

NOTES ON THE REVELATION OF JOHN

Tom McDaniel

- 1:1 **Revelation** from God **to** Jesus Christ **to** his angel **to** John **to** the reader
- 1:1, 3 EVENTS MUST TAKE PLACE SOON . . . FOR THE TIME IS NEAR
- 1:12 seven lamp stands = seven churches (1:20)
- 1:13-16 like a human being but with flaming eyes, bronze feet, gurgling voice, sun-like-face, being the living 'first and the last' who has the keys to Death and Hades
- 1:16 seven stars = angels of the seven churches
- 1:16 two edge sword
- 3:20 if any one hears my voice and opens the door
- 4:1 I looked, and lo, in heaven an open door
- 4:1-11 The Creator seated on a throne, surrounded by 24 thrones for 24 elders, plus 7 torches (= 7 spirits of God) and 4 living creatures (lion, ox, human-face-like, eagle) which sing a 3 + 3 + 3 hymn while the elders praise the creator.
- 5:1:1-5 The scroll with seven seals, in the Creator's right hand, opened by 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David'
- 5:6-12 The Lamb, which had been slain to provide ransom from every people and nation, having 7 eyes (= the 7 spirits of God) is praised by 24 elders and 4 creatures as worthy to unseal the scroll.
- 5:13-14 The LORD and the LAMB are praised by all creatures of heaven and earth, earth and sea.

2 NOTES ON THE REVELATION OF JOHN

- 6:1 **Seal 1** produced a rider with a bow on a white horse ready to depart to conquer
- 6:3 **Seal 2** produced a rider on a red horse who would remove peace from the world
- 6:5 **Seal 3** produced a rider on a black horse with a balance in his hand
- 6:7 **Seal 4** produced the rider Death on a pale horse, followed by Hades, empowered to kill earth inhabitants with sword, famine, pestilence, and beasts
- 6:9 **Seal 5** produced the souls of those slain for the word who, calling for vengeance, were told to wait until more of their brethren were killed.
- 6:12 **Seal 6** produced the day of God's wrath: an earthquake, a darkened sun, a blood-like moon, falling stars, the vanishing of the sky, mountains and islands.
- 7:1-12 Four angels were empowered to harm the earth but they are told by another angel which appeared from the rising sun to wait until the 144,000 servants of God were sealed on their foreheads. 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes, with Dan replaced by Manasseh. This ethnocentric vision was followed by universalistic vision of a multi-ethnic multitude, along with the 24 elders and 4 creatures, praising the LORD and the LAMB.
- 7:13-17 Recognition of the white robed servants who had come out of the tribulation for whom the LAMB will be a shepherd. No more hunger or thirst or scorching heat
- 8:1-12 **Seal 7** produced cataclysms on earth inflicted by 8 angels, one of whom cast fire from the altar to earth,

NOTES ON THE REVELATION OF JOHN 3

and four of whom sounded their trumpets to produce thunder, lightning, earthquake, hail, blood, a falling star (named Wormwood), all of which resulted in the destruction of $\frac{1}{3}$ of the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth and its trees, sea creatures, ships, rivers and fountains.

8:13 A flying eagle announces three woes:

9:1-12 **Woe 1** came when the fifth angel's trumpet called for a falling star which had the key to unlock the bottomless pit. When the star fell and opened the pit, the opening produced further cataclysms on earth from smoke and horse-like locusts—who were servants of the angel of Abaddon (= the bottomless pit)—which tortured for five months all those who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. Those tortured were not free to die.

9:13-21 **Woe 2** began when the sixth angel blew the trumpet and released four angels who were to kill $\frac{1}{3}$ of mankind by employing 2 x 10,000 x 10,000 cavalrymen using chemical weapons (fire, smoke, and sulphur).

10:1-11 *An interlude* about the seer eating a sealed scroll about seven thunders

11:1-19 *An interlude* about measuring the temple, with two witnesses empowered to prophesy in sackcloth for 1,260 days, after which the two witnesses will be killed by the beast from the bottomless pit, causing a $3\frac{1}{2}$ day celebration over their deaths. But the witnesses are resurrected and ascend into heaven, at which time an earthquake killed 7,000 people.

4 NOTES ON THE REVELATION OF JOHN

- 11:14-19 *An interlude* about the seventh angel's playing the trumpet which was followed by a Christological doxology sung in heaven and a viewing of the ark of the covenant in the heavenly temple.
- 12:1-17 **Woe 3** came when a pregnant woman (Israel and/or the Church) clothed with the sun, moon, and stars was confronted by a red dragon (serpent, Devil, Satan, the deceiver) with seven heads and ten horns, culminating in a war in heaven between Michael and the dragon and his angels. Satan lost the battle and is thrown down to earth; and from earth the dragon pursued the woman without success, making him angry enough to make war on her other offspring (the saints of God).
- 13:1-10 The dragon empowers a head-scarred *beast from the sea* (= Rome) which was allowed to make war on the saints for 42 months.
- 13:11-18 The *beast from the earth* joined the *beast from the sea*. The earth-beast enforced (1) the universal worship—on pain of death—of *the sea-beast* whose image could even speak, and (2) the marking of everyone with the name or **666** number of the sea-beast.¹
- 14:1-5 The LAMB and 144,000 virgin and spotless men, marked with יהוה (YHWH) and יהושוע (YHWSW^c), assemble on Mount Zion and sing a secret new song
- 14:6-7 A flying angel proclaims an eternal gospel to the world
- 14:8 Another angel announces the fall of Babylon
- 14:9-11 Another angel announces those with the mark of the

NOTES ON THE REVELATION OF JOHN 5

- beast shall be tormented before the LAMB and angels
- 14:12 A call for endurance of the saints, for “BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD HENCEFORTH.” But the saints are not the only ones to die.
- 14:14-20 Four angels (at least one being “like a son of man”) with sickles in hand become grim-reapers, filling the wine press of divine wrath with enough “grapes” to create a flood of blood—bridle high—for 1,600 stadia (= 200 miles).
- 15:1-8 Seven angels with seven plagues, seven bowls of wrath, are made ready to complete God’s wrath.
- 16:1-20 **Bowl of Wrath 1**— sores inflicted on those with the mark of the beast
Bowl of Wrath 2— the sea became like blood and all sea creatures died
Bowl of Wrath 3— rivers and fountains became blood so that those who shed blood would have to drink blood
Bowl of Wrath 4— was poured on the sun causing the sun to burn men
Bowl of Wrath 5— was poured on the throne of the beast, causing darkness, sores, and pain
Bowl of Wrath 6— was poured on the Euphrates causing it to dry up, permitting the Eastern king to mobilize in anticipation of battle (of Armageddon)
Bowl of Wrath 7— was poured into the air bringing the cataclysmic end of the “great city” (Babylon = Rome) and the cities of the nations. Mountains and islands disappeared. Men were pounded by 100 pound hail stones.

6 NOTES ON THE REVELATION OF JOHN

- 17:1-6 **Bowl of Wrath 7 Amplified** — the judgment of the great harlot, Babylon, who was seen sitting on many waters and on a seven headed, ten horned, scarlet beast; and she was drunk with the blood of the saints.
- 17:8 • the beast “was, is not, and is to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to perdition”
- 17:9 • the seven heads = the seven hill on which the woman is seated (Rome's 7 hills)
• the seven heads = seven kings: 5 past kings. the present king (Vespasian), and a future king (Titus)
- 17:11 • the eighth king who is among the seven kings appears to be Nero, who was said by some to have come back to life, who is consigned to perdition
- 17:12 • the 10 horns = 10 temporary (1 hour) ruler serving the beast to make war on the LAMB
- 17:14 • the LAMB will conquer the 10 horns /rulers
- 17:15 • the waters = the nations
- 17:16-18 • the horns and the beast will, by God’s design, desolate and devour the harlot, identified again (as in 17:5) as the “great city” (= Babylon = Rome)
- 18:1-24 An angel announces: “Fallen is Babylon!”
- 19:1-2 **Hallelujah 1** — Power belongs to God; justice has been done
- 19:3 **Hallelujah 2** — Babylon burns forever
- 19:4 **Hallelujah 4** — from the 24 elders and four living creatures
- 19:5 **Hallelujah 5** — for the marriage of the LAMB has

NOTES ON THE REVELATION OF JOHN 7

- come, the Bride is ready
- 19:9 blessed are those invited to the marriage supper of the LAMB
- 19:11-16 the appearance of “Faithful and True” / “The Word of God” / “King of Kings and Lord of Lords,” armed with a two-edged sword in his mouth, to judge and make war, riding on a white horse and followed by heaven’s armies on white horses
- 19:17-18 the angel in the sun calls for birds to eat the carrion of all men
- 19:19-21 the capture of beast and the false prophet who were thrown alive into the lake of fire
- 19:21 the rest of those mobilized for Armageddon were slain by the two-edge sword and became bird food
- 20:11-4 a detailed picture of 19:20 telling of the dragon/serpent/Satan/Devil being sealed in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years, after which he be set free for a while
- 20:5-7 vision of the souls of those beheaded for their testimony of Jesus and being unmarked by 666 came to life (the first resurrection) and reigned with Christ for 1,000 years
- 20:7-8 Satan will be freed after his 1,000 year sentence at which time he will gather Gog and Magog for battle.
- 20:9-10 But instead of a battle at Armegaddon, fire from heaven consumed Satan and his forces, at which point Satan was thrown back into the bottomless pit forever, rejoining the beast and the false prophet, were all three will be tormented forever.
- 20:11-15 Judgement of all the dead who had been given up

8 NOTES ON THE REVELATION OF JOHN

by Death, Hades, and the sea. The Book of Judgment and the Book of Life were opened before the Lord on his great white throne. The dead were judged by what they had *done* [n.b., not by what they *believed*]. The ‘Second Death’ comes when Death and Hades, along with those whose names are not in the Book of Life, are thrown into the Lake of Fire

- 21:1-8 A New Heaven, a New Earth, and a New Jerusalem wherein the “dwelling of God is with men.” No more death or tears! I am the Alpha and the Omega!
- 21:9-27 Detailed view of the New Jerusalem, the Bride/Wife of the LAMB, which needed neither the sun or the moon
- 22:1-5 Vision of the river of the water of life flowing from throne of God and of the LAMB and the tree of life and healing
- 22:6 SOON TO TAKE PLACE . . . I AM COMING SOON
- 22:10 THE TIME IS NEAR
- 22:12 I AM COMING SOON
- 22:20 SURELY I AM COMING SOON

NOTE

1. J. Massyngberde Ford (*Revelation: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday. 1975, p. 216) quoted the commentary of Beatus (circa 776 A.D.) on Rev 13:18, Ὡδε ἡ σοφία ἐστίν. ὁ ἔχων νοῦν ψηφισάτω

τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου, ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν, καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ, which Beatus rendered “this is wisdom; he who has understanding let him count the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man, [its number is 666,] that is, of Christ whose name the beast takes for himself . . .,” citing H. A. Sanders, “The Number of the Beast in Revelation 13,” in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 37 (1918), 95-99.

- The Greek σωτήρ (*sōtēr*) “savior” (as in Luke 2:11 σωτήρ ὃς ἐστὶν Χριστὸς κύριος, “a savior who is Christ, the Lord”) would be transliterated in Hebrew and Aramaic as סוּתֵר (= *swtr* = *sōtēr*). In Hebrew the ס (s) = 60, the ו (w/ō) = 6, the ת (t) = 400, and the ר (r) = 200, which all together equal 666.
- The Hebrew and Aramaic word סוּתֵר (= *swtr* = *sōtēr*)—in contrast to the Greek word transliterated in Hebrew using these same letters—means “destroyer” or “one who tears down” (BDB 1104; Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1022). The Arabic *šatar* “to offend, abuse, revile” and *šatîr* “knave, rogue” may be cognates (Hava, *Dictionary*, 351).
- Therefore, 666 can be the numeric code for “savior”—when based upon the Greek loanword σωτήρ (*sōtēr*)—or 666 can be a numeric code for “destroyer” when based upon the Hebrew/ Aramaic סוּתֵר (= *swtr* = *sōtēr*). The title (*Sōtēr*) given to Zeus Olympus would have had different meaning to different people: for the Greeks, “Savior” ; for the Jews, “Destroyer.”
- שְׁקוּץ שְׂמִים בַּעַל שְׂמִים became שְׂמִים בַּעַל שְׂמִים and then שְׂמִים שְׂמִים
- The phrase “It is the number of a man” (ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν) would have been in Hebrew מִסְפַּר אִישׁ הוּא (*mispar ʾiš hūʾ*) or מִסְפַּר אָדָם הוּא (*mispar ʾādām hūʾ*).

10 NOTES ON THE REVELATION OF JOHN

Were it the latter phrase with אָדָם (*ʿādām*/Adam), the phrase could also mean (1) “it is the number of a ruler/provost” or (2) “it is the number of a peacemaker, reconciler, exemplar.”

Thus, Beatus’ commentary, “*it is the mark/number of a man, that is Christ, whose name the beast takes for himself*” indicates a hidden wordplay. In McDaniel’s opinion Christ’s Greek title *swtr/sôter* “Savior” (being one way to spell 666) became the Hebrew *swtr/sôter* “Destroyer” used as the title of the beast which functioned under the guise of a being a “Savior” when it was in reality the “Destroyer” (compare 19:20).

CODEX OF THE MONASTERY OF SAN PEDRO DE CARDEÑA*

In the eighth century, the greater part of the Iberian Peninsula was invaded and ruled by Arabs. Christian religious and lay people migrated north into the mountains and set up safe havens for their culture and religion. They took relics, books and other significant objects with them. In the northern mountains of Spain, the migrants met with the Visigoths who ruled with severity. The Visigoths, like most other Christian kingdoms at the time, followed the calendar of the Consular Era. This calendar indicated that the end of the ninth century corresponded with the end of the millennium according to Christ. And, according to Saint John the Evangelist's Revelations, the end of the millennium would bring the Final Judgement and the coming of the Lamb. Fear and awe filled the minds of Christians as they began to contemplate the coming of the end of the world as they knew it.

As the monasteries in the north grew in size and power, they posed a threat to the already weakened See of Toledo on the Spanish meseta. This factor, along with the continuous Arabic incursions and the vision of an impending end of the world described by St. John, paints a picture of the historical milieu in which the monk, Beatus of Liébana, sat down and wrote his

NOTES ON THE REVELATION OF JOHN 11

commentary on the Apocalypse. He contemplated the destiny of the Christian church on the Iberian Peninsula and the final salvation of his people in the event of the Apocalypse predicted by St. John the Evangelist. He affirms his faith in the authority of the Saints and the grace of God all Mighty.

Beatus wrote his commentaries in a monastery in the region called Liébana in the Cantabrian Mountains of northern Spain (circa 776 A.D.) In a sense, his original text became a best seller of the middle ages. Scribes, fascinated with the notion of the Apocalypse, copied the text and illuminated the pages over a period of 3 centuries (from the 10th to the 13th centuries.) These illuminated copies became known by the name and place of the monk who wrote the original text, "Beatus of Liébana."

The text is basically the same in most of the copies. However, the iconography has evolved over time. Today, 22 of the original illuminated copies exist and are dispersed throughout the libraries of the world. To study all of the Beatus is to study the transition of illumination during the Middle Ages on the Iberian Peninsula.

The Beatus of Liébana codex of the Monastery of San Pedro de Cardeña was copied in the 12th century (1175-1185). The style of lettering is Carolinian gothic. In 1871, the manuscript was donated in poor condition to the National Museum of Archaeology in Madrid. Several pages had been removed and were eventually relocated in the Metropolitan Museum of New York and the private collection of Francisco de Zabálburu.

The text of the codex is a commentary on St. John the Evangelist's Revelations, written by the monk, Beatus, in the mountainous region in northern Spain called Liébana. St. John's Revelations predicted that the Savior would come at the turn of the millennium bringing salvation to the pious and destruction by fire and floods to the unfaithful. Beatus wrote his commentaries on the Apocalypse to affirm his faith in the Christian Saints on the eve of what most Christians believe would be the coming of the end of the world as they knew it.

12 **NOTES ON THE REVELATION OF JOHN**

* <http://www.fims-books.com/cardena.htm>