

Rita Winkelmann

Considerations on the Series

REVELATION TO SAINT JOHN

The Revelation or in Greek language Apocalypse of Saint John, came into being as the last book of the New Testament in the late years of the reign of the Emperor Domitian (81-96 AD). Its author calls himself "John" and describes himself as a servant of Jesus Christ (Rev 1,1.2).

How did arise the revelation?

Emperor Domitian demanded the imperial cult, i.e. he had to be worshiped as a god. Many Christians opposed it and therefor were exposed to the martyrdom. John also had refused the homage to the God Emperor. According to the legend, John was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, but it turned into a refreshing bath. Therefore, the frightened emperor banished John to the island of Patmos

John says: " I John, ... was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. " (Rev. 1.9)

On Patmos, John wrote seven letters to the seven Christian churches in West Asia, Turkey today, as they were full of fear for the obligation to the emperor cult. He wrote these letters to encourage them, and said, that their enemies would be punished, that Christianity would prevail and that the heavenly kingdom would bring them redemption. His firm conviction based on divine visions and auditions, that he had on Patmos and that he wrote down, because a voice ordered it. This is the revelation or apocalypse of Saint John.

What does the Apocalypse contain?

The work describes the punishment, that God will send to the infidels and the rewards which will be given to the faithful people in God. It is not a prediction of the history of the world or the church. In some rather unusual images, symbols and allegories the work will result the fate of the faithfull and unbelieving people and prepare for martyrdom. So it is a book of consolation and reminder of the Christian Church.

It describes three major complexes of disasters: First the book with seven seals will be opened and predicts war, famine and death to the humanity. Then most of the seven trumpets bring natural disasters and the seven bowls of anger announce punishments. Between these events John devours the little book that is both bitter and sweet. Then there is the battle of the dragon or devil against the young woman, the description of the Adoration of the Lamb and the singers on the sea of glass. Angels announce the great Court of Babylon. And when the devil and sinners were thrown into the big fire, there is the vision of a heavenly Jerusalem.

When Babylon is mentioned, it is probably not Babylon in Mesopotamia, in which Jews were deported to slavery. Probably Babylon is a symbol for the city of Rome and the Roman

Empire with its cult of the emperor, by which Christs were tormented like the Jews in slavery in Babylon. Babylon – i.e. Rome – is considered to be discarded, corrupt, sinful and idolatrous as before Sodom and Gomorrah.

About the artistic preoccupation with the Revelation.

Many artists worked about the Revelation. Probably Albrecht Durer is the best known of them. In a highly condensed form he illustrated some texts of the Book of Revelation in 15 woodcuts. The graphic medium of woodcut shows black and white contrasts with black lines on a light background.

Rita Winkelmann discussed in her dissertation on Max Beckmann - Studies on color in the late work - about the interpretation and meaning of colors in painting. Results of this analysis flow into the series on the Revelation to St. John. Espacially the pure colors are the adequate expression for the dramatic visions of St. John.

Colours speak to the viewer's feeling in a special way, which evidenced can not be achieved by a black-and-white image. In particular, the pure colours - not mixed with white or black - can speak with an overwhelming force. They are particularly suited to express deep feelings and elemental forces that shape the Apocalypse prevail. Therefore, they are preferably used in this series.

The form design is limited almost exclusively to the representation of heads, hands and the objects, that are described in the Apocalypse. Occasionally, medieval uncial letters are included in the images.

In the first painting of the series on the Apocalypse, "John before Domitian," the first woodcut of Durer is quoted in an excerpt. All other paintings are own interpretations of the text. The images were painted in the years 2010-2011 in the format 100 x 80 cm acrylic on canvas.

On the problem of ambiguity of colours.

If you want to deal with the interpretation of colours, you have to solve are many problems. There is p. e. a nursery rhyme to the color red, which indicates the ambiguity of color: "Red is love, red is the blood, red is the devil in his rage." This ambiguity is in all colors.

Nevertheless, an interpretation does not lead not into randomness. Basically you can divide the interpretations into two classes: positive and negative interpretations. The context, in which the color occurs, determines the interpretation.

In this consideration

first the paintings will be shown and then the texts of the Apocalypse. These texts were translated into German by Schmanck Burghard, a classical scholars and theologians gene. He made a new translation of *Anthony Praetorius: De sacrosanctis novi foederis Jesu Christi sacramentis* from the year 1602. For the present series of paintings of the Apocalypse, he translated the lyrics from the original Greek text with special consideration of the Aramaic and hebraic linguistic background. Therefor the german translation has a great vitality and it impressively presents the wonder of the mighty visiones of the revelations.

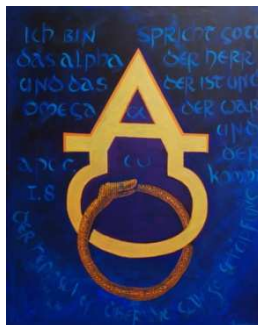


1th Saint John before Domitian

In the second general persecution, in the year 95, St. John was apprehended by the proconsul of Asia and sent to Rome, where he was miraculously preserved from death when thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. The Caesar Domitian, having failed to execute St. John, banished him into the isle of Patmos.

Rev 1:9 I John, ... was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

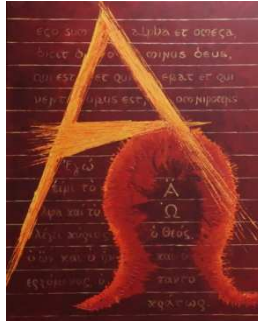
The image shows on the left the Emperor Domitian on a purple background. Violet is to be interpreted as a color of passion and torment, that Domitian causes, following his gesture towards John. The red of the glowing fire and the yellow of the hot oil cause great suffering, such as shows the facial expression of John. According to the ambiguity of red it can also symbolize in a positive sense the ardent love of St. John to God with respect to his self-sacrificing love of a martyr. And in a negative sense with respect to the martyrdom. Similarly, the same will follow for yellow. In a positive interpretation, it was poured from the splendor of the heavenly spirit in John, the negative interpretation bases on the burning heat of the hot oil. The cool celestial blue of the sky like cool water brings relief and deliverance, because John is - beseeching his God - unharmed.



2nd Alpha and Omega

1:8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

This is the first revelation to John. God introduces himself as the Almighty. He has no beginning and no end like the Uroborussnake that bites its own tail and is considered a symbol of eternity. Against a dark and meditative blue Alpha and Omega appear in gold - symbol of the other side. They are framed by a small margin in Orange - an increased red- to heighten their glory. Medieval manuscripts show this form.



3rd Alpha and Omega, Alpha and Omega (Greek and Latin)

1, 8: I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God, who exists and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Since antiquity purple and gold are the colors of the ruler. Only they were allowed to wear these colors. I also remember the hems of the purple togas who were allowed to wear the Roman senators. Until well into modern times, there were some Dress Codes, which allowed only certain persons to use and to wear certain colors. The common people wore natural colors - usually ochre, brown, gray, black. Today's medieval markets do not reflect authenticity in their colourfulness.

In the Middle Ages, the most precious manuscripts were written in gold letters on purple parchment or papyrus. To join this tradition, the image was created.

The orange of the Alpha is a sign of the highest energy of life and the red of the Omega is the spiritual fire ignition as burns in the flames of Pentecost Spirit.



4th What thou seest, write in a book

1 10.11: I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet saying: *What thou seest, write in a book!*

The vision begins as a listening experience. John's right hand will take up the message. The voice from behind brings the greatest excitement, which is perfectly embodied by a brilliant red. The voice of God manifests itself in royal yellow gold, which outshines the background, because the yellow light triumphs in white, the color of all the gods of light. It is a color of the Absolute, the beginning and end.



5th Seven candlesticks - seven stars

1, 12-16.20: And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man ... And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. ... The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the candlesticks, the seven, are the seven churches.

Against the deep meditative blue of the sky John had his first Vision. Jesus's face is given as the sun like a light phenomenon. The seven stars in his right hand and the sword rise from this light. The seven candlesticks are named after the seven churches, to whom John wrote seven letters: Philadelphia, Laodicea, Sardis, Pergamum, Smyrna, Ephesus, Thyatira.

Here I would like to point out, that certain sacred numbers occur again and again in the apocalypse: the number two for the couple, maybe three for unity of the three, the four for the four Evangelists, the seven for the seven days of creation, the eight as the number of perfection ($2 \times 2 \times 2$), the twelve for the twelve apostles, including 12 000 and the product of $12 \times 12 = 144$, and 144 000.



6th Fear not!

1, 17.18: And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying: *Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.*

In front of the blue of the night and calm and the deep indigo blue of meditation the anxious crouching John is comforted in purple, the color of passion. He winds like children do when they are afraid. About John the golden hand of the Creator inclines with the emanating golden text that shows little gems such as colored lights that emphasize the preciousness of the Word. Calming Green carries over from his hand on the frightened John.



7th The Thrones of The Elders

4, 2–4 : And behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon the throne; and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, like an emerald to look upon. And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones I saw twentyfour elders sitting...

Here a concrete representation is omitted. The colors of jasper and carnelian embody the divine before the heavenly blue. The rainbow in an emerald green color of hope arch over the thrones of the elders, who represent the high angels. The divine light rubs off on them.



8th Four Living Creatures

4, 6.7: And in the midst of the throneroom, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. 4:7 And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle.

As in the previous image, the bright appearance in the colors of jasper and carnelian, assume the presence of God. Four living creatures that are the guards for the throne surround him: bull, lion, eagle and man - the symbols of the four Evangelists. The background in grand purple is covered with eyes. The eyes are in the ancient world for vigilance - reminiscent of the hawk - but also for introspection and the presence of God who could be displayed from the Egyptians through the udjat-eye.



9th The Book with the Seven Seals

5,1-4: And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back, close sealed with seven seals. ... And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a great voice: *Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?* And no one in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon. And I wept much. ... And one of the elders saith unto me: *Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof.*

At the time of John books with stapled pages were unknown. It was usual to write on scrolls of papyrus or parchment. Such a scrolls with seven seals can be seen here. The book with seven seals is literally for the impossibility of unsolvable mysteries. The background shows the heavenly color blue and the violet of suffering, because John is crying very much. The scroll that only may be opened by the lion of Judah, i. e. Christ, appears in divine gold, pointing to the hereafter.

Now all seven seals are opened one after another and bring disasters for the people. First the four horsemen appear, who have been shown impressively in Dürer's woodcut on one page. Here they occur singly.



10th The First Seal: The Rider on the White Horse

6,1.2 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, *Come!* 6:2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon had a bow.

The first rider on the white horse is a young man who stands for the international war. White is the color of the beginning, because the battles begin here. The young man is faced with a fresh green as it appears in spring. But it is going to a bluish green and so it becomes a color of the energetic setting. The young man shows his excitement in the color red and the suffering he caused, in the violet.



11th The Second Seal: The Rider on the Red Horse

6, 3.4: And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying: *Come!*
 6:4 And another horse came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat thereon it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

The second rider is an energetic man of middle age, who distributes terror before the red-green background. He brings the Civil War. The pair of red-green color is most aggressive. Vincent van Gogh writes to his brother Theo, that red-green is spreading an atmosphere in which you could commit a murder.



12th The Third Seal: The Rider on the Black Horse

6, 5.6: And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying: *Come!*
 And I saw, and behold, a black horse; and he that sat thereon had a balance in his hand.
 And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying: *A measure of wheat for a shilling, and three measures of barley for a shilling; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not.*

The third **rider** is an old man in black on a pale and sometimes yellow background. He brings high prices, shortages and famine across the **country**. The black points to protest, grief, loss and death, such as red for danger. The yellow hues that express in negative sense power, violence and death underscore the frightening mood. The slightly warmer yellows alleviate this tension and bring a little kindness into the picture, because the oil and the wine, which were the staple foods, should be done no harm.



13th The Fourth Seal: The Rider on the Pale Horse

6, 7.8: And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying: *Come!*

And I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth. The fourth rider - in pale colors like the horse - is the death. He brings plague and mass death. The color reveals mortality and decomposition. Monster of the underworld spread fear. The scene is set against a turbulent, spotty in expressing ground in violet and red, expressing torture and threats.



14th The Fifth Seal: White Robes

6:9-11: And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 6:10 and they cried with a great voice, saying: *How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* And there was given them to each one a white robe; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed even as they were, should have fulfilled their course.

White robes of innocence and purity are given to the martyrs who have laid their martyrdom in the fire. The white altar in front of the blue sky is in correspondence with them.



15th The Sixth Seal: Black Sun and Red Moon

6:12.13: And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; 6:13 and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind.

In this picture, the description of John is translated visually.



16th Rocks, fall on us and hide us!

6:15–17: And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they say to the mountains and to the rocks: *Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?*

Due to the disasters people suffer anxiety. Therefore they want to escape and hide themselves, because they can't endure no longer. The darkness of caves promises security. But the burdening of the rocks presses the suffering people against the lower edge of the image



17th The Number of them that were sealed

7,4–9: And I heard the number of them that were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel:

Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand:

Of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues.

The sealed ones are shown and the people should be comforted by them. The sealed ones are those who bear the seal of God in their heart and on their forehead, they are protected and saved.

How to translate the large number of the sealed, no one could count? The figures in the Apocalypse are not to be taken really. They each will represent a very large number. Over the names of the tribes of Israel is a shimmering bar list, indicating the number of the sealed.

From different directions, this dashing looks different. The ground color green may indicate that we are all hoping to be among those sealed ones.

There now follows a new seven-part series.



18th The Seven Trumpets

8,2-4: And I saw the seven angels that stand before God; and there were given unto them seven trumpets. 8:3 And another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 8:4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.

The first four trumpets announce now natural disasters, the next two ones predict pain which comes upon the persecutors of Christians. From the appearance of yellow and red light, implying the presence of God, blue trumpets blown in all directions of the sky. From the golden censer on the green background of the world reddish plume rises up as prayers of love.



19th The First Trumpet: Hail and Fire

8,7: And the first sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

Gray hail and fire are falling on the earth toward the lower left corner. In the art it is called a death corner, when a motion from the right corner above down to the left one can be seen, and thus indicates a doomsday scenario as it did in Figure 15 (Black Sun - Red Moon). Charred trees and scorched grass occupy the lower part of the picture.



20th The Third Trumpet: A great Star falling from Heaven

8,10,11: And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters; 8:11 and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

An asteroid falls to earth in fire colors. At some distance from the image in the background the sea can be seen, which recedes from the falling star and forms a trough. The light violet-colored sprinklings symbolize here again the suffering that comes down from this natural disaster on human and animal.

Besides the Apocalypse of John, there are stories of other peoples and cultures that describe such an impact. There are also scientific studies and comparisons of such descriptions. The tradition of the Aborigines come at the next to the probable consequences of such a meteorite impact.

In the following, as well as in the previous images John describes a proposal meteorite impact.



21st The Fourth Trumpet: The Stars were darkened

8, 12: And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner.

Like a dark curtain, the darkness sets over a part of the stars that lose their luminosity. Dust darkens the sky dispersed by a meteorite impact. The red color of the moon during a lunar eclipse also occurs in the shadow of the Earth covered by the moon appear reddish. It could also be observed in ancient times. Physically, this is a diffraction phenomenon.



22nd The Fifth Trumpet: Men tormented

9,1-9: And the fifth angel sounded. ... And he opened the pit of the abyss, and there went up a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace. ... And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth. ... And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months. ... And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war ... and their teeth were as teeth of lions.

After a meteor strike initially intense heat, which causes severe fires, will spread over the earth. In this fiery furnace of fire, people will be tortured. Their faces are gray with fear and pain. The locusts are a synonym for a great nuisance, as we already know from the seven plagues of Egypt in the Old Testament. Here, the plague is symbolized by a yellow lion's head with open mouth. Yellow is in the negative interpretation a sign of sharp aggressiveness, sharp as a fanfare as says the Synesthet Kandinsky.



23rd The Sixth Trumpet: Horses with Fire, Smoke and Brimstone

9, 17,18: And the sixth angel sounded And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates *as* of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone: and the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceedeth fire and smoke and brimstone. 9:18 By these three plagues was the third part of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths.

Natural phenomena such as red rain, dust and gas clouds are the possible consequences of a meteoroid impact. Horses in the colors of red flame, blue smoke and sulfur yellow smoke come out of their nostrils. Fire, smoke and sulfur are threatening people symbolically with lion bites. The lion was a symbolic animal for all deities because of its super-human strength and power.

Before the seventh trumpet is blown, we find a slot on the little book, the prophets and the woman and the dragon.



24th The Angel and the Little Book

10,12.9: And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, ... and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; 10:2 and he had in his hand a little book open:. ... 10:9 And I went unto the angel, saying unto him that he should give me the little book. And he saith unto me: *Take it, and eat it up!*

Albrecht Dürer represents the angel as a physical phenomenon with feet as pillars in his woodcuts. In my series of the Apocalypse I do it without physical representations of angels. Here he is to see according to the text in almost all images as a light-appearance on two major pillars of fire. Fire indicates the presence of God in the way as the burning bush and the pillar of fire, that leads the Israelites at night in the desert.

White stands for the clarity and affection of light and the presence of God's light, yellow for spirituality and the divine gold and red for the strength and power of God and his all-embracing love.

The little book, that John will readily assimilate, is to see in the same colors.



25th Bitter-Sweet

10, 9.10: And I went unto the angel, saying unto him that he should give me the little book. And he saith unto me: *Take it, and eat it up!* and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey. 10:10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was made bitter.

The word of God is sweet but the final judgment is bitter. Only the color should speak to Sweet and Bitter. By Nicholas Cusanus Violet is a 'coincidentia oppositorum' - color of the reconciling the contradiction of the warm color red with the cold color blue or red, the color

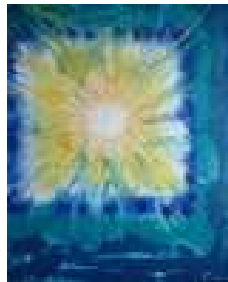
of earth, and blue, the heavenly. Purple is oscillating and disturbing by mixing the two contrasting colors. In the bright, branching parts lilac and violet appear soft are the color of mysticism. We find a bright purple pink often as the little girl's favorite color - and we say, oh how sweet! The strong violet symbolizes suffering and pain in this picture. It was chosen as an expression of bitterness. The strong branching background of the painting in sync with the alarming color purple symbolize the complexity of the message.



26th The two Witnesses

11, 3,4: And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. 11:4 These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth.

God sends prophets. The color of olive trees surrounds their heads. With their sometimes closed eyes, they show their thoughtfulness and the relationship to internal values. They are not regarded as divine seers with eyes wide open, but as Cassandra with inner voice.



27th The Seventh Trumpet: The Ark of the Covenant

11, 15.19: And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said: *The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant.

There are a few ideas as the Ark of the Covenant looked like. But the external form of the charge does not matter. It's their content and meaning, to be shown.

From the round inside the bright divine light shines in white and gold as a symbol of the spirituality of the other side. It is pervaded with a little red of God's love and power. The circle and the ball is in the sign the sky and of perfection in Christian symbolism. A square, which symbolizes the earth, is framed and outshined. This fits perfectly with the title of the exhibition in Soest in 2012, proposed by Dr. Wolf Kalipp: *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth.*

The next four pictures show a conflict between the woman - meaning the Virgin or the God-folk - and the dragon or the emperor cult.



28th The Woman and the Dragon

12, 1-4: And a great sign was seen in heaven: a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was the child; and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered. And there was seen another sign in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. ... and the dragon standeth before the woman that is about to be delivered, that when she is delivered he may devour her child.

Two visions of heaven describe this picture. First the woman in **labor** is appearing in the color of innocence and light: white. She is equipped with all the signs of the Virgin as Queen of Heaven: a star wreath crowns her head, the moon at her feet. The dragon appearing in hell-colors is longing for her child, that will be born.

In parallel interpretation the woman can be seen as a symbol of the God-folk and the dragon with seven heads as a symbol of Rome's seven emperors.



29th The woman and the child

12, 5: And she was delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne.

In a positive interpretation of the colors of the background change to red for love and in blue for the power of faith and trust and intimacy and meditation. The red-blue pair is used in conjunction with Our Lady, often interpreted as red for the earth and blue for the sky, as the Mother of God belongs to both alike.

Mother of God associated with the severity of archaic appears in tender light blue, like the young woman in the church window in Chartres. That Light blue color is also a color of the spiritual and the divine. The child appears in red for divine strength and power. The mighty scepter points to his domineering role.



30th The Cast Down of the Great Dragon

12, 7-9: And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; 12:8 And they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. 12:9 And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him.

From the strong blue and turquoise skies Michael's hand comes out. Turquoise is the coldest color, there is. With coldness Michael pushes with his spear the dragon, glowing of anger and aggression, from heaven to earth.



31st The Dragon's Fight with the Woman

12, 13-15: And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man *child*. And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, ... And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream.

Fell to the earth, the dragon tries to catch the woman. Also by a large surge of water it does not succeed to reach the woman. Because she gets the heavenly wings of the eagle. The blue plumage should announce the heavenly origin of the wings, which make her unreachable to the devil.



32nd The Lamb and the 144.000

14, 1: And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads.

The yellow and white light triumphs and outshines the Saved. Here again is called a symbolic number 144 000. Only a few representatives are portraited. Green in the lower part of the picture is a part of the earth, on the other hand it is a sign for the hope on salvation and immortality.

Now follow the three angel's announcement of the court.



33rd The Proclamation of the Judgment (1)

14, 6-7: And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having eternal good tidings to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; 14:7 and he saith with a great voice: *Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters.*

In all three pictures the angels announce the court against an azure blue sky showing the union with the Divine. They are here represented as winged white and yellow light phenomena. White describes the heavenly light, yellow the glory of the spiritual and it is a substitute color for gold and a symbol of the opposite.

The script is a script of the Middle Ages, called uncial. It was used in luxury manuscripts of the Middle Ages.



34th The Proclamation of the Judgment (2)

14, 8: And another, a second angel, followed, saying: *Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, that hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

Babylon is meant to be Rome, which has forced the whole Roman empire to the emperor as a god.



35th The Proclamation of the Judgment (3)

14, 9-10: And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a great voice: *If any man worshipping the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand, 14:10 he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.*

This threat is addressed to those, who pay homage to the emperor as a god.



36th The Hour of Harvest

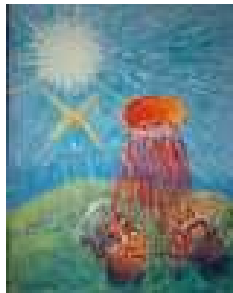
14, 14-15: And I saw, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud I saw one sitting like unto a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the temple, crying with a great voice to him that sat on the cloud: *Send forth thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.* In the white cloud - in the color of bright light – appears by way of a hint the face the Son of Man with his crown. The background of the picture goes from fiery red to violet tones of anger about the Passion. Hovering above the sickle of the harvest, that is the last court, wearing white and yellow. In a positive interpretation, these are the colors of the sky, the monarchy, and harvest and autumn. In the negative interpretation of the colors white and yellow are colors of extinction, of falsehood and the plague that was displayed during the Middle Ages with a yellow flag.



37th The Singers by the Sea of Glass

15, 2.3: And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that come off victorious from the beast ... standing by the sea of glass, ... 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: *Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages.* In the picture the idea of the water is clear. Water is the element from which everything arises, this is our livelihood. On it the singers who glorify and reverently praise God. What is meant by the sea of glass? Burghard Schmanck, the translator of the apocalyptic texts, sees this as the firmament of heaven: clear and transparent as the crystal, but as hard as glass. In the creation story of the Bible, Genesis, 1,6.7, God creates the heavens as a divide between the waters above and below. This is the origin of the idea of the heavenly sea before the throne of God. In the sea of glass, the winners are before God's throne. They proceed like Christ on the Sea of Galilee. The water carries them. God's power subdues the water of the Red-sea (Exodus 14.15). The song is the song of the winner in Rev. 15.3 is the song of Moses because of occasions of Exodus-15. - "Mixed with fire" indicates the presence of God in the burning bush and the pillar of fire, that duked at night in the desert before the Israelites.

Now is following the third seven-part series of disasters. The seven bowls of wrath bring punishments to those people, who pay homage to the emperor as a god and don't want to follow the word of the true God.



38th The Bowls of the Wrath: The first Bowl brings Ulcers

16, 1.2: And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels: *Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.* And the first went, and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a noisome and grievous ulcer upon the men that had the mark of the beast, and that worshipped his image.

The first angel's appearance as a light - as it sometimes was common in ancient times – is girded with a golden girdle, which was crossed over her breasts. The cross may recall the tale of woe. Red like blood, rage and anger are the outpourings of anger from the shawl.



39th The Second and the Third Bowl bring Blood

16, 3.4: And the second poured out his bowl into the sea; and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living soul died, *even* the things that were in the sea. And the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of the waters; and it became blood.

Here the text has been translated literally into the picture.



40th The Fourth Bowl brings the Fire of the Sun on the Men

16, 8: And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto it to scorch men in fire.

The glow of the sun, which burns the people, so that even traces of black are appearing, lies flickering across the sky.



41st The Fifth Bowl brings Darkness on the throne of the beast

16, 10: And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened.

In the darkness glows the throne of the destroyer. Thus, both the devil and the Roman emperor are meant. In the turmoil of the somber background the divine colors of gold and purple can be seen. Blue is also a divine color, shown in the medieval royal coats, as well as in numerous amulets of lapis lazuli, the dead in Egypt were given to the grave, to show faith in the power of God's blue.



42nd The Sixth Bowl dries up the Euphrates

16, 12: And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sunrising.

The sandy, dry river bed lies in front of the glowing landscapes before a threatening sky.

The Euphrates was the natural boundary of the Babylonian Empire, that protected against the invasion of the peoples of the East. Therefore his drying is to be considered as a loss of a life-important protective wall. The drying of the Euphrates - and thus the loss of a protective wall - is seen as an allegory for the imminent demise of the Roman world power.



43rd The Seventh Bowl causes Earthquake

16, 17-19: And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air ... and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth. ... And the city, the great, was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell.

Babylon was in ancient times because of his non-Christian faith as a synonym for depravity. This call is transferred to Rome. Therefore his downfall before a fragmented and threatening violet sky, declining death, is seen as justifies punishment. The dark indigo blue expresses in negative interpretation anger, fear and oppression.



44st Babylon, the Mother of Harlots

17, 3-4:... and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls.

Here is Babylon - also known as the world power of Rome - seen as the personification of sin, which is consistently depicted in Christian art as a woman. Jewelry and precious clothes were abhorred by Christians as ostentation. The scarlet beast can be seen as vicious, idol, empire or emperor worship. The horns are symbols of power. The red-green color contrast shows high aggression and murderous mood.



45st Plagues hit Babylon

18, 8: Therefore in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine.

Babylon or Rome will be punished with death, mourning and famine, which are shown here personified. Pale yellow, shades of gray, deepened in black, and purple are reminiscent of decay, suffering and death.



46th Fall of Babylon

18, 21: And a strong angel took up a stone as it were a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying: *Thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all.*

Before apocalyptic purple sky a parable of the downfall of Babylon and Rome is shown.



47th Hallelujah in heaven

19, 6: And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying: *Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth.*

Shades of the rulers dominate the picture: purple and gold. Small colored sprinklings show the colored light of heaven, as it was symbolized in medieval stained glass windows.



48th The King of Kings on a White Horse

19, 11-14: And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True. ... And he *is* arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood. ... And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses.

Christ is victorious, and finally begins to judge. White as the color of light, wisdom and spirituality, red as the color of blood and sacrifice and yellow as a substitute for gold to symbolize the sky with his hosts.



49th The Satan, Bounded for a Thousand Years

20, 1-3: And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed *it* over him.

Not once but only once for a thousand years the devil is locked up. It may be regarded as a kind of purgatory. Before light bright blue sky the key for the Satan, that could loosen his bonds, hovers out of reach of him. The heavy black metal chain pushes him into the bottom of the image space, which again shows his torment in purple.



50th The Souls of the Beheaded lived and reigned

20, 4: And ... *I saw* the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, ... and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

The souls of the beheaded emerge dimly in the white of their spirituality out of their blood and seek the light blue with small bright spots indicated against the sky. The red background can also be interpreted as the love of Christ, in which the martyrs are enveloped after they have paid with their blood.



51st The Final Victory over the Satan

20, 10: And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Head over the devil falls in the brimstone as a synonym for Hell. He has no more tangible form, but rather a caricature of crashes in the fall, into the lower left corner of death in the picture.



52nd The Lake of Fire

20, 14.15: And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, *even* the lake of fire. ... And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

Red-hot blazing fiery glow in the air, out of the black drop souls like tar in the hell.

Now finally, all suffering has pasted and the new Jerusalem are promised to the faithful.



53rd The New Jerusalem

21, 16-21: And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth. ... And the building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprased; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the several gates was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Now finally releases the new Jerusalem. While Dürer's shows in his woodcut a city view, here the description of the town in the Apocalypse is translated almost literally and symbolically - as it is meant in the text. All jewels are enumerated, which characterize the city. Pearls, gold and precious stones describe metaphorically the preciousness of the heavenly city - called the New Jerusalem.



54th Water of Life

22, 1: And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal.

The water of life is refreshment and nourishment for body and soul.



55th I, the Alpha and the Omega

22, 13: I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

Ultramarine blue, the color of the sky and intimacy and gold, the color of divinity and kingship dominate the picture. The circle of perfection, as well as the number eight - add to the symbolism of the Heavenly - represented in the octagon as it is customary for fonts and baptistries. The Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and end as a symbol of eternity close the series on the Apocalypse.

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