

The Book of Revelation – Chapter 1 Part2

Introduction:

1. No book in all scripture has stimulated more discussion, generated more controversy, and created more questions than the book of Revelation.
2. Each one of us may have read different interpretations – scripture interprets scripture
3. The title of the book in Greek is *Apocalypsis*, from which we get its other common name, the Apocalypse.
4. *Apocalypsis* is formed from two Greek words—*apo*, denoting separation or removal, and *kalypto*, a verb meaning to cover, hide, or veil so *Apocalypsis*, then, literally means removal of the veil or covering - hence its title in English, the Book of Revelation or the uncovering or unveiling
5. **"Are we expected to understand the book of Revelation? Certainly - why else did the Lord reveal it?"**
6. By the way - Jesus Christ - Is a fundamentally Jewish name and a title.
7. Yehoshua – his actual name by which he is known to his parents, friends and to his followers and comes from the Hebrew verb “to save”
8. His glory was concealed, during his “exile” on earth, but now in John's vision He is revealed in the heavens in His full glory
9. at the time of John's writing, most Jews were in “exile” across the world, but God promised that in the last days he would gather people from the four corners of the world (***Isaiah 11:12***)

Symbols:

1. The symbols in the Book of Revelation resemble other Jewish books written in the same style. Consider the imagery of animals meant to represent humans Leaders of Israel are called “*shepherds of the sheep*”
2. These techniques belong to the genre of apocalyptic books which use images, symbols, cultural and linguistic codes that make perfect sense to the insider audience but is meaningless and confusing to outsiders. For example, the image of the Beast and its number
3. Then the number 666 is a Gematria - a numeric code meant to help people to calculate and identify whom John was really writing about.
4. The Mark of the Beast - whatever form or shape. it was to be placed on their head and their hand according to Revelation
5. To the Jewish audience placement sound very similar and would make perfect symbolic sense. The Israelites were commanded to place God's word on themselves “***to bind them as a sign on your hand” and to wear “as frontals on your forehead” between your eyes” Deut 6:8***”
6. In the Jewish community, these verses were practiced by wearing the “*tefillin*” during morning prayers.

666:

1. The name Nero Caesar spelled in Hebrew adds up to 666.
2. Some later Greek Manuscripts of Revelation feature the number 616 instead of 666.
3. this technique is called Gematria - a literally device often associated with mysticism, secret things and used purposely to conceal something's meaning.
4. The method is simple. In Hebrew, letters are also numbers, so A would be 1 - B would be 2 and so on in a sequential system. The result is that any word can have a mathematical value which is the sum of the letter values added together.

5. Nero's name is like Hitler today – it invokes the thought of evil

Deliberate Structure:

1. In **verse 4** we are introduced to the number seven which is a crucial number and constitutes the numeric based structure of the book's composition.
2. In the ancient Hebrew tradition, the number 7 represent completion or perfection - idea of wholeness is connected to God Himself so it is the number 7 appears throughout the letter very intentionally.

Seven Churches:

1. All seven assemblies mentioned in the letter or located within the system of ancient Roman roads in Asia Minor.
2. The letter is tied to the importance of the number 7, pointing to symbolic nature of these churches
3. As we will see the letter confronts each of the seven communities with an alternative image of the world and their reality
4. In Roman cities, civic and religious architecture iconography, statues, rituals, and festivals all served as impressive visual displays of Roman imperial power and the magnificent splendor of pagan worship.
5. The power John's letter stands in opposition to that visible reality in order to cleanse and refresh the minds of the reader down through the ages
6. In **Chapter 17**, for example, John describes his vision of a woman.
7. At many temples throughout Asia Minor people worshipped this goddess as the personification of the majestic Roman civilization.
8. John turns this image on its head, portraying the woman - not as some noble figure but as a murderous prostitute. Her wealth and splendor represent the evil gains of her disreputable trade.
9. The image of this woman has caused much speculation and great deal of ink has been spilled attempting to define this woman - Babylon.
10. A coin minted in the year 71 AD with the image of emperor Vespasian and the reverse side of this coin is an image of the goddess Roma, literally sitting on seven hills of Rome
11. In the late 1st century AD the threat of invasion from the Persian Empire was real and widely felt. According to a popular myth, Nero would come back from the grave at the head of the Persian hoards to conquer the Roman Empire. The letter of Revelation plays on this fear and envisions an alliance between *the beast* and the kings of the East.

God's Special Name:

1. **Revelation 1:4a. "Grace and peace to you from He who is and was and is still to come"**
2. John uses the same Greek wording, only in this place - God's unpronounceable name YHWH
3. It is a composite past, present and future aspects - all represent and blended into that one single word YHWH - "**who is and the one who was and who will be**"
4. **Revelation 1:4b. "And from the seven spirits who are before His throne"**
5. **Revelation 1:5-6 "And from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first born from among the dead, the ruler over the kings of the Earth. To the One who loves us and has set us free from our sins at the cost of his own blood and has appointed us as a Kingdom of priests serving his God and father - to him be glory and power forever and. Amen"**

6. John and his community and the believers to whom he addressed his letter to be the priestly Kingdom serving Jesus' God's - literally His God and Father

Many Voices:

1. A variety of voices are being heard - there is God, John, Spirit, Jesus Christ Bride and so on
2. John is interrupted by two unexpected benedictions - in **verses 5b-6** and the next one in **verse 7** where we see two biblical prophecies involved. **Daniel 7:13-14, Zacharia 12:10**
3. New Testament documents like the Book of Revelation mostly operate within an already pre-existing set of Jewish concepts, the New Testament's genius and uniqueness is seen. For instance, the harmonizing of the triumphant cloud riding Messiah with the tragic, meek and suffering servant riding on a donkey.
4. **Revelation 1:10 "I was in the spirit on the Lord's Day"**
5. The vision he recorded are rooted in the end time reality of the future day of God's triumph.
6. **Revelation 1:10 "I was in the spirit on the Lords Day when I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying 'Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches – to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea'"**
7. When John turned back to look in the direction of the voice speaking to, he first saw something like a Menorah - the Golden seven branched lamp that stood in the Holy Place in the Jerusalem Temple.
8. The presence of the temple menorah would signal to John's audience that his visionary experience took place in the vicinity of the Heavenly Temple Tabernacle

Son of Man:

1. **Revelation 1:12-13 "I turned to see whose voice was speaking to me and on doing so, I saw seven golden lampstands in the midst of the lampstands which one like the Son of Man"**
2. The fact that the Son of Man walks among the seven heavenly lamps means that he - Jesus - as Heavenly high priest, was a source of this revelation.
3. **Revelation 1:13-14 "I saw like the Son of Man, clothed in a robe, reaching to his feet and girded across his chest with a golden sash"**
4. **Revelation 1:14** - His head and then separately his hair is described in terms of white wool.
5. **Revelation 1:14-16a "His head and his hair were white like white wool, like snow and his eyes like the flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze when it has been made to glow in a furnace and his voice was like the sound of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars"** This is similar to the description of an Angel in **Daniel 10:4-6 and Daniel 7:9-10**
6. **Revelation 1:16. "Now from his mouth came a sharp two- edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in its strength"**
7. **Hebrews 4:12 - "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing as far as the divisions of the soul and spirit of both joint and marrow and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart"**

Times of Persecution and Great Turmoil

1. The Book of Revelations was composed during the time of the persecution of the early Christ followers by the Roman government.
2. While the fate of the Jesus worshipping congregations was not at all certain, John was shown a vision of what must soon take place
3. No coincidence – no - this is the message for us today in the midst of everything that is going on in the world