



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

**AN INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION 7:1-3:
IN CONTINUUM
WITH THE HISTORICIST APPROACH OF
INTERPRETATION**

Carlos G Molina

**Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Philosophiae Doctor (PhD)**

**Department of New Testament Studies
Faculty of Theology
University of Pretoria**

January 2010

Supervisor: Prof Ernest van Eck



DEDICATION

To God for this educative opportunity.

To the University of Pretoria for opening its doors for seeking knowledge.

To my parents ,Carlos Luis and Teresa, who inspired me to love doing study.

To my wife, Diana, for her patience and constant stimulus.

To my daughters, Libna and Dana, for their joy and support.

To my supervisor, prof dr Ernest van Eck for his valuable guidance
and academic expertise.



SUMMARY

In this investigation it is proposed that the word σφραγίς is used as a symbol for the figurative presence of the holistic Sabbath in Revelation 7:1-3 by showing Revelation 7:1-3's reference to (bringing forward of) the ideas of Ezekiel 9:1-4 – the use and inclusion of the letter π as an identification of the sealed, thus anticipating the belief that “sealing” only has meaning if there is a personal relationship between God and man.

In Exodus 12 the “sealing” of the doorposts and lintels of the Israelites with the blood of the Passover Lamb functions primarily as protection against destruction. But the blood is also representative of ownership, property, inviolability, preservation, and authenticity. Another “sealing” process is described in Exodus 21 – in order for a slave to remain in his master's house after his mandatory service was over, the master had to pierce the slave's ear (i.e. “seal” it) with an awl (Ex 21:6); an act of voluntary submission and friendship on the slave's part.

When viewing Revelation 7:1-3 in the light of the above-mentioned functions of “sealing”, the conclusion is that the meaning of the holistic Sabbath also only occurs if the slave voluntarily receives the “sealing” of Jesus' friendship in his/her mind – i.e. a personal relationship with Christ, centered in a free will election of service and loyalty, symbolically represented by a seal on the forehead (Rv 22:4-5).

With regards to the authenticity of the ghematric number in Revelation 13:18: this historicist investigation does not consider χξς to be the earliest and truest numeric value, but as a numeric value used by Preterist and Higher Criticism scholars to denigrate the traditional presence of χξς in Revelation 13:18; believed to be a scribal error. Regarding the meaning of χξς the major downfall of the traditional *Vicarivs Filii Dei* ghematric approach's interpretation of the sea-monster as the Roman Catholic Church system is its source – that is the

Donation of Constantine, a well known forgery. Moreover, in the game of ghematria, all the letters must have a numeric value – *Vicarivs Filii Dei* does not fulfill this requirement.

With this in mind, this thesis proposes the use of a code number hypothesis – the phrase ἀπο ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου in Revelation 7:3 is connected with another genitive in Revelation 16:12 – τῶν βασιλέων τῶν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου. When it is taken into consideration that the previous genitive phrase is derived from Isaiah 44:28-45:21 – where Cyrus the Great is announcing the destruction of Babylon and the setting free of the captives – it is concluded that (in this sense) Cyrus is seen as a type for Christ and his second coming (Mt 24:27; 2:9; Lk 17:23-24; 2 Pt 1:19; Rv 18:1-4); the kings of the East represent Christ and his hosts; and the drowning of the river Euphrates as symbolic of the lack of human support or ability to detain the world plagues and the sins of Babylon. This code number hypothesis considers these three evil powers to be the 666 of Revelation 13:18 – a malign Trinity; in opposition to the Holy Trinity symbolized by the verbs “blessed” (Father), “rested” (Son), and “sanctified” (Holy Spirit; see Gn 2:2,3; Ex 20:11).



DISCLAIMER

The research done in this study, as well as the conclusions reached, do not necessarily concur with (or reflect) those of either the thesis supervisor and/or the University of Pretoria - they are the personal conclusions of the thesis writer only. The methodology used, and the conclusions reached, stem from the researcher's education in (and background as being part of) the Seventh-day Adventist tradition. But, at the same time, the researcher also wants to emphasize the fact that this investigation does not necessarily completely concur with (or reflect) traditional Seventh-day Adventist doctrine – it has as one of its goals the proposal of a different approach to research.

Table of contents

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. HISTORICISM AS TOOL TO IDENTIFY THE RESEARCH GAP	1
1.1 Historicism	1
1.2 QUESTIONS THAT OPEN THE STUDY OF SEALING	7
1.2.1 Sealing terminology from the time of the ANE up to the Apostolic Fathers	7
1.2.2 Questions relating to the terminology used for sealing in Revelation	9
1.2.3 Questions that relates to the exegesis of Revelation 7:1-3	9
1.3 RESEARCH GAP IDENTIFICATION	11
1.3.1 The Holistic Sabbath and sealing	11
1.4 JUSTIFYING THE IDENTIFIED RESEARCH GAP	14
1.4.1 Other aspects of the justification of the research gap	14
1.4.2 Archaeological justification of the research gap	15
1.4.3 Code number hypothesis for ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) in Revelation 13:18 and its holistic creation implication	15
1.5 ROUTE OF THE THESIS	16

CHAPTER 2

SEALING: AN OVERVIEW

2. SEALING DEFINITION	36
2.1 Sealing in the Ancient Near East	38
2.1.1 Sealing in Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt	38
2.1.2 Seal motifs in the ANE	42
2.1.2.1 Animals on geometric patterns	42
2.1.2.2 Cultic themes	45
2.1.2.3 Images of gods	47
2.1.3 Sealing usage in the ANE	48
2.1.3.1 Ownership and authority	48
2.1.3.2 Property and ancient economy	49
2.1.3.3 Inviolability	50



2.1.3.4	Tattooing as protection and branding	51
2.2	SEALING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT	55
2.2.1	Concordance: Sealing in the Old Testament	55
2.2.2	Evidence of seals from Old Testament times	56
2.2.3	The use of sealing in the Old Testament	57
2.2.4	Hebrew terms for seals and the act of sealing	58
2.2.5	A description of the terms used in the Old Testament for seals and sealing	59
2.2.5.1	חֹתָם (<i>hōthām</i>)	59
2.2.5.2	דְּמוּת (<i>Demût</i>)	59
2.2.5.3	אוֹת (<i>'oth</i>)	60
2.2.5.4	מַטָּרָה (<i>mattara'</i>)	61
2.2.5.5	מוֹפֵת (<i>m ōph ēth</i>)	61
2.2.5.6	קַא'אָה (<i>ka'aka'</i>)	61
2.2.5.7	צֵלֶם (<i>Tselem</i>)	62
2.2.5.8	תּוֹ (<i>taw</i>)	62
2.2.6	Sealing practices in the Old Testament	64
2.2.7	The figurative use of sealing in the Old Testament	64
2.2.8	Sealing and its legal pattern in the Old Testament	66
2.3	SEALING IN ALEXANDRIAN JUDAISM	66
2.4	SEALING IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD	68
2.4.1	Sealing, religion, and witchcraft	68
2.4.2	Cultic motifs in Graeco-Roman jewelry	69
2.4.3	Terms for sealing in the Graeco-Roman world	70
2.4.3.1	εἰκόν	71
2.4.3.2	μῶλωψ (μωλωπίζω, μωλωπικός, μολύνω)	71
2.4.3.3	σημεῖον (σᾶμα, σημαίνω, σημειόω, ἄσημος, ἐπίσημος, εὐσημος, σύσσημον)	71
2.4.3.4	σκοπός	72
2.4.3.5	στίγμα (στιγμάτα)	72
2.4.3.6	σφραγίς (σφραγίζω, σφραγίδα, σφραγίδα, ἐσφραγίσθητε, σφραγίσιν, σφραγίσαντε, σφραγίσωμεν, σφραγίσειν)	72
2.4.3.7	χαρακτήρ	73
2.4.3.8	χάραγμα	73
2.4.4	Branding and sealing in the Roman army	74
2.4.5	Slavery and sealing in the Graeco-Roman world	74

2.4.6	Sealing of letters in ancient Rome	76
2.5	SEALING IN GnosticISM	78
2.6	SEALING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT	79
2.6.1	A concordance of sealing in the New Testament	79
2.6.2	Roman military seal motifs derived from the prophecy of Jesus regarding the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE (Lk 21:20-21, 22)	79
2.6.3	Terms for sealing in the New Testament	81
2.6.3.1	εἰκόν (εἰκόνα, εἰκόν, εἰκονι, εἰκόνοι)	81
2.6.3.2	μῶλωψ	83
2.6.3.3	σημεῖον (σημεῖα)	84
2.6.3.3.1	τὸ σημεῖον ᾿Ιωνᾶ in Matthew 12:39	84
2.6.3.3.2	σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in Matthew 24:30	85
2.6.3.4	σκοπός	85
2.6.3.5	σφραγίς (σφραγίζω, σφραγίδα, σφραγίδα, σφράγισαντε, ἐσφραγίσθητε, σφραγίσεται, σφραγίσιν, σφραγισάμενον, σφραγίσωμεν, ἐσφράγισεν)	85
2.6.3.5.1	σφραγίς in Ephesians 4:30	86
2.6.3.5.2	σφραγίς and the Paulinist theory on Ephesians	86
2.6.3.5.3	σφραγίς in John 6:27 and John 3:33	91
2.6.3.5.4	σφραγίς in Matthew 27:66	91
2.6.3.5.5	σφραγίς in Romans 4:11	92
2.6.3.5.6	σφραγίς in 1 Corinthians 9:2	94
2.6.3.5.7	σφραγίς in 2 Corinthians 1:22	94
2.6.3.5.8	σφραγίς as baptism in Ephesians 1:13	95
2.6.3.5.9	σφραγίς in 2 Timothy 2:19	97
2.6.3.6	στίγμα (στίγματα).....	100
2.6.3.7	χαρακτήρ	100
2.6.3.8	χάραγμα (χαράγματα, χαράγματι)	101
2.7	SEALING IN THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS	101
2.8	SUMMARY	102
 CHAPTER 3		
APPROACHES TO REVELATION		
3.	PRELIMINARIES	109

3.1	THE FOUR MAYOR APPROACHES TO REVELATION	109
3.1.2	A brief description of the four approaches	109
3.2	PRETERISM	111
3.2.1	THE PRETERIST APPROACH TO REVELATION	111
3.2	PRETERIST-FUTURISM	113
3.3	FUTURISM	115
3.3.1	Futurism as approach to Revelation	115
3.3.2	Futurism-Dispensationalism as approach to Revelation	116
3.4	IDEALISM	118
3.4.1	The Idealism school's interpretation of Revelation	118
3.4.2	Idealism and Preterism	121
3.5	HISTORICISM	121
3.5.1	Historicist approach in Revelation	121
3.5.2	Two sequential approaches of the Historicist method	123
3.5.3	Straight-line approach within Historicism	123
3.5.4	The Recapitulation approach within Hlstoricism	124
3.6	THE USE OF SYMBOLS IN THE HISTORICISM APPROACH TO REVELATION	127
3.6.1	The presence of symbols in Revelation	127
3.6.1.1	Symbols declared to be symbols.....	129
3.6.1.2	Symbols explained by other texts in Scripture.....	129
3.7	THE FOUR APPROACHES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE INTERPRETATION ON THE INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION 7:1-3.....	134.
3.7.1	Preterist reading of Revelation 7:1-3.....	134.
3.7.2	Futurist reading in Revelation 7:1-3.....	135
3.7.3	Idealist reading of Revelation 7:1-3.....	137.
3.8	QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE HISTORICISM APPROACH.....	139
3.8.1	History: bone marrow of prophecy.....	139

3.8.2	Why does the concept of historical <i>continuum</i> emerge in apocalyptic in apocalyptic in distinction from the “two foci” concept of classical prophecy?.....	140
3.8.3	Does the Apocalypse contains the concept of repeated fulfillments?.....	140
3.8.4	Is there any conditionality in apocalyptic?.....	143
3.9	A PREVIEW OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE HISTORICIST APPROACH FOR THE ANALYSIS OF REVELATION 7:1-3.....	144
3.9.1	Questions on the preview analysis.....	144
3.10	THE SIX MINOR APPROACHES TO REVELATION.....	146
3.10.1	PATRISTIC APPROACH TO REVELATION.....	146
3.10.2	HIGHER CRITICISM METHOD TO REVELATION.....	148
3.10.3	KABALISTIC OR ESOTERIC APPROACH TO REVELATION.....	149
3.10.4	AESTHETIC APPROACH TO REVELATION.....	150
3.10.5	LITERALIST APPROACH TO REVELATION.....	151
3.10.5.1	Metaphor.....	152
3.10.5.2	Hypocastasis.....	152
3.10.5.3	Metonymy.....	152
3.10.5.4	Synecdoche.....	153
3.10.5.5	Apostrophe.....	153
3.10.5.6	Simile.....	153
3.10.5.7	Personification.....	153
3.10.5.8	Hyperbole.....	153
3.10.5.9	Interrogation.....	154
3.10.5.10	Polysindeton.....	154
3.10.5.11	Asyndeton.....	154
3.10.6	ASTRAL PROPHECY APPROACH TO REVELATION.....	155
3.11	SUMMARY.....	156

CHAPTER 4

A HISTORICIST INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION 7:1-3

4.1	INTRODUCTION	157
4.1.1	A brief survey of contents	157
4.1.2	Historicist methodology	158

4.2 REVELATION: DATE OF WRITING	162
4.2.1 The Nero theory	162
4.2.2 The Nero <i>redivivus</i> myth	164
4.2.3 The Domitian theory	166
4.2.4 The Domitian theory: The banishment to Patmos	167
4.2.5 The composite hypotheses of the Babylonian theory	172
4.2.6 The Papias theory	172
4.2.7 Influence of Dionysius of Alexandria on Eusebius' Papias theory	174
4.3 THE GREEK USED IN REVELATION	174
4.3.1 The wrong conception about the usage of κοινή	174
4.3.2 The influence of Hebrew in Revelation	175
4.3.3 Qumran and Nahal Heber research on Semitic writing influence on Revelation	177
4.3.4 κοινή in Egypt	178
4.3.5 The κοινή linguistic differences between John and Revelation	178
4.3.6 Linguistic parallelism in the Κοινή of John and Revelation	181
4.4 BABYLON AND REVELATION 7:1-3	183
4.4.1 Babylon and Rome crypticism	183
4.4.2 The internal continuum threat of spiritual Babylon within the Christian community and beyond	187
4.4.3 The symbolic-universal approach to Babylon	189
4.4.4 The literalist approach to Babylon	189
4.4.5 Jerusalem-Babylonian approach to Babylon	190
4.5 κοινή WORDS RELATED TO SEALING IN REVELATION	191
4.5.1 εἰκόν (εἰκόνα)	191
4.5.2 σφραγίς (σφραγίζω, κατασφραγίζω, κατεσφραγισμένον, σφραγῖσιν, σφραγίδας)	192
4.5.3 χάραγμα	193
4.5.4 θηρίον (θήρ, θηρία)	194
4.6 HISTORICISM AND THE CONTINUUM IN θηρίον CONCEPT	195
4.6.1 ἥλιος	195
4.6.2 The Sunday evolution in the Roman church from a partial Bacchiocchianian-historicist approach	197
4.6.3 The Constantine legacy on Sunday worship	203

4.6.4	ἥλιος and the development of the Roman imperial cult	204
4.6.5	Roman eschatological presence in the death of the Caesars	209
4.6.6	Domitian and imperial worship	210
4.6.7	Domitian persecution	211
4.6.7.1	Against the Jews	211
4.6.7.2	Against the Christians	211
4.7	κύριος IN THE FIRST CENTURY CE	213
4.7.1	The Christian allegiance to Κύριος	213
4.7.2	The Roman concept of atheism	214
4.8	THE ἀριθμός OF THE BEAST	216
4.8.1	ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς)	216
4.8.2	ἀριθμέω (ἀριθμὸς)	217
4.8.3	ψηφίζω (ψηφός, ψηφίζω, συμψηφίζω, ψηφίζειν)	218
4.8.4	ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) and its ghematric application to Nero in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin	219
4.8.5	ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) and its ghematric Domitian application	220
4.8.6	ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) and its ghematric <i>Vicarivs Filii Dei</i> application	220
4.8.7	Veracity tension accuracy of <i>Vicarivs Filii Dei</i>	221
4.9	THE χις IN THE OXYRHYNCHUS MANUSCRIPT	222
4.9.1	ρ ¹¹⁵	
4.10	HISTORICIST APPROACH ON τὸ χάραγμα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου	226
4.10.1	The first beast and its mark	226
4.10.2	The 1260 years of τῆς θαλάσσης θηρίων (τὸ θηρίον τὸ πρῶτον) in Revelation 13:1-10	228
4.10.3	Antiochus Epiphanes IV as the little horn	230
4.10.4	The ἄλλο θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς γῆς in Revelation 13:11	231
4.10.5	The ἄλλο θηρίον ... εἶχεν κέρατα δύο ὅμοια ἀρνίων καὶ ἐλάλει ὡς δράκων (13:11)	232
4.10.6	Revelation 13:3 and ἄλλο θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς γῆς	234
4.11	REVELATION 7: 1-3: EXEGESIS AND THE HOLISTIC SABBATH	236
4.11.1	Exegetical guidance for Revelation 7:1-3	236
4.11.2	The theological concept of Revelation in the New Testament	237

4.11.3	The interlude of Revelation 7 in the exegesis	239
4.12	REVELATION 7:1	241
4.12.1	Μετὰ τοῦτο	241
4.12.2	εἶδον (ὄραω, εἶδεν)	242
4.12.3	τέσσαρας ἀγγέλους (ἀρχάγγελος, ἰσάγγελος)	243
4.12.4	ἐστῶτας ἐπὶ τὰς τέσσαρας γωνίας τῆς γῆς	245
4.12.5	κρατοῦντας τοὺς τέσσαρας ἀνέμους τῆς γῆς ἵνα μὴ τνήη ἄνεμος ἐπὶ τῆς μῆτε ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης μῆτε ἐπὶ πᾶν δένδρον	250
4.13	REVELATION 7:2	252
4.13.1	ἄλλον ἄγγελον ἀναβαίνοντα ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου	252
4.14	REVELATION 7:3	254
4.14.1	λέγων, Μὴ ἀδικήσητε τὴν γῆν μῆτε τὴν θάλασσαν μῆτε τὰ δένδρα Ἄχρι σφραγίσωμεν τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν	254
4.14.2	τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν	257
4.15	THE HOLISTIC SABBATH	261
4.15.1	Creation covenant	261
4.15.2	The holistic Sabbath and the restlessness of man	263
14.5.3	The Sabbaths and their holistic equality function in Hebrew society	263
4.15.4	The holistic Sabbath in spiritual Israelites	264
4.15.5	The holistic Sabbath in contraposition with evolution	267
4.16	BIBLICAL TERMS FOR RESTING, BLESSING, AND SANCTIFYING IN GENESIS 2:2-3 AND IN EXODUS 20:11	269
4.16.1	Hebrew and Greek terms	269
4.16.2	ברך (ברכה)	270
4.16.3	εὐλογέω (εὐλογία)	271
4.16.4	נוח (הנוח)	272
4.16.5	καταπαύω (κατάπαυσις, ἀνάπαυσις)	272
4.16.6	שקט (שוקט)	273
4.16.7	ἀγιάζω (ἅγιος, ἁγιασμός ἁγιασμοῦ, ἅγιος, ἅγια, ἁγιότης, ἁγιόντος, ἀγιωσύνη, ἀγιοσύνης)	273
4.17	HYPOTHESIS FOR ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) USING ἀπὸ ἀατολῆς ἡλίου AND THE CONTEXT OF REVELATION 7:3, 16:12-14 AND 13:18	274



4.17.1	The code number hypothesis	274
4.17.2	ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου: Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11 and Revelation 16:12-14	275
4.17.3	Marriage, holistic Sabbath and Trinity	279
4.18	A SEALING LESSON FROM EXODUS 12:7	281
4.18.1	The blood, sealing, and the ordinance	281
4.19	SUMMARY	283
5.	CHAPTER V	
	CONCLUSION	290
	WORKS CONSULTED	297
	GLOSSARY	327