethnic divisions or sicknesses or simply 'the healing of the wounds of the nations incurred in their rebellion against God and the Lamb'<sup>53</sup> is not clear. As Thomas argues, however, the hearers 'would likely understand healing in its most holistic and comprehensive fashion, encompassing both physical and spiritual healing for both are part of the salvific work of Jesus'.<sup>54</sup> In the Ezekiel passage John is alluding to, 'their leaves are for healing' (Ezek.47.12); John adds that the Gentiles are included in this healing work.<sup>55</sup> But both passages seem to be depicting a glorious eschatological future.

However, this future orientation is modified in several ways in Revelation. First, the water of life may be future, but is also offered now when John writes, 'Let everyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift' (Rev. 22.17; comp Jn 4.13–14; 7.37–38).<sup>56</sup> So if the water of life is already available, perhaps so too is the tree of life and the healing of its leaves, at least spiritually.<sup>57</sup> After all, it is *now* rather than in the new earth that the nations need healing.<sup>58</sup> This may be seen as part of the salvation Jesus offers to all people now through the gospel.<sup>59</sup>

Second, the beast of Revelation 13 experiences healing of its mortal wound (Rev. 13.3, 12). This healing would seem to be a work of Satan, not God, and may refer to a political healing (perhaps the reunification of the Roman empire after civil war)<sup>60</sup> rather than a physical or spiritual healing of an individual.

53 Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 661–62. Cf Koester, *Revelation*, pp. 824, 835; Beale, *Revelation*, pp. 1107–1108; McQueen, *Eschatology*, pp. 255–56.

54 Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 661. Comp. McQueen, *Eschatology*, pp. 250–51.

55 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 661. see also the discussion in Michael L. Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1995), pp. 205–206.

56 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 659, 684. However, some commentators such as Craig Koester see this as a promise for the future. Cf Koester, *Revelation*, p. 857.

57 For example, McQueen points to the 'eyesalve' that the Laodiceans are urged to use for 'the healing of spiritual perception' (*Eschatology*, p. 249).

58 Smalley also considers the dilemma of healing for the nations being needed in the future new order, but suggests that 'even in the dimension of the new Jerusalem there will be those who choose to remain outside its gates ... and who will therefore need the opportunity to accept "leaves of healing" by which to embrace God's universal invitation of love' (Smalley, *Revelation to John*, p. 563).

59 Cf Thompson, *Kingdom Come*, pp. 144–45.

60 Cf Smalley, *Revelation to John*, pp. 338–39; Koester, *Revelation*, pp. 570–71.

But it is not specifically attributed to the dragon (unlike other aspects of the beast) and may be partly providential.<sup>61</sup>

Third, the two prophetic witnesses of Revelation 11 experience resurrection (and even ascension) after being killed by the beast (Rev. 11.7, 11–12). This event seems to be definitely located in the present age, not in the eschaton, unless perhaps (as Aune and Waddell propose), this is to be read as a literal ‘rapture story’.<sup>62</sup> If the two witnesses are two literal people who experience literal death and resurrection, this opens up the possibility of healing and even resurrection now. If they stand for the Spirit-anointed church, at least some level of miraculous healing by the power of God, the kind of miracle many Pentecostal preachers have encouraged people to believe for, may be envisaged.<sup>63</sup>

Fourth, the followers of Jesus are apparently exempted from physical afflictions sent by God. Of the Christians in Thyatira, only Jezebel and her followers are warned, ‘I am throwing her on a bed, and those who commit adultery with her I am throwing into great distress, unless they repent of her doings, and I will strike her children dead’ (Rev. 2.22–23).<sup>64</sup> It may also be implied that Jezebel’s sick followers will be healed if they repent.<sup>65</sup> The locusts of Revelation 9 are allowed to torture people for five months, a sting so painful that people will (unsuccessfully) seek relief in death.<sup>66</sup> But only ‘those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads’ are affected (Rev. 9.4–6). This implies that people of faith will be protected from God-sent plagues,<sup>67</sup> as happens also in Rev. 16.2 where ‘a foul and painful sore came on those who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped its image’ (comp 16.8–11). This theology is reminiscent more of the Old Testament (such as the plagues sent on Egypt in Exodus)<sup>68</sup>

61 See discussion in Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 386. As Thomas notes the passive here has previously referred to the work of God. Beale contends that the healing of the beast was only apparent (Beale, *Revelation*, p. 689).

62 David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998), p. 625; Robby Waddell, ‘The Apocalypse of John according to Craig R. Koester: A Critical Appreciation of *Revelation* (The Anchor Yale Bible) with Special Attention to Rev. 7.1–15.4’, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 24 (2015), p. 21; See also Robby Waddell, *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation* (JPTSUP 30; Blandford Forum, UK: Deo, 2006), p. 186; comp. Beale, *Revelation*, pp. 597–601.

63 Though many commentators view this as metaphorical language that speaks of the church’s vindication. Cf Smalley, *Revelation to John*, p. 284; Koester, *Revelation*, pp. 502–503, 510–11; Beale, *Revelation*, pp. 597–601.

64 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 149–51.

65 Cf Smalley, *Revelation to John*, pp. 74–77.

66 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 296.

67 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 295.

68 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 467.

than of the work of Jesus and his apostles in the New Testament, though there are God-sent disasters in Acts affecting Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), Herod (Acts 12), and the magician Elymas (Acts 13).<sup>69</sup>

Summing up, then, Revelation promises universal healing in the future and opens up the possibility of healing (or exemption from plagues of illness) in this age, especially when sicknesses are being sent as God's judgments on the earth. Jesus is not directly portrayed as Healer even though 'the healing of the nations' and other eschatological healing is probably meant by John to be based on Jesus' atoning work.

### *Jesus as Sanctifier*

Literal sanctification language, such as forms of ἁγιάζω or ἅγιον, is uncommon in Revelation, mainly being found in references to the 'holy city' (Rev. 11.2; 21.1).<sup>70</sup> The idea of Jesus as Sanctifier is also implied by the language of ransom and redemption (Rev. 5.9; 14.3–4)<sup>71</sup> which seems to imply people being set apart, the election language associated with the ransoming of 'saints from every tribe ...' (Rev. 5.9), the sealing of the 144,000 'out of every tribe ...' (Rev. 7.3–4), and the divine names written on their foreheads (Rev. 14.1; comp 2.17; 3.12). Moreover, the 144,000 exhibit practical and moral holiness: they have not 'defiled themselves with women,' and 'in their mouth no lie was found; they are blameless' (Rev. 14.4,5).<sup>72</sup> The saints and their opponents are set apart especially by moral and religious works. Unbelievers do not repent of idolatry or 'their murders or their sorceries or their fornication or their thefts' (Rev. 9.20–21; comp. 16.9, 11).

But it is not only unbelievers who are called to repentance. The greatest attention in the text to issues of holiness is found in the messages to the seven churches (Revelation 2–3). Christians in the seven churches of Asia, the original audience of the text, are frequently called on to repent:<sup>73</sup> of abandoning their first love (Rev. 2.4–5); of the teaching of the Nicolaitans, which seems to relate to compromise with idolatry (Rev. 2.14–16); of involvement with the teaching and practices of Jezebel (Rev. 2.20–22); of spiritual slothfulness (Rev. 3.1–3); and of complacency and self-satisfaction (Rev. 3.15–19). The Sardis church is faulted for not going on to perfection: 'I have not found your works perfect

69 Cf Brown, *Divine Healer*, p. 210.

70 Cf McQueen, *Eschatology*, pp. 229–30.

71 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 423; Smalley, *Revelation to John*, p. 137.

72 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 425–28. Bauckham associates their sexual abstinence with OT rules of war (*Theology of Revelation*, p. 78). Comp. Beale, *Revelation*, pp. 738–47.

73 Cf Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, pp. 122–23; Smalley, *Revelation to John*, pp. 104–105.

in the sight of my God' (Rev. 3.2). Though this is probably more about the incompleteness of their service than their moral imperfection,<sup>74</sup> the message to Sardis has a strong holiness theme using clothing imagery: 'you have still a few persons in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes; they will walk with me, dressed in white ... If you conquer, you will be clothed like them in white clothes' (Rev. 3.4–5).<sup>75</sup> Moreover the favored believers, the 'conquerors', qualify for that status and the rewards that go with it by a combination of spiritual loyalty and moral faithfulness. Here we find a practical understanding of Jesus as Sanctifier.<sup>76</sup> What Jesus appears to be doing through these prophetic words is sanctifying his people by a process of exhortations, promises and warnings. He is calling on them, through John and the Spirit, to separate themselves from the ways of the non-Christian culture around them and to live a life characterized by moral uprightness, loyalty and love. Moreover, there are warnings about the consequences if they do not obey (Rev. 2.16,22–23), and this same note is sounded repeatedly throughout the whole book (Rev. 9.20–21;18.3–6; 22.15).

In other words, holiness of life is expected of Jesus' followers in Revelation based on their 'positional sanctification' (that is, election). But how do they get the power to live like this? The Wesleyan Pentecostals saw sanctification as a separate work of grace subsequent to salvation, or at least the possibility in this life of entire sanctification in-worked by Jesus, not achieved by the believer's own efforts.<sup>77</sup> This note is not strong in Revelation, though it may be implied by the setting apart language mentioned above and the white clothing imagery.<sup>78</sup>

In conclusion, Jesus is revealed in Revelation as Sanctifier, but not by a process of crisis experiences of total sanctification<sup>79</sup> – at least, not yet. Matthew Thompson makes a convincing the case for entirely sanctified believers administering a sanctified universe in the eschaton,<sup>80</sup> and McQueen argues for a future 'communal holiness'<sup>81</sup> and a worldwide 'sacred space'.<sup>82</sup> And those

74 Cf Rebecca Skaggs and Priscilla C. Benham, *Revelation* (Pentecostal Commentary Series; Blandford Forum, UK: Deo, 2009), p. 46.

75 Cf Koester, *Revelation*, p. 314.

76 Cf Macchia, *Baptized*, p. 223.

77 Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 29, 56–58, 230; Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology*, pp. 87, 107–15; Macchia, *Baptized*, pp. 30–31.

78 Cf McQueen, *Eschatology*, pp. 231, 234.

79 A conclusion perhaps more acceptable to Pentecostals of the 'finished work' view (cf Macchia, 'Baptized in the Spirit', p. 15).

80 Thompson, *Kingdom Come*, pp. 129–40.

81 McQueen, *Eschatology*, pp. 230–34.

82 McQueen, *Eschatology*, pp. 237–39.

excluded from the holy city are indicted for their practice of 'abomination or falsehood' (Rev. 21.27) or labeled as 'dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood' (Rev. 22.15).

But in the present, Jesus stands over against each believer, and each local church, to teach and shape them into holiness through the Holy Spirit.

### *Jesus as Baptizer in the Holy Spirit*

The Book of Revelation as a whole is produced in the Spirit.<sup>83</sup> The seven messages to the local churches are seen as 'what the Spirit is saying to the churches' (Rev. 2.7, etc), and the Spirit sometimes speaks in the narrative (Rev. 14.13; 22.17). All the visions are received 'in the spirit' (or Spirit) (Rev. 1.10; 4.2; 17.3; 21.10), a phrase which stands as a marker of the different stages of the revelation.<sup>84</sup> Moreover the 'spirit of prophecy'<sup>85</sup> is identified with 'the testimony of Jesus' in Rev. 19.10.<sup>86</sup>

However, the work of the Spirit is otherwise not explicitly emphasized in Revelation.<sup>87</sup> The Spirit is implied by 'the seven spirits' (Rev. 1.4; 3.1; 4.5; 5.6),<sup>88</sup> by the witness of the saints (Rev. 2.13; 11.3; 12.11; 19.10; compare Acts 1.8),<sup>89</sup> by the image of the two olive trees (Rev. 11.4) derived from Zech.4.3–6,<sup>90</sup> by the

83 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 44; Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, pp. 115–16; McQueen, *Eschatology*, pp. 240–41.

84 Cf Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, pp. 138–50; Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 3; Melissa L. Archer, 'I Was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day': A Pentecostal Engagement with Worship in the Apocalypse (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2015), pp. 130, 140, 175–76. Comp. Skaggs and Benham, *Revelation*, p. 27; Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, p. 116.

85 Cf Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, pp. 189, 191.

86 Cf Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, pp. 119–21; McQueen, *Eschatology*, pp. 242–43.

87 Cf David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1997), p. 36; Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, p. 2; Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, p. 109.

88 Commentators debate whether this phrase refers to the 'sevenfold Spirit of God' (perhaps following Isa. 11.2) or perhaps seven angels of God (following the apocalyptic tradition). For the former view, see Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 92, 223; Skaggs and Benham, *Revelation*, pp. 21–22; Osborne, *Revelation*, p. 61; Beale, *Revelation*, pp. 189–90; Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, p. 110; Smalley, *Revelation to John*, pp. 33–34; Frank D. Macchia, 'Exploring a Strange New World: A Theological Response to Craig R. Koester' (*Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 24 [2015]), pp. 36–37. For the latter view, see Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, pp. 33–35; Koester, *Revelation*, p. 216. For an extended discussion of both views, see Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, pp. 9–21, 176.

89 Cf Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, pp. 174–75; Macchia, *Baptized*, p. 162.

90 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 330; Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, pp. 133, 162–63, 172–73; Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, pp. 113–15; McQueen, *Eschatology*, p. 244.

'breath of life' that enters into the dead witnesses (Rev. 11.11; compare Gen. 2.7; Ezek. 37.5),<sup>91</sup> and by the image of the 'water of life' (Rev. 7.17; 22.1, 17).<sup>92</sup>

However, it is the relationship between the Spirit and Christ that I want to focus on here. In the early chapters of Revelation, they are particularly associated in the area of communication. The first mention of the 'seven spirits' is joined to description of Jesus as 'the faithful witness' (Rev. 1.4–5). Later in that chapter, John's first experience of being 'in the spirit' leads to his being commissioned by the risen Christ to 'write in a book what you see' (Rev. 1.10–11).<sup>93</sup> This task begins with recording the seven messages to the seven local churches (Revelation 2–3), each of which commences with an instruction from the risen Christ to write to the church's angel, a message which begins with, 'These are the words of ...' followed by a description of one aspect of the risen Christ as seen in John's vision (Rev. 2.1, 8, 12, 18; 3.1, 7, 14). Then at the end of each message comes the exhortation to 'listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches' (Rev. 2.7, 11, 17, 29; 3.6, 13, 22). The obvious inference is that the words of Christ and the words of the Spirit are one.<sup>94</sup> The Spirit speaks the words of the risen Jesus (compare Jn 16.13). And prophetic speech is a characteristic expression of the Spirit of Jesus, as both Rev. 19.10 and Acts 2.17–18 seem to indicate.

Later, when the Lamb appears in heaven, he is described in three phrases: 'standing as if it had been slaughtered' (denoting his atoning work, certainly his violent death),<sup>95</sup> 'having seven horns' (probably denoting his power and authority)<sup>96</sup> and '[having] seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth' (Rev. 5.6).<sup>97</sup> So the 'seven spirits' are closely identified with the Lamb as his eyes.<sup>98</sup> This third phrase seems to allude to Zech.4.10, which says 'these seven are the seven eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth'.<sup>99</sup> The reference in Zechariah 4 may be to the seven lamps

91 Cf Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, pp. 184–85.

92 See the survey in Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 683. Waddell also argues that the 'angel' of Rev. 10 is the Holy Spirit (Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, pp. 158–60), which seems unlikely. See also Smalley, *Revelation to John*, p. 562.

93 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 44.

94 Cf Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, p. 117.

95 Cf Koester, *Revelation*, pp. 376–77, 386.

96 Cf Osborne, *Revelation*, p. 257; Beale, *Revelation*, p. 351. Smalley points out that elsewhere in Revelation horns are only found in pictures of the enemies of God (Smalley, *Revelation to John*, p. 133).

97 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 225–26; Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, p. 178; Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, p. 112.

98 Cf Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, p. 178.

99 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 226–27; Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, p. 354; Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, p. 177; Koester, *Revelation*, p. 377.

of verse 2; the context also refers to 'two olive trees' (Zech.4.3, 11–12) who are 'two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth' (Zech. 4.14). Images of the Spirit are strong here, and this is confirmed by a favorite verse of Pentecostals: 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the LORD of hosts' (Zech. 4.6).<sup>100</sup> Putting this together, the seven eyes of the LORD (Zech. 4.10) and of the Lamb (Rev. 5.6)<sup>101</sup> seem to be the same and identifiable as the Holy Spirit. So why 'eyes' and why are they travelling throughout the earth? The immediate answer in Zechariah would appear to be that these eyes are a kind of reconnaissance patrol, similar to the four horses of Zech. 1.10 or perhaps parallel to the statement in 2 Chron. 16.9 that 'the eyes of the LORD range throughout the entire earth, to strengthen those whose heart is true to him'.<sup>102</sup>

However, in the Revelation reference, the seven spirits are not ranging so much as 'sent' (Gr. ἀπεσταλμένοι). The hearers of Revelation, if they were familiar with the language of the Fourth Gospel (as Thomas argues),<sup>103</sup> would link this language with statements about Jesus being sent by the Father (Jn 3.17, 28, 34; 5.36, 38; 6.29, 57; 7.29; 8.42; 10.36; 11.42; 17.3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25; all using the same Greek root ἀποστελλω),<sup>104</sup> sending the Spirit (Jn 14.26; 15.26; 16.7) and sending the apostles (Jn 4.38; 13.20). These usages come together remarkably in Jn 20.21–22, where the risen Jesus commissions the ten disciples with these words: καθὼς ἀπεσταλκεν με ὁ πατήρ, κἀγὼ πέμπω ὑμᾶς (i.e. 'as the Father has sent me, so I send you') and then imparts to them the Holy Spirit to enable them to carry out this commission, in anticipation of, or parallel to, Luke's Pentecost narrative.<sup>105</sup>

100 Cf Osborne, *Revelation*, pp. 421–22; Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, pp. 110–11.

101 This is a contrast to other mentions of Jesus' 'eyes' as being 'like a flame of fire' (Rev. 1.14; 2.18; 19.12).

102 Cf Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, p. 112; Koester, *Revelation*, p. 387.

103 Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 23, 225, 227. This is a controversial area, tied in with discussions of authorship and 'Johannine schools', but I think Thomas' argument is strong. Cf Stephen S. Smalley, *Thunder and Love: John's Revelation and John's Community* (Milton Keynes, UK: Word Publishing, 1994), pp. 37–40, 57–63, 67–69. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has argued against such close links (*The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998], pp. 85–113). But she conceded that 'an author could have access to various Christian traditions' (p. 101). If so, then the audience of Revelation could also be familiar with traditions related to John.

104 John 4.34; 5.23, 24, 30, 37; 6.38, 39, 40, 44; 7.16, 18, 28, 33; 8.16, 18, 26, 29; 9.4; 12.44, 45, 49; 13.20; 14.24; 15.21; 16.5.

105 See discussions on this in James D.G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1970), pp. 173–76; Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1996), pp. 91–100; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), II, pp. 1204–206; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John. Baker*

So if this allusion to the Fourth Gospel is credible, then John's description of the Lamb 'having ... seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth' seems to have missional implications. It sounds like John's and Luke's language of the Spirit being given by Jesus to equip or anoint the sent ones (apostles) for their worldwide mission<sup>106</sup> (Jn 20.21–22; Lk. 24.47–49; Acts 1.8; 2.32–33). Or to use other terms, this sounds like the 'baptism with the Holy Spirit' (Acts 1.5; 11.16).<sup>107</sup>

If this is true, the purpose of the Spirit being 'sent into all the earth' would be the same in Revelation as in Acts, that is, to gather in the ransomed, especially among the Gentiles.<sup>108</sup> This is exactly what we find in Revelation, even though it is not attributed directly to the Spirit: the slaughtered lamb ransoms 'saints from every tribe and language and people and nation' (Rev. 5.9; compare 7.9 and 15.4). All languages (Gr. γλώσσης) are to be gathered in. And this is the true implication of the first speaking in tongues mentioned in Acts.<sup>109</sup> The known tongues of Acts 2 from 'every nation under heaven' (Acts 2.5), are a clear indicator that the Spirit's coming was indeed for the purpose of reaching 'the ends of the earth' (Acts 1.8).<sup>110</sup> Similarly, the implication of the tongues heard in Cornelius' house was not just that these Gentiles had received the Spirit, but that this meant Gentiles were welcome into the Kingdom of God

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*Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), pp. 573–75, especially p. 573, n. 13.

- 106 Comp. Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 227; Osborne, *Revelation*, p. 257; Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, pp. 112–13; Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, pp. 177–78, 189; Waddell, 'Apocalypse of John according to Craig R. Koester', p. 20. Smalley speaks of the 'seven spirits' being 'sent out on a mission to the whole world' (Smalley, *Revelation to John*, p. 33; see also p. 133).
- 107 Macchia remarks, 'this seven-fold Spirit as described in 5.6 is possibly a cryptic reference to Pentecost' ('Exploring a Strange New World', p. 36). See also McQueen, *Eschatology*, p. 245.
- 108 Cf Daniela C. Augustine, 'The Empowered Church: Ecclesiological Dimensions of the Event of Pentecost', in Thomas, *Ecclesiology*, p. 163.
- 109 As Keener observes, 'tongues are a sign of prophetic empowerment for the continuing cross-cultural mission'. (Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012], I, p. 824). Cf Macchia, 'Baptized in the Spirit', p. 16, about the views of early Pentecostals like William Seymour.
- 110 Even if the original reference in Acts 25–11 was to Jewish pilgrims. Cf Darrell L. Bock, *Acts. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), pp. 99–105; David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, (MI: Eerdmans, 2009), pp. 135–37; Keener, *Acts*, I, pp. 823–24, 832–35, 842–44; Macchia, *Baptized*, p. 218.



(Acts 10.45–47; 11.15–18; 15.7–9).<sup>111</sup> Revelation then confirms that Jesus does baptize witnesses with the Holy Spirit, sending them out to gather in the Gentiles and their languages. It's in this sense primarily that we can speak of tongues being the evidence of the Spirit baptism: Jesus' Spirit-sending leads to new tongues being added to the church.<sup>112</sup>

Zechariah 4 also stands behind another possible reference to Spirit baptism in Revelation 11. The two 'witnesses' (Rev. 11.3) or 'prophets' (Rev. 11.10) are metaphorically called 'olive trees' and 'lampstands' (Rev. 11.4). Lampstands imply lamps which require oil to fuel them, which explains the need for olive trees (comp. Zech. 4.2–3, 11–12). In Zechariah, the prophet is shown that this speaks of the Spirit (Zech. 4.6) and later of 'the two anointed ones' (Zech. 4.14). Thus the witnesses (in Revelation 11 and Zechariah 4) depend on the power of the Spirit to carry out their mission, just as Luke relates in Lk. 24.48–49 and Acts 1.8.<sup>113</sup> Moreover in Revelation, lampstands speak of the local churches (Rev. 1.20), who are commissioned to bear witness to Jesus (see also Rev. 12.11). The episode in Revelation 11 can therefore justly be read as a message to and about the churches and their mission. It's even possible that the outcome of this mission is also referred to in this passage. The temple being measured in Rev. 11.1 is perhaps under construction (measuring is mentioned in connection with the ultimate temple, the new Jerusalem, in Rev. 21.15), just like the temple in Zechariah's day (Zech. 2.1–2; 4.9–10),<sup>114</sup> and in Zechariah 4 the emphasis is on the work of the Spirit in this process (Zech. 4.6–7). Thus Revelation 11 perhaps portrays Spirit-baptized witnesses engaged in building Christ's church.<sup>115</sup> This

111 Cf Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology*, p. 101; Bock, *Acts*, pp. 400–401, 409–10, 499–500; Peterson, *Acts*, pp. 339–41, 343–49, 425–26; Keener, *Acts*, 11, pp. 1809–812, 1825–828.

112 See discussion of Pentecost and Babel in Augustine, 'Empowered Church', pp. 166–75; Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology*, p. 98; and Macchia, *Baptized*, pp. 214–17.

113 Cf Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, p. 175; Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 330–31.

114 Cf Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, p. 165, 172–73. Waddell sees measuring as representing 'divine protection of God's people' (pp. 165, 167–68). Aune argues it 'signifies preservation' (Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, p. 630). However, in at least some cases measuring is connected to construction (Isa. 28.16–17; Jer. 31.38–39; Ezekiel 40–42; Zech. 1.16; 4.9–10).

115 Cf Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, pp. 166, 174. Other interpretations of the temple in Revelation 11 are possible: it could be the second temple, a future 'third temple', the temple in heaven, or something else, but I think seeing it as the church is at least feasible in view of Rev. 1.20 and makes sense of the 'protection and vulnerability' that Thomas notes (Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 327; see surrounding discussion in pp. 324–27). See also discussion in Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, pp. 596–98.

is also the only place in the Revelation narrative where this witness may have had positive results, backed up by signs and wonders (Rev. 11.13).<sup>116</sup>

### *Jesus as (Soon) Coming King*

This eschatological conviction may be the driving belief of the fivefold gospel in Pentecostalism. Indeed, Faupel claims 'the belief in the imminent premillennial return of Christ proved to be the primary motivation for evangelization and world mission' among early Pentecostals.<sup>117</sup> This is also the most obvious and uncontroversial aspect to be found in Revelation at first glance. Unquestionably Jesus is seen as 'coming' in such places as Rev. 1.7; 2.25; 16.15; 22.7, 12 and 20.<sup>118</sup> He says 'I am coming soon' (Gr. ἔρχομαι ταχύ),<sup>119</sup> three times in the final chapter of the text.<sup>120</sup> And he is clearly coming as King, that is, to reign with his people (Rev. 22.5), since the new Jerusalem contains his throne (Rev. 22.3), and previously he and the resurrected saints reign for a thousand years (Rev. 20.4). Even now he is called 'the ruler of the kings of the earth' (Rev. 1.5).

But how soon is soon? The Pentecostals of the first decades of the twentieth century believed that their new movement was in some way the 'latter rain' which would usher in the final harvest of souls and the second coming.<sup>121</sup> The Christians to whom the first manuscript of Revelation was sent may have believed the same.<sup>122</sup> But either they were mistaken<sup>123</sup> or 'soon' means something different in prophetic language: either God's timing is radically different to ours ('with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years

116 Cf Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, pp. 86–88; Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, pp. 187–88; Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 342; Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, pp. 628–29. (Aune argues strongly that 'gave glory to God' equals conversion). But see discussion in Allan J. McNicol, *The Conversion of the Nations in Revelation* (London: T & T Clark International, 2011), pp. 9–10, 123–27.

117 Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, p. 21. Cf Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology*, p. 15; Peter Althouse, *Spirit of the Last Days* (JPTSup 25; London: T & T Clark International, 2003), p. 1.

118 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 95; Osborne, *Revelation*, pp. 69–70; McQueen, *Eschatology*, p. 258.

119 This adverb can be translated as 'quickly', 'without delay', 'soon', or 'soon afterward' according to Barclay Newman's dictionary in *The Greek New Testament* (UBS 1994), p. 179.

120 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 668.

121 Cf Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 30–31, 308; Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, p. 44; Althouse, *Last Days*, pp. 1, 10, 18–19.

122 Cf Koester, *Revelation*, pp. 838–39.

123 Already by 1908, it was clear that this 'imminence' would not be realised in the way expected by the Pentecostals (cf Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, p. 228). Smalley argues that in Revelation the Parousia is 'perpetually imminent' (Smalley, *Revelation to John*, pp. 37, 568).

are like one day', as 2 Pet. 3.8 puts it, borrowing language from Ps. 90.4) or the starting point for that 'soon' is much later than John's time as some dispensationalists believed.<sup>124</sup>

The other hermeneutical problem in Revelation concerns where in the text the second coming appears. The first reference is in Rev. 1.7:

Look! He is coming (Gr. ἔρχεται) with the clouds;  
every eye will see him,  
even those who pierced him;  
and on his account all the tribes  
of the earth will wail.

This seems plain enough until we dig deeper. 'Coming with the clouds' is an apparent reference to Dan. 7.13, where the 'one like a human being' comes on the clouds to God to be given 'dominion and glory and kingship', so maybe Rev. 1.7 is referring to Jesus' ascension, not his second advent. But surely 'every eye will see him' shows that we are reading of his triumphant public return, also on clouds (Acts 1.11; Mk 13.26). However, does this include 'those who pierced him',<sup>125</sup> who were dead and buried in the first century?<sup>126</sup> And 'all the tribes of earth' could be translated 'all the tribes of the land (Gr. γῆς)', that is, Israel (compare Rev. 7.4).<sup>127</sup> According to Matthew, Jesus at his trial says to the high priest,

I tell you,  
From now on you will see the Son of Man  
seated at the right hand of Power  
and coming on the clouds of heaven.

<sup>124</sup> See discussion in Koester, *Revelation*, pp. 850–51.

<sup>125</sup> This phrase has been derived from Zech. 12.10. Space does not permit a thorough discussion of how Dan. 7.13 and Zech. 12.10 have been conflated in Rev. 1.7 or how this relates to similar passages in the synoptics (especially Mt. 24.30; but see also Mk 13.26; 14.62; Lk. 21.27). Cf Aune, *Revelation* 1–5, pp. 54–56, 59; Smalley, *Revelation to John*, pp. 37–38.

<sup>126</sup> Cf discussion of the parallel reference in Jn 19.37 in Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 95.

<sup>127</sup> Cf Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), pp. 127–29. But see Beale, *Revelation*, p. 197; Skaggs and Benham, *Revelation*, p. 23; Osborne, *Revelation*, p. 68.

A number of commentators therefore understand this as a reference to the ascended Christ coming in judgment in 70 CE.<sup>128</sup>

There are a series of references to Jesus coming in the messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2–3, either using the same verb for ‘come’ as in Rev. 1.7 (ἐρχομαι) or the future of ἔρχω. To the church in Ephesus, Jesus says ‘I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent’ (Rev. 2.5).<sup>129</sup> To the church in Pergamum, he says about the followers of the Nicolaitans, ‘I will come to you soon and make war against them with the sword of my mouth’ (Rev. 2.16). To the faithful minority in Thyatira, he says, ‘hold fast to what you have until I come’ (Rev. 2.25). To the dead church in Sardis he says, ‘If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you’ (Rev. 3.3). To the Philadelphians he says, ‘I am coming soon’, after promising them protection from ‘the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world’ (Rev. 3.10–11). Are these references to the triumphant second coming? It appears unlikely,<sup>130</sup> even though language evocative of the second coming is used at times, such as the comparison with a thief.<sup>131</sup> In general, these statements are better understood as referring to a spiritual coming, a visitation of Christ by the Spirit, especially if we understand Jesus as intending these actions for the literal first century churches. As McQueen puts it, ‘Jesus comes repeatedly to the Church *prior* to the event of his eschatological coming so that the Church may be challenged and strengthened to conquer ...’<sup>132</sup> However, these temporal comings also show the greater coming to follow.<sup>133</sup>

A more definite reference to the second coming may be found in Rev. 16.14–15. Immediately after speaking of preparations for ‘battle on the great day of God the Almighty’ we read in parentheses (NRSV) ‘See, I am coming

128 Cf David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance* (Tyler, TX: Dominion Press), p. 66; Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 127–31; N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 459–64. Aune, however, maintains that John intends us to see this as describing the Parousia (Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, p. 59). See also discussion in Beale, *Revelation*, pp. 197–98.

129 Smalley comments here, ‘Christ is speaking about his Parousia now, not at the end’ (Smalley, *Revelation to John*, p. 62).

130 Unless, of course, John was expecting Jesus to come again in his lifetime or very soon after.

131 Comp. Mt. 24.43; 2 Pet. 3.10; 1 Thess. 5.2. Cf Koester, *Revelation*, p. 851; Smalley, *Revelation to John*, p. 83.

132 McQueen, *Eschatology*, p. 259.

133 See discussion in Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, pp. 188, 221–22. Beale concludes that Christ’s ‘coming’ in Revelation ‘is understood better as a process occurring throughout history’ and concluded with his ‘final’ coming (*Revelation*, p. 198). Comp. Smalley, *Revelation to John*, p. 83.

(Gr. ἔρχομαι) like a thief!’ And, as we saw above, Jesus says three times ‘I am coming soon’ (Gr. ἔρχομαι ταχύ) in Revelation 22. These statements introduce a blessing on ‘the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book’ (Rev. 22.7), a promised reward ‘according to everyone’s work’ (Rev. 22.12) and a responsive call, ‘Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!’ (Rev. 22.20). The coming of the Lord Jesus is clearly a very happy expectation.

The second coming may also be in mind in some of the narrative images of Revelation, such as the sixth seal (Rev. 6.12–17), the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11.15–19), and the harvest imagery of Revelation 14,<sup>134</sup> but especially that of the rider on the white horse in Revelation 19. Most commentators view this as a reference to the second coming<sup>135</sup> in view of its position in the narrative (an obvious climax), the descriptions of the rider (language evoking the Messiah and sometimes used previously in Revelation of Jesus),<sup>136</sup> the introductory phrase, ‘Then I saw heaven opened’ (Rev. 19.11),<sup>137</sup> the allusion to Psalm 2 and Isa. 49.2 (Rev. 19.15), the entourage of heavenly armies (Rev. 19.14)<sup>138</sup> and the violent victory the rider wins over the enemies in the plot (Rev. 19.19–21). This is also followed by the binding of Satan (Rev. 20.1–3) and the ‘first resurrection’ (Rev. 20.4–6).<sup>139</sup> On the other hand, the victory is temporary: Satan comes back for a final stand in Rev. 20.7–10. And the last judgment, associated with the second coming elsewhere in the New Testament (Mt. 25.31–46; 2 Thess. 1.6–10; 2 Pet. 3.10), only comes a thousand years later (Rev. 20.7–15).

Moreover some of the language attached to the second coming in the New Testament and Revelation itself is conspicuously absent here: the trumpet call (1 Thess. 4.16; 1 Cor. 15.52; comp Rev. 10.7; 11.15),<sup>140</sup> the catching up or transformation of the saints (1 Thess. 4.17; 1 Cor. 15.51–52), ‘coming like a thief’ (compare

<sup>134</sup> Cf McQueen, *Eschatology*, pp. 261–62.

<sup>135</sup> E.g. Thomas writes, ‘coming from heaven will be the long awaited return of Jesus himself’ (*The Apocalypse*, p. 574). See also Osborne, *Revelation*, pp. 679–94; Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, pp. 105–106; Koester, *Revelation*, pp. 753–54; McQueen, *Eschatology*, pp. 262–63.

<sup>136</sup> Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 574–83; Smalley, *Revelation to John*, pp. 488–90.

<sup>137</sup> Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 574.

<sup>138</sup> Comp. Mt. 13.41; 16.27; 25.31; 1 Thess. 3.13; 2 Thess. 1.7; Jude 14. Cf Osborne, *Revelation*, p. 684. According to Osborne, these armies apparently include the saints as well as angels (comp Rev. 17.14; see also Smalley, *Revelation to John*, pp. 492–94).

<sup>139</sup> Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 603–606; Osborne, *Revelation*, pp. 706–708; Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, pp. 147–48.

<sup>140</sup> Cf Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, p. 142.

16.15), coming on clouds (compare 1.7),<sup>141</sup> being seen by everyone (1.7), people wailing at the sight (1.7), or even words like *parousia*, though there is probably a parallel with the description in 2 Thess. 1.7–8.<sup>142</sup> McQueen, for example, skates over this; he immediately jumps from Revelation 19 to a survey of this other New Testament language, largely in Paul's letters, and seems to assume the connection to the very different apocalyptic language of Revelation.<sup>143</sup> Further, the language of the battle in Revelation 19 does not actually portray Jesus coming to the earth. He rides in heaven apparently, for John sees him when heaven is opened (19.11), his armies are heavenly (19.14), and he strikes the (earthly) armies with 'the sword that came from his mouth' (19.21, 15) rather than coming down and engaging in literal combat.<sup>144</sup> All this is compatible with a scenario where Jesus and his heavenly armies come in judgment and inflict devastation on the earth while remaining 'above' it.<sup>145</sup>

But if Revelation 19 is not describing the second advent, then it is not demanding a premillennial coming, as would otherwise be the most natural implication of the chronology in John's narrative.<sup>146</sup> Pentecostals have been almost unanimously premillennial in their eschatology.<sup>147</sup> Jesus as 'soon coming King' meant that his return was imminent (which often implied a two-stage coming, begun by a 'secret' rapture) and would usher in the millennial reign.<sup>148</sup> The premillennial belief is grounded in a chronological reading of Revelation with the assumption that Revelation 19 refers to the second coming of Christ.<sup>149</sup> This has been challenged in two ways: I have cast doubt on the identification of the events in Revelation 19 with the second coming; others have seen Revelation 20 as recapitulating earlier parts of the narrative, rather

141 R. Alastair Campbell, 'Triumph and delay: the interpretation of Revelation 19:11–20:10', *Evangelical Quarterly* 80.1 (2008), p. 4.

142 Ben Witherington III, *Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 242.

143 McQueen, *Eschatology*, pp. 262–68.

144 But see Osborne, *Revelation*, p. 691.

145 Cf Jon K. Newton, 'Time Language and the Purpose of the Millennium'; *Colloquium* 43.2 (2011), p. 162. The picture of God riding to the aid of His people and to defeat His enemies is found in the Old Testament, e.g. Deut. 33.26–27; 2 Sam. 22.10–15; Ps. 18.9–15; 68.4, 33; Isa. 19.1–2; Hab. 3.8–15; Nah. 1.2–8.

146 E.g. McQueen, *Eschatology*, p. 269.

147 Cf Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology*, p. 33; Thompson, *Kingdom Come*, pp. 49, 52–53.

148 E.g. Duffield and Van Cleave, *Foundations*, pp. 519–46; see Althouse, *Last Days*, pp. 9–44 and McQueen, *Eschatology*, Chapters 3–4, on the historical development of Pentecostal eschatology and Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, pp. 31–13, regarding shifts in millennial thinking among UK Pentecostals in recent years.

149 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 592.

than following on from them chronologically,<sup>150</sup> or understood the millennium as a theological image rather than a literal period of time.<sup>151</sup> Moreover, the binding of Satan can be read as missional language: he is imprisoned 'so that he would deceive the nations no more' (Rev. 20.3), thus releasing the gospel to do its work among the Gentiles.<sup>152</sup>

So, while the expectation of Jesus as 'coming King' is unquestionably biblical, the details are more complex than the classical Pentecostal view might lead us to expect. Certainly, Revelation sees this coming as both a present and a future reality. Thomas puts it well when, discussing Rev. 22.7, he observes,

Just as the hearers already experience in their daily activities eschatological realities in the things that must take place quickly, so they experience the coming of Jesus here and now in their community worship and activities, a coming that is tied to the eschatological reality of his return in the consummation.<sup>153</sup>

### Conclusions

Jesus is clearly revealed in Revelation as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, and coming King. However, there are significant differences between Revelation and the classical Pentecostal fivefold gospel.

Specifically, Revelation interprets these truths in a way that is not only Christ-centered<sup>154</sup> but also:

1. Eschatologically fulfilled. These aspects of Christ's ministry are not all to be fully experienced in this life or age. This applies especially to the experience of Christ as Healer and Sanctifier as well as coming King.
2. Missionally focused. The purpose of this fivefold revelation is to motivate the church to carry out its mission of testifying to Christ to the ends of the earth and making disciples of all nations. The emphasis in Revelation

150 Cf Smalley, *Revelation to John*, pp. 500–505; Beale, *Revelation*, pp. 974–83. See arguments against this line of thinking in Newton, 'Time Language', pp. 156–60.

151 E.g. Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, pp. 107–108.

152 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 598; Beale, *Revelation*, pp. 985–89; McQueen, *Eschatology*, p. 270.

153 Cf Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, p. 668.

154 Yong would add perhaps 'soteriologically derived' in that he sees all these truths as flowing out of Christ's work as Savior (Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology*, pp. 229–30).

is not on individual experiences as much as global effects. Salvation is for people of all nations who have been purchased with the blood of Jesus. People are set apart from the world in all nations. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Spirit baptism is for the purpose of reaching all nations and bringing their tongues into the Kingdom of God. The coming of the king is to be preached in all nations (as in the use of gospel language in Rev. 14.6).

3. Pneumatologically mediated. While the Holy Spirit is mentioned sparingly in Revelation, Christ's work of saving, sanctifying and healing is mediated and revealed in the Spirit. Moreover, His coming is not just future but now in the Spirit.<sup>155</sup>
4. Communally applied. Revelation's message is addressed to churches and nations more than individuals, though not exclusively so. Salvation, healing, sanctification and Spirit baptism are communal experiences.<sup>156</sup>
5. World (empire)-resisting. The fivefold revelation of Jesus is shown in a context of resistance to the Greco-Roman world and the Roman empire in particular. Jesus is revealed in his fivefold role in contrast with Caesar.<sup>157</sup> People are saved out of the deception of the idolatrous culture and sanctified to stand out against the idolatry, immorality, sorcery and injustice of that culture, including the empire that embodies it. The King is coming in judgment on that world and the Spirit is given to enable the church to bear witness to Jesus in defiance of the culture and empire.

This discussion should also affect our reading of Revelation. The fivefold revelation of Jesus, if indeed it is present in Revelation, shows us that Revelation is indeed 'the revelation of Jesus Christ' (Rev. 1.1), that is, not just originating in him but about him.<sup>158</sup> It also shows that Revelation is not just a future-oriented text but has relevance now, motivating believers to live for Jesus and carry forth his mission in the power of the Pentecostal Spirit.

155 As Thompson points out, the Spirit is also central to the coming of Christ and the subsequent 'Spirit baptism' of the whole cosmos (*Kingdom Come*, pp. 123–24, 135–37).

156 Cf Thompson, *Kingdom Come*, pp. 139, 152–53.

157 Caesar was often referred to as *soter* (Savior) or son of God and his coming as king to his people was described as a *Parousia* (Wes Howard-Brook and Anthony Gwyther, *Unveiling Empire: Reading Revelation Then and Now* [Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1999], p. 115; J. Nelson Kraybill, *Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics and Devotion in the Book of Revelation* [Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2010], pp. 54–57).

158 The genitive form can, of course, be understood both ways.