

Fifth Ascent

I.

**...And made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father,
to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.**

Amen.

**When I saw him,
I fell at his feet as though dead.
But he laid his right hand on me, saying,
“Fear not, I am the first and the last;
“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write:
“The words of him who has the seven spirits of God
and the seven stars.**

“I know your works.

You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my
God. Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent.

If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments,
and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life.

I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

II.

...And before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God,

And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth.”

When he opened the fifth seal,

I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.

They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true,
how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer,

until the number of their fellow servants

and their brothers should be complete,

who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

III.

**And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures,
and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying,**

“Amen!

**Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power
and might be to our God forever and ever!**

Amen.”

And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth,
and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.

He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace,
and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft.

Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth.

They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree,
but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them,
and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone.

And in those days people will seek death and will not find it.

They will long to die, but death will flee from them.

In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold;

their faces were like human faces, their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth;

they had breastplates like breastplates of iron,

and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle.

They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails.

They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit.

His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.

The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come.

IV.

So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll.

And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

And when they have finished their testimony,
the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them,
and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt,
where their Lord was crucified.

For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies
and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb,
and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents,
because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.

...And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God,
in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon.

It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence,
and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed.

It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people,
and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth,
telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud,
"Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe."

So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.

V.

**...And out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues,
clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests.**

The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast,
and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish
and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores.

They did not repent of their deeds.

This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated;
they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come,

and when he does come he must remain only a little while.

As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction.

And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power,
but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast.

These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast.

VI.

**And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her,
will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning.**

They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say,
“Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon!

For in a single hour your judgment has come.”

And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls.

“The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you,
and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you,
never to be found again!”

The merchants of these wares,
who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment,
weeping and mourning aloud,

VII.

**And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.
From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations,
and he will rule them with a rod of iron.
He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.
On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.**

...And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur
where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying,
“Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain,
and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,
having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels,
and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—
on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates.
And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true.
And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”

“And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”