

The following is a translation of a Coptic manuscript by Wayland Jackson, AB, BD, M.Div., BS. The manuscript, overlooked by earlier scholars, dating to the late first or early second century of the Common Era, was found in upper Egypt by Bedouins in 1948. The working title was Revelation 2.0, but according to academic custom, the official title is the first words of the document. Chapter and verse numbers have been assigned for use in scholarly study.

Grace, to You

Grace, to you, and to Charity, and to all
1 who hear the words recorded in this
book:

2. Being in the spirit on a Wednesday, I saw a
vision of things that are, but are not. ³An angel
of sorts spoke to me of things visible and
things invisible. ⁴He was about four cubits
tall, his hair was beginning to turn gray, his
clothing shone like the noonday sun. He was
wearing Nikes.

⁵When I saw the angel, I fell to my knees. I
would have fallen at his feet, but I wasn't sure
how long he had been wearing the Nikes with
no socks. ⁶Seven rings were on his right hand.
Light from his eyes was like rays you might
expect from the eyes of a superhero. ⁷His voice
was like the sound of many rushing waters,
only a little slower.

⁸He commanded me: Rise. Come. Write these
words about things that your eyes have never
seen before. ⁹Do not worry about plagiarism.
Most of what I tell you to write is in the public
domain, although not visible to many.

¹⁰Write to the seven nations and to their
seven rulers, arranged in the order of their
Gross Domestic Product, California being
number five.

¹¹Blessed are they that hear the words of this
revelation and mull over them, for the time is
far gone, and we could use a lot more mulling.

I asked the Spirit, What is this great
2 thing you are going to show me? The
Spirit said, I will show you a city on a hill
which cannot be measured. ²Like all cities set
on a hill, it has twelve foundations and is
walled. ³The wall has twelve gates, three gates
on each of its four sides: east, north, south, and
west, arranged alphabetically and hypothetic-
ally.

⁴The spirit said to me, If you don't understand
three's and four's, seven's and twelve's, go to
your local library. ⁵Check out a book on
numerology.

⁶As a start, imagine the number three. That's
an exalted oration, high, lofty, with three
points. Four is the mundane: earth's four
corners, four directions, four winds. Three and
four added together become seven and
multiplied they become twelve. ⁷Therefore,
seven and twelve are complete numbers, the

exalted and mundane in union, like in a
marriage, not like the AFL/CIO.

⁸I will show you many things, the Spirit said.
When we have exhausted the number
metaphor, count the things I have shown you.
Insert that number here: _____

⁹Then the Spirit led me through a deep
chasm. I looked up and beheld immense walls
that reached to the heavens. ¹⁰It was a great
city, bigger than Chicago.

I saw twelve huge gates, actually only the
3 three on my side of the great city; but
based on what the Spirit said and simple
logic, I assumed the other nine.

²The gates I beheld looked like your average
bejeweled gates, and the double doors looked
as secure as the vaults at Fort Knox.

³The Spirit said, The gates before you are
ordinary, with one major exception. They are
one-way gates. ⁴You may enter by the gates,
but, once in, I just dare you to try to find your
way out.

⁵Nevertheless, said the Spirit, it can be done,
and it has been done by a few.

⁶I beheld a few, wandering outside the
walls.

⁷I asked, Spirit, who are these outside the
wall, and what are they called? ⁸They are
called the Select. Unlike the Elect who live in
the city, the Select live outside the wall. They
are not homeless, but they are city-less. ⁹They
live less in the urbs and more in the sub-urbs.

¹⁰Oh, I said, not understanding.

¹¹The Spirit said, The Select, who live in sub-
urbs, have found, by experiment or by acci-
dent, that the walls of the city are permeable.

¹²From the outside, the walls seem to be insur-
mountable. From inside, the walls are
invisible.

¹⁴Once inside, people are not aware that they
are walled in. ¹³They may leave their square
or leave the city at any time, but the exits open
only to seekers. ¹⁴The Select came through the
doors unhindered and without injury. ¹⁵They
feel no urgency to persuade those inside the
city to join them.

¹⁶What good would it do? they ask. None,
they tell themselves. ¹⁷If their former friends
are happy, what's the point? said the Spirit.

I said, Spirit, what will you show me first? ² First, said the Spirit, we must enter the city. ³ I said, How shall we open the great door seeing we have no key? ⁴ The Spirit said, Not to worry. The doors are not locked. However, every gate has its own entry ritual. ⁵ Come, I will show you what's behind door number one.

⁶ Door One had a steeple above it with a thousand tiny silver bells that hung in great clusters like grapes. ⁷ As we approached, the doors swung open freely and the bells tingled, raising peals of joy that echoed across the city.

⁸ The Spirit said, Entering the city involves a gatekeeper and water. ⁹ I get it, I said. The gatekeeper is like a butler or a tour guide, but teach me about the water.

¹⁰ The water is real, said the Spirit. You are going to get wet, very wet, or maybe only a little, but wet you will get.

¹¹ I asked, And what is the purpose of the water?

¹² The Spirit said, Water is a great symbol. ¹³ It is essential to sustain life. Remember to hydrate. It is useful for cleaning, both hands, and laundry. It's also an extender. If you have food for twelve, but thirteen guests show up, add water.

¹⁴ Today you get the deluxe treatment, said the Spirit. ¹⁵ Suddenly, as if I were on a conveyor belt, I began to move forward. ¹⁶ I heard the sound of many machines. ¹⁷ Brushes swirled, soap splatted on me, and was rinsed off. ¹⁸ But at the end, no one sopped up the excess water or wiped my glasses. ¹⁹ I drip-dried as our journey continued.

Before me, a great city that no man can measure was laid out like a gigantic grid, with a multitude of perfect squares, separated by gray streets to the right, to the left, and straight ahead. ² Each square held a multitude of people.

³ The Spirit said, Pulses from the center of the great city roll over the city and its inhabitants regularly. ⁴ They all feel better after a good pulse.

⁵ The pulses are pulses of affirmation. "Yes, you are right," the pulses say. "You're superior. Your life has meaning. You're the ideal."

⁶ But we must see other things first. ⁷ Spirit, I said, the gray roads that separate the squares look odd, but the inhabitants inside the squares look normal.

⁸ The Spirit answered, What did you expect? In a vision, something has to relate to the real world or it will get too fantasmagorical.

⁹ I said, I see bistros around each square with people seated on sidewalks, eating, drinking, and laughing. ¹⁰ But the patrons' backs are turned to the gray way that separates them from other squares. What's up with that? ¹¹ The backs of the people form a wall.

¹² Walls keep things out. Walls keep things in.

¹³ You can't wall someone out without walling yourself in. The bars on your neighbor's windows work both ways.

¹⁴ I asked the Spirit, why are the gray streets almost deserted? Don't the groups have intercourse? ¹⁵ Don't get cute with your little double entendre. And don't say, Look it up.

¹⁶ Behold those two trying to talk across squares. Their words are both audible and visible.

¹⁷ Notice that the words of one fly over the head of the other, and vice versa. They talk over each other's heads, not to each other.

¹⁸ The Head of each block maintains that other blocks are dangerous. "Patrons in other blocks," he tells them, "are different. ¹⁹ They look the same on the outside, but their minds are disoriented." ²⁰ The block Head says, "People in other squares cannot tell north from south, or up from down as we can." For the most part, people in his square believe what the Block head tells them.

²¹ A few may be pushed, jump, or fall into the gray area, or be set adrift, fly, or vault into another square. ²² Those who move to a different square can look back and see the square they have left, completely unaware that they are still in a square, just a different square.

Let's move on, said the Spirit.

⁶ ² Inside one square, I beheld a building that reached up to the clouds. Yes, there were clouds—regular, fluffy clouds.

³ Across the building entrance was emblazoned the word: BROKERAGE. ⁴ I asked the Spirit, What's the purpose of a brokerage in

the walled city? ⁵ The Spirit said, What do you think? Everything runs on money.

⁶ He said, Think infra-structure. Even a street of gold gets potholes. Every million years or so, a fire breaks out, and they deal with it.

⁷ But, I said to the Spirit, if this is heaven, what is the need of a brokerage, or money of any kind? ⁸ Heaven? said the Spirit. Who said this is heaven? This revelation is of things you see every day that are invisible to the eye.

⁹ The Brokerage is a reminder that while money is not the wheel, it is the grease. ¹⁰ And if you want to grease someone's wheels, green is best, depending on the kind of currency you're using.

¹¹ I said to the Spirit, What a great mystery. In a visionary world, I would never have expected the inhabitants to use currency, green or any other color. ¹² The Spirit said, Don't be daft. The color is irrelevant. The wheels they grease are real and not real. ¹³ They are real in a pump, sucking oil from the earth, but almost completely invisible in the halls of power.

⁷ The facade of the next great building bore in large block letters the word: EDUFACE. ² What is this mystery? I asked the Spirit. ³ The Spirit said, EDUFACE is the education center. ⁴ When a person steps inside a square, the word on the building looks like EDUCATION. But when one looks across into a neighboring square, one sees EDUFACE and knows his square is superior

⁵ So, I said, are the people still learning literature, science, the arts? ⁶ No, answered the Spirit. That would be education. EDUFACE is not a misspelling. It's education—in your face. ⁷ So, Spirit, is there education or is there not? ⁸ Loosely speaking, yes; actually, no. Indoctrination is more accurately what they do, said the Spirit.

⁹ Each block has its own ways, facts, prejudices, and fears. ¹⁰ The job of EDUFACE is to perpetuate the mores of the people in its square, to inculcate their facts and prejudices, and to sustain their fears.

¹¹ Once a person gets inside a square, what is done there will seem right and true to him--or her, to be inclusive.

¹² I said, That doesn't sound like any kind of education I've ever encountered. ¹³ It's all in the viewpoint, the Spirit answered.

¹⁴ So, Spirit, is the purpose of education to keep people in their square? ¹⁵ The Spirit said, Not only keep them in but also to entertain them. ¹⁶ Spirit, that sounds to me like Fantasy Land. ¹⁷ The Spirit corrected me, Disney engineers on their best day could not have imagined this walled city.

I said to the Spirit. Do I understand ⁸ correctly? ² Each square is a world of its own? Its inhabitants do not question its values or ethics and view all other squares as somehow inferior? ³ The Spirit said, Yes. The people of each square think that they are the elect Elect. ⁴ They do not question themselves or their own lives.

⁵ The major fear in every square of the walled city is fear of self. Second like unto that is fear of someone who is different. ⁶ The people are taught, and they believe, that the gray areas that separate them are fraught with uncertainty and danger, and they are not entirely wrong.

⁷ Oh, I said, 'gray areas' is a metaphor? ⁸ Correct, but not a very good one if it has to be explained.

⁹ Is there more you want to show me?

The Spirit said, The city set on a hill is ⁹ ruled by a great one, not visible to the eyes. But he's there, or she is, whatever. I cannot say for sure. ² I said, Do you mean like the Wizard of Oz, a great one whose voice is heard but whose countenance no one has ever looked upon? ³ The Spirit said, Don't be simple. Everyone has seen the Great One in the Wizard of Oz if you've ever watched Turner Classic Movies. It's all a trick.

⁴ I said to the Spirit, Then, is the city ruled by God? Is God the ruler over the great walled city? ⁵ No, said the Spirit. The ruler is called the Nameless One, or One with a Thousand Names.

⁶ Doesn't that make him, her, or it, God? I asked. ⁷ You can call her, him, or it, God, if you wish. That doesn't make it God, just as you can call this place heaven, but that doesn't make it heaven. For all I know, it's hell.

8 Hell? I said. How can that be? The people seem happy. The chatter is endless. The squares seem lively.

9 Staying in one square, never venturing into gray areas, hearing the same message day after day is like eating the same food at every meal, said the Spirit. ¹⁰ Eating butter fudge chocolate brownies for a million days, even with a tall glass of cold milk, is anesthetizing.

¹¹ In their hearts, they know there is more.

12 More what? I asked the Spirit. ¹³ More desert, more of everything. Baklava, lemon meringue pie. A better menu. Freedom.

14 Spirit, I said, are the people like mountain climbers who reach a peak every day, then look ahead to discover only another horizon?

¹⁵ Cliché alert! Let's just stick with the walled city, said the Spirit.

10 Spirit, I don't see any birds. Why is that? ² I don't know. I like birds. I didn't decorate the place.

³ Does that mean we cannot get a bird's-eye view of the city? ⁴ Of course not. You don't have to stand in a tunnel to have tunnel vision.

5 Then, we soared to great heights, but not too high, because I get air-sick. ⁶ I saw people sitting in a gigantic circle inside one square. No one spoke or moved.

7 Spirit, I said, Who's in that square? Are they calm, or are they dead?

⁸ Those are Quakers. They are dreaming of a world where thunder makes no sound. ⁹ You know their motto: In case of emergency, please be quiet.

10 And Spirit, the square over there is surrounded by shades.

¹¹ Spirit said, Correct. No one can see in or out. They're nudists. Shades keep outsiders from viewing all that flesh, and they keep the insiders from the looks of horror and amusement on faces looking in.

12 I see a busy square, Spirit, people marching around, holding signs. A few have megaphones.

¹³ Those are protesters, said the Spirit. Those with megaphones are their leaders. Something is always wrong, and they always feel a need to fix it. ¹⁴ They protest climate change, high taxes, clowns, the right to bear arms, government meddling. ¹⁵ See? said the Spirit. One protester has a sign protesting protesters.

¹⁶ It's a serious business. No one smiles, and no one fools around.

17 I said, A barber would have a field day in that square. Every man has a beard. ¹⁸ A barber would be out of business in that square, said the Spirit. Those are Sikhs. They never cut their hair. Something about their religion.

¹⁹ The Sikh square has one door on each side, just like the Golden Temple.

20 I see a square with polka dots on the floor and people going from one dot to another, I said. Who are they?

²¹ They're historians. Each dot is a verifiable fact. They spend their days trying to connect the dots with theory thread. ²² They resemble the ancients who drew pictures by connecting stars in the sky, you know, a fish, a hunter, a dipper. They saw the stars but lacked depth perception. ²³ History buffs create pictures of a past that never was and never will be.

11 Spirit, there's a square shaking like gelatin. ² Everyone has side-burns, gyrating hips, and a microphone.

³ Those, said the Spirit, are Elvis impersonators. 4 Spirit, I see one square full of smoke. Let me guess who's in that one. ⁵ Spirit said, be my guesser. Ha, ha.

6 Those must be pot smokers, I said. They couldn't find a door if they wanted to. They can't even find a wall, can they? ⁷ Spirit said, They're not looking for a wall or a door. They're looking for a chair.

8 Spirit, that square reminds me of an old TV ad in which apes tossed suitcases around their cage to test them. Can it be? ⁹ It can, he said.

¹⁰ Baggage handlers throw suitcases and bags, bouncing them off the walls, stomping on them. Some of them rummage through the bags. ¹¹ Spirit said.

12 And who are the strange-looking people in that square? Their eyes are bugged out, a box rests on their chests, and they all have four arms.

¹³ Those are accordion players. After only a few minutes in there, everyone's eyes are buggy. They use the extra hands to stop their ears. ¹⁴ Those people think they are in hell. So, do I. 15 Whatever occurs to you, we have a square for it, said the Spirit: Sunnis, libertarians, feminists, generals, popes, Okies, terrorists, Inuits, lumberjacks, surgeons, ¹⁶ used car

sales-people, the homeless, hospital orderlies, fighters (or pugnacionists), airline landing crews, and pilots of all sorts. There are bazillions of squares.

17 Bazillions?

18 Bazillions.

12 You won't remember all the squares, said the Spirit, but let me give you a few to choose from when you write.

2 There is a nerd square. It requires a test of computer language and knowledge of connectors to get in.

3 The square with people pounding nails in, and pulling them out, and nailing them in again, is for handymen. A few are handywomen.

4 There are squares for pet lovers: lovers of dogs, cats, ponies, snakes—you name it.

5 There is a square for people-pleasers who can't stop smiling. They just want everyone to like them.

6 The square with people dressed loudly wearing floppy shoes standing around a VW automobile is for clowns.

7 The people running amok are gun lovers. They take turns shooting and being shot at. No one ever gets hurt.

8 The square with a stage is for standup comics. They rate each other by holding up cards numbered from one to five.

9 Spirit, I said, who is that motley crew? They look so confused.

¹⁰ Those, said the spirit, are writers. See? They all have pens, paper, and laptops. Indeed, they are a motley crew.

11 What is this square next to them? People there also have pens, paper, and laptops, but they are drinking wine and eating cheese. ¹² Those, said the Spirit, are writers who have sold something. Ah, yes, I grimaced.

13 Spirit, let me put some questions to you as we travel. ² Fine, I can do questions, he said.

3 What if a person fits in more than one square? For instance, what if a person is a feminist as well as a terrorist?

4 Spirit joked, Aren't they the same things? Ha, ha, ha. Take my wife, please! I'm on a roll!

⁵ But seriously, the answer is that if a person has more than one label, one of the labels

floats to the top, and that's where he goes. For instance, a person who is gay and likes drums might end up in a square with other gays, prioritizing his gay identity over his love of bongos. Next.

6 Why are some blocks more densely populated than others? ⁷ Because some blocks are more densely populated than others. Next.

8 What things, I asked the Spirit, are common to all groups? ⁹ All have financial institutions and educational institutions. They all have Heads, bosses I mean, not toilets. And they all shun.

10 Shun? I said. ¹¹ Yes, shun. If an individual gets too far out of line, he or she is relabeled and shunned. ¹² I asked the Spirit, How is a person shunned?

13 You get the "look," the message. One way or another you will leave the group, voluntarily or forcibly. ¹⁴ You might move to a more compatible group, or just wander around in gray areas. Or, you might find the invisible gate in the invisible wall, and go live in the sub-urbs.

15 It's like this, said the Spirit. Every group believes it has the truth by the big toe when all it has is a big toe. ¹⁶ It clings to its truth to justify its existence.

17 If they question themselves, it will only be in superficial ways.

¹⁸ Meaning what? I asked. ¹⁹ Well, for example, a doctor's group might argue the differences between saline solutions and sucrose solutions. They would never question the importance of the heart as an organ. ²⁰ Or, another example, A religious group might argue about the best way to baptize, but it would never ask, Should we worship at all?

21 You see, said the Spirit, all of them are all right because *all* of them are wrong. No one owns truth, not even God.

14 Spirit, what is at the center of the city? If it is not like the Wizard of Oz, then what is it like, and who dwells there? ²

The Spirit moved us north, or was it west, toward the center. ³ Was it like California? I wondered.

4 The sound of mighty waters grew to an unspeakable roar. ⁵ Yes, I thought. This is California. ⁶ No, said the Spirit, it's not California.

7 And don't get close to the center. ⁸ Those who do may be drawn into a hole. ⁹ It resembles a black hole, but it could be any color. ¹⁰ The point is this: once you start down the pike, there is no escape, no returning. ¹¹ You will never be heard from or thought of again. So, don't get too near.

12 The main thing to remember is the noise. The center is full of noisy noise. ¹³ You'll not find a Quaker within a mile.

14 The Spirit added, This would be a good place to use one of my favorite words: cacophony. Look it up.

15 I am puzzled, Spirit. ² Can you explain why I saw no jail or prison in any of the squares?

³ Because each square is itself a jail, said the Spirit. The people are all prisoners of their environment. A way out only *seems* to be a way out. ⁴ The beings who have escaped and think they are superior have not gone much further than the sub-urbs.

5 Spirit, I notice the glaring absence of oriental or Near Eastern references. Why is that? ⁶ That, said the Spirit, is because I am a Western spirit. In a way, I too am in a square. I have spent my life with my back turned to the East. ⁷ At times, I feel like a mad man in a straightjacket of Westernism.

8 I said, Spirit, given all the commonalities, the city still doesn't make sense. Where is the pattern? What unifies it? Where is the plot? ⁹ The Spirit said, Those elements are all missing because this is life. Life is messy, not like a story, which is logical and orderly, with great dialog and sharply drawn characters. ¹⁰ Life doesn't make sense, said the Spirit. It never has. Never will. ¹¹ If you want to go to a place that makes sense, go to the bank. Ha, ha, ha—a little Spirit humor.

16 Spirit, What gems of wisdom can I write that you have not yet revealed to me? ² The Spirit said, I apologize. I am all out of gems.

³ Surely, Spirit, there must be something. We've come so far. ⁴ And learned so little, said the Spirit. All right, he said, I'll give it a try.

5 No one knows, he said. ⁶ No one knows—what? I asked. ⁷ No one knows much compared to what there is to know. Everyone is smart

compared to when he or she was born, but overall, none of us knows much.

⁸ What can we learn from that? I asked. ⁹ He said, That 'none' takes a singular verb.

10 Sorry, Spirit, that won't cut it. That's not enough. ¹¹ Spirit said, How about this? Even though we are all wrong, it's okay for everyone to think he or she is all right.

12 But Spirit, What if someone who thinks that he or she is right wants another to adopt his or her brand of 'all right'? ¹³ The Spirit said, I'm embarrassed to answer in this way, but that's life.

14 I will offer an observation, though observations are not my favorite things: ¹⁵ Every moment in a person's life is unique. Therefore, there can be no rules that always apply.

16 Spirit, I feel like a dog chasing its tail. Does life go in circles? ¹⁷ I don't do geometry, said the Spirit. I'll have to take a pass on that.

18 Then the Spirit brightened and said, How about this for a take away? Offer \$5 to anyone who has read this to the end. Make it worthwhile to a few at least. ¹⁹ I said, I've only got \$65. If thirteen people read this and ask for the \$5, I will be flat broke. ²⁰ Spirit said, Trust me. You're not going to run out of money.

21 It's my turn to ask a question, said the Spirit. The degrees of the translator listed at the beginning of this work, I understand all of them except the last one, BS. ²² You're kidding. You don't know what BS is? I said.