

Introduction

Welcome to the study of the Book of Revelation from the mindset of a Hebrew. I wrote and taught this course once before during the 2016-2017 school year to a group of gals very interested in end times. Oddly enough, many of the women's groups in the surrounding churches were also studying the book of Revelation in various formats that same school year. Now again, as I study and rewrite parts of this study for presentation during the school year 2024-2025, I am becoming aware of other groups studying Revelation this year. One of those groups is BSF and they are devoting their entire year to this book. "Mary-Kate Online is offering a study on Revelation and one of the churches in the Denver area is also taking an in-depth look at this book this year. I will be very interested in talking with those who do these other studies.

When I began my research for this study, I was overwhelmed by the amount of material that was available for the study of the Book of Revelation in magazines, books, the Internet (not all of it is true-surprise, surprise!), commentaries and YouTube. YouTube has a plethora of prophets who say they have heard from the LORD and the events we are experiencing today are related to the end times and the book of Revelation. Of course, not all of these so-called prophets agree with one another. The disagreements over the meaning of the book of Revelation and its timing are nothing new. The early Roman Catholic church believed that the events of the Tribulation portion of the book of Revelation were completed by the end of the great war of the Jews and the Romans under Titus Vespasian in the year 70 A.D. This passed on to Martin Luther's followers and they, too, believed that the tribulation portion of Revelation had been fulfilled. This is the dominate view of the Catholic and the Lutheran churches today. This is called the Preterist viewpoint. However, there are others, including the Messianic Community of Jews, who believe that the end times and the Tribulation are yet to be fulfilled and will occur in the future. They take their viewpoint from the book of Daniel and his missing 70th week of years in Daniel 9:24-27. This is called the dispensational view. We will cover the viewpoint of the Messianic Christians first and then as we continue through the book and where there are sharp differences, I will try to explain the Preterist viewpoint. With all of these differences on eschatology out there, my main purpose in writing this study from the Jewish mindset is for you to "be ready" for the Lord Jesus to return and for you to have intimacy with Christ. The first time Jesus came as the lowly Servant, Mashiach Ben Joseph. The second time He will be coming as the conquering King, Mashiach Ben David. I will say this again for emphasis: The main reason to study eschatology in my viewpoint is "to be ready."

I have taught the book of Revelation two times before this study in two different formats. The first time I took part in the teaching of a two-year Precept Upon Precept study and the second time was an 11-week Living Proof Ministries' (Beth Moore) study. For this study, I plan to use all the many ways I've learned to study and teach the Bible and the information I have gleaned along the way. This is not an inductive study, but I may from time to time use these methods to teach you something I want you to know, and the inductive method of learning is the best way to learn it. It is not a topical study, but we will study many topics along the way. It is not a study of history, but there is much history in it. This study will be primarily designed around seeing the Book of Revelation through the eyes of someone with a Hebrew mindset in the first century. However, I also intend to use everything I have learned along the way that does not necessarily

have a Hebrew bias. Why in the world, if I've taught this book twice already, and there is already so much information circulating out there concerning this book, would I want to teach it again? And why, for heaven's sake would I write another study?

I'm so glad you asked that question. In the Fall of 2015, I joined a group of Believing Christians who were studying the Hebrew language with the intent to read the original text of the Bible in the Hebrew, without the bias of the Greek language, culture, and the Greek Hermeneutics method of study, that is and was used in its' translations. I don't think any of us realized how lofty that undertaking was. The few of us who remained in the class to the end were fairly adept at sounding out the words in Hebrew, but none of us were able to understand what we were reading. We hadn't built the vocabulary necessary for understanding. Even though I didn't feel like I had obtained what I went after in taking this class, I really became fascinated with the difference it made to translate the Scripture with the Hebrew way of thinking in mind.

The Jewish Christian theologians say the meaning of this book of Revelation has to be first understood by the first century recipients of this letter and then secondly understood, as it is meant for future generations. There are many ways the first century Jewish Believers would have differed in their evaluation or reading of the book of Revelation than later readers of the text. The main way they discern the text is very similar to the "Dispensational view" where grammar has its place and most of it can be taken literally. For example, where we have the words, "like" or "as," it is meant to be taken metaphorically or as a simile. Where there are no comparisons, it is meant to be taken literally. The first century Jews would have looked at other apocalyptic literature, gaining insight into comparing the other apocalyptic writings to the book of Revelation. They would also have understood the animals or beasts seen in the book of Revelation to represent human or angelic rulers who were in charge of the other nations. The phrase "The LORD's Day" had a different meaning to them, maybe differing from our understanding, because to them, the LORD'S Day, was the day of the shofar (trumpet) and the shofar sounded judgment (Zeph. 1:14-16). They would have understood that Christ's raiment in Revelation 1 was very similar to the clothes of the high priest in the Temple of YHWH and also reflective of the dressing of a king. This would have symbolized to the first century recipients of this letter that Jesus was both priest and king, and held the unique office of the Messiah.

Until I started scanning the Internet for help, I did not know there was so much material available on the New Testament Greek text translated into the Hebrew, called the B'rit Hadashah. The Old Testament was translated into the Koine (common) Greek language from the Hebrew, approximately 200 years before Christ. This is called the Septuagint and it was made available for those who spoke or read Greek at the time of Christ. Since the time of Christ, the archeological world has looked for but not found original New Testament manuscripts in the Hebrew language*. As far as we know the original manuscripts were written in Greek and probably biased by the Greek language, culture, and method of interpretation. In other words, for us studying the book of Revelation, it came to us in the Greek language, not the Hebrew. For our purposes in studying the book of Revelation, having the B'rit Hadashah gives us who can't read the Hebrew language, a source that we can go to and see the English translation of the Hebrew right next to the Hebrew translated from the Greek language.

We live in such a wonderful age. The Hebrew Text of the Old Testament, the Tanakh along with the English translation is now available online for anyone to study on their own. Both the Tanakh and the B'rit Hadashah are found on the website below. Access this website and put the website in your favorites or your bookmarks so that you can click on it at any time. Please be advised there is more than one translation for the B'rit Hadashah. The translation that is used on the Sar Shalom website has been translated into that King James Version style of old English. I am not fond of it, but I use it when I think there might be a nugget of truth in it that's not evident in my NASB.

<http://www.sarshalom.us/resources/scripture/asv/bible.html>

Basically, what does this kind of translation mean? The Greek/Hebrew scholars took the New Testament Koine Greek manuscripts and translated them into Hebrew. The Jewish translators tell us that the translation from the Greek to the Hebrew restores all of the Hebraic perspective and understanding that was lost to the Greek language. Then after this, the translators took the B'rit Hadashah and translated the Hebrew into the other languages of the world. * **There is a linguist by the name of Dr. Miles Jones, Benai Emunah Institute, who believes he has an original copy of the book of Revelation and the four gospels in Hebrew from when the apostle Thomas went to India. You can check out his web site at >www.writingofGod.com<.**

In addition to the B'rit Hadashah for reference in this study of Revelation, we can also use the over 800 cross references of Revelation to the Old Testament Tanakh. Again, the Tanakh was originally written in the Hebrew (and some Aramaic). So, by studying the Old Testament references, we can have access to, at least, the original Hebrew text translated into the English.

Not only will we be able to reference the Hebrew text of the Old and New Testaments, and study the 800 cross references, but we will also look at the differences between modern western world-views, and ancient near-eastern (and current) thoughts. If you've ever traveled to the Middle East or if you have read about the current mindset of those who are from the Middle East, you will know that their way of thinking and looking at the world is very different from ours. Here in the US and in Western Europe, we have much more of an egocentric identity (focus on the individual) whereas the Middle Eastern countries' identities are more group-centric (focus on the group). There are many more of these differences we will explore in the coming weeks.

Many of you, who have studied with me before, have had detailed learning on the Hebrew tabernacle, outlined for us in Leviticus. You have also studied the concept of Covenant and how God always works with His own through Covenant. We will be referencing both of these topics many times throughout our study.

We will look at the sacrifices and priestly vestments which make atonement in the Temple. A look at the different clothing articles of the priests shows us different atonements for different raiment, i.e., the breeches atone for lewdness, the girdle for impure meditations of the heart, etc. We will also take an in-depth look at Jesus as the Heavenly, High Priest (the Metatron) and His order after Melkizedek. We will compare Rev 1:12-13 with other apocalyptic literature (lesson 5, 6THBR-Dr.Lizorkin, pp.5) such as the Testament of Levi, the Sefer Hekhalot in 3 Enoch, the

Sefer Haqomah, and the Babylonian Talmud. From these comparisons we will see how Revelation merges these texts into harmony with Jesus.

We will also compare Rev 1:14-16 with other Biblical verses and the Babylonian Talmud which seem to describe the Son of Man such as Daniel 10:4-6, and as the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9-10.

Ketubah is the Hebrew word for the marriage contract or the betrothal covenant. One set of books I read, authored by two Messianic Rabbis and a pastor, believe that all four kinds of covenant present in the Scripture, blood, salt, sandal, and betrothal, are representative of a continuous love story in which God redeems His own for intimacy with Him¹. With this in mind, we will attempt to understand the four cups of the Betrothal Covenant and how these fit into our study of Revelation. It is amazing to me, how we so often fail to see, that the first two chapters of Genesis are about Creation and the Fall of Man, but the remaining chapters (Genesis 3 – Revelation 22) of the book, are about God securing Man’s redemption. Finally, and appropriately, both the Bible and the book of Revelation end with the marriage supper of the Lamb. Just a little incentive for you who like unlocking a good romantic mystery: the Ketubah document had 7 seals. Only a select group was able to break each of the seals and the last seal was to be broken only by the married couple when the marriage was consummated. In the Scripture, the Church is considered the Bride of Christ and Israel the adulterous wife of YHWH. Most of the material we will use for the Ketubah will be the most helpful when we get beyond the seven letters to the seven churches.

Another thread that is woven all the way through the Scripture and also through the Book of Revelation is the tabernacle’s lampstand with seven lamps, often referred to as the menorah. “Menorah” is the actual Hebrew Word for this lampstand with seven lamps, not seven candlesticks as in the KJV and unfortunately in the Tanakh on the Sar Shalom web site as well. The menorah is pictured on the Israeli flag today. In Leviticus, the menorah is in front of the Holy of Holies’ wall (or curtain) of separation between God and Man. In the book of Hebrews, after the death of Christ, the wall has been split open, signifying that Man now has access to God directly. The menorah is still in front of the Holy of Holies, but there is no longer a wall of separation. All of what happened daily and yearly in the tabernacle was a foreshadowing or patterning of what was actually happening in the throne room of God in heaven. On earth, God’s Shekinah Glory dwelt between the cherubim on top of the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest had access to God, and only one time a year, and only after the proper cleansings, sacrifices, and wardrobe changes had been completed. We will see the menorah in Revelation 2 and 3 in the seven lampstands for the seven churches. Revelation 4-5 shows us the throne room of God with the actual seven lamps of fire burning before the throne (thus the cover for this study) that are the seven Spirits of God. We will even see the clear use of “sevens” as a symbol of completion throughout the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments.

You will find reference to satan in the Old Testament in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. In Isaiah, he is called “Daystar, son of the morning,” and is the one who said in his heart, ‘I will ascend above

¹ Lost in Translation, John Klein, Adam Spears, Michael Christopher, Volumes 1-3, Covenant Research Institute, 2009.

the heights of the clouds; ‘I will make myself like the Most-High.’ He is called the King of Tyre in Ezekiel, and you will discover from this chapter that he was formally one of the angels that covered God’s Throne until iniquity was found in him. For his pride, God kicked him and one-third of the heavenly host who sided with him, out of heaven. Satan and his devils (fallen angels) show up big time in the book of Revelation. Satan shows himself to be the ultimate counterfeiter. In Revelation, we see him mimic the Trinity with his unholy trinity. While investigating other books of the Bible, we will see him counterfeiting God throughout the whole of Scripture. As an example of this, in I John, Jesus is Light and in Him is no darkness, and in the Gospel of John, He is the “Light of the World.” Satan mimics Him by coming as an angel of light, but he actually brings only darkness. Satan is sneaky. He is angry because he knows his time is short. He will do anything he can to turn the world away from the worship of the One True God (YHWH) and towards the worship of himself. Why? I want you to think about this and record your thoughts on this throughout this study in **Appendix A**. As we study the book of Revelation, I want each one of you to get your minds wrapped around this thought: we are in a spiritual war and sometimes it’s hard to tell right from wrong, good from evil. Take John’s advice in the book of 1 John 4:1-3 where he says: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist...” This is a quote from the B’rit Hadashah.

Besides John being the human author of this letter, we have three other senders. See 4THBR, Dr. Lizorkin, Rev 1:4): God the Father, God the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ.

Jesus as God come in the flesh was a relatively new understanding for the Jewish people of that first century. The Trinity was definitely not in their understanding. Trinitarian theology today says that the seven Spirits mentioned in 1:4 are one title and six characteristics of the one Holy Spirit found in Isaiah 11:2, and who is, also God. There are also those in the Messianic community who believe these seven Spirits are not the Holy Spirit but the seven archangels revealed in 1 Enoch: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Remiel, Raquel, Uriel, and Saraquel.

Interestingly enough, as I read through the first of five volumes of church history my kids gave me one birthday, the Holy Spirit as God was not viewed as such until the 4th century, A.D. Between Constantine’s sons, one who was the bishop of Rome and the other the bishop of Constantinople, there was a great schism over Jesus’ and the Holy Spirit’s inclusion into the Trinity. In other words, it was difficult for the church to accept the Holy Spirit’s inclusion into the Godhead.

We hear all the time in our churches that God loves us and Jesus loves us. We are taught that from a young age, in every Sunday school class. What about the Holy Spirit? If I were a gambling person, I would bet that not a single one of you has heard that the Holy Spirit loves you. Why is He left out of our understanding of God’s love for us? Is He not part of the Godhead, too? In Ephesians 4:30, Paul commands us “not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” So, if you can grieve the Holy Spirit, and the word ‘grieve’ means distress or make sorrowful, is this not evidence that He cares for you, too, and does indeed love you.

Much of Jewish writing goes like this: there is a summary of the whole paragraph or the whole subject in the first sentence or the first paragraph of the body of material presented. After this, comes the explanation of everything that is in that first paragraph. For example, Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now in Genesis 1:2, the writer begins to explain the rest of the story, “The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep...” In Revelation, the first sentence is this, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.” Beginning with the next sentence, he tells the rest of the story: the unveiling of Jesus Christ. We are going to see Christ, His appearance, His character, and His will, discovered in the rest of the book. All of the subsequent verses in Revelation can reference back to the initial sentence. We will see this type of writing all the way through Revelation. The book of Revelation is written very much like paragraphs with initial topic sentences all fanning out from an initial topic paragraph. Clues for the paragraphs are already numbered in bold type in many of the versions of the Bible.

In this study, we will look at the use of Gematria. Gematria is using numbers to represent letters to spell out names and to purposely veil a meaning. There was a rabbi in the 12th century who believed that the Messiah’s actual name was Menachem based on the gematria of the Hebrew word used for “branch” in Zechariah 3:8. He paired this with the name used for “comforter” in Lamentations 1:16. The numerical value of the Hebrew word for Menachem “branch” is 138 and the Hebrew word for tzemach “comforter” is also 138. This will become very important when we study the mark of the beast in part 3. Along with the gematria, we will look at the practice of wearing “phylacteries” or “tefillin” during the morning prayer. Phylacteries are a set of 2 small boxes that hold portions of God’s Word in writing. The Jews would tie the boxes on the head and arm. Again, this will become very important when we look at the mark of the beast in part 3.

The Greek word for “revelation” is *apokalupsis*. The negative connotation that this word has to do with ominous catastrophes or disasters is a misnomer. It does not represent doom or the end of the world. In the Hebrew translation for the Greek word *apokalupsis* it simply means “to uncover something that was hidden.” John uses his visions and also symbols to describe what he saw. These visions and symbols would be very familiar to the Jewish people of the day. We will reference other apocalyptic books both within the Scripture and outside the Scripture. We can learn a lot about the meaning of the Revelation text by looking at the other apocalyptic texts that emerged in the culture 100-200 B.C., such as the book of 1 Enoch. In apocalyptic literature, there is a tradition of viewing kings of gentile nations who rebel against Israel’s God as animals (reference the book of Daniel). We will see this in part 3 of Revelation, during the Tribulation period. Also, we will look at the book of Enoch again, when we look at the title the “Son of Man.” In Enoch, “The Son of Man” is described with the term the “Head of Days.” You will start to see in our study, the association of the “Ancient of Days” of Israel in Daniel, the “Head of Days” in 1 Enoch, and the “Son of Man” in Revelation.

The book of Revelation is also structured uniquely. First off, it is the only book of the Bible that promises a blessing to those who read and hear the words of this prophecy and also heed the things that are written in it. My professor for the Hebrew course I am taking online says that this blessing at the beginning of the book of Revelation and the six subsequent blessings in

Revelation are a picture of the beatitudes. He claims that these seven blessings are a literary device that helps to explain John's vision. This is called "chiastic" structure. We will definitely look at this. Seven is a key number in Revelation and we will see many, many sevens along the way. There is a Journal in **Appendix B** for you to write down God's blessings that you have received from reading Revelation. Secondly, we are given a divinely inspired outline in Revelation 1:19 as to the structure of the entire work. Revelation 1:19, says this to John: "Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter." Revelation 1 speaks of "the things which thou sawest." Revelation 2-3 of "the things which are," and Revelation 4-22, speak of "the things which will come to pass thereafter." This is remarkable. We are given the outline for the interpretation of time or order of all things in this book. (B'rit Hadashah)

We find very early in this book that there are a lot of metaphors and similes used. We should be looking for these words: "like" and "as." For example, Revelation 1:10 "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet." Was it a trumpet sound that John heard? It could have been, but it also could have been something else making that sound and it was the only way John knew how to describe it. **Or maybe it was the sound of a shofar that brought with it, the threat of imminent judgment for the Jews (Zeph 1:14-16).** Until recently, I had always looked at the words associated with "like" or "as" as necessary to be symbolic versus taking the language literally. Now, after being exposed to other apocalyptic writings, I can see that John's letter begins much like other Jewish apocalyptic writings of the day. I can see that the language used without the use of words: "like" and "as" can be symbolic also. The apocalyptic writings of the same period used images, symbols, cultural and linguistic codes that made sense to the Jewish person, but would not necessarily make sense to an outsider. For example, the early church was under heavy persecution. Their writings, if confiscated, could condemn them. So, mystical meanings were hidden within their writings to protect them and also to inform them. When we get to mystical Babylon, many of you will wonder if Babylon is Rome, or Jerusalem, or Babylon (or maybe even the USA). When speaking of the beast and Babylon in Revelation 17, the angel present tells us the mystery of the of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads, and the ten horns. We are told in 17:9 that the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. **Look at the period of time this is written in.** There were seven hills of Rome. Rome heavily persecuted the Christians and the Messianic Jews. Mystical Babylon is related to whatever period we are in and also related to whom is in world power at the moment.

There is much symbolism used in Revelation as well as the similes and metaphors described above. The word for "a sign," or "to signify" is "semaino," and means "to make known by some kind of sign." In the NASB the word "signified" is replaced with the word "communicated." At least two of the commentators I read used these two words, "sign" and "symbol," interchangeably. An example of a sign or a symbol is the seven-tiered lampstand used in the seven letters to the seven churches. God was going to take away their church's lampstand (menorah) if they didn't do what He asked. Yet, in Revelation 4:5, we see that the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne (the menorah) were symbolic of the seven Spirits of God. Could the first reference to the lampstands of the seven churches, be real lampstands or were they symbolic of the Spirit of the Lord's presence in those particular churches? **Or could the seven Spirits mentioned in 1:4 be the seven archangels of God that encircle the throne? (Source: 1 Enoch mentioned above).**

We will see many names Christ is called throughout the Book of Revelation and many titles to which He is referred. The titles used in Revelation 1 are used again in chapters 2 and 3 when he is communicating to His “called out ones.” We will see Him as the Lamb of God who was slain in chapters 4 and 5, and He is referred to as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah as the only One Who is worthy to break the seals. This Lamb breaks the 7 seals in chapters 6 revealing God’s wrath against Mankind’s sin. Christ is then seen as the Lamb all the way through to chapter 19, when He is also revealed as the One Who comes riding on a white horse and He is called Faithful and True. Here He is also called the Word of God, KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS. Finally, in chapters 19 through 22, we will see Him as the Judge of all the earth and the Bride Groom, who comes to claim His Bride, the Church. **The Great I AM is the memorial name of God given to the Israelites for all generations. He is the “Being One.” And it is in this use of the “Him who is, and who was and who is to come” in 1:4 that the Jewish people find their claim to the book of Revelation as pertaining to them first. They view themselves as the only people in the pre-incarnate Christ history who have had the Great, I AM of the Bible, as their God.**

Before we end with this introduction, I want to make a few statements that I believe and I would like you to think about them long and hard. First off, I believe, as do many others, that God is not done with the Jewish people and the church has not replaced Israel (Replacement Theology). On the contrary, after the seven letters to the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation, there is no mention of the church until we get to chapter 19 and the Bride of Christ. What we see instead are the 12 tribes of Israel taking center position on the world’s stage. If this is the case and I believe that it is, when God specifically says in **Revelation 7:4**, 144,000 from the tribes of Israel, 12,000 from each of the tribes, to whom is He referring? He is referring to the 12 tribes of Israel. Don’t make it difficult. There are no similes or metaphors here. Could it be symbolic of the Church or a specific cult of today, **like the Jehovah Witnesses?** Not likely.

Secondly, the written Word of God is the Holy Scripture. The person called the “Word of God” is our Savior, the LORD Jesus Christ. He is God. He is part of the Trinity, but He is still God. Let me preface this: I do believe the written word of God is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness – **2 Timothy 3:16**. Our Pastor at Crossroads Community Church in Parker made a remarkable statement one Sunday during his sermon. I’m paraphrasing, but it went something like this: We are to worship only the person of Jesus as the Word of God. We are not to worship the book, the Word of God. The written Word of God was written and given to us for our understanding so that we might know how to be in relationship with the Word of God, the Son. This Book, this study, is being written with the ultimate goal for you to have intimacy with Christ. The Bible from Genesis to Revelation is a love story of redemption and the Bride readying herself for her wedding day, so that she might have intimacy with her husband. For the Jews, depicted as the wife of Jehovah throughout the Old Testament, of whom He divorced, He will redeem her (for as many as will believe His provision of salvation for them) as He has redeemed you and me and He will graft them back into Vine (Romans 9,10,11).

Peggy Grinstead

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**The Preterist viewpoint is that God has divorced the Jewish people for their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah and Savior. Jesus coming in the clouds (the Parousia) is a reference to the judgment of Israel carried out by Rome, just like the judgments on them carried out by Assyria (Northern Kingdom) and Babylon (Southern Kingdom). The invasion of Judea by Titus Vespasian in 68-70 A.D. and subsequent enslavement of the few survivors were the end of the Old Covenant and the beginning of the New Covenant.*