

APOCALYPTICA

V1.0 by Songless

Years have passed since the fall of Earth, when the sins of humanity brought fire and darkness, when angels did battle with the demons of hell and Satan walked the lands. Though the lord of hell was defeated, Earth was lost. But the faithful endured, warned by the Lord of the coming armageddon. Leaving their former home in great ark ships, the righteous left Earth behind so that humanity might live on amongst the stars, free from the sins and corruption that lay waste to their ancestral home.

But it was not to be. Though Satan was defeated, he has begun to reform in the bowels of hell - taking the form of a horrifying monstrosity of cybernetics and cursed flesh. The legions of darkness spilled forth from the black ruins of Earth, ravaging the worlds of the pure under the banner of Neo-Satan in an unstoppable tide of filth. Worlds fell, one by one. Now, even Nehemiah Major, capital world of the Ecclesiarchy and last bastion of humanity, is under siege by the endless hordes of the cursed dead. Now, the once-vast empire of the faithful is little more than a battered shell, standing on the edge of defeat. Now, we are desperate.

But even in such darkness, not all hope is lost. Recent breakthroughs in cloning and soul-imprinting technologies have led to the rise of a new kind of soldier: the most holy of saints, the most esteemed knights and heroes of the Ecclesiarchy, reincarnated again and again as eternal champions that may stand against the darkness no matter how often they might fall in battle.

The S.S. Ariziel, the flagship for Matron-Hierophant Asher and Arch-Templar Samech, now rushes to the broken world of Jerusalem V. Within the ship, the clone bays and DNA banks will allow a team of righteous champions to strike a blow the forces of Neo-Satan on the world without needing to fear death. Not only will this disrupt the siege against Nehemiah Major, there is also the chance to eliminate one of hell's greatest generals - an ingenious and cruel demonlord known as 'Arch-Duke Sarubac'. But the future has surprises in store, and through courage, disaster and opportunity the coming campaign will see the deciding events of the war... for better or worse.

You are one of the champions brought on the S.S. Ariziel, and begin your jump as the ship prepares for the first attack on Jerusalem V. Your time here will continue until you attain victory in favor of the Ecclesiarchy... or if the forces of light are eliminated.

This jump is a **Gauntlet** - you lack any advantages from previous jumps and can no longer access your Warehouse, but neither will death be ending for you during your stay. Instead, you will be reincarnated into a new clone body anytime you fall in battle.

You start with **OCP**.

BACKGROUND

Though the forces of the Ecclesiarchy are varied indeed, their greatest champions can be divided into four different types, each with their own philosophy and combat style – the Templar, Nuns, Seraphs and Robots. Though their methods differ, each is an embodiment of holiness, a warrior with few, if any, equals restored to life through the blessed technologies developed by the Ecclesiarchy. During this Gauntlet, you will be one of these champions – a volunteer who will be brought back to fight again and again by a technological process that draws the soul of a slain individual back into a specially prepared clone body, augmented with cybernetics and equipped with the most advanced equipment that can be provided. Though you may fall on the field of battle time and time again, death is not an end here. So long as your will remains strong the forces of darkness will never truly break you, and you will return in mere moments, ready to bring wrathful retribution to your would-be killers.

The process used to save the souls is only barely out of the prototype stages, and the intense pressures that the forces of righteousness operate under means that it does not matter who a person is, so long as they can hold back the tide of evil. Indeed, while most of the individuals chosen to lead the charge from the Ariziel are revered saints and champions of renown, the identity of at least one of the soul imprints used for the creation of the Robot champions is unknown to this day. Consequently, you may choose to have your background include an in-setting life and history, or instead elect to be a Drop-In, your soul recovered by the Ecclesiarchy during their tests of the Resurrector and accepted as a candidate despite the mystery of your (non-existent) past.

Choose your duty, champion, and bring the burning light of righteousness to the wicked.

The **Templar** are the toughest and mightiest of the Ecclesiarchy's front-line warriors. Trained in melee combat from a young age, these knights are truly 'knights in shining armor', their massive blades and power armor a welcome sight on any battlefield. They bring an end to the legions of Neo-Satan with unparalleled strength and determination.

The swift and cunning **Nuns** are the most skilled combatants in the forces of light, and rely on their agility, superior combat training and quick thinking to outmaneuver their foes on the field of battle. Though they lack the strength needed to carry the heavier swords and rifles used by the Templar and Robots, their talents allow them to easily make up the difference and dance through supposedly-superior foes leaving nothing but broken bodies in their wake.

The holy powers of the **Seraphs** are a direct result of their nature – these men and women are the descendents of unions between angels and mortals. Although physically frail, Seraphs make up for their lack of raw combat power by commanding mighty divine abilities. By drawing on the faith of the virtuous, they can both smite foes and heal allies with numerous different talents. Though working such miracles is draining on their spiritual energy, a skilled Seraph can shift the course of a battle with a mere gesture.

Finally, the **Robots** fielded by the Ecclesiarchy are unusual in that they do not have 'souls' as such – rather, their essence is formed from a 'copied' echo of a saint's soul, an incomplete result of the earliest tests in the soul restoration technologies. Though made of steel and silicon, their devotion to the cause is as great as that of their flesh and blood companions, and the souls used to form their core are universally the greatest marksmen of the Ecclesiarchy – making Robots the undisputed masters of ranged combat on the battlefield.

Regardless of your chosen background, your gender may be chosen as you wish. You'll stand out as a female Templar or a male Nun, but so long as your heart is pure people will be happy to fight by your side. Age is irrelevant, you'll always be reincarnated into a young adult body to ensure top fitness, regardless of how old you were before. Both age and gender are effectively irrelevant for Robots, at least in physical terms, though your choices will still have some influence as it defines the soul echo that resides within your metallic shell.

PERKS

- Might (100CP, free for Templar)

Your task is to hold the line against the forces of evil, to stand strong so that the innocent may live without fear. And stand strong you will – for your physical power is greatly increased by your faith. Your strength would be superhuman even if you were a mere civilian before arriving here, but even if you were already vastly stronger than that you would still receive a noticeable increase.

- Shield Of Faith (200CP, discount for Templar)

Though you fight in the mightiest armor, built from gleaming silver and steel with the greatest craftsmanship the Ecclesiarchy can spare, your greatest defense will always be your dedication to the cause. Conviction gives you strength, and not only are you immune to the pains and hardships of long combat campaigns, the greater your belief in whatever cause you fight for, the greater your defenses are bolstered. This power might not allow your skin to stop bullets on its own, but continuing fighting when any ordinary warrior would have succumbed to their wounds will be a trivial feat for you.

- Purification (400CP, discount for Templar)

The Templar are often the last warriors to remain standing on the field of battle, their hardiness and devotion allowing them to endure the foul wrath of evil longer than any other. But some such saints are greater still - and you are an exemplar of these icons of virtue. You have the ability to use even the most wicked, cursed tools of darkness without falling to their taint, and more than that: any such item that seeks to corrupt you will slowly lose its own evil nature, the dark tendrils of sin they extend to you burned away in your inner light. The time you need to use such items before they are fully cleansed will depend on their power and the depth of their sinful natures, but with enough time and diligence even the greatest artifacts of hell can be purified in your hands.

- Fist Of The Heavens (600CP, discount for Templar)

You are the blade of the faithful, the epitome of heaven's wrath against the forces of darkness. Infused with divine power, your strikes are so mighty that they will ignore any physical barriers, cutting through armor and flesh, and even the heaviest fortifications as if they were naught but smoke. However, this power relies on your embodiment of valor - to use it effectively requires you to wield it in close quarters. Attacking with ranged weapons or vehicles goes against the nature of this boon and will not gain these advantages.

- Grace Of The Convent (100CP, free for Nuns)

The Nuns of the Ecclesiarchy are, above all other things, *fast*. Fighting using the kind of manoeuvres and acrobatics that form the core of the Nun combat style ordinarily requires some sacrifices in terms of protection - nonetheless, while Nun armor is not as heavy and tough as that of the Templar, it is more than adequate for the job. You have learned to maintain your mobility even when using the heavy power armors of the Ecclesiarchy's orders, and are never restricted or slowed down by any protective gear you wear.

- Maiden's Wisdom (200CP, discount for Nuns)

Rather than relying on power, a Nun's combat style revolves around skill, out-matching opponents before the first blow has even landed. You have the mental acuity to analyse your foes even in the chaos of a large-scale fight, identifying the flow of battle and opportunities to disrupt enemies with the least amount of time and effort. At their best, a Nun can weave in and out of combat, distracting and staggering half a dozen foes and leaving openings for their allies to press the advantage or land the killing blow.

- Battle Dance (400CP, discount for Nuns)

Where most of the other champions of the light dedicate themselves to a single pursuit with unflinching dedication, the Nuns of the Ecclesiarchy are more broadly educated, allowing them to be vastly more versatile on the field of battle... but also limiting their abilities in any one aspect of combat. In particular, while many Nuns are close-quarters specialists, they lack the physical strength of their Templar counterparts. Nonetheless, you have learned to handle even the heaviest weapons with the finesse and skill expected of a Nun. No matter how large or heavy the weapons you wield, so long as you can wield them at all they will seem as light as a rapier or pistol in your hands.

- The Guidance Of God (600CP, discount for Nuns)

You walk into the darkness fearing no evil, for the Lord is by your side. The wicked may seek to lay their hands upon you, but again and again you will defy their wickedness. Your already exceptional agility is bolstered with divine power, rendering you all but untouchable by any but the most competent of fighters. Any time you would be in danger from a threat you could theoretically avoid, you will gain a subconscious flash of divine insight on how to move to dodge or deflect it. Even against foes that are your equal in terms of combat skill this will still allow you to avoid half their blows, and as the difference in skill and experience between you and your foes increases you will leave them ever-more incapable of harming you.

- Embodiment Of Virtue (100CP, free for Seraphs)

The light of the heavens flows through your veins, your heritage amongst the most exalted of all mortals. Much as you exemplify the compassion of the angels, so too can your actions both draw upon such holy inspiration... and create it. With every virtuous act you perform, you will regain a small measure of spiritual power, reinvigorating both body and soul - allowing you to draw upon further supernatural abilities or mend your own injuries. The greater your acts of kindness and justice are, the more you will find yourself restored.

- Lightbringer (200CP, discount for Seraphs)

No evil shall stand mighty in the face of your wrath, and the innocent shall never fear so long as you stand fast against the darkness. You are a champion of light, an avatar of humanity's greatest virtues, and your supernatural powers are bolstered by your dedication to the tenets of the faith. Any offensive powers you wield against the forces of darkness will grow stronger the more wicked your target is, and likewise your efforts at protecting or healing the righteous will be bolstered the greater their virtue. This ability will only reach its limit when used on 'pure' manifestations of good or evil, bolstering you to twice your original power when dealing with beings such as the forces of the angels or Neo-Satan himself, but it will nonetheless see noticeable differences even when brought to bear against mortals.

- Tools Of The Faith (400CP, discount for Seraphs)

Your divine ancestry may protect you from the worst of the corruptive influences that the forces of Neo-Satan might bring to bear against you, but the Seraphs understand better than anyone that personal might is not always enough. Indeed, Seraphs are dependent on the power of divinity infinitely greater than them for their combat talents, as well as technology for their daily lives – although they can float, they require holographic wings to be able to propel themselves while doing so. You have learned this lesson well, and have gained the insight needed to infuse a fragment of your own divinity into the equipment and machinery you use or design. Though such technology may still break, any attempt to corrupt, possess or twist it against you will fail – the circuitry and engravings forming holy symbols that will shatter outright before they allow themselves to blacken at the touch of evil.

- Divine Heritage (600CP, discount for Seraphs)

Seraphs are only half-divine, and though they stand closer to heaven than any ordinary mortal they are still that: mortal. But you... perhaps you are somehow blessed beyond even your peers, or the result of a union with an angel and a Seraph instead of a human. Whatever the case may be, within you burns a fire brighter than the hottest flames of hell – a fire that you can release as a holy aura of spectacular proportions not unlike the cleansing light used by the angels summed with the Divine Intervention miracle. Yours is not as 'pure', though, and you will not be able to burn an entire squad of Black Knights to ashes in seconds like a full angel would... but at the same time, your power now leans to much more mortal interpretations of heaven's light. Though your presence will burn the forces of darkness at a much slower pace than a full angel's light, it is now also safe for your allies – indeed, the golden light that cascades around you as you unleash your power will slowly purge not only the darkness, but also a multitude of ailments that

might affect your allies. Both physical injuries and more esoteric forms of corruption will slowly vanish in your glory – not even leaving scars to mark their passing.

ROBOT

- Shatterpoint (100CP, free for Robots)

A Robot's primary duty is to function as ranged combat support for their living allies. However, merely using guns is not nearly their only purpose. From the use of grenade launchers to rocket artillery to placed charges, Robots are often called upon as demolition specialists. You have exemplary skill with not just the proper use and storage of almost any kind of explosive device, but can also predict with great accuracy how much explosive force is necessary to create just the right amount of damage to a building (or a squad of enemies).

- In Memoriam (200CP, discount for Robots)

You are the legacy of a once-living saint, but you are not flesh and blood yourself. Though much of your skills and responsibilities are tied to your mechanical nature, at its heart you still possess a soul – and through it, the wisdom of a life long gone. Though the process is slow, you can draw upon memories from any past lives you may have lived, even those that your former host (or your previous-jump's self) has forgotten in the time since. You are likewise blessed with state-of-the-art memory banks, ensuring that no memories you wish to keep will ever be lost again.

You will stand, and so long as your model remains in service your predecessor will never be forgotten.

- Spirit And Steel (400CP, discount for Robots)

The forces of Neo-Satan overwhelmingly favor brute force and raw bloodlust to gain the upper hand, and the legions of the dead that march in the name of darkness are unsuited to highly technical work. Nonetheless, on occasions it is necessary for the forces of the Ecclesiarchy to deal with various demonic technologies – sealed consoles, possessed software, and electronic circuitry that seems more living thing than metal machine. You have gained a divinely-powered Babel interface suite, allowing you to wirelessly interact with almost any type of technology regardless of compatibility (though achieving your goals is not guaranteed). Furthermore, your cyberwarfare suites have been granted a vast number of blessed wards and electronic countermeasures, ensuring that you can interact with even the most infernal of devices without having to fear for harm due to feedback, be it from crashing your comm systems due to unexpectedly immense amounts of data returned from a query or more lasting harm from demonic curses that seek to corrupt you as they travel along the datastream.

- The Steady Hand Of Retribution (600CP, discount for Robots)

Within your cold exterior burns the soul of a master marksman – a copied soul, perhaps, but your talents are no less real for it. The blend of a lifetime of ranged combat with advanced computational mathematics and top-of-the-line sensor suites make you an outright terrifying rifleman. You can predict projectile trajectories with perfect accuracy, and have the reflexes and

physical control to negate recoil and ensure that any time you fire your weapon, your shots will land where you are aiming, every time. The only way foes can prevent your shots from successfully striking them is by making sure you cannot get a clear shot, being fast enough to dodge while a projectile is in transit, or by having factors unknown to you to deflect the round or alter its trajectory (such as unnatural gravity fields, strong winds or invisible shields).

Note: this skill does not fully compensate for limits on your weapon - unless you can accurately predict the uneven gunpowder load in every bullet, for example, a shoddy machine gun may still leave you with some inaccuracies in your shots. Likewise, aiming at the moon won't let you *hit* it unless your shots could actually reach that far.

ITEMS

With a keen eye and some resourcefulness, your team will likely find designs and runes for most (if not all) of the weapons and divine powers that are used by both sides of the war. That said, starting with little more than a mundane Guardian Sword and Blaster will not exactly make you the epitome of divine wrath. If you wish, you may purchase weapons here to immediately gain their use, as well as upgrade them with additional effects or advantages. Descriptions are given both for the versions you may find in the setting and how purchasing them improves the design. In addition to each item's specific upgrade, all CP-bought weapons gain infinite ammo, can be used even if they are not meant for your class, and may be included in the buyer's loadout without taking up space. For example, a Templar could buy an Eye Of God rifle and use it on missions, even though he is not a Robot and he would normally be at capacity when carrying a (non-upgraded) Blaster, Guardian Sword and Hand Of God.

Your team will gain access to the designs for any weapons you purchase, but they do not receive their unique upgrades or the ability to use them if their class normally could not.

- Guardian Sword (50CP)

This plain, unadorned blade is the standard weapon of the Ecclesiarchy's soldiers. Blessed with a wickedly sharp edge but otherwise rather mundane, this weapon is very lightweight and the fastest melee weapon available. The Guardian Sword is the default equipment for all champions in service of the Ecclesiarchy, and can be wielded by anyone. If bought for CP, it becomes completely indestructible and can now be summoned to your hand any time you may need it, appearing out of nothingness with but a thought on your part. It can likewise be banished should you no longer need it.

- Flame Sword (100CP)

The Flame Sword is a more potent weapon that uses advanced DNA scanning in the handle to ensure that the fires that continually swirl around the blade never harm the wielder. Although it is not as powerful as some other melee weapons, the searing flames deal a surprising amount of damage without leaving any major restrictions on the weapon's speed. The Flame Sword can normally only be wielded by Templar and Nuns. If bought for CP, the blazing fires the sword emits become divine in nature, their ethereal inferno bypassing any kind of resistances to heat and allowing the flames to harm both body and spirit.

- Mace Of Storms (100CP)

Although it is still a one-handed weapon, the weight of this mace makes it slow to wield... but its strikes are terrifyingly powerful indeed. Furthermore, the weapon is charged with electricity to further enhance its bone-breaking impacts. The normal Mace Of Storms can be used by Templar and Nuns. When bought for CP, the electrical systems in the weapon are further enhanced, causing each strike to release a powerful electrical charge that grounds itself through any nearby enemies, creating an area-of-effect that deals minor damage and may cause enemies to be briefly stunned or paralyzed as their nerves are overloaded by the channeled energy.

- Sword of Restoration (150CP)

This wicked two-handed blade is one of the few weapons used by the Ecclesiarchy that was originally developed by the forces of darkness. Purged from its evil but retaining its hungering properties, every strike by this powerful weapon will heal some of the bearer's wounds. The size and weight of this weapon ensures that only Templar can wield the normal version. When bought for CP, the blade's hunger takes on a more esoteric nature – in addition to draining life from its targets, it can now slowly drain powers, enchantments and other advantages from other weapons, gaining any effects they may have but destroying the sacrificed weapon in the process.

- The Hand Of God (200CP)

This enormous blade is the pinnacle of weaponcraft found with the Templar – a cross between a claymore and a chainsaw longer than most men are tall. Heavy enough that only the strongest Templar can wield this weapon, the damage dealt by a direct hit surpasses that of any other weapon used by forces on either side of the conflict. When bought for CP, the blade will remain a symbol of your might just as it was for any Templar wielding it – as you grow in power, the blade will match your progress to ensure it always remains a suitable expression of your wrath.

- Blaster (50CP)

The St. Yoderick Mk IV Blaster is the standard sidearm of pretty much every combatant in the war. Firing large-calibre rounds with moderate accuracy, this pistol provides a solid if somewhat basic option for ranged attacks. That said, most veterans prefer more powerful alternatives should they focus on fighting from a distance. The Blaster pistol is the default equipment for all champions in service of the Ecclesiarchy, and can be wielded by anyone regardless of class. If purchased for CP, the pistol is improved such that it can load and fire any kind of ammunition intended for a hand-held weapon, though only the standard rounds keep the 'infinite ammo' improvement.

- Bible Basher (50CP)

The Bible Basher is one of the more unusual weapons used in the great war between good and evil. Rather than using conventional ammunition, this weapon is instead loaded with bibles – drawing the holy essence from the very pages themselves and launching it as a slow-moving

but homing blast of sacred power. This weapon can normally be used by Nuns and Robots. When bought with CP, the design is improved to allow the loading of any kind of text – while holy bibles are quite effective against the forces of evil, a textbook on metallurgy or combustion engines will likely be a better choice when attempting to disable a vehicle. The upgraded version also gains improved maneuverability, speed and range of the fired projectiles, greatly reducing the chance that your foes might avoid the strike by dodging or retreating.

- Martyr Gun (50CP)

This unusual weapon is a grenade launcher that, rather than firing conventional explosives, instead uses spiritual grenades powered by the souls of martyrs who have agreed to serve one last time to deal a final blow against the forces of darkness. Upon striking, it releases a lethal cloud of spiritual energy to lash out against all living targets. Ordinarily, this weapon can only be wielded by Nuns and Robots. If purchased for CP, the weapon is further enhanced such that it can draw upon any source of power – foregoing the need for souls – while retaining the semi-aware nature of the shells. Indeed, the weapon now enables each shot to remain dormant instead of exploding on impact, allowing the wielder to create devastating minefields and booby traps in addition to using the gun in its traditional role as a short-range grenade launcher.

- Haridiel's Shards (150CP)

This magnificent weapon is one of the few truly Angelic weapons wielded by the forces of the Ecclesiarchy. The rotary launcher at the tip of the weapon fires a stream of crystalline shards at a great rate of fire, sending an endless hail of doom at its targets. The crystals shatter on impact, sending razor-sharp splinters of the blessed crystal into enemies with great force. Due to the weight and complexity of this weapon, only Robots can normally make use of it. When upgraded, the weapon causes the crystal shards to be launched with tremendous internal strain – causing the shards to splinter once they pass a certain distance and effectively doubling the number of projectiles mid-flight with only a minor loss of raw power per hit. The internal stress can be intensified to allow the weapon to splinter more rapidly, potentially even multiple times before striking. However, while the splintering will increase the total inflicted damage, as the shards splinter more often the weapon's range, accuracy and damage per hit will drop sharply.

- Armageddon's Herald (200CP)

This immense weapon is the Ecclesiarchy's answer to the need for overwhelming, brute force. Firing 100mm explosive shells, this rocket launcher hits harder than any other ranged weapon in the war, and the rumbling echoes of its immense power is enough to strike fear into all but the most courageous or suicidal foes. The standard model was never designed for human hands, and can only be used by Robots. When purchased for CP, the Armageddon's Herald is enhanced to fire self-adjusting shaped charges, completely eliminating the risk of friendly fire while maximizing the explosive power and impact towards enemies.

- Eye of God (200CP)

One of the most iconic weapons of the Ecclesiarchy's Robot forces, the Eye Of God is a laser-based sniper rifle of great power. Pinpoint accurate and hard-hitting, this weapon can be

charged to further increase the lethality of the laser blast. As this weapon fires purely energy-based shots, it does not require ammunition, though the standard model requires a dedicated power source and can therefore only be used by Robots. When bought for CP, the weapon is further upgraded such that it bypasses all technology-based shields while automatically guiding your hand to maximize the possible damage. So long as your skill is great enough that you would hit the target at all, the weapon automatically strikes any reachable weak points in your foe's defenses – a master marksman could score an unbroken string of headshots.

- Miracles (200CP)

Seraphs can call upon the light of the blessed heavens to smite any who stand with Neo-Satan, but even their semi-divine nature does not grant them such powers without long study and dedication. Most Seraphs learn only a handful of miracles, with more powerful effects needing to be discovered through studying runes and divine texts before they can be manifested. This collection of tomes and relics are enough to teach every miracle seen in Apocalyptica, from the weak but efficient Storm Hand lightning creation to the awe-inspiring Divine Intervention, as well as a number of weaker divine abilities that are fitting for the hosts of heaven but not suited for front-line combat. Seraphs need no further aid to use these powers, but other classes will need to find some method to power these effects without a Seraph's divine nature – but so long as such a power source is taken care of, anyone can learn these powers.

- Golden Crown (50CP)

Not a crown so much as a technological halo worn above the head, this device is similar to that worn by Matron-Hierophant Asher herself. An icon of wisdom and leadership, the soothing light it casts around you will calm your allies, allowing them to fight with greater clarity and the courage they need to resist the fear that comes with facing the forces of evil.

- Crown Of Thorns (50CP)

The offensive counterpart to the Golden Crown, this heavy, spiked iron ring is favored by combat veterans such as Arch-Templar Samech. It forms a halo that is much more suited to personal combat, creating a shield that protects the bearer from a limited amount of harm. Although the barrier does not last forever, it recovers fairly quickly and the damage it prevents is often enough to give the bearer the upper hand in a fight.

- S.S. Ariziel II (750CP)

This magnificent starship is one of the greatest weapons of war ever built by the Ecclesiarchy - but its mightiest power does not lie in its weapons or armor. Much like its sister ship, the Ariziel, the true purpose of this flagship lies deep within, in the vast facilities of the cloning bays and robot assembly lines. Containing all the systems needed to restore the souls of the righteous dead, this ship can reincarnate almost any person a seemingly unlimited number of times... although it cannot make 'copies' if the original soul is inaccessible such as by being trapped (or if they are still alive). Together with a teleporter that can move forces across a solar system or, so long as suitable receiver beacons are in place, even at interstellar distances in the blink of an

eye, this allows for the forces of light to return to a battlefield mere seconds after their untimely demise.

That said, it is still a powerful warship, with both an impressive firepower and enough speed and stealth to excel at surgical strikes against planetary garrisons. It comes complete with the staff needed to operate it, either non-specific NPCs or automated robotic crews as you prefer.

- The Gates Of Heaven And Hell (Free upon completion of the Gauntlet)

No mortal can hope to stand against the greatest foe - Neo-Satan's power is simply too great. But as you will learn during the Ecclesiarchy's final, desperate campaign, that does not mean he cannot be stopped. The last battle would have likely seen you fight beneath the towering form of the devil's reincarnated might, on the suicidal battlefield of the Sanctum Satanicus. That battle would end not with Neo-Satan's death - rather, he would be imprisoned along with the more mortal warriors around him, sealed within an angelic prison for all time. Now, your Warehouse gains a gleaming gateway of embossed gold - a way to return to this battlefield again and again.

Though your allies are long gone, whisked away as you reached the final victory, Neo-Satan remains within... and with him, an endless legion of hell's forces. While in this prison realm neither you nor your enemies will die permanently - all combatants will reincarnate anytime they are slain. Though the prison is eternally unchanging, any skills gained here are not - even the mightiest of the Templar may need to train their combat skills from time to time.

No power can break free of the asteroid prison, preventing you from accessing the rest of the Apocalyptica setting.

COMPANIONS

- Brothers and Sisters (50CP per purchase)

The Ecclesiarchy is formed upon the ideals of virtue, duty, and community – though lone champions might oppose the dark at times, they do so knowing they never truly stand alone. Likewise, you may keep such bonds as you continue on from this world. With each purchase, you may bring an existing character from Apocalyptica, be it another champion or someone further from the action like Matron-Hierophant Asher, with you on your travels as a Companion.

- United Under God (variable cost)

One man, woman or divinely-empowered machine may stand against Neo-Satan's endless hordes, but the wise know that it's better to fight by the side of friends. You may import (or create) Companions for 50CP each, or pay 200CP for eight Companions at once. Each gains a background of their choice, and may take Drawbacks from among 'Faint', 'Martyr', 'Defied', and 'Labyrinthine'. They also receive half the total CP you've gained from any other Drawbacks that you've taken.

DRAWBACKS

- The Greatest War (+1000CP)

Normally, you would arrive in this setting as the Ecclesiarchy begins what would be the single-most important assault on Neo-Satan's forces, participating in a series of missions that would see an end to the endless conflict – one way or another, in the form of a Gauntlet. You may instead opt to make this into a 'normal' jump, losing the protections against dying that come from its nature as a Gauntlet (and consequently failing your chain if you die) but keeping any powers or other advantages you bring with you from worlds you have visited previously. You arrive here just under ten years before the S.S. Ariziel departs to strike against Arch-Duke Sarubac, and will stay here until the last battle concludes.

- In Service Of Neo-Satan (+0CP)

What's that? You don't want to stand on the side of righteousness and virtue? Shining armor and crucifixes not your thing? Well, if you really insist, this Drawback instead places you in the forces of hell, serving Neo-Satan as a Black Knight, Vamp, Wraith or Ripperdroid instead of whatever background you normally would have had. All Perks, Items, Drawbacks and other purchases are now based around your new, demonic ambitions instead of the holy might of virtue, and these changes will persist beyond this jump as appropriate. This Drawback otherwise doesn't make the jump any easier or more difficult – the setting simply changes such that it is now the forces of darkness that are near collapse under the relentless assault of the Ecclesiarchy's forces.

- Without Sin (+100CP)

There is a quiet virtue in being innocent... and the knowledge of what is to come can be grim, indeed. You and your Companions arrive here with no knowledge of the setting or the events of the game, keeping only what your background's memories tell you. Likewise, any and all methods to preserve this information will fail somehow until the end of your time here – written summaries will turn to gibberish, computer files become (temporarily) corrupted, and so on. This does not remove your memories from other jumps.

- Faint (+100CP)

Somehow, an unusual flaw has crept into the resurrection process when it is applied to you. The connection between your soul and your physical body is weakened in a way that can't be mended, leaving you exceptionally vulnerable to the attacks brought against you by the enemy. You take twice as much damage from any weapon hit, miracle, or other method Neo-Satan's forces might use to harm you.

- Martyr (+100CP)

You might have strength, you might have faith, you might have the determination to face the enemy head-on... but you'll likely have no choice but to do so. Be it through nerve damage as a consequence of flawed cloning technology, misfiring cybernetics or a fanaticism so great you

refuse to move, you somehow completely lack the reflexes necessary to dodge attacks or block incoming strikes. Indeed, the only times you can actually respond to attacks in time is if you try to take the hit instead of an ally. Let's hope you've got the fortitude to outlast your foes.

- Defied (+100CP)

Whether Neo-Satan has somehow learned of your... unusual nature or not, the fact remains that the forces of hell are more than ready for you. Somehow, the foes you face have been bolstered by a dark energy that is uniquely effective against your powers. Though it is of little use against other combatants, this vile power shrouds them in shadows that drain the very light from your every strike, causing you to deal only half as much damage as you should have.

- The Burning Light (+200CP)

The missions that the Ecclesiarchy's elite participate in often involve close-quarters combat – cramped tunnels, enemy strong points and the chaos of battle mean that often one fights side by side with their allies. Fortunately, the blessed nature of the weapons used by your side ensured that 'friendly fire' is not a concern... unless you take this Drawback. Now, both your own attacks and those of your allies will deal full damage to any friendly forces caught by the attack. A Templar with a Hand Of God becomes a no-go zone for anyone looking to keep their limbs attached, and a Robot wielding the Armageddon's Herald had better exercise some very cautious aiming.

- The Endless Tide (+200CP)

The forces of the Ecclesiarchy can no longer go on the offensive and face a head-on battle with Neo-Satan's forces. Their numbers are too great, their power too certain. Instead, the champions of light are now tasked primarily with engaging in small groups, striking hard and fast against targets of interest and accomplishing their objectives before Neo-Satan's forces can mobilize and reinforce the area under attack. Consequently, many missions have a time limit – although it takes time for the forces of darkness to mount a counteroffensive, if the Ariziel's task force takes too long to achieve its goals, they will be trapped by rapidly escalating enemy reinforcements. With this Drawback, the forces of darkness are much faster when it comes to retaliating against your own offensives, halving the time they need to react to your strikes. There is little time for mistakes or the long, arduous series of do-overs that the champions might have employed in the original timeline.

Running out of time won't mean instant defeat during the Gauntlet as it did during the game, but once the enemy mobilizes you'll want to complete your objective and move on, *fast*.

Be swift, for all our sakes.

- Drowning In Corpses (+100CP per purchase, up to +300CP)

The forces of Neo-Satan seem limitless at times – formed from the desecrated bodies of the dead and those corrupted by sin, even when he was still limited to old Earth his armies swelled fast enough that all the forces of heaven could only force a stalemate, the few remaining faithful evacuating in vast stellar arks. Now, this is doubly true: with every purchase, the lesser forces of Neo-Satan's legions are three times as numerous as they were before. Most of the zombies,

bound spirits and other 'cannon fodder' enemies are barely a threat to a champion of the light... but quantity has a quality of its own, and they now have plenty.

- Their Name Is Legion (+50 per purchase, up to +300CP)

Though much of the forces of darkness is composed of the forcefully resurrected dead and other 'lesser' horrors, that does not mean that the enemy does not have its own elite forces. The Black Knights, Vamps, Wraiths and Ripperdroids form twisted, foul counterparts to the champions of the Ecclesiarchy... and now, they are just that bit more numerous. With every purchase, Neo-Satan's forces field one-fourth more champions than before – while on most missions you might only face four at once, now you will face at least five... and much like your own repeated reincarnation through the clone bays, so too does Neo-Satan have its means of bringing these vile butchers back to fight again and again.

- Cunning Cruelty (+100CP)

No longer are your foes the mindless zombies and war-crazed berserkers that you once would have faced. Within Neo-Satan's forces, a dark and cunning cruelty has developed, a drive to overcome the enemy through twisted intellect and scheming. Even the slowest and dumbest enemies you'll face will now begin employing ambush tactics, striking without warning in a desperate attempt to rend your flesh. And the greater the power of your enemies, the greater their cunning. Be careful, and never assume that a Black Knight's bloodthirsty charge cannot also be the distraction for a Vamp or Ripperdroid to strike your foes when you move out of cover to engage.

- Sinners' Iron (+100CP)

The Ecclesiarchy has long relied on superior skill and equipment to even the odds against the forces of darkness. Even Neo-Satan's elite forces tend to be more poorly equipped than the Templar, Nuns and other champions in service of the light. They will eventually field more powerful weapons and abilities, but most encounters would see them use only the more basic gear. Well, that was before. With this Drawback, 'eventually' means *now*. Every champion you face will have access to every loadout their class could use, and you're pretty much guaranteed to deal with Black Knights wielding bloodied *Hand Of God* blades or Wraiths summoning demon lords with their own perverted version of the *Divine Intervention* power.

- Utter Darkness (+100CP per purchase, up to +300CP)

Even amongst the forces of hell, there is a clear hierarchy. From the enslaved souls and zombies at the very bottom to the Black Knights that serve as their shock troopers, each has its own strengths and weaknesses. But above all others stand a rare number of demons of great and terrible power. Even one of such beings was considered dangerous enough that dispatching the S.S. Ariziel, with all its potential, was more than justified by the chance to eliminate it. But now, abominations such as Arch-Duke Sarubac are no longer so rare, so exceptional: for with every purchase of this Drawback, the forces of Neo-Satan will number twice as many of such exemplars of sin and evil. Expect to face a lot more 'boss' type opponents, and may the angels guide your path.

- Labyrinthine (+200CP)

Through ash-choked ruins and twisting hellscapes you will lead the charge against Neo-Satan's forces, bringing wrathful justice against the wicked and the profane. But darkness has many forms, and with every drop of blackened blood you spill a terrible curse is released into the air. Any time you fight, environments will continually warp and twist, the world around you shifting from one form to the next until your sense of direction is completely, utterly gone. Slaying a group of zombies is no more difficult than it was before... but finding your next target will be substantially more challenging when the paths you took no longer lead where they did.

- Neophyte (+300CP)

Things have taken a turn for the worse for the Ecclesiarchy and the S.S. Ariziel was forced to depart in great haste, leaving many of the more advanced manufacturing facilities incomplete or inoperable. While the core systems still function as necessary, you and the rest of the Ariziel's champions can no longer be equipped with the more advanced gear. Any melee weapon stronger than the *Storm Mace*, any ranged weapon stronger than the *Martyr Gun*, and the *Divine Intervention* miracle can no longer be used by you or your allies. This restriction in power also applies to any abilities or equipment you bring from other jumps, if you took *The Greatest War*.

ENDING

The forces of light have triumphed! Neo-Satan's power is broken, his colossal form brought low by the unquenchable valor you have shown. Or has he? Should you and your allies have been broken, the Ecclesiarchy overrun until even the angels have fallen to the last and Neo-Satan stands triumphant, you will have failed. You must make your choice while retaining none of your purchases from the Gauntlet save the knowledge that you could not stop the triumph of evil. If you died after taking 'The Greatest War', you may only choose to go home or stay here - your jumping days are over.

But if you *did* win... well, you may stand proud knowing that the forces of hell are broken for good. Perhaps you slew Neo-Satan yourself, but if you were instead forced to trap him within the angelic prison you will find that neither you or your allies will remain trapped there as they normally would have.

Your 'ordinary' allies will stay here, their homes and lives in this world compelling them to help humanity rebuild after Neo-Satan's onslaught. But you and your Companions will need to choose.

You may stay here as well, if you like. The Ecclesiarchy will need every willing person to rebuild and recover, and your presence would likely be very welcome.

Perhaps the battles you have fought here have made you weary of the challenges and hardships you've endured and have yet to face? If you choose, you may return home to where

you lived before you became a Jumper. You reach the end of your travels with anything you brought with you.

But most likely, you'll want to see what's there, beyond the next jump, the next journey. Then move on to your next world, and remember kindly those you fought beside in this realm.

NOTES

The Gates Of Heaven And Hell item is only received if you complete the Gauntlet, not the jump mode. It's so heavily tied in to the way the Gauntlet's campaign/missions end in the game that most jumpers starting ten years early would butterfly away the entire thing by default.

Without creating/importing Companions, your team during the Gauntlet will eventually include one member of each class. Each Companion you add will replace one of the existing champions. If doing the Gauntlet and creating/importing three or more Companions, it is strongly recommended you have at least one Robot on the team. Some of the missions have objectives that can only be completed by a Robot, so replacing the Crusader 471.2 that was part of the original game's team with your fully flesh-and-blood friends will almost certainly see you fail (at least if none of you took *Spirit And Steel*).

Each class comes with the basic skills necessary to match the champions seen in the game, such as the necessary weapon handling skills for Templar and Robots, a Nun's innate agility, and the Seraph's ability to manifest (some) miracles. Perks and other purchases are 'extra'. Buying any item with CP allows you to use that weapon regardless of your class, but it does *not* guarantee competence: without suitable Perks, a Nun or Seraph wielding a Sword Of Restoration will not deal the kind of damage a Templar would with it due to their inferior physical strength. Likewise, a Templar with an Eye Of God will need perks to match the kind of accuracy and reflexes a Robot has with it.

Effects like resistance to magic, fire, or holy powers and so on will apply to some or all of the faith-based powers seen in this setting, including both Seraph and Wraith abilities. Fanwank how the divine aspects of these abilities factor in, or if they work differently if wielded by demons such as Arch-duke Sarubac or Neo-Satan himself instead of 'mere' mortal champions.

Feel free to fanwank what other types of powers you could learn from the *Miracles* item. Expect stuff normally associated with Christian saints and the like - healing the infirm, turning water into wine, etcetera. Other than that, the (combat) miracles that Seraphs start with (or that others can learn through the *Miracles* item) are:

- Storm Hand: an efficient but somewhat weak auto-targeting channeled lightning attack. Think 'Darth Sidious electrocuting Luke' except with holy powers instead of the Dark Side and you're pretty close.
- Godspeed: a channeled power that massively increases the Seraph's speed. Roughly highway speeds for several seconds at a time.

- Faith Heal: a channeled power that leaves the Seraph stationary, and heals both them and any injured allies nearby. Faith cost increases with the number of targets healed simultaneously.
- Armor Of God: provides near-total invulnerability to damage for a short time, but costs enough Faith to leave a Seraph effectively 'drained' until the miracle ends, forcing them to recover their power for some time before they can use it again. It does not guarantee invulnerability against sufficiently powerful attacks - even in-game bosses (especially Neo-Satan) can break through it, and likewise enemies you face in other worlds might be too strong for the barrier to prevent all damage. The effect will still provide some protection in all cases, though, even if it may not always be absolute.

The (combat) miracles that Seraphs do not normally learn but that can be found in-setting or learned from the *Miracles* item are:

- Repel: when cast, this miracle releases a wave that pushes all enemies away from the caster. Very effective if you're getting swarmed by enemies, and quite lethal if used near cliffs and other hazards.
- Void: the opposite of Repel, this creates a black void that draws in nearby enemies and deals (minor) damage. Good for setting up area-of-effect attacks from teammates.
- Divine Intervention: this highly draining miracle also sacrifices a portion of the user's life force, but is the most powerful of all the miracles seen. Summoning an angel (or demon lord) directly to the field of battle after a three second delay, the summoned ally becomes the center of an effect that continually and heavily damages all mortals in the area - sufficient to wipe out an entire squad of champions in mere seconds. However, without out-of-jump powers to resist it, the Angel's aura is so pure it will purge your own life much as it will anyone else's if you remain in the area of effect, regardless of whether you get this ability in-setting or from the Miracles item.

The S.S. Ariziel II can revive you as easily as it would anyone else in future worlds, but barring advantages from other jumps dying will still end your chain.

Higher tiers of the Drawbacks that multiply enemy numbers are multiplicative with their lower tiers. For example: a single purchase of 'Drowning In Corpses' triples the number of mooks you face, a second level multiplies their numbers by nine, and a third level ensures you face twenty-seven times as many such enemies. Round down numbers for 'Their Name Is Legion', to a minimum of one additional enemy champion on each mission.

All else fails, fanwank.