11:1 Kai ἐδόθη μοι κάλαμος ὁμοίος ῥάβδῳ, λέγων· ξειρε καὶ μέτρησον τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας ἐν αὐτῷ.
2 Kai τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἐξωθεί τοῦ ναοῦ ἐκβαλε ἐξωθεί καὶ μὴ αὐτὴν μετρήσῃς, ὅτι ἐδόθη τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν πατήσουσιν μῆνας πεσεράκοντα [καὶ] δύο.

In Herod’s temple the outer court was marked off from the inner by “the middle wall of partition” (to mesoitoichon tou phragmou, Eph_2:15), beyond which a Gentile could not go. In this outer court was a house of prayer for the Gentiles (Mar_11:17), but now John is to cast it out and leave to its fate (given to the Gentiles in another sense) to be profaned by them.

3 Kai δύσω τοῖς δυστυσίν μου καὶ προφητεύεσθωσιν ἡμέρας χιλίας διακοσίων ἐξήκοντα περιβεβλημένοι σάκκους.

There is no possible way to determine who they are. All sorts of identifications have been attempted.

4 οὗτοί εἰσιν αἱ δύο ἑλαία καὶ αἱ δύο λυχνίαι αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἔστωτες.
5 καὶ εἰ τις αὐτοὺς θέλει ἀδικήσαι πῦρ ἐκπορεύεται ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτῶν καὶ κατεσθείς τοὺς ἐχθροὺς αὐτῶν· καὶ εἰ τῆς θελήσεως αὐτοῦ ἀδικήσαι, οὐ τῶς δεῖ αὐτὸν ἀποκατανθῆναι.
6 οὕτωι ἔχουσιν τὴν ἐξουσίαν κλεῖσαι τὸν οὐρανόν, ἵνα μὴ ὑποκεχρή τᾶς ἡμέρας τῆς προφητείας αὐτών, καὶ ἔχουσιν ἔπι τῶν υδάτων στρέφειν αὐτά εἰς αἷμα καὶ πατάσαι τὴν γῆν ἐν πάσῃ πληγῇ ὀσκαίς ἓν ἥθελσωσιν.

Whoever these two are, like Elijah and Moses, they have the power to call down rain or not, and to call down plagues.

7 Kai ὅταν τελέσωσιν τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτῶν, τὸ θηρίον τὸ ἀναβαίνον ἐκ τῆς ἀφύσος αὐτῶν ποιῆσει μετ’ αὐτῶν πόλεμον καὶ νικῆσει αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀποκτενεῖ αὐτοὺς.

Nothing less than antichrist will satisfy the picture here. As Swete puts it, “But his words cover in effect all the martyrdoms and massacres of history in which brute force has seemed to triumph over truth and righteousness”.

8 Kai τὸ πτώμα αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τῆς πλατείας τῆς πόλεως τῆς μεγάλης, ἤτοι καλεῖται πνευματικῶς Σόδομα καὶ Αίγυπτος, ὅπου καὶ ὁ κύριος αὐτῶν ἐσταυρώθη.
9 Kai βλέπουσιν ἐκ τῶν λαῶν καὶ φυλῶν καὶ γλώσσον καὶ ἔθνων τὸ πτώμα αὐτῶν ἡμέρας τρεῖς καὶ ἡμίσι καὶ τὰ πτώματα αὐτῶν οὐκ ἀφίουσιν τεθῆναι εἰς μνήμα.

This delight of the spectators “is represented as at once fiendish and childish” (Swete).
In a country where burial regularly took place on the day of death the time of exposure and indignity would be regarded long” (Beckwith). See Tobit 1:18ff.

10 καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς χαίρουσιν ἐπὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ εὑροῦνται καὶ δῶρα πέμψουσιν ἀλλήλοις, ὅτι οὗτοι οἱ δύο προφήται ἐβασάνισαν τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

This is the reason (hoti) of the fiendish glee of Jew and Gentile, who no longer will have to endure the prophecies (Rev_11:3.) and dread miracles (Rev_11:5.) of these two prophets. “Such a sense of relief is perhaps not seldom felt today by bad men when a preacher of righteousness or a signal example of goodness is removed” (Swete).

11 Καὶ μετὰ τὰς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ ἡμισυνεδύμα ζωῆς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσῆλθεν ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐστησαν ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας αὐτῶν, καὶ φόβος μέγας ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τοὺς θεωροῦντας αὐτούς.

12 καὶ ἠκουσαν φωνῆς μεγάλης ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης αὐτοῖς· ἀνάβατε ὁ δε. καὶ ἀνέβησαν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ, καὶ θεωρήσασαν αὐτοὺς οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτῶν.

13 Καὶ ἐν ἔκεινη τῇ ὀρᾷ ἐγένετο σεισμὸς μέγας καὶ τὸ δέκατον τῆς πόλεως εἰς ἐστησαν καὶ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν τῷ σεισμῷ ὄνοματα ἀνθρώπων χιλιάδες ἐπὶ καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἐξορθοὺς ἐγένοντο καὶ ἔδωκαν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

14 Ἡ οὐαὶ ἢ δευτέρα ἀπήλθεν· ἵδοι ἢ οὐαὶ ἢ τρίτῃ ἔρχεται τοιχῷ.

15 Καὶ ὁ ἐβδομος ἀγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ ἐγένοντο φωναὶ μεγάλαι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λέγοντες· ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ κόσμου τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ, καὶ βασιλεύσει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων.

This is the certain and glorious outcome of the age-long struggle against Satan, who wields the kingdom of the world which he offered to Christ on the mountain for one act of worship. But Jesus scorned partnership with Satan in the rule of the world, and chose war, war up to the hilt and to the end. Now the climax has come with Christ as Conqueror of the kingdom of this world for his Father. This is the crowning lesson of the Apocalypse.

16 Καὶ οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι [οἱ] ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενοι ἐπὶ τοὺς θρόνους αὐτῶν ἐπέσαν ἐπὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θεῷ

17 λέγοντες· εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, κύριε ὁ θεός ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν, ὁτι εἰλήφας τὴν δύναμίν σου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ εβασίλευσας.

18 καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ὑγριζήθησαν, καὶ ἤλθεν ἡ ὅργη σου καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τῶν νεκρῶν κρίθηκαν καὶ δοῦναι τὸν μισθὸν τοῖς δουλοῖς σου τοῖς προφήταις καὶ τοῖς ἁγίοις καὶ τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸ ὅνομά σου, τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους, καὶ διαφθείρα τοὺς διαφθείροντας τὰς γῆς.

19 Καὶ ἤνοιγεν ὁ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ ὕφε η κιβωτός τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ναῷ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐγένοντο ἁστραπαί καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ σεισμὸς καὶ χάλαζα μεγάλη.
12:1 Καὶ σημεῖον μέγα ὁφθη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, γυνὴ περιβεβλημένη τὸν ἥλιον,
καὶ ἡ σελήνη ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτῆς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτῆς στέφανος ἀστέρων δώδεκα,

John may have in mind Isa_7:14 (Mat_1:23; Luk_1:31) as well as Mic_4:10; Isa_26:17; Isa_66:7.

2 καὶ ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα, καὶ κράζει ὠδίνουσα καὶ βασανιζομένη τεκέιν.
3 καὶ ὕφθη ἄλλο σημεῖον ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἰδοὺ δράκων μέγας πυρρὸς ἔχων κεφαλὰς ἐπτά καὶ κέρατα δέκα καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτοῦ ἐπτά διαδήματα,

Homer uses this old word (probably from derkomai, to see clearly) for a great monster with three heads coiled like a serpent that ate poisonous herbs. The word occurs also in Hesiod, Pindar, Eschylus. The Babylonians feared a seven-headed hydra and Typhon was the Egyptian dragon who persecuted Osiris. hepta diadēmata. Old word from diadeō (to bind around), the blue band marked with white with which Persian kings used to bind on the tiara, so a royal crown in contrast with stephanos (chaplet or wreath like the Latin corona).

4 καὶ ἡ οὐρά αὐτοῦ σύρει τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀστέρων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἔβαλεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν γῆν. Καὶ ὁ δράκων ἔστηκεν ἐνώπιον τῆς γυναικὸς τῆς μελλούσης τεκείν, ἵνα ὅταν τέκη τὸ τέκνον αὐτῆς καταφάγῃ.

5 καὶ ἔτεκεν υἱὸν ἄρσεν, δὸς μέλλει ποιμαίνειν πάντα τὰ ἐθνη ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδήρῳ. καὶ ἡρπάσθη τὸ τέκνον αὐτῆς πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ πρὸς τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ.

hēpαsthe. First aorist passive indicative of harpazō, old verb for seizing or snatching away, as in Joh_10:12, here alone in the Apocalypse. Reference to the ascension of Christ, with omission of the ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ because he is here simply showing that “the Dragon’s vigilance was futile” (Swete). “The Messiah, so far from being destroyed, is caught up to a share in God’s throne” (Beckwith).

6 καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἐφυγεν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον, ὅπου ἔχει ἐκεῖ τόπον ἥτοιμασμένον ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα ἐκεῖ τρέφωσιν αὐτὴν ἡμέρας χιλίας διακοσίας ἔξηκοντα.

ephugen eis tēn erēmon. Here, of course, not Mary, but “the ideal woman” (God’s people) of the preceding verses, who fled under persecution of the dragon.

7 Καὶ ἐγένετο πόλεμος ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ Μιχαήλ καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ τοῦ πολεμῆσαι μετὰ τοῦ δράκοντος. καὶ ὁ δράκων ἐπολέμησεν καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ,
8 καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσεν οὐδὲ τόπος εὑρέθη αὐτῶν ἔτι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ.

The dragon is finally expelled from heaven (cf. Job_1:6), though to us it seems a difficult conception to think of Satan having had access to heaven.
9 and he called them together, and they answered: "We are God's angels, and the Lord our Maker. We are the angels of Satan, the angels of the heavenly order, the angels of the earth, the angels of the angels, the angels of the demons, the angels of the accusers, and the angels of the faithful."

10 And he said: "I am the angel of the Lord, and I am the angel of Satan. I am the angel of the heavenly order, the angel of the earth, the angel of the angels, the angel of the demons, the angel of the accusers, and the angel of the faithful."

11 And they answered: "We are the angels of the Lord, and we are the angels of Satan. We are the angels of the heavenly order, the angels of the earth, the angels of the angels, the angels of the demons, the angels of the accusers, and the angels of the faithful."

12 And they said: "We are the angels of the Lord, and we are the angels of Satan. We are the angels of the heavenly order, the angels of the earth, the angels of the angels, the angels of the demons, the angels of the accusers, and the angels of the faithful."

13 And they said: "We are the angels of the Lord, and we are the angels of Satan. We are the angels of the heavenly order, the angels of the earth, the angels of the angels, the angels of the demons, the angels of the accusers, and the angels of the faithful."

14 And they said: "We are the angels of the Lord, and we are the angels of Satan. We are the angels of the heavenly order, the angels of the earth, the angels of the angels, the angels of the demons, the angels of the accusers, and the angels of the faithful."

15 And they said: "We are the angels of the Lord, and we are the angels of Satan. We are the angels of the heavenly order, the angels of the earth, the angels of the angels, the angels of the demons, the angels of the accusers, and the angels of the faithful."

16 And they said: "We are the angels of the Lord, and we are the angels of Satan. We are the angels of the heavenly order, the angels of the earth, the angels of the angels, the angels of the demons, the angels of the accusers, and the angels of the faithful."

17 And they said: "We are the angels of the Lord, and we are the angels of Satan. We are the angels of the heavenly order, the angels of the earth, the angels of the angels, the angels of the demons, the angels of the accusers, and the angels of the faithful."
The devil carries on relentless war with all those “which keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus”

13:1  καὶ ἐστάθη ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον τῆς θαλάσσης. Καὶ εἶδον ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης θηρίον ἀναβαίνον, ἔχον κέρατα δέκα καὶ κεφάλας ἐπτά καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κερότων αὐτοῦ δέκα διαδήματα καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτοῦ ὀνόματα βλασφημίας.

The imagery comes from Dan_7:3. See also Rev_17:8. This “wild beast from the sea,” as in Dan_7:17, Dan_7:23, is a vast empire used in the interest of brute force. This beast, like the dragon (Rev_12:3), has ten horns and seven heads, but the horns are crowned, not the heads. The Roman Empire seems to be meant here (Rev_17:9, Rev_17:12). On “diadems” (diadēmata) see Rev_12:3, only ten here, not seven as there. See Rev_17:3 for this same phrase. The meaning is made plain by the blasphemous names assumed by the Roman emperors in the first and second centuries, as shown by the inscriptions in Ephesus, which have theos constantly applied to them.

2 καὶ τὸ θηρίον ὁ εἶδον ἦν ὀμοίων παράδειλε καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὡς ἄρκου καὶ τὸ στῶμα αὐτοῦ ὡς στόμα λέγοντος. καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ δράκων τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔξουσιαν μεγάλην.

3 καὶ μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεφαλῶν αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον, καὶ ἤ πληγή τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ἔθεραπεύθη. Καὶ ἐθαυμάσθη δὴ ἡ γῆ ὑπὸ τοῦ θηρίου

“The stroke of death” (that led to death). Apparently refers to the death of Nero in June 68 a.d. by his own hand. But after his death pretenders arose claiming to be Nero redivivus even as late as 89 (Tacitus, Hist. i. 78, ii. 8, etc.). John seems to regard Domitian as Nero over again in the persecutions carried on by him.

4 καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ δράκοντι, ὅτι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἔξουσίαν τῷ θηρίῳ, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θηρίῳ λέγοντες· τίς ὀμοίως τῷ θηρίῳ καὶ τίς δύναται πολεμῆσαι μετ’ αὐτοῦ;

Emperor-worship, like all idolatry, was devil-worship. The same thing is true today about self-worship (humanism or any other form of it).

5 Καὶ ἔδοθεν αὐτῷ στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα καὶ βλασφημίας καὶ ἔδοθεν αὐτῷ ἔξουσία ποιῆσαι μήνας τεσσεράκοντα [καὶ] δύο.

6 καὶ ἤνοιξεν τὸ στῶμα αὐτοῦ εἰς βλασφημίας πρὸς τὸν θεὸν βλασφημῆσαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ, τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας.

The Roman emperors blasphemously assumed divine names in public documents.

7 καὶ ἔδοθεν αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς, καὶ ἔδοθεν αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν φυλὴν καὶ λαὸν καὶ γλώσσαν καὶ ἐθνὸς.

8 καὶ προσκυνήσωσαν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, οὐ δὲ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

9 Εἴ τις ἔχει οὕς ἀκουσάτω.
10 Εἰ τις εἰς αἰχμαλώσιαν, εἰς αἰχμαλώσιαν ὑπάγει. Εἰ τις ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθήναι αὐτὸν ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθήναι. Ἡ ἡμέρα ἐστιν ἡ ὑπομονή καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἁγίων.

Condition of first class.

11 Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλο θηρίον ἀναβαίνον ἐκ τῆς γῆς, καὶ εἶχεν κέρατα δύο ὀμοια ἀρνίως καὶ ἔλατεί ὡς δράκων.

Swete thinks that he had the roar of a dragon with all the looks of a lamb (weakness and innocence). Cf. the wolves in sheep’s clothing (Mat_7:15).

12 καὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ πρώτου θηρίου πάσαν ποιεῖ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, καὶ ποιεῖ τὴν γῆν καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ κατοικοῦντας ἵνα προσκυνήσουσιν τὸ θηρίον τὸ πρῶτον, ὥθησά ὑπὸ τὸν Βασιλέα αὐτοῦ.

13 καὶ ποιεῖ σημεῖα μεγάλα, ἵνα καὶ πῦρ ποιῆ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβαίνειν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων,

14 καὶ πλανά τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς διὰ τὰ σημεῖα δὲ ἔδοθε αὐτῷ ποιήσαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου, λέγων τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ποιήσαι εἰκόνα τῷ θηρίῳ, δέχει τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρης καὶ ἔζησεν.

This “image” (eikon, for which word see Mat_22:20; Col_1:15) of the emperor could be his head upon a coin (Mar_12:16), an imago painted or woven upon a standard, a bust in metal or stone, a statue, anything that people could be asked to bow down before and worship. This test the priests in the provinces pressed as it was done in Rome itself.

15 Καὶ ἔδοθε αὐτῷ δουναί πνεῦμα τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου, ἵνα καὶ λαλήσῃ ἢ εἰκών τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ποιήσῃ ἵνα δοῦν τῇ καὶ προσκυνησοῦσιν τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου ἀποκτανθήσει.

“That refusal to worship the image of the emperor carried with it capital punishment in Trajan’s time is clear from Pliny’s letter to Trajan (X. 96)” (Charles).

16 καὶ ποιεῖ πάντας, τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους, καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους καὶ τοὺς πτωχοὺς, καὶ τοὺς ἐλευθέρους καὶ τοὺς δουλοὺς, ἵνα δοῦσιν αὐτοῖς χάραγμα ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν τῆς δεξιᾶς ἢ ἐπὶ τῷ μέτωπον αὐτῶν.

Deissmann (Bible Studies, pp. 240ff.) shows that in the papyri official business documents often have the name and image of the emperor, with the date as the official stamp or seal and with charagma as the name of this seal. Animals and slaves were often branded with the owner’s name, as Paul (Gal 6:17) bore the stigmata of Christ. Ptolemy Philadelphus compelled some Alexandrian Jews to receive the mark of Dionysus as his devotees (3 Macc. 3:29). The servants of God receive on their foreheads the stamp of the divine seal (Rev_7:3). Charles is certain that John gets his metaphor from the tephillin (phylacteries) which the Jew wore on his left hand and on his forehead. At any rate, this “mark of the beast” was necessary for life and all social and business relations. On the right hand, that is in plain sight.
The stamp (the mark) may bear either the name or the number of the beast. The name and the number are one and the same. They could write the name in numerals, for numbers were given by letters. Swete suggests that it was “according to a sort of gematria known to the Apocalyptist and his Asian readers, but not generally intelligible.”

All sorts of solutions are offered for this conundrum. Charles is satisfied with the Hebrew letters for Nero Caesar, which give 666, and with the Latin form of Nero (without the final n), which makes 616. Surely this is ingenious and it may be correct. But who can really tell?