

REVELATION

SUBTITLE: ALLOWING SCRIPTURE TO INTERPRET SCRIPTURE

FORWARD

The Book of Revelation is unique. On the one hand, it differs from all other books of the Bible in that the majority of its words are written in apocalyptic (hidden) or symbolic form (The word-Apocalypse means 'revelation' or, hidden and to uncover). But on the other hand, it is not unique in that books like Daniel and Ezekiel include apocalyptic writing as well. Those books will be used throughout this book to assist in allowing scripture to interpret scripture, or itself. That will be the mode of operandi for this commentary. This method is not new. In a sense that is what the 4 Gospels do. It's kind of like watching a football game on TV. A team shows a touchdown and then you see 5 replays from 5 different angles. You don't say, "Wow, they must of scored 5 touchdowns!" No....it's simply one TD from 5 different angles. (We will try to keep the angles down to one or two!).

Other commentaries of the day like to use such things as current world affair, or recent historical events to parallel the symbolism used in Revelation; such as the war in the Middle East being the start of Armageddon, or, the lion mentioned in Revelation represents Britain and the eagle the United States, and the bear represents Russia and the dragon-China. Or, they choose to interpret the book literally verses that are obviously symbolic; such as Revelation 20 and the 1000 year reign or the number 666 (the mark of the beast) as a literal number; used in an assortment of literal ways such as being applied to people's bodies. All of which are based on human opinion. Rev. Dr. James Heining adds; "Most of Revelation should be interpreted symbolically. But I think that comes from study, and looking at other parts of Scripture. I would suggest that the literal interpretation would be the first and most obvious reading--even though that is not correct. As example, it seems obvious that the sun circles around the earth--but we have learned that it is not true!"

Our method of allowing scripture to interpret scripture is nothing new. The Bible speaks of allowing 2 or 3 witnesses to establish truth. Such biblical method is found in cross-referencing to establish various truths of the Bible. That is the intent of this book. That is, to keep opinion at a minimum. On the one hand, even with this method, it is our 'opinion' that the scripture used to interpret scripture is accurate. While on the other hand, we are allowing that scripture itself, to assist in providing the meaning that is already there. Thus, our purpose of this book is to offer a clear, faithful, and accurate commentary on what is the most difficult book in the Bible to understand. In so doing, we hope to keep our opinions out and allow scripture to interpret scripture.

In closing, as fascinating as it is to read and study Revelation, it also takes work; putting on our thinking caps; wrestling with God ***And Jacob was left alone. And a Man wrestled with Him until the breaking of the day Genesis 32:24.*** But above all, it depends on our leaning on the Holy Spirit who promises...***But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you John 14:26.*** And..... ***He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says Rev. 2:7.***

DEDICATION

Back in High School, I was voted 'class prophet.' Who'd-a thunk? But God in His grace and mercy gave me this 'prophetic' work late in life and right at His perfect time. I will try to be brief. I would first and foremost like to dedicate this book to our Triune God. The God of all grace and mercy who is worthy to be praised! I also would like to dedicate this book to my wife-Jody, who has stuck with me through thick and thin and lived her vows of 'through richer or poorer, sickness and in health, till death do us part' to the max. To my daughter Carisa and husband, Justin who both are truly the best parents I've ever seen and the epitome of two becoming one flesh; and their children Alayna (9) and Leah (6); the love of our lives and little witnesses for Jesus as well. To my son Darian; who knows Jesus from both his creation and Word and Spirit; and his wife Shelly who pictures Jesus with her actions and beautiful artistry. Also, to sister-in-laws Janet Gagelin and Lona Bach, who have their own personal battles with cancer going. But who both never saw short of what I couldn't do with an ipad and a pen.

I also wish to dedicate this book to my Pastors-Henry Fry and Ernest Bartels who I will be seeing again sometime in the place our Lord is preparing for us. Pastor Edward J. Rutter, age-95, (at this writing 8/5/16) who at this writing (8/3/16) has eyes sharper than an eagles as he edits this book and offers his great wisdom. I include with them my 'temporal teachers of Maxine and Reuben Kath, and my siblings Jody, Cheri, and John. All of us remain a work of God in progress. My cousin Sharon as well. She gently encouraged and kept me thinking on the straight and narrow in more ways than one.

Finally, I'd like to dedicate this book to my Wahpeton High School Class of '68. Not for voting me class prophet (as I'm not sure how many of you said, "Lyle? Him a Pastor?") That's OK! But for all your love and kindness over the years. I especially want to say I'm sorry to anyone in our class or outside, to which I called a name and hurt you. I believe my heart was saying it in fun but of course that's no excuse. Please forgive me. A special thank you to Al 'Biggy' Emmel. whose letters from Hawaii while spoke of true friendship. Thank you also to Kevin Lehman; a man struggling the same as me with sin, but not one to forget his friends. John Wicklein; old Legion Baseball and Breck Lanes Softball buddy. Both remain mine heroes to this day. Finally, a special thank you to Mark Munson of whom the same words of Kevin apply, and even though we went our separate ways after high school, that deep, abiding friendship from the Lord above continues to exist. Thank you for our farewell fishing trip and "See ya on the other side!"

INTRODUCTION

The historian-Eusebius tells us the book of Revelations was written in 96 A.D. in the 15th and final year of the Emperor Domitian. Eusebius adds, "It is said in the persecution of the Apostle, Evangelist John, who was still alive and condemned to live on the island of Patmos as consequence for a testimony to the Divine Word."

(1) Patmos (Greek, Πάτμος; Italian: *Patmo*) is a small Greek island in the Aegean Sea. One of the northernmost islands of the Dodecanese complex, it has a population of 2,984 and an area of 34.05 km (13 square miles). The highest point is Profitis Ilias, 269 meters above sea level.

Patmos is probably not where the Apostle John died. Early records say that he went on to live out his days in Ephesus. The Apostle lived out his days as a greatly revered apostle and elder in the Church. He is the only one of the original apostles who did not die an overt martyrdom. His long life came with great blessing for the early congregations. His immediate disciples had a tremendous influence on the continual formation of the Church after his death. "John is only one of 12 not to be martyred." Regarding that statement, Rev. Dr. James Heing says, "I also believe that from church tradition, but it cannot be verified. (Some traditions are pretty wild.) I think I would simply acknowledge that this is from tradition.

From Chapter XVIII—*The Apostle John and the Apocalypse*. Eusebius says that in this persecution the apostle and evangelist John, who was still alive, was condemned to dwell on the island of Patmos in consequence of his testimony to the divine word.

Irenæus, in the fifth book of his work *Against Heresies*, where he discusses the number of the name of Antichrist which is given in the so-called *Apocalypse of John*, speaks as follows concerning him: "If it were necessary for his name to be proclaimed openly at the present time, it would have been declared by him who saw the revelation. For it was seen not long ago, but almost in our own generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian."

Eusebius quoted also Hegesippus' testimony [about 150 A.D.] that John returned to Ephesus upon being released from exile after the accession of Nerva in A. D. 96 (HE III. xx). Eusebius also said, that while in Ephesus, because of his age and frail condition, young men of his church would set John in a chair and then carry him and the chair to church so he could teach.

The book of Revelation is divided into 9 sections as follows:

n Introduction. (Ch. 1)

1. The Seven Letters to the Seven Churches (Ch. 2-3)
2. The Vision of the Seven Seals (Ch. 4:1-8:5)
3. The Vision of the Seven Trumpets (Ch. 8:6-11:19)
4. The Seven Visions (Ch. 12-15)
5. The Vision of the Seven Bowls (Ch. 16)
6. The Victory over Antichrist (Ch. 17-19)
7. The Victory over Satan (Ch. 20:1-22:5)

Conclusion. (Ch. 22:5-21)

Each of these sections are to be read as separate events; not a continuation of events, but each one has its own unique special message. The easiest way to read Revelation is to first take your time and read the Old Testament prophets. Because the OT prophets keep having vision after vision after vision and at no time do you see a time continuum. For example, the visions of Ezekiel and Isaiah. These are separate visions and yet they allude to the same historical fact. But they are also to be understood on their own. They are not to be understood starting at 30 A.D. continuous events up until the present or judgment day. The visions are separate. However, they can mean the same thing. For example, in Pro Football, a player scores a touchdown. That touchdown happened to be recorded by 7 different cameras from 7 different angles. Rather than 7 separate touchdowns, in reality there was only 1 touchdown but shown 7 different ways. That is the way John speaks of various visions in his book.

Another thing people have a hard time with is the imagery. If you read the Old Testament prophets, you will find a great deal of imagery that coincides with Revelation; not all, but a great amount. That is where we will draw our parallels from, allowing scripture to interpret scripture. Then the reader is better prepared to understand the book of Revelation. Still, the reader will still have to discern what we, the writers write, as to whether the parallel is contextual and apropos. Thus, faith and wisdom remain a requirement. You will be the judge along with our Church and Publisher's critics.

We use a lot of imagery today in our everyday world. For example, we have the bear and bull markets of the stock exchange, the statue of liberty, our flag, McDonald's golden arches just to mention a few. We simply are not use to all the imagery of Revelation. When we understand the Biblical references,

CHAPTER 1-REVELATION-JOHN'S INTRODUCTION & 1ST VISION

PROLOGUE

Revelation 1:1-3... The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John (2) who testifies to everything he saw-- that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. (3) Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

God often sent an angel in Old Testament times to give messages to His people. i.e. Samson's parents, Abraham, Jacob, Mary, just to mention a few. Such was God's modus operandi. God makes mention that this is how He will communicate with John, and later, we will find that God has one angel for each church to do His bidding. This mode of operation gives credence to the words, 'wherever two or three are gathered in My Name, there am I in the midst of them;' or His Presence as the result of His angel. We don't claim knowledge as to the literal appearance of God other than the words of another of His promises; ***"Lo, I am with you always."*** Also, people have individual angels assigned to them as we recognize from Jesus words in Matthew 18, ***"Be careful what you do to these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven."*** We are reminded from Luther's morning prayer which speaks of "God's holy angel(s) watching over us, so the wicked foe has no power over us."

Vs. 1...The very word for angel in the Greek--αγγελουσ--literally means messenger.

Vs. 2...Although what John saw was a vision, we can understand these words as literal.

Vs. 3...God calls us blessed (μαρκαρισος); the same word used in the beatitudes. Who is blessed? It says, the one who reads AND...those who hear the Word of prophecy; AND...those who keep these writings; or, take them to heart. Notice there are 3 things mentioned. We might want to attune our thinking as we take God's Word to heart, of the symbolism of God's use of numbers (Numerology). #3 represents 'purity' or 'holiness,' and, God Himself in terms of the Trinity. By taking these words to heart; we are reminded how State Police 'educate' high-schoolers learning how to drive a car. They show them crash vehicles; mangled messes plastic and steel, many of which still have the victim's blood on them. Are these Officers showing a lack of concern for these students? No way! Such visual reality serves to automatically serves to make the student 'take driving to heart.' That this is a serious endeavor. The same could be said for learning the word of God under the circumstances of persecution by the Roman Emperor-Domitian of the day. For Christians were being mutilated in the most horrendous ways under his reign. In John case, he was fortunate to escape with only being exiled. Which was actually a 2nd persecution. The first being under Nero in 67 A.D. and following. Domitian's took place in 81 A.D. and ff. While a 3rd persecution took place under the Emperor Trajan in 108 A.D.

Greeting to the Seven Churches

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,⁵ and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the

ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷ Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. ⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Verse 4...To the seven churches in the province of Asia. In chapter 2, John will speak individually to each church starting down in the southwest corner with Ephesus; then heading north to Smyrna, and Pergamum; then southeast to Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and finally, Laodicea; in kind of a geographic circle. These were literal cities. However, they are also used by John in a symbolic sense to represent the visible church(es) on earth.

the seven spirits who are before his throne Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire: Psalm 104:4; and... And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. Heb. 1:7 That would be His angels. But note the number; 7. Another number in God's common numerology. It is used 735 times in the Bible and 54 times alone in Revelations. A reminder of creation; 7 days. There are the 7 annual holy days of the Old Testament. Isaiah 11:2 mentions of the 7-fold description of the Holy Spirit which gives cause to believe the seven spirits mentioned here are the Holy Spirit. 1-The Spirit of the Lord, 2-the Spirit of wisdom, 3-the spirit of understanding, 4-the Spirit of counsel, 5-the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord **(SB)**. **The addition of 3=God, coupled with 4 (God's perfect creation and/or man prior to the fall)=7.** Thus, 7 means God and His creation. In a sense, 7 is a perfect and complete number like 10 in that God and all His creation was completed perfect. Yet because of our sin, the creation part is anything but perfect.

Four...The cross, 4 sides-man and His sin; or the mention of 'peoples, tribes, languages, and nations' (4), meaning man... and equaling 7. More information regarding the number four: it denotes the Creations made by the God, in other words, all the things you see around. Four great elements of the universe, namely, earth, fire, air and water, the four regions of the mother earth- east, west, north, south- and four divisions of the day that goes as morning, evening, noon and midnight. In a year, there are four seasons, summer, autumn, spring and winters, four sides of a square and also there are four major variations of the phases of the moon. Also, there are four gospels which were Matthew, Luke, John and Mark. Also you can see that the throne of the God is surrounded by four beasts that also signify the worth of number 4. The shape of the New Jerusalem is of a square with the entire side equal and the high priests breastplate was also a foursquare. There was the total of four rows with three stones in each row where the names of twelve tribes of Israel were inscribed. There were four heads of the animal creations one of the lion, the wild beast, one of the ox, the tame beasts, another one of the eagle, the birds and the fourth one is of a man, the head of all. The prophecy mentioned the names of four kings of Persia at the time of the fall of the Medes and Persians though there were many other too. In the revelation 7:1, there is a mention of four angels that stand at the four corners of the mother earth and release four wings of annihilation which was complete and unstinting in its purpose. There is also the four-fold description of "the generations of the sons of Noah" in the Genesis 10 that goes as lands, tongues, nations and families. In verse 5, families, tongues, countries, nations in the verse 20 and families, tongues, lands, nations in the verse 31, which gives added credence to 4 associated with

'man.' The order of these descriptions may change but the sole purpose remains the same, that is, creation. (2) (Descriptions of 5, 6, 12 are forthcoming)

The number 10 is not used specifically. However it comes into play when we begin to speak of the number 144,000 (total number of believers from Rev.7). Here we have the mention of 12-referring to the 12 tribes of Israel from the Old Testament and 12-referring to the 12 disciples from the New Testament; take those two numbers times each other ($12 \times 12=144$) and we get 144. That number taken time 10 to the 3rd power (1000) we have 144,000 representing the complete number of believers found in all time. Also regarding 12, it can be found in 187 places in God's word. Revelation alone has 22 occurrences of the number. The meaning of 12 is that it symbolizes God's power and authority, as well as serving as a perfect governmental foundation. It can also symbolize completeness (like 10) or the nation of Israel as a whole. God specified that twelve unleavened cakes of bread be placed every week in the temple with frankincense next to each of the two piles that were to be made. The priests were commanded to change the bread every Sabbath day (Leviticus 24). In Revelation 12, the church, wears a crown containing twelve stars.

New Jerusalem, which is made in heaven and brought to the earth by God himself, contains 12 gates made of pearl which are each manned by an angel. Over each gate will be one of the names of Israel's twelve tribes. The walls are 144 cubits high (12 multiplied by itself - Revelation 21:16 - 17), with the city itself being 12,000 furlongs square.

Speaking again of the number 10, it is used 242 times in the Bible. The designation "10th" is used 79 times. Ten is also viewed as a complete and perfect number, as is 3, 7 and 12. It is made up of 4, the number of the physical creation, and 6, also a number of man; that is, one short of God and a created being. As such, 10 signifies testimony, law, responsibility and the completeness of order.

In Genesis 1 we find the phrase "God said" 10 times, which is a testimony of His creative power. God gave the 10 Commandments to man. Ten therefore represents man's responsibility to keep the commandments. A tithe is a 10th of our earnings and is a testimony of our faith in the Lord. You also have the Passover Lamb was selected on the 10th day of the 1st month (Exodus 12:3), as was Jesus, the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world (John 12:28 - 29; 1Corinthians 5:7). The 10th day of the 7th month is the Holy Day known as the Day of Atonement. This unique day of fasting pictures the removal of Satan, the author of sin, before the Millennial reign of Jesus begins (Revelation 20:1 - 2). The last great world-ruling kingdom of man under Satan is symbolized prophetically by the 10 toes of Daniel 2 and the 10 horns of Revelation 13 and 17. (2) There are many more example, too numerous to mention.

Verse 4 (**cont.**)...***Grace and peace to you from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne;*** This verse begins like a letter of Paul's with a salutation. (see "Grace and peace to you from "the first verse or seven) from Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2

Timothy, Titus, but not Hebrews (which is simply another reason of many why its readers aren't sure Paul is the author). The only difference, John's salutation is specifically speaking of God the Father. He brings Jesus into it in verse 5. It's no wonder Lutheran Pastors use Paul's salutation to open nearly all of their messages. It's a reminder to all who that message is from as well as helps keep the Pastor thinking about who words his are rather than himself and his own! One slight variation of John's salutation...he speaks of The Father and Jesus as ***Him who is, and who was, and who is to come*** (See Rev. 1:8).

Verse 5...***and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood***; Can there be any more faithful witness from One who was there in the beginning, and is Himself God! ***firstborn from the dead***...Though many have been raised to life from the dead in both the Old and New Testaments (Including 2 who never died: Enoch and Elijah) Jesus is the first One to be as a 'first-fruit' offering. ***Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first-fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine*** Prov. 3:9-10. ***All the firstborn males that are born of your herd and flock you shall dedicate to the Lord your God. You shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock.*** Pharaoh's son was a type of 'first' fruit sacrifice as well. But Jesus was the first perfect sacrifice.

Jesus is ruler of Kings. (see King Nebuchadnezzar-Dan. 4:25 and King Belshazzar-Dan. 5). The remainder of verse 5 is simply an inclusion of Jesus and description of Him. We cannot be reminded enough of His love for us, His forgiveness, and the cross.

Verse 6...***and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father-- to him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.***

Every Christian is to see him or herself as a priest. No, not the kind that are relegated to only service inside God's house, but the kind of priest that is out and about and witnessing their faith, and trying to bring others to Christ. We need to get it out of our heads that Priests or clergy, are the only ones to do the work of Evangelism. ***1 Peter 2:9***, (cross reference) says, ***But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*** We also have the words given the Israelites in the Old Testament (which speak to the Bible's words 'in the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses, a truth is established); ***you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites. Exodus 19:6.*** Rev. Dr. James Heining adds, "Kingdom of priests. I am wondering if this not refer to the idea that we can go directly to God, rather than the priesthood (or Mary or saints). (Hebrews) I am thinking that it is in our prophetic role that we are able to proclaim God's word in the world."

Vs. 7...***Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.*** Powerful promise! 7a is the same promise He gave the Sanhedrin when they accused Him of blasphemy... ***Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."*** Matt. 26:64 They, along with Pilate, and all mankind with our sins...pierced Him. Yet, we shall see Him! PTL! Both the good and the evil will "wail" on Judgment day (Revelation is filled with examples)! Amen means 'truly it shall be so.'

For the people of the earth (gentiles-γῶι 'goi'), it will be a day of mourning. In **Isaiah Chapter 24:19ff** we read...*The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is thoroughly shaken. 20 The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls-- never to rise again. 21 In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. 22 They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days. 23 The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed; for the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders, gloriously. But for Christians, this will be a day of rejoicing.*

Verse 8b... *"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."*

This is the first message coming from our Lord Jesus. By declaring Himself the Alpha and Omega (the first and last letter of the alphabet) He is declaring He and His Word, and creation, and all that goes with it, He is Himself that beginning and end. In contradiction, Carl Sagan, on his show-The Cosmos says, "We come to learn more about the cosmos, a cosmos that always is, has been, and always will be." A direct and intentional rip on Christianity as well as this verse. The 'and who is to come' part refers to **Acts 19:4...who was to come after him, that is, Jesus."**

Vision of the Son of Man

⁹ I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet ¹¹ saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." ¹² Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lamp stands, ¹³ and in the midst of the lamp stands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. ¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. ¹⁹ Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. ²⁰ As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lamp stands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lamp stands are the seven churches.

Verse 9...***I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.***

The Lord who appears to John is the Messiah whom Daniel saw at the end of time with power and authority from the God-head. The Messiah in Daniel's book is God and begotten from God as He is worshipped and glorified as God Himself. From ***Daniel 7:13... "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.***

As Christians, we can expect to be hated. Jesus said, ***If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you (John 15:18).*** And ***1 Pet. 4:16-Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.*** We should be more alarmed if we are only loved by the world. That revelation tells us we may be getting too chummy with the world.

Verse 10...On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, On a Sunday (called the Lord's Day by early Christians), John was on the desolate island of Patmos. He was put there for witnessing Christ. This was a big deal for Christians to move the 'Lord's Day,' which in a (lawful) Old Testament sense was always Saturday, the Sabbath Day. Reason-a 24 hour period does not bring you to God, Christ does! And the victory of His resurrection on a Sunday, in the minds of these early Christians, trumped the law with its requirements of the Sabbath Day.

Yet, there are still those who hold on to the traditions of the Law saying Saturday is the 'Lord's Day.' The 7th Day Adventists. Largely in part to the false prophet Wikipedia says, "Ellen White whose book the "Great Controversy theme", became foundational to the development of Seventh-day Adventist theology. Ellen G. White is the most translated female non-fiction author in the history of literature, as well as the most translated American non-fiction author of either gender. "Her book on successful Christian living, Steps to Christ, has been published in more than 140 languages. (Wikipedia) Here is what scripture says to Ellen White and the 7th Day Adventists: ***Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath Col. 2:16.*** Also the fact that the cross and resurrection was a fulfillment of the Law, as heard in Jesus words, ***'It is finished' (telesthai).***

Suddenly, he hears the voice of Christ thunder like the last trumpet. He sees the glorious "Son of Man" whom Daniel saw. Christ is in His full glory, as on the Mount of Transfiguration. We are reminded of ***Philippians 3:21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. And 2 Pet. 1:18- we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. We are reminded also of 1 John 3:2- Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.***

Verse 11...***which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and***

Laodicea." This is a key verse in Revelations. Why? Because it is one of the few verses that is tied to the earth; the 7 churches, real churches of John's day and still today. Have any of their candlesticks been removed?

Verse 12 ...I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lamp stands, 13 and among the lamp stands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

Vs. 12...seven golden lamp stands again, represent the churches. Rev. Dr. James Heining adds, "Lamp stand in Holy Place, vs. Holy of Holies (I think). The lamp stands in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle was called a menorah. It had a central lamp or candle, with 6 branches, 3 on each side containing candles which both looked like, and represented the burning bush that Moses saw. God in the middle is speaking through us, and we are a light to the world, as mentioned in **Matthew 5:14- You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.**

Verse 13, **and in the midst of the lamp stands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.** Someone 'like the Son of Man' appears to be Jesus. And what He is wearing continues into verse 14. Matthew Henry says, "The apostle saw as though of the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in the midst of the golden candlesticks. He is with his churches always, to the end of the world, filling them with light, and life, and love. He was clothed with a robe down to the feet, perhaps representing his righteousness and priesthood, as Mediator. This vest was girt with a golden girdle (sash), which may denote how precious are his love and affection for his people." Matthew Henry's Commentary on Revelation)

Verse 14... **His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.** We get this visual picture of Him appearing similar to what He appeared to Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. Brilliant white, as if it were indescribable. When people ask what our bodies will be like we have only this image to go on and Jesus words of **Matthew 13:43-"And ye shall shine like the sun."** The color white: Rev. Edward J. Rutter, born in 1921, Pastor at my church of Immanuel Lutheran in Wahpeton, North Dakota U.S.A. says, "I had a Bible study (for children) once on the colors of our human races. I called the cutest white girl up front and the darkest child (at my church in Lynch where I had a lot of multi-colored children) and an oriental child as well (However, I never had a native American). I also had 4 pieces of paper; white, black, yellow, and red. I held the red paper up beside the white girl and asked, "Is she white like this paper?" Then i did the same thing with the black child (black paper) and oriental child (yellow paper) and an imaginary Indian (red paper).We all agreed that none of them were the colors of the paper. Rather, all were just different shades of brown!" (Rev. Edward J. Rutter-Wahpeton, ND 7/21/16) I wish to make a personal comment here. The homosexual community has chosen to use the 'rainbow' to describe their unholy sexual activity as well as their political issue and selves; thereby

desecrating the word. They did the same to another wonderful word...'gay.' They find themselves still welcomed by the Lutheran/Christian churches in America, especially by the largest Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (E.L.C.A.). However, the smaller Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (L.C.-M.S.) and other smaller Lutheran churches condemn their activity (excursus).

Thus, remaining faithful to God's Word which clearly calls homosexuality a sin (**Leviticus 18:22, "You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination. Leviticus 20:13, "If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their blood guiltiness is upon them."** **1 Corinthians 6:9-10, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God."** **Romans 1:26-28, "For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. 28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper."**). "Love sin sinner, hate the sin." Those words are not scriptural nevertheless, it represented Jesus' purpose on earth and His mission. The same mission which is ours today.

Verse 15...The mention of 'rushing waters;' in **Ezekiel 43:2 we read...and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory. From Ezekiel 1:24...When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings.** If we can imagine sitting in front of giant speakers at a rock concert, and the wave of sound that hits us! We can literally feel that 'rushing' sound wave hit us! Such would be the image John is speaking of here.

Verse 16...We here mention again of the 7 stars which again refer to the angels of the 7 churches previously mentioned. 'In His hand' simply symbolizing the power and control Jesus has of them. The sword **out of His mouth**...Satan indeed has a type of power that allows him to speak grandiose lies and blasphemies; **so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect (Matt. 24:24b)**.(thank God it's not possible). in Ephesians 6, Paul refers to the sword as the word of God. And the 'double-edged' Sword...**Hebrews 4:12 which is able to...'pierce to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.** But regarding our bodies, Paul describes in detail in 1 Corinthians 15, what our bodies in heaven will be like, but quite mysteriously. We know it will be a **spiritual body** (vs. 46), but just how much physical body (as we know it) we are not told. But we are told it will be a **heavenly body** (vs.49). And also **imperishable** (vs. 52-53). Thus, they will be the similar, but drastically different. Such is the way we are to think of our bodies. John

concludes this verse by again mentioning His face was shining like the sun in brilliance. **John 8:12-Jesus says, I am the light of the world.** He was there, as John records in his book 1:1-**In the beginning**, when light itself was created. All these 'light' references point to Jesus. Remember we were created to shine as His image, reflection. Remember, we are reflections of His Light. **Matthew 13:43 says, Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.**

Verse 17-18...When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

When Moses came down from the mountain after receiving the 10 commandments it says in **Deut. 9:17...So I took the two tablets and threw them out of my hands, breaking them to pieces before your eyes. 18-Then once again I fell prostrate before the LORD for forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water, because of all the sin you had committed, doing what was evil in the LORD's sight and so provoking him to anger.** And in **Joshua 5:14..."as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come."** **Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"** Which speaks of how sinful man in the presence of God; that is, the pure and holy, how that which is sinful automatically responds. Ezekiel falls down a couple times: **Ezekiel 1:28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.** And **Ezek.3:23...So I got up and went out to the plain. And the glory of the LORD was standing there, like the glory I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown. Daniel 8:17 says, he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. "Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end. And Daniel 10:9 Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.**

We also see it in the New Testament after Peter and his fellow fishermen were skunked all night fishing, Jesus tells him to go out and try it one more time. He slowly agrees, and afterward, they catch a massive amount of fish. Peter, in realizing Jesus to be God, **Luke 5:8 says, "Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."** All of these reference speak of automatic, uncontrollable, and natural respect, for that which is holy God, and things of God.

Verses 19-20...Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. ²⁰ As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lamp stands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lamp stands are the seven churches.

In these verses, the symbolism is explained for us. Quite simply, the 7 stars are the 7 angels, one for each church. And, the 7 golden lamp stands are the 7 churches. Period. We will find the symbolism hereafter, found in various parts of scripture, which is much different from many of the free-thinking opinions we hear today from many of the Commentators on the book of Revelation.

Revelation 13

1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.**2** And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. **3** And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. **4** And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? **5** And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. **6** And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. **7** And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. **8** And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. **9** If any man have an ear, let him hear. **10** He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. **11** And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. **12** And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. **13** And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, **14** And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. **15** And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. **16** And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: **17** And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. **18** Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Verse 1...**beast rise out of the sea** here the sea refers to the nations of which Satan, who is ruler of comes from. **And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves Luke 21:25.** The Dragon (Satan) has two operative agents: Secular and pseudo-ecclesiastical

powers. The "Beast of the Sea" represents the attack on the Church from without – secular powers. A little later we're going to be told straight out what the sea represents...death and hell. **And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. Rev. 20:13**Partly because it contains dead souls but more because of its depth-seemingly unending like hell.

Verse 1 (cont)... **and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns**, Here's our old friend, the 7 headed 10 horned dragon of 12:3 (check out for the 7 heads 10 crowns meaning). But when you get up real close to him you find it's not the dragon at all, but his twin brother-the beast (more on beastie to come)! **and upon his heads the name of blasphemy**. That word (blasphemy) is used 12 times (interesting number) and 1/3; that is, 4 (another couple interesting numbers) right here. (see 2:9 cont) (or;**and blasphemous names on its heads** which is the ESV translation both meaning the same thing).

Vs. 2...In the book of Daniel we have different animals representing various conquering nations. From Daniel 7 we have a leopard-Greece (Alexander the Great), bear-Persia, lion-Babylon (quick to devour), and dragon (though Daniel doesn't specifically call him a dragon, but it is plainly understood in vs. 7...**and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet...**Rome. We still live today with the effects of Rome do we not? Both inside the church and without. All of these oppose the church as well.

Vs.3...Here we have a couple interpretations regarding the wound...1-it is the fall of the Roman Empire. Even though it's hurt it still continues on. How many times do you here various epochs say, "...and we're living in the days of the Romans!" The other is, we're told Jesus was to come and crush Satan's head, and yet Satan goes on and on. Which is correct? You be the judge as both fit most aptly. Lenski says, "Some critical commentators point to Nero (who, btw stabbed himself) and to the myth that he would return to Rome because he had not killed himself (like Elvis being abducted by aliens!) but secretly fled to the Parthians who would furnish him with an army for retaking Rome and, when this failed to materialize as the years went on, that Nero would come back from the dead (sound like Someone we know?). But Nero has never returned and never will." (RCH Lenski Commentary-Revelation page 394)

Vs. 3 (cont)...Paul Kretzman says, "If we compare this picture with those found in the prophecies of Daniel, there can be little doubt that this beast is the Roman Empire. It arose out of the ocean of nations, gradually, but surely, until it had power over practically the entire world. Seven heads the beast had; for the city of Rome, the capital of this great empire, is built on seven hills; and ten horns were seen by John, which refers to the ten provinces of the old empire." (Kretzman Commentary of Revelation)

Vs. 4...This beast seems all powerful just like the 4 conquering nations of their past and present. Who could we say was the beast in our recent history; Hitler and Germany; North Viet Nam, U.S.S.R. and China; Bin Laden and Sadaam Hussein; and some would even say some of our recent and current leaders in both the U.S. and on the world stage could represent the beast. Do people ever get to the point of worshipping them and/or the government? Indeed they do!

Vs. 5...For 'mouth' (see 1:16b). But specifically for a beast's mouth, if a prophet speaks false doctrine, this indeed is great blasphemies. For 42 months (see 11:2).

Vs. 6...Here the beast is simply exercising his power. 'His tabernacle' represents God's church; both the physical church such as we seen in Exodus 26, and the people/church/ecclesia-(**a.** church or congregation. **b.** The collective body of Christian believers regarded as constituting a universal church. **So that through the church ecclesia (εκκλησια) the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places-Eph. 3:10.** (last phrase) Even though it does no good to blaspheme those who dwell in heaven, the beast can't help himself.

Vs. 7...No little power but the beast has great power (Matt. 24:24b). **to overcome them (the saints)** Now wait a minute! Didn't we just read the words of Jesus in Matt. 24 tell us it was impossible?! And, in 12:11 the saints conquer the dragon. Why can't they conquer his brother-the beast? We need to relax....his time is coming. The 'kindred, tongues, and nations, (see 7:9). But note, one is left out (languages). It may be because it is understood the same as tongues (see Acts 2:11). It also could be because 3 rather than 4 is symbolically a more complete number. My guess is both are correct.

Vs. 8... Plain and simple...unbelievers will worship the beast. Book of life appears in Phil. 4:3...(see 3:5); 8 times in all in scripture, 7 times in Revelation (4 to come...17:8, 20:12, 20:17, 21:27, 22:19). 'Slain from the foundation of the world'...my guess is Abel would top the list.

Vs. 9...**If any man have an ear, let him hear** (see 2:7). This is very interesting. We have the same phrase used 8 times in Revelation alone. But this is the only one (and it's the last one) that has 'if.' In other words, 'if' you listen, you will hear. If you don't, you'll wind up an unbeliever.

Vs. 10... The first thing that comes to mind in Ga. 6:7-8 **Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.** 'The killing with the sword we recall the words of Jesus to Peter... **Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Matt. 26:52**

Vs. 10 (cont)... **Here is the patience and the faith of the saints** Regarding patience (see 1:9).

Vs. 11...Kretzman says, That there is a close connection between the two beasts of this chapter is here again evident. ...and the full authority of the first beast he exerts before him; and he causes the earth and those that dwell on it that they worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. It would be foolish to attempt an interpretation of all the details of this picture, but the general trend seems to be clear. This beast is also a great kingdom or power exerted like that of a king or emperor, although with a lamblike aspect. I wish to

interject a comment by Becker. "The first verse in this section (the 3rd vision) presents a problem in translation which also has an effect on the interpretation of this verse. Both the 'lamb' and 'dragon' are anarthrous; that is, they have no article. This would be normal the first time the word is used, as in the case of 5:6, where the word 'lamb' is used for the first time, and in 12:3 where the word 'dragon' is used for the first time. The word 'lamb' is used 26 times in later chapters, and in every case except here it has the definite article, which would be the article of the previous reference. The word "dragon" is used 11 more times; again, in every passage except here it has the definite article. The common translation of this verse reads, "He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke a dragon. The absence of the article in Greek does not always call for an indefinite article in English (Greek has no indefinite article). The absence of the article sometimes indicates that a word is being treated as a proper name. It would be possible to view the absence of the article here in this way, especially because Revelation the word 'lamb' is always the name of Jesus and the word 'dragon' is always the name of the devil. We could then very properly capitalize the 2 words in English: 'Lamb' 'Dragon.' At other times the absence of the article indicates quality. The anarthrous noun in Greek is almost equivalent to an English adjective. The English language has the same idiom. An English-speaking person senses that it makes a difference whether we translate "**God is a spirit**" or **God is "spirit"** (John 4:24). The second sentence really says that God is spiritual. It would be perfectly permissible to translate this verse therefore, "Lamblike, he had two horns, but his speech was dragon-like." (Siegbert Becker, Revelation Commentary-A Distant Triumph page 205-206)

Vs. 12...This beast is the successor of the first beast and takes his place in every respect, differing from him only in form. He succeeds above all in making men worship the first beast, to overlook the wound which had really struck a vital spot, which had laid open the real nature of the first beast. To this end the second beast shows great activity: And he performs great signs, so that he also causes fire to come down from heaven to the earth before men; and he seduces those that dwell upon the earth through the signs which were granted to him to perform before the beast, saying to them that dwell upon the earth to make images to the beast which has the wound from the sword and still lived.

Vs. 13...In this beast is fulfilled what St. Paul had prophesied, namely, that his coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, 2 Thess. 2, 9. 10. It would be foolish to ascribe all the so-called miracles that are performed by antichristian prophets to superstition; for the devil knows how to use the forces of nature to his ends if God gives him permission. So great was the influence of this beast that he even succeeded in making men set up the first beast as an idol, as a god in the midst of God's true temple, and to give him divine worship. (Kretzman Commentary-Revelation 13:11-12)

Vs. 14...William Barclay says, This passage deals with the power of the second beast, the organization set up to enforce Caesar worship throughout the empire. Certain things are said

about this power. It produces signs and wonders, such as fire from heaven; it brings it about that the image of the beast should speak Everywhere there were statues of the emperor in the presence of which the official act of worship was carried out. In all ancient religions the priests knew how to produce signs and wonders; they knew well how to produce signs and wonders; they knew well how to produce the effect of a speaking, image. Pharaoh had had his magicians in the time of Moses, and the imperial priesthood had its experts in conjuring tricks and ventriloquism and the like." (William Barkley William Barclay Commentary-Revelation Chapter 13)

Vs. 15...Note that it is the second beast's work to glorify the first beast, is witnessed in his healing of the first beast. Lenski says, "Only because to this beast "was given" was it able "to give" breath to the image it made men construct. Again, this reminder must not escape our notice.This is a monstrous tyranny of the lamb-like beast--death to all who refuse to surrender conscience and soul." (RCH Lenski Rev. Commentary p. 409)

Vs. 16-17...These last 3 verses of Chapter 13, especially verse 18, is where we come up with some real outlandish commentaries. Lenski says, "This marking is the devil's counterpart to the "sealing of the slaves of God," the 144,000, in 7:27, with the difference that God's slaves are sealed solely on their foreheads." (RCH Lenski Rev. Commentary p. 410)

Kretzmann says, There is a remarkable show of authority which is here described: And there was granted him to give spirit to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should die; and he obliges all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the slaves, that they impress upon them a mark upon their right hand or upon their foreheads, that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, the name of the beast or the number of his name. So far the power of the beast goes by God's permission, to this extent he is God's scourge upon those that will not accept the salvation through Christ. Even the image, the copy of the first beast, this second beast caused to have the ability to speak and to exert great might in the world. He does not confine himself to any special class of people: powerful or without influence, rich or poor, free or in slavery, the beast will try to get them all into his power and to control them according to both body and soul. To do this, he sees to it that his mark is impressed, either upon their right hands or upon their foreheads. The word here used by John originally designated the imperial stamp on documents and merchandise, a red seal with the emperor's name or effigy. 6) The mark on the hand was to indicate that the wearer would faithfully conform all his acts to the will of his master; and that on the forehead indicated that the wearer openly proclaimed himself a servant of the beast. So far did the power of the beast go at certain times that the very commerce of states and nations was controlled by it, and men could buy and sell commodities only with his permission. Luther writes about this chapter and the preceding one: "What abominations, woe, and damage this imperial papacy has committed cannot be related now. For in the first place, the world through his book has been filled with idolatry, with monasteries, institutions, saints, pilgrimages,

purgatory, indulgences, lack of marriage, and innumerable other specimens of human doctrine and works. In the second place, who is able to tell how much bloodshed, murder, war, and misery the Popes have been the cause of, both with their own wars and by provoking emperors, kings, and princes?" The word for the mark of the beast is charagma (Greek #5480), and it could come from more than one ancient custom. (Kretzman Commentary-Revelation 13:16-17)

According to Wikipedia, many "... scholars who believe that the Book of Revelation refers to historical people and events argue that the number represents [the Roman Emperor] Nero. In Hebrew gematria, every letter has a corresponding number. Summing these numbers gives a numeric value to a word or name. In Hebrew, "Nero Caesar" is spelled "נרון קסר", pronounced "Neron Qe[i]sar".

Adding the corresponding values yields 666, as shown:

Resh	Samekh	Qoph	Nun	Vav	Resh	Nun
200	60	100	50	6	200	50

Removing the terminal character "נ" (written as ן) produces the name "Nero" rather than "Neron", and makes the numeric value 616, which may explain that variation.

The hypothesis that 666 is a code for a Roman emperor seems to have historical support. The emperors were noted for their oppression of both Jews and Christians. Both communities were known to use numerology, codes and symbols (such as the Ichthys) when living under Roman rule to avoid persecution.

The German protestant theologian Ethelbert Stauffer, argued that gematria had been the most popular form of numerology among Jews but also in the rest of the Greco-Roman world. He developed a Greek gematrical procedure to explain the number 666. Judging from the precise information that the Book of Revelation gives about the person behind the number 666, Stauffer concluded that the "beast" can only refer to a Roman emperor. Stauffer argued that this Emperor must be Domitian, because he had reigned during the proposed time of the writing of the Apocalypse and supposedly was called "The Beast" as a "secret derisive nickname" by Romans, Greek, Christians and Jews. Stauffer computed the Number of the Beast using the short form of Domitian's five titles and names -- *A KAI ΔOMET ΣΕΒ ΓΕ* -- as derived from the abbreviations on coins and inscriptions.

About the "mark" described in Revelation 13:16-17: Recent interpreter Hank Hanegraaff says, "Some have concluded that the most important verse in Revelation 13 does not relate to 666. It is the reference to *"a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads."* They have concluded that the mark is: A national ID card, A person's Social Security Number, A microchip that can be implanted under the skin, or Somehow related to the current abandonment of the use of cash in favor of credit and debit cards. One visitor to this essay supplied an innovative interpretation as to why a mark would be made to a hand or forehead. She suggested that the hand represents action -- the object that a person acts with. The forehead is associated with a person's thinking process or attitude.

In conclusion, Todd Strandberg says, As time has passed, we have lost the true meaning of the mark of the beast. Even though it is clearly defined as a mark that will be placed upon the right hand or forehead, a number of people throughout history have attached new and even weird meanings to the number 666. The number has become trivialized by its repeated association with its every random occurrence. Some folks have believed the beast's number was to be a certain year. Because of this, the year 666 AD was at one time considered the date for the advent of the Antichrist. When that date came and went without incident, many began to anticipate the year 1666 with dread. Nostradamus pointed to the year 1999 as an inverted 666 year. Because the beast's number will have something to do with the Antichrist's name, scholars have been busy working equations to figure which world leaders have had names equaling 666 in some way. Depending on how you figure it, 666 can be made to add up to just about anyone's name.

A number of people have superstitions or phobias about this number.
Hexakosioihexekontahexaphobiac

Vs. 18...***Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.***

the number of a man ἄριθμὸς ἀνθρώπου [Arithmos anthrōpou] Matthew Henry says, simply number of man. The definite article ("the") is not found in the Greek text. Wallace sees the missing article as an indication that the number is not of a man, but the number of humankind. While this may account for the grammar, it fails to account for the previous verse wherein the article appears before both number and man: τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ [ton arithmon tou onomatōs autou] , the number of the name of him (cf. Rev. Rev. 14:11+). Thus, the number seems inextricably tied to the individual. Some explain 'of a man' as designating a number as men count.

His number is six hundred and sixty six

Discussion on the meaning of this value and its association with individuals and movements of history is legend. "The interpretations of this number form a jungle from which escape is apparently hopeless."

The numeric designator for the value 666 found in the MT...Masoretic Text is the authoritative Hebrew and Aramaic text of the Tanakh for Rabbinic Judaism. However, contemporary scholars seeking to understand the history of the Hebrew Bible's text use a

range of other sources. These include Greek and Syriac translations, quotations from rabbinic manuscripts, the Samaritan Pentateuch and others such as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Many of these are older than the Masoretic text and often contradict it.^[3] While the Masoretic Text defines the books of the Jewish canon, it also defines the precise letter-text of these biblical books, with their vocalization and accentuation known as the Masorah. and TR... Textus Receptus (Latin: "received text") is the name given to the succession of printed Greek texts of the New Testament which constituted the translation base for the original German Luther Bible, the translation of the New Testament into English by William Tyndale, the King James Version, the Spanish Reina-Valera translation, the Russian Synodal Bible and most Reformation-era New Testament translations throughout Western and Central Europe. The series originated with the first printed Greek New Testament, published in 1516 – a work undertaken in Basel by the Dutch Catholic scholar and humanist Desiderius Erasmus. This family of manuscripts of the New Testament is the one that the Church has received and used without interruption since antiquity. Manuscripts of this family represent that vast majority of the 5700 manuscripts that are currently in existence. (Wiki-Encyclopedia)

texts employs the Greek character stigma which is not generally used today. It occurs between epsilon (ε) and zeta (ζ). Thus it displaces zeta as the sixth character, giving zeta through theta the values 7 through 9, iota through kappa the values 10 through 90, and rho through omega the values 100 through 800. An additional character, sampsi stands at the end as 900. Since our Greek font does not contain stigma we will represent it by a sigma with an accent: ζ´

In the TR and MT text, the value is given by the three Greek letters χξζ´. Given the Greek alphabet of the time, the values of the three letters are: χ = 600; ξ = 60; ζ´ = 6. Their sum is the infamous 666.⁷ The NU text spells out the values using words: ἑξακοσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ [hexakosioi hexēkonta hex], six hundred sixty six. Among all the extant manuscript evidence, only a very few have δεκα [deka] (10) as the middle value resulting in 616.⁸

The Nero advocates make much of the alternative value 616 because two different spellings of Nero can account for both the value 666 and 616. This may be true. But it is but one small piece of the overall puzzle which contributes to the identity of the Beast. Nero succeeds on this count, but fails miserably on all others. Nero is far from the only individual in history who meets the conditions for 666. See A Lock almost any Key will Turn. Metzger suggests that the textual variation indicating 616 is best explained as an intentional modification of the original text by a scribe who saw Nero in the text.⁹ See our discussion of the attempts to find fulfillment in Nero.

Irenaeus, who lived much nearer to the time of Nero than modern preterists and who was a disciple of Polycarp who knew our author, supports the reading 666:

Such, then, being the state of the case, and this number [666] being found in all the most approved and ancient copies [of the Apocalypse], and those men who saw John face to face

bearing their testimony [to it]; while reason also leads us to conclude that the number of the name of the beast, [if reckoned] according to the Greek mode of calculation by the [value of] the letters contained in it, will amount to six hundred and sixty and six; that is, the number of tens shall be equal to that of the hundreds, and the number of hundreds equal to that of the units (for that number which [expresses] the digit six being adhered to throughout . . . I do not know how it is that some have erred following the ordinary mode of speech, and have vitiated the middle number in the name, deducting the amount of fifty from it, so that instead of six decades they will have it that there is but one. (I am inclined to think that this occurred through the fault of the copyists, as is wont to happen, since numbers also are expressed by letters; so that the Greek letter which expresses the number sixty [chi, ξ] was easily expanded into the letter Iota [ι] of the Greeks.) Others then received this reading without examination; some in their simplicity, and upon their own responsibility, making use of this number expressing one decade; while some, in their inexperience, have ventured to seek out a name which should contain the erroneous and spurious number. (Irenaeus, Against Heresies, v.xxx)

He saw the number connected with the antitype of Antichrist's image—Nebuchadnezzar's statue. He also saw the Beast as a person yet future, not Nero:

For that image which was set up by Nebuchadnezzar had indeed a height of sixty cubits, while the breadth was six cubits; on account of which Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, when they did not worship it, were cast into a furnace of fire, pointing out prophetically, by what happened to them, the wrath against the righteous which shall arise towards the [time of the] end. For that image, taken as a whole, was a prefiguring of this man's coming, decreeing that he should undoubtedly himself alone be worshipped by all men. (Irenaeus, Against Heresies, v.xxx)

Adding to the complexity of identifying an individual with the number are various ways in which gematria can be performed. Harless argues for the simplest, ragil method:

There are seven ways of calculating gematria in Jewish tradition. 1) Ragil: This method is the basis for all the other methods. Each letter of the alphabet has its own numerical value. The numerical value of a word or phrase is the sum total of the values of its letters. 2) Katan: All the tens and hundreds are converted to the single numbers 1 to 9. 3) K'lali: In this method, the value of a word is the square of the sum of the ragil values of each letter in that word. 4) Millui: This method gives a letter the numerical value of the sum of the ragil values of the letters that make up the name of the letter. 5) Kolel: This method sums the ragil values of the letters in a word plus the number of letters. 6) Hakadmi: The value of the first letter is ragil. The accumulated value of the second letter is its ragil value plus the ragil value of the first letter. The accumulated value of the third letter is its ragil value plus the accumulated value of the second letter, etc. 7) Haperati: The value of each letter is the square of its ragil value. The value of the word is the sum of all the squares of its letters. It is apparent that the k'lali, millui, kolel, hakadmi, and haperati methods are unlikely to be intended in this passage, since they would tend to produce numerical values much in excess of 666. These methods also seem to be late additions not in use during the New Testament period. Only the ragil and katan

methods are candidates for this calculation. Katan suffers from four shortcomings: 1) It would require a long name to evaluate to 666 (at least 74 letters). 2) The Talmud only uses ragil. 3) Therefore, katan is a later development and not contemporary with the Revelation. Rev. 4:1+) Only ragil has an analogue in Greek and Roman culture, katan does not.

The threefold representation of “6,” the number of man, may be connected with the three key players in the kingdom of the Beast of the end: “Possibly the threefold occurrence of the number six is a vague imitation of the trinity formed by [the Beast’s] association with the devil and the false prophet.” As we discussed in Six: Man’s Incompleteness, Human Will, the number almost certainly emphasizes how the Beast, the epitome of human achievement and government at the end, falls short.¹⁴ Others note how the value compares to the sum of the Greek letters making up the name “Christ”: “According to the Greek numbering scheme Christ’s name, Ἰησοῦς [Iêsous] , is represented by Ι=10, η=8, σ=200, ο=70, υ=400, ς=200, which add up to 888.”

Various passages of Scripture hint at the character of the Beast using values which employ six, including the number of fingers and toes on the godless giants of old (2S. 2S. 21:20; 1Chr.1Chr. 20:6); Goliath who had a height of six cubits, six pieces of armor, and a spear’s head weighing six hundred shekels of iron (1S. 1S. 17:4-7); Nebuchadnezzar, whose “image” was sixty cubits high and six cubits wide (Dan. Dan. 3:1); and even Solomon’s wages of six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold (1K. 1K. 10:14). See Six: Man’s Incompleteness, Human Will.

Ultimately, it is fruitless for us to employ this number in speculation as to the identity of the Beast.

- 1.The value of the number in and of itself is too broad—too many historic names can be made to generate “666.” (See A Lock almost any Key will Turn.)
- 2.The church will not be present when the Beast becomes known to the world, for she will have been taken in the Rapture (2Th. 2Th. 2:1-8).
- 3.The number of his name is perhaps the least important clue among many attributes which Scripture set forth concerning the identity and ministry of this individual. Certainly it is the most elastic.
- 4.While the Restrainer remains (2Th. 2Th. 2:7), he will not be revealed. No amount of conjecture or analysis will bring him forth prior to God’s timing. While there are no preconditions for the removal of the Restrainer, he could continue to restrain for decades or even centuries beyond our present time.

What we can be sure of is that the value given in this passage will enable believers of the end, when combined with the many other Scriptural clues, to positively identify the individual. It may be that gematria is not even involved in the final understanding of the number:

A similar use of nous and sophia occurs in Rev. Rev. 17:9+, where John calls attention to the identity of the beast ridden by the harlot. What John seems to be asking for in both cases is divine discernment and not mathematical ingenuity! Believers need to penetrate the deception of the beast. John's reference to his number will help them to recognize his true character and identity.

The better part of wisdom is to be content that the identification is not yet available, but will be when the future false Christ ascends to his throne. The person to whom 666 applies must have been future to John's time, because John clearly meant the number to be recognizable to someone. If it was not discernible to his generation and those immediately following him—and it was not—the generation to whom it will be discernible must have lain (and still lies) in the future. Past generations have provided many illustrations of this future personage, but all past candidates have proven inadequate as fulfillments. Christians from generation to generation may manifest the same curiosity as the prophets of old regarding their own prophecies (cf. 1Pe. 1Pe. 1:10-11), but their curiosity will remain unsatisfied until the time of fulfillment arrives.

For those who are in the Church Age, the number of the Beast, as fascinating a puzzle as it may be, is of relatively little importance. For the Church will not be present when he is revealed (see Who is the Restrainer?). This is by design for we are to maintain a watch for Christ, not Antichrist! We are commanded to look for our Bridegroom, not a coming global despot (Php. 3:20).

Barclay says, "(i) Sometimes domestic slaves were branded with the mark of their owner. But usually they were branded only if they had run away or had been guilty of some grave misdemeanor. Such a mark was called a stigma (Greek #4742); we still use the word in English. If the mark is connected with this, it means that those who worship the beast are his property.

(ii) Sometimes soldiers branded themselves with the name of their general, if they were very devoted to him. This, to some extent, corresponds to the modern custom of tattooing upon one's person the name of someone specially dear. If the mark is connected with this, it means that those who worship the beast are his devoted followers.

(iii) On every contract of buying or selling there was a charagma (Greek #5480), a seal, and on the seal the name of the emperor and the date. If the mark is connected with this, it means that those who worship the beast accept his authority.

(iv) All coinage had the head and inscription of the emperor stamped upon it, to show that it was his property. If the mark is connected with this, it again means that those who bear it are the property of the beast.

(v) When a man had burned his pinch of incense to Caesar, he was given a certificate to say that he had done so. The mark of the beast may be the certificate of worship, which a

Christian could obtain only at the cost of denying his faith." (William Barclay William Barklay Commentary-Revelation Chapter 13)

Vs. 18...Barclay says, In this verse we are told that the number of the beast is six hundred and sixty-six; and it is almost certainly true that more ingenuity has been expended on this verse than on any other verse in Scripture. Who is this satanic beast so symbolized? It must be remembered that the ancient peoples had no figures and the letters of the alphabet did duty for numbers as well. This is as if in English we used A for 1, B for 2, C for 3, D for 4, and so on. Every word, therefore, and in particular every proper name, can also be a number. One charming and romantic way in which use was made of this fact is quoted by Deissmann. On the walls of Pompeii a lover wrote: "I love her whose number is 545," and thereby he at one and the same time identified and concealed his loved one!

The suggestions as to the meaning of 666 are endless. Since it is the number of the beast, everyone has twisted it to fit his own arch-enemy; and so 666 has been taken to mean the Pope, John Knox, Martin Luther, Napoleon and many another. Dr. Kepler provides us with an example of what ingenuity produced during the Second World War. Let A = 100; B = 101; C = 102; D = 103 and so on. Then we can make this addition:

H = 107 I = 108 T = 119 L = 111 E = 104 R = 117 and the sum is 666!

Very early we saw that the Revelation is written in code; it is clear that nowhere will the code be more closely guarded than in regard to this number which stands for the arch-enemy of the Church. The strange thing is that the key must have been lost very early; for even so great a Christian scholar as Irenaeus in the second century did not know what the number stood for. We set down four of the very early guesses.

Irenaeus suggested that it might stand for Euanthas. In Greek numbers E = 5; U = 400; A = 1; N = 50; TH (the Greek letter theta) = 9; A = 1; S = 200; and the sum is 666. But as to what Euanthas meant Irenaeus had no suggestion to make; so he had simply substituted one riddle for another.

Another suggestion was that the word in question was Lateinos. L = 30; A = 1; T = 300; E = 5; I = 10; N = 50; O = 70; S = 200; and the sum is 666. Lateinos could be taken to mean Latin and, therefore, could stand for the Roman Empire.

A third suggestion was Teitan. T = 300; E = 5; I = 10; T = 300; A = 1; N = 50; and the sum is 666. Teitan could be made to yield two meanings. First, in Greek mythology the Titans were the great rebels against God. Second, the family name of Vespasian and Titus and Domitian was Titus, and possibly they could be called the Titans.

A fourth suggestion was arnounge. A = 1; R = 100; N = 50; O = 70; U = 400; M = 40; E = 5; and the sum is 666. It is just possible that arnounge could be a form of the Greek word arnoumai (Greek #720), "I deny." In this case the number would stand for the denial of the name of Christ.

None of these suggestions is convincing. The chapter itself gives us by far the best clue. There recurs again and again the mention of the head that was wounded to death and then restored. We have already seen that that head symbolizes the Nero redivivus legend. We might well, therefore, act on the assumption that the number has something to do with Nero. Many ancient manuscripts give the number as 616. If we take Nero in Latin and give it its numerical equivalent, we get:

N = 50 E = 6 R = 500 O = 60 N = 50 The total is 666; and the name can equally well be spelled without the final N which would give the number 616. In Hebrew the letters of Nero Caesar also adds up to 666. There is little doubt that the number of the beast stands for Nero; and that John is forecasting the coming of Antichrist in the form of Nero, the incarnation of all evil returning to this world. (William Barkley William Barclay Commentary-Revelation Chapter 13)

As long as we're dealing with numbers, Pastor Edward Rutter who is an astute scholar on Numerology says he got this interpretation from a Jehovah Witness. He said, "The answer to the number 666 is found in the Latin title for the Pope; **VICARIUS FILII DEI...V=5, I=1, C=100, ...the letters a r s f and e have no value; I=1, V=5 (since there is no 'u' in Latin), I=1, I=1, I=1 D=500, I=1.....adding these sums together you get 666."** Pastor Edward Rutter

Some more current interpretations; Hank Hanegraaff presented an interesting interpretation of Revelation 13:18 in his *Daily e-Truth* for 2015-AUG-28. He explained:

"... the author of Revelation, told a first-century audience that with 'wisdom' and 'insight' they would be able to 'calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666' ... Obviously no amount of wisdom and insight would have enabled a first-century audience to calculate the number of a twenty-first-century beast. It would have been cruel and dangerously misleading for John to suggest to first-century Christians that they could identify the beast if, in fact, the beast was a twenty-first-century individual or institution."

Following this argument, 666 or 616 must refer to a First Century CE personality. That would eliminate many persons who have been suggested to be the, including: Pope Leo X (1475-1521), Saladin, Napoleon, Hitler, Bill Gates, Saddam Hussein, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, etc. President Obama is a popular choice at the present time. A Google search using the string "**Barack Obama**" antichrist returned about 674,000 hits in early 2008-DEC shortly after he was elected President for the first time. Opinions of President Obama appear to be improving, because during 2015-AUG, the number of hits using the same string had dropped to about 512,000. Popular choices for the Antichrist who lived in the 1st century CE are Roman Emperor Nero (37 to 68 CE) and Emperor Domitian (51 to 96 CE).

Plain and simple 666; each 6 is one short of 7-the number of God plus the perfect man and all creation prior to sin. Three 7's represents a 'Trinity' of a perfect God. Thus, 666 is an unholy

trinity-Satan. You can extend that further by saying it is the dragon, the beast, and the false teacher.

Paul tells us in **2 Thess. 2** *Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction (vs. 7)* and also in all of Chapter 2 that Satan is the man of lawlessness...a.k.a. the Anti-christ with a capital 'A' (the small 'a' is his minions/demons/unbelievers). One Lutheran Pastor tells of a lady Pastor who does séances in Rochester, Mn. (see Deut. 18). The Masonic Lodge (a men's only 'club') says you have to make yourself reach a certain degree of perfection as God's temple in order to go to heaven (see Eph. 2:8-9). These are a couple examples of the small 'a' anti-christ. Another example is Pastors (Joel Osteen) who say nothing about the sacraments but tell you of 8 steps in how to be successful drawn from motivational speakers. "If you believe in 'yourself' you are successful, God will make you successful!" Titus went into the temple after he destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D....could he be the man of lawlessness? You have Arius who says Jesus was just a man and I have all the answers!" is that the man of lawlessness? Martin Luther was told he would go to hell by preaching God's Word by Pope Leo who was molesting young boys at the time...man of lawlessness? How about Adolf Hitler, Jim Jones, David Koresh, Bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, or other evil figures who have arisen in our 21st Century? The list can get big in a hurry! More on the capital 'A' Antichrist to come.

THE THOUSAND YEARS

1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Vs. 1... **key of the bottomless pit**...(see 9:1). The '**great chain**' is a new entry. Becker says, "No serious commentator maintains that the "great chain" with which the devil is bound is a chain of steel. Such chains cannot hinder a spirit's freedom of movement. The chains with which the devil is bound must be something that hinders his efforts and keeps him from doing what he likes to do if he had complete freedom to act. We must also be careful not to construct an mental picture of the chaining of the devil and then draw conclusions from that subjective idea rather than from the words that evoke the concept. It is not necessary to view the chaining of Satan as a binding with a set of handcuffs and leg irons, or as something that leaves no more freedom of movement than a straightjacket. It is possible, as has been suggested, to think of it as a chain similar to one which prevents a wild animal from harming those who stay beyond its reach. That this latter picture is more in keeping with the wider context of Scripture becomes evident when we hear Jude (vs. 6) saying, **And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day**—According to Jude's inspired and inerrant words, the evil angels are bound with *everlasting* chains, and yet they are still free to roam about to the degree that God permits." (Siegbert Becker, Revelation Commentary-A Distant Triumph page 297)

Vs. 2...Much has been written on the **thousand years**. Lenski says, "No past history has a period of a 1000 years that even remotely corresponds with the state that is described in these verses. Read all the histories and see that this is true. Of course, search in the past for the 1000 years could begin only after a sufficient number of years had already passed. But

even now, although they have a period of a 100 years within which to locate the 1000, where is what v. 7-10 describes? And this is only a "little time," so that we may ask, "Where is what v. 11-15 describes, in other words, why do the world of men continue the way they are? The futuristic millennialists, commonly designated by the term "chilliasts," have a great advantage in the fact that they place the 1000 years in the future, including, of course, the binding of Satan. They are free, too, to make the "1000 years" symbolical if they wish. Since all lies in the future, what difference does it make to let a 1000 years denote a fully complete cycle? We also note that the "year-day theory" has been applied, each day of the 1000 years denoting a literal year, thus 365,000 years of a future millennium. But most of the chilliasts are satisfied with the literal 1000 years. Many count 6 millenniums of 6 workdays in a world week (6,000 years) and then one millennium like the Sabbath at the end of this world week -- thus 7,000 literal years. These are harder to refute because they place everything into a distant future." (RCH Lenski Rev. Commentary p. 573-574)

Lawrence O. Richards writes, "The pre-millennialists takes these descriptions in their plain sense and links the 1000 year period with many OT prophecies which describe the Messiah's rule on earth....Amillennialists take this chapter as the 7th in a series of parallel visions, each of which encompasses the whole period between Christ's first and second comings....The 1000 years is symbolic, and the "resurrection" is the believer's salvation and endowment with spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3)." He continues, "This is the only place where the Bible indicates a specific span of time during which Christ, the Messiah, will rule." (Lawrence O. Richards; Bible Reader's Companion, p. 925).

Surprisingly, Matthew Henry writes very little on vs. 2 and nothing on the 1000 years. He writes, " He cast him into the bottomless pit, cast him down with force, and with a just vengeance, to his own place and prison, from which he had been permitted to break out, and disturb the churches, and deceive the nations now he is brought back to that prison, and there laid in chains." (Matthew Henry; Revelations Commentary)

Becker says, "We can also say that the 1000 years during which the devil is bound began when Christ redeemed us from the devil's power by His vicarious atonement and commanded His church to carry the message of forgiveness to the ends of the earth. The 10000 years will come to an end when the preaching of the Gospel becomes muted and false teachers and false christs multiply as the devil's instrument to lead the nations astray. The 1000 years therefore, can confidently be viewed as a representation of the whole New Testament period." (Siegbert Becker, Revelation Commentary-A Distant Triumph page 302-303)

Vs. 3...Equally as much has been written of **a little season**. Though Matthew Henry again says very little. He says, " He is *shut up, and a seal set upon him*. Christ shuts, and none can open he shuts by his power, seals by his authority and his lock and seal even the devils themselves cannot break open. (Matthew Henry; Revelations Commentary)

Lenski says, How long will this "little time" continue? Merely long enough to permit Satan to gather his host and to have the fire out of the heaven to devour them. Some call this "little

time" The Great Tribulation" for the saints and introduce 7:14, where this expression occurs. Can you find a trace of it in v. 7-10? There is no trace. This is not a θλιψις, a "tribulation," but the final judgment of Satan. (RCH Lenski Rev. Commentary p. 577)

Finally Becker says, "The only question concerning which some doubt might remain is whether the "short time" of which John speaks here is a part of the 1000 years or lies outside of that framework. It should be pointed out that the original Greek says that the devil will be bound αχρι τελεσθη τα χιλια ετη, which we have translated, "until the 1000 years has come to an end." The verb form is an aorist subjunctive and not a perfect tense, as both the KJV and the NIV translations would seem to imply. While we cannot say that the NIV translation, "until the 1000 years were ended," is impossible, it is by no means certain. The most natural interpretation is that Satan will remain bound until shortly before the end of the world, or shortly before the 1000 years comes to an end with the final day of judgment." (Siegbert Becker, Revelation Commentary-A Distant Triumph page 303)

Vs. 4... The thrones John is seeing is that of the 24 (see 4:4) surrounding 'The Throne.' **and judgment was given unto them:** We are reminded of Jesus words to His disciples **Matt. 19:28b...ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.** The John sees **the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands;** (see 6:9). Finally **and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years** (see vs. 2), refers to the amillennialist view as put forth above. The same view of the Lutheran church.

Vs. 5...What this is referring to; that is... **But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished** is those dead who died without Christ. They aren't raised up until the last day. Then they receive bodies of damnation. **Daniel 12:2 says, And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.** Regarding...**This is the first resurrection** Question: Is Paradise enjoyed now at the moment of death? Or faith on earth? Or both? I personally believe it is both because 1,000 years longs for the totality of saints. Note the parallel: 20:14. The SECOND death comes after Judgment. The FIRST death is sin NOW. Lenski writes, "This (is) the first resurrection, the "the first one" (the number being made emphatic by the second article), he plainly refers to what he wrote in v. 4. When the *souls* of the martyrs and saints pass to the throne in heaven to live there in glory, "this is the first resurrection." John uses the term αναστασις, "resurrection," *Auferstehung* symbolically. Here on earth we poor mortals say that the godly die when their souls leave their broken bodies; John says for that their souls this is "the resurrection, the first one." For now these souls indeed live, in the fullness of the ζωη, in heaven, reigning on thrones as kings with Christ in glory. Certainly, there is no such resurrection for the souls of the "rest of the dead." (RCH Lenski Rev. Commentary p. 586)

I'm surprised that none of the commentators mention that the first resurrection has anything to do with Baptism. I may be putting my neck in a noose but I believe the first resurrection is also referring to our Baptism. We live with Christ "a thousand years" (that is, our natural lives of 70 or 80 years if we have the strength) then die. The second resurrection is then our time with Him in heaven.

Vs. 6...John describes our state in the first resurrection, which also fits well with our Baptisms. Thus, ***the second death hath no power over us. but they shall be priests of God and of Christ*** draws us immediately to 1 Peter 2:19...***But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*** Of course we will reign in heaven with Christ as 'priests,' but also in the here and now! Again, this fits well with Baptism as well. ***and shall reign with him a thousand years*** (see vs. 2).

THE BATTLE

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

Vs. 7...Common sense tells us that Satan has been around ever since the fall. If we are thinking literally, and in order to be consistent, then we haven't had Satan or his minions to tempt us since the fall if he's just let loose. This 'loosing' here refers to the 'little season' (see vs. 3). Where he's let off his chain (see vs. 1) for a 'little season.' Just because Satan is in prison (hell) and on a chain, doesn't mean he's not free to roam the earth. ***And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it Job 1:7.*** Thus, this vs. agrees with Becker's comments in vs. 1.

Vs. 8...While off his chain John tells us what Satan is going to do. ***deceive the nations*** (see 2:26). Where? ***which are in the four quarters of the earth***, the number 4 symbolizes God's creation including people. But who are ***Gog, and Magog?*** The only other mention in scripture of these two is Ezekiel 38:2...***Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog***(also mentioned in Ch. 39), ***the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him.*** Lenski quoting Thomas Graebner (another Lutheran commentator at the turn of the 19th Century to 20th) says, "Here is sanity: "Whatever is in league today

against the Christian Church -- anti-christian scientific speculation, higher criticism, the New Theology, New Thought, Mormonism, Eddyism [7th Day Adventists], materialism, sensualism, secretism [Masons], birth control, all the forces of sin and carnality which seek to corrupt the Church and to slay her inner life, are the 'Gog and Magog' of Ezekiel and John. But the great day of the Lord is even now approaching, which will witness their irrevocable doom." (RCH Lenski Rev. Commentary p. 596) It seems Lenski and Graebner had their share of literalists in their time too. One commentator of the day, Gray and Gaebelein, believed Meshech and Tubal of and the prince of Rosh (another name for Meshech) is in fact Meshech and Tubal, a.k.a. Gog and Magog. Lenski further writes, "They [Gray and Gaebelein] said Russia was this 'prince of Rosh,' reproduced in their modern day Moscow and Tobolsk. And Gray claims: "Meshech and Tubal are original forms of 'Moscow' and 'Tobolsk,' which are immemorially in possession of that nation. A reliable ancient map placed beside a reliable modern one will identify the territories." But the maps give this claim the lie just as all reliable etymologists will deny this derivation of the names. Graebner writes that "Moskva" first appears in 1156, and was not even then in possession of the Russian nation for the very good reason that the Russian nation did not yet exist. Tobolsk, in the far arctic corner of Siberia, was not "immemorially in Russia's possession." Not until 157, about 2000 years after Ezekiel, was it even visioned by Russians; it became Russian only by conquest in 1639. Of a piece with this is the interpretation in which England is made "the Gog of prophesy." (RCH Lenski Rev. Commentary p. 595)

Vs. 8 (cont)... ***to gather them together to battle*** See 11:4 & 16:16). ***the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*** God made this promise to Abraham and if you include the angels of heaven (more sand!), you have quite a number. ***Gen. 22:17...I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on these shores. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies.*** For the enemy's size, we have an example from ***Josh. 11:4...And they came out with all their troops, a great horde, in number like the sand that is on the seashore, with very many horses and chariots.*** Again, same battle as that of Armageddon, but a different camera angle.

Vs. 9...In regard to ***and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city:*** What John sees here is what the prophet Elisha saw but his servant didn't. ***Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see." So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha 2 Kings 6:17.*** The 'beloved city' of course is Jerusalem. Better yet is this witness from Hezekiah when Rabshakeh's army had him surrounded. ***2 Kings 19:35... And that night the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.*** Here again, in the blink of an eye the battle's over. ***and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.***

Vs. 10...'To the victor remain the spoils!' Though we're not told if Hezekiah 'spoiled' General Rabshakeh's/King Sannacharib's army but we do find out what happens to Satan...***And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.***

Vs. 11... ***And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.***

Regarding ***whose face the earth and the heaven fled away***. There is good reason for that. In **Deut. 1:20** we read...***And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.*** Lenski says, "This vision presents the last judgment. Practically all the symbolism is dropped. The dead stand before the throne, both the great and the small, and "judged were they, each one, according to their works" -- language that is as literal as can be written. This vision completes the group presented in Chapter 20." (RCH Lenski Rev. Commentary p. 599)

THE OPENED BOOKS

¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. ¹⁴ And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Vs. 12...From **Daniel 7:10...the judgment was set, and the books were opened** is basically what we see here word for word. For **book of life (see 3:5)**. For **and the dead were judged**(see 11:18). God's got it all down in His Book of Life. For those who say we are saved by faith alone; on the one hand, they are correct. But the inerrant inspired words of James says, Faith without works is dead. How are they judged? **according to their works**. See Lenski's closing comment on verse 11.

Vs. 13...This verse is intended for all those who think our bodies are going to be left behind and eaten by the fish of the sea; for **the sea gave up the dead which were in it;** (and from **Job 19:26**)...***And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.*** There are those who believe in a 'soul sleep.' Which is nothing more than dying and having only our spirit go to heaven and not our bodies. We cannot accept the witness of those who have 'near death' experiences. We aren't calling them liars but we're saying only that God revealed that truth to you, and you alone, Praise God! But there is credence for our bodies being in heaven particularly from Jesus words to the thief on the cross...***Today, you shall be with Me in Paradise Luke 23:43.***

Vs. 13 (cont)...What is unnerving for unbeliever's; especially John Lennon (unless he had an 11th hour confession like the thief on the cross), because of the words of this verse: **and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them**. BOOM! You're shot! You die! You find yourself in hell (as though you were waiting for your trial and praying you get off on 'good behavior!')! But then hell itself delivers you up. **according to their works** (see vs. 11 & 12).

Vs. 14...For **death and hell** (see 6:8). They **were cast into the lake of fire** (see 19:20). We come again to the 2nd death (repeat for emphasis-mentioned in 2:11 but see 20:6).

Vs. 15...We know what becomes of those found in the book of life...it's written 8 times in the Bible but 7 times in Revelation (see 3:5). They get what's coming to them according to their deeds (see Verses 11, 12, & 13). The chapter closes with their destination... **the lake of fire**. Once again, mentioned for emphasis (if we haven't 'got it' by now we never will 'get it'). Also (see 19:20 & vs. 14).