

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

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## **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.

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## CHAPTER 4

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the reference to sealing found in Revelation 7:1-3. To introduce this study, the sealing practices found in the Ancient Near East (ANE), Old Testament, the Graeco-Roman world, the New Testament, Alexandrian Judaism, Gnosticism and the period of the Apostolic Fathers are discussed. After this discussion, the historicist-prophetic method of interpretation is used to interpret the act of sealing referred to in Revelation 7:1-3.

Firstly, however, the research gap this study wants to attend to has to be identified. This is attended to in the following sections. After the research gap is identified, a description of the route this study will follow is set out.

### 1. HISTORICISM AS TOOL TO IDENTIFY THE RESEARCH GAP

#### 1.1 Historicism

Biblical Historicists have developed the *continuum* concept which sees history as being repeated, but not prophecy (Rice, in Holbrook 1992a:148-155). In this understanding of history, God shows his will through history, which is anticipated and previewed by various prophecies. One of the earliest definitions of Biblical Historicism is that of Elliot (1862:562-563) who, with regards to the book of Revelation, understands Historicism as “largely predictive of actual events to occur throughout the history of Christianity from the time of John until the return of Jesus Christ.” One of the earliest historicist commentators on prophecy was Victorinus of Pettau (Bruce 1938:352-356; Cross 1960:187). Victorinus, in a work titled *Commentary of Apocalypse* (considered to be the oldest commentary on Revelation) discussed some events he understood as being repeated through history. Referring to the antiquity and functionality of the use of Biblical Historicism as a school of interpretation by the Reformers, Froom (1948a:463) says

[I]n restudying the prophetic statements of Daniel, Jesus, Paul and John, the Reformers discovered the striking resemblance between the features of the gross apostasy portrayed in these picturesque symbols and the Roman church portrayed in history. Therefore they pointed to the pope and his system as the falling away, the Man of Sin, the Antichrist, the persecution, Little Horn, and the corrupt woman of Babylon.

(Froom 1948a:463)

Napier (1593:62), for example, has used the Biblical Historicist approach to study some of the prophecies in Revelation. He postulated that a primitive concept of millennialism is to be found in Revelation 20, and, applying it to the Constantine kingdom, pointed the beginning of this prophecy to 300 CE. His Constantine millennial assumption is based on Revelation 11:15 which, according to him, is depicting the union of church and state by Constantine. The millennial approach to Revelation is also explained by Klassen (1992:5) with reference to Eusebius (*Ecc Hist* X.9; *Oration* XVI.3-8). Maimonides also, with reference to the relationship between the Bible and history and the historicist approach, understood the Bible in the light of history (Hamilton 1996:56). For Spinoza (2001:98-9), a Jesuit author, the sacred text has relevance over history, and not history over the text.

One of the contributors to the Christological dimension of the historicist study of prophecy is Bengel, who is known for introducing the concept of the centrality of Christ in prophecy. His “Christ-centered” concept can grotesquely be explained with the sun and all the planets of the solar system making their orbits around the luminous heavenly body. As the planets orbit around the sun, all prophecies point to Jesus; He is the center of them all. Referring to the work of Bengel, Froom (1948a:710) states that Historicism not only values “computations for measuring time, the Bible should be considered as the revelation of God’s plan in which Christ is the supreme, all overshadowing center.”

Trench (1997:291-296), however, rejects the historicist prophetic view of the Apocalypse of John, especially the understanding of the seven churches in terms



of a historicist *continuum*. According to him, the Church Fathers were not “Periodists” but “spiritualists.” Paulien (2004:29-30), however, is of the opinion that “Periodism” does not necessarily reject “devotionalism.” Even though Historicism does not favor Idealism as the overruling path for interpreting Revelation, Historicism also respects and recognizes the devotional and spiritual personal applications of every church period, especially in the blessings to each church. These blessings can be set in a personal devotional message within the periodistic prophetic process. The historic-grammatical hermeneutical method is used in the study of Biblical Historicism. In commenting on the validity of the four major approaches in the interpretation of Revelation (i.e., Preterist, Futurism, Idealism and Historicism) he explains that text and context should guide the method interpretation:

But if you believe in inspiration, all four approaches have validity. First, as we have seen, the book of Revelation certainly spoke powerfully to its original audience. So preterists have a point. Second, the book claims to describe important events that are still future in our day – the Second Coming and even beyond. So a futurist approach to the book of Revelation will prove to be at least partly right. Third, the book of Revelation unquestionably describes the future from John’s perspective (Rv 1:1) and part of it (such as Rv 12), at least, portray a sequence of events from the prophet’s day to the end of the end of the world. So the historicist approach is likely to be helpful at various points in the book. Finally, the book of Revelation contains many themes applicable to any age. “Whoever has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches” (Rv 2:7, etc). So all four approaches have a certain amount of validity for studying the Apocalypse...the Biblical text governs what we see in the passage, in other words, we don’t want to impose our ideas on Revelation, but let the text itself teach us how to understand it.

(Paulien 2004:29-30)

This statement of Paulien justifies the presence of a devotional message in Revelation, which is determined by the context. This author (2003:20) observed in Adventism, a less careful attention and more questioning to the traditional historicist approach toward Revelation. One of these reasons, he points, is that preaching and interpretation is increasingly left to the evangelists, while weekly

sermons focus more on social scientific insights and story telling.<sup>1</sup>

Depending on Historicism and its understanding of prophecy, however, intends to preserve a *continuum* in the traditional base on text and its contextuality.

Therefore, the possibility does not exist that a prophecy may lend itself to various approaches of a vision as some approaches suggest.

Using certain words in the Bible as a hermeneutic tool to justify Historicism, we find, for example, the following declaration of Jesus in Matthew 24:15: "Ὅταν οὖν ἴδητε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως τὸ ῥηθέν διὰ Δανιὴλ τοῦ προφήτου ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ. For Kittel (1964a:598-599), "the constructions deriving from the stem βδέλυγ-are not found in the Bible because is not concerned to emphasize the abhorrent nature of things but to describe in a plastic and anthropomorphic expression the attitude and judgment of God in relation to things which he hates."<sup>2</sup> Horn, using the LXX (1995:8-9) describes βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως as appearing in three defined Bible moments: Daniel (11:31; 12:11) where the term is applied to a rival religious system full of declared hostility against the adoration to the true God. In 1 and 2 Maccabees (1Mac 1:20-64; 4:36-60; 6:7; 2 Mac 6:2); Horn argues that such Gk expressions are not a fulfillment of the Danielic prophecies in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes and, that the writer of Maccabees used the same Gk words for "abomination," and "desolation" and other key expressions as they are shown in the book of Daniel from the LXX, which is believed to be translated by 150 BCE, approximately the same time where these events took place. Horn also says that in the Maccabees there is not any fulfillment of Daniel 11:31 or 12:11 (Horn 1995:9). In the Gospels of Matthew (24:15-20) and Luke (21:20-24),

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<sup>1</sup>For Paulien (2003:20) "SDAs today are paying less and less attention to the historic Adventist approach to apocalyptic. Liberal, conservative, old, and young alike are experimenting with alternative approaches and questioning traditional ones. But this lack of attention is not a neutral matter. It is creating a radical, if unintentional, shift in the core message of the Adventist Church."

<sup>2</sup>As a marginal and an additional peripheral reference, Vincent (2009:128) cites that βδέλυγμα is used in the LXX as a figurative meaning to denote or religious repugnance (2 Chr 15:8; Jr 13:27; Ezk 11:21), and is used also as an equivalent to an idol (1 Ki 11:17; Dt7:26; 2 Ki 23:15).

Horn explains Flavius Josephus as being the writer who utilized Antiochus Epiphanes IV as fulfilling Daniel 11:31 and 12:11. The same Horn indicates in term, βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως as the Roman papal opposition against Christianity, just as the pagan Rome against Jews. There are also two verbs in Matthew 24:15 that can be associated with prophecy and time fulfillment. These verbs are: ἴδητε and ῥηθέν. Ἰδετε (ὁράω) is a term with a variety of meanings in the New Testament. It may denote “to observe, to note, to see, to perceive (Kittel 1967a:342-348), and is also used with reference to a visionary-ecstatic prophetic seeing (Kittel 1967a:350-66). The word ὁράω is parsed in Matthew 24:15 as an aorist, second, plural, active subjunctive which denotes a dependent connection with the prophetic scenario referred to by Jesus, and ῥηθέν (λέγω) an aorist, passive, participle, neuter, singular, accusative is utilized by Jesus when he is prophesying the future fall of Jerusalem within a historical fulfillment context. The Greek forms being used is intended to enhance the fulfillment of the prophecy within the Historicist realm. The prophecy of Matthew 24:15 includes the Romans that took part in the Jewish war during the years 66-70 CE. Josephus says that after the burning of the temple the Romans brought their ensigns and set them over against the eastern gate, and there they offered sacrifices to them, and declared Titus, with acclamations, to be emperor (Vincent 2009:128). According to Biblical Historicism, Christ is also included in three other Danielic visions associated with Matthew 24:15 (Dn 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). In the use of the word group βδελυκ- in the Old Testament, there is reflected some part of the obligation of Israel to separate itself from everything pagan in the natural life of the people. In the New Testament this conflict is loosed from its national and natural foundation (Kittel 1964a:599).

Among other factors, Biblical Historicism does not consider one isolated historical event as the fulfillment of a prophecy. All the prophetic fulfillments of a specific prophesy is seen as part of a *continuum* that is linked to the chain of Biblical historic issues as part of the big *continuum* chain. According to some historians, such as Reilly, there are events which are to be considered as helping in the

changing of the way humans think of the world. The attack on the Twin Towers in New York on 9 November 2001, for instance, led to the war against terrorism, bringing with it a process of globalization that cannot be ignored (Reilly 2004:549- 552). The 9/11 event, according to the historicism-prophetic approach, is only another sign of moral decadence in humankind and the prevalent hatred behavior in humankind's pride towards each other. History is not an exact science and humans are creators, as well as subjects, of change. Worlds of history are converging upon man, and only one world will emerge from wishes, wisdom and human will (Reilly 2004:553). However, Biblical Historicism believes that God intervenes in human events, sometimes permitting them to occur or allowing them to evolve for His final purpose (Gn 6:13; Mt 24:37-40; Dn 2:21-22; Jr 29:10-11). Even though these interventions take place, they are sometimes postponed or conditioned to man's response to the message of God (Jr 38:14-28; Dn 4:34-37; 5:22-30; Jn 1:2; 3:1-10; 2 Pt 3:9). With reference to this "God intervention concept" in history issues, some Bible translations such as the KJV and NASV translate Daniel 2:21 for instance as "He changes times and the epochs," and the GWTV renders this verse as "He changes times and periods of history." According to Nichol and Cottrell (1985a:797) the words time [עֲדָנַיָא – idanaiya] from עֵדָן [iddan]; καιρούς [LXX]), and epochs [עֲזִמְנַיָא- vezimnaiya] from זְמַן [zeman]; χρόνους [LXX]) are almost synonymous. The word periods refers to a specific point of time, while the word season gives more the idea of a period.

In Revelation, depending on Richards, time focuses on the fact that all time finds its focus and fulfillment in Christ. His coming transforms every moment into opportunity; and when he returns, the fulfillment of every promise God ever made will be achieved (Richards 1985:598). Other older Historicists such as Wesley (1990:148), in commenting on Deuteronomy 32:4 regarding the administrations of God in history, says the following: "all his administrations in the world and particularly with man are managed with wisdom and justice." In commenting on the *continuum* movement of God through history, White (1955:23) refers to Galatians 4:4-5 and the fact that God is not haste, or delay, as humans do. He

moves at his own eternal pace, introducing his will throughout man's history, using various Biblical symbols that prophesied the intervention in history. White refers, in this regard, to the case of Jesus birth; everything was planned for Christ to be delivered by Mary. Referring to the God sovereign purpose with the virginal birth, he states:

But like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste and no delay. Through the symbols of the great darkness and the smoking furnace, God had revealed to Abraham the bondage of Israel in Egypt, and had declared that the time of their sojourning should be four hundred years. "Afterward," He said, "shall they come out with great substance" (Gn 15:14). Against that word, all the power of Pharaoh's proud empire battled in vain. On "the self-same day" appointed in the divine promise, "it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt" (Ex 12:41). So in heaven's council the hour for the coming of

Christ had been determined. When the great clock of time pointed to that hour, Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

(White 1955:32)

In order to understand how the Historicist tool is applied in the identification of the research gap of this study it is necessary now to ask several questions on the practice of sealing and its terminology in the ANE, Old Testament, Graeco-Roman world, Alexandrian Judaism, New Testament, Gnosticism and the time of the Apostolic Fathers.

## **1.2 QUESTIONS THAT OPEN THE STUDY OF SEALING**

### **1.2.1 Sealing terminology from the time of the ANE up to the Apostolic Fathers**

Sealing throughout the centuries has been used in various motifs to indicate different attributes of the owner of the seal and the article being sealed. These attributes of the owner of the seal and the seal itself are ownership, property, protection, authenticity, preservation, salvation and identification. It is known, for instance, that sealing in the late Roman period was a common practice among the soldiers who were initiated in the cult of Mithras; they were sealed on their

foreheads (Willoughby 1929:143-168). Several Hebrew and Greek words give an indication of sealing usage throughout time. For the Old Testament, these Hebrew words are חותם (*h oth am*); דמות [*demūt*]; אות [*'oth*]; מטרא [*mattara*]; מופת [*móphéth*] קעקע [*ka'aka*]; צלם [*Tslem*] and תו [*taw*]. For the Greek terms in the study of sealing, the following words have been chosen for the discussion of sealing: εἰκών, μῶλωψ, σημειῖον, σκοπός, στίγμα, σφραγίς, χαρακτήρ and χάραγμα. The last four words (εἰκών, σφραγίς, χαρακτήρ and χάραγμα) are also to be discussed in the context of Revelation. These terms are analyzed in the context of slavery in ancient world, particularly with regard to soldiers and slaves. In this regard previous work done by Kittel (1971b:659), Clauss (2000:100-131), Weideman (1981:193-194), Bouquet (1953:140-141) and Glancy (2002:88) among others are utilized.

The following questions are attended to: What is the function of sealing terms when they are used in the context of the Old Testament and the Graeco-Roman world? Can a difference be indicated in sealing terminology when the words used for sealing in the Old are compared to the terminology used for the practice of sealing in the New Testament? Is there a parallel between the terms used in the Old and New Testament? Can a correlated and cohesive progression be indicated in the New Testament with regard to the words used for sealing? Because this thesis also explores the presence of sealing in Gnosticism and the period of the Apostolic Fathers, the following questions are also important: What is the meaning of sealing in Gnosticism and the Apostolic Fathers? Finally, the following question will also be addressed: Is there any relationship or difference between sealing and the work of the Holy Spirit?

To analyze the difficult and complex Apocalypse of John four major schools (approaches) of interpretation are selected for this purpose. They are known as Preterist, Futurist, Idealist and Historicism. Each of those four schools is discussed with regard to their origin and methodological approach towards the interpretation of Revelation. Six other minor approaches to Revelation are also

discussed, although to a lesser extent. These approaches are known as Patristic, Higher Criticism, Kabalistic, Aesthetic, Literalist and Astral prophecy.

### **1.2.2 Questions relating to the terminology used for sealing in Revelation**

There are two Greek terms, namely ἀριθμέω (see Kittel 1964c:461-464) and ψηφίζω (see Kittel 1974d:604-608) that relates to the ghematric interpretation of Revelation, especially the deciphering of the number 666 in Revelation 13:18. Among scholars, including Historicists, several arguments are put forward in which either a reading of 616 (χις = 616) or 666 (χξς = 666) is proposed on the basis of manuscripts evidence. Which of these two readings should be accepted? Is there any manuscript or previous scholarship that can help to make a decision? Moreover, can a reading be found from Revelation that can be indicated as the trend of the author of Revelation?

Because there are certain points of similarity between Old Testament passages about sealing and those in the New Testament, the question should also be asked if there is, if any, a possible parallel between Exodus 12, Ezekiel 9 and Revelation 7:1-3. Also, is there a connection between δοῦλος and σφραγίς?

### **1.2.3 Questions that relates to the exegesis of Revelation 7:1-3**

Because sealing in Revelation, according to Biblical Historicists, is related to end time issues, there are important questions to discuss before approximating any eschatological matter. The Christian community of the first century CE considered the ἐσχάτον as taking place in their own time (see, e.g., 1 Jn 2:18). Paul also was of the opinion that some of believers in the first Christian communities would still be alive when Christ would return again (1 Th 4:15). Important from a hermeneutical point of view, Biblical Historicists consider παρουσία or Christ's second coming to be preceded by a world religious apostasy or ἀποστασία (2 Th 2:3), an apostasy also referred to in Revelation 7:3 in conjunction with the act of sealing: "Μὴ ἀδικήσητε τὴν γῆν μήτε τὴν θάλασσαν μήτε τὰ δένδρα, ἄχρι σφραγίσωμεν τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν".



Relating to this apostasy, Beale (1999:511-513, 684-686) and Juncker (2003:3) opine that even though the man of lawlessness is not actually present (and so the end of the age has not finally come), he is invisibly present in his emissaries, the false teachers. This understanding suggests a *continuum* in the conflict between good and evil and brings the following questions to the fore: Can the literal usage on sealing in the Ancient Near East, Old Testament, Graeco-Roman world, New Testament and beyond be used as a figurative concept with regards to the sealing attributes in Revelation 7:1-3? What is the meaning of the act of sealing in Revelation? Is the sealing an exclusive future and end-time application, or it can be seen as something to be practiced in the apostolic church also?

The above questions put the research gap of this study on the table. In filling this research gap, a study of the Greek of the New Testament Greek is seen as an indispensable tool to grasp the thought of the original audience to whom John addressed his vision. The Greek used by the author of Revelation was definitely influenced by Hebrew (Mussies 1997:311, 335-353). This Semitic influence of Revelation is also supported by Thompson (1985:107-108) and Carson and Moo (2008:627).<sup>3</sup> Many theories are put forward regarding the bilingualism of Revelation, including the Semitic heritage from Egypt. This possible Semitic influence on the Greek of Revelations brings several questions to the fore. What kind of κοινή do we have in Revelation? What kind of grammar is used by the author?

The book of Revelation presents solid evidence of symbolic values used in prophetic language. This also put a few questions on the table: Is there a symbolic relationship between θάλασσαν, δένδρα, and γῆς in Revelation 7:1-3 and other Biblical texts? What is the meaning of ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου (Rv 7:2)? Is the cult of Emperor worship present in Revelation 7:1-3? Is there any relation

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<sup>3</sup> See Porter (1989a:582-603; 1989b:42-50) who contests the idea of Semitic influence on the Greek used in Revelations.



evidence between the term Κύριος and the Sun worship? Can the concept of σφραγίσωμεν τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν be considered as a *continuum* history application for Christians (Rv 7:3) or only a Preterist or Idealist assumption? Are there any Old Testament narratives that parallel Revelation 7:1-3? If it is the case, what does this parallelism entails? And finally: Is there any symbolic historicist connection between Revelation 7:1-3 and Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Daniel 7:25; 8:10-12; Revelation 12:1-17; 13:1-18 and 17:1-18?

### 1.3 RESEARCH GAP IDENTIFICATION

#### 1.3.1 The Holistic Sabbath and sealing

Revelation is, according to Biblical Historicism, to be interpreted by Scripture as its own interpreter (2 Pt 1:20-21; Johnson 1986:259-287). This premise leads to the idea that truth is not only present in an overall sense, but also contained in individual truths. Revelation 7:1-3 will be studied by using this approach. Taking this approach as hermeneutical cue, many parallel references between Revelation and Old Testament can be attested, especially with regards to Ezekiel. At least twenty parallel narratives between Revelation and Ezekiel can be indicated, visions that indicate a symbolic parallelism between the Old Testament and Revelation. This similarity between Ezekiel and Revelation is well documented by some authors such as Boxall (2006:147-255) and Kowalski (2004:8-595). Kowalski extends these two books similarity saying an structural outline is transmitted from Ἰεζεκιήλ (*yechezkel*) to ἀποκάλυψις. The twenty parallels between Ezekiel and Revelation can be listed as follows:

|                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Throne vision             | (Rv 4 – Ezk 1).     |
| The book                  | (Rv 5 – Ezk 2-3)    |
| The plagues               | (Rv 6:1-8 – Ezk 5)  |
| Slain Beneath the altar   | (Rv 6:9-11- Ezk 6)  |
| Wrath of God              | (Rv 6:12-17- Ezk 7) |
| Seal on saints' foreheads | (Rv 7 – Ezk 9)      |
| Coals from the altar      | (Rv 8- Ezk 10)      |
| No more delay             | (Rv 10:1-7-Ezk 12)  |
| Eating the book           | (Rv 10:8-11- Ezk 2) |



|                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Measuring the temple      | (Rv 11:1-2 – Ezk 40-43) |
| Jerusalem and Sodom       | (Rv 11:8 – Ezk 16)      |
| Cup of wrath              | (Rv 14 – Ezk 23)        |
| Vine of the land          | (Rv 14:18-20 – Ezk 15)  |
| Great harlot              | (Rv 17-18 – Ezk 16, 23) |
| Lament over the city      | (Rv 18 – Ezk 27)        |
| Scavengers feast          | (Rv 19 – Ezk 39)        |
| Battle with Gog and Magog | (Rv 20:7-9 – Ezk 38-39) |
| New Jerusalem             | (Rv 21 – Ezk 40-48)     |
| River of life             | (Rv 22 – Ezk 47)        |

The presence of Old Testament references help to provide a setting for the historical *continuum* which is the typical force of movement in applying prophecy fulfillment. The research gap identification of this study is traced by using the Historicist method, explaining why neither Preterism, Futurism or Idealism are able to support the spine cord of prophecy-history-prophecy found in Daniel and Revelation in a special way. The Historicist approach is also supported by the late Bacchiocchi (2000:161-211) in a brief portion of his doctoral research. According to Bacchiocchi the concept of the seventh day Sabbath changed gradually through history. This change started with and evolved within the cult of Emperor worship and was later present in the Sun worship, first with a hybrid of Gentile Christians and Judeo Christians observing Sunday and Sabbath at the same time, and later in a rejection on Sabbath because of its Jewish heritage. Before considering this historical development, the Constantine law on Sunday affairs has to be discussed, together with the Constantine millennium prerogative in bringing peace to the world in uniting church and state for this purpose. In order to integrate the historical evolution of Sunday the Reformers historical approach on Daniel 7 and Revelation 13; 17 and 18 will be applied in this study. In Adventist Historicism, the only approach that attends to the resurgence of the Little Horn, an explanation of Revelation 12 exists which considers the 1,260 mentioned in Revelation 12:5 years as part of this resurgent process. When a description of the Holistic Sabbath is taken into consideration, various aspects are brought into this scenario, including in the meaning of the original language in Genesis 2:2-3 and Exodus 20:10-11. In this regard, the relationship between the Hebrew verbs bless = בָּרַךְ [*b ār āk*]; rest = נָח [*nuah*] and sanctify = קָדַשׁ

[*kohesh*] are paralleled with the Greek terms εὐλογέω, καταπαύω and ἁγιάζω used in the LXX as applied in Genesis 2:1-3 and Exodus 20:10-11.

The meaning of δοῦλος, μετώπων and σφραγίς in Revelation 7:1-3 and ἁδικία (2 Tm 2:19) seems to justify the concept of the Holistic Sabbath with the benefit of resting and renewal of human being and nature. This ecological and emotional rest is supported by different scholars such as Doukhan (2002:70-72); Kline (2006:19, 39, 180); Bacchiocchi (1997:221-223) and Dresner (1970:43). Furthermore, this is linked to the verb ἄνθρωπος in Mark 2:27, which means humankind instead of the term ἀνὴρ (Wuest 1973:60-61).

The study argues that the sealing of Revelation 7:1-3 is to be identified with the Holistic Sabbath. The Holistic Sabbath concept is described in Genesis 2:2-3, Exodus 20:11 and Mark 2:27. The holistic idea of Sabbath-sealing does not refer to a mere external σφραγίς, a day of ritual, but to a sense of intimacy and relationship with κύριος. It will further be argued that the Holistic Sabbath hypothesis of Revelation 7:1-3 also relates to creation, marriage, the way in which human beings treat each other and the manner in how man cares for their natural environment.

To facilitate evidence for the Sabbath - sealing hypothesis and the presence of sealing in the ANE, the Old Testament, Graeco-Roman world, the New Testament, Alexandrian Judaism, Gnosticism and the Apostolic Fathers will be discussed. Literary evidence shows that the various attributes for sealing are often used in a metaphorical way. These figurative applications are ownership, property, authenticity and protection. These sealing qualities are applied to the Holistic Sabbath. Historicism as hermeneutical approach will be employed to explain the presence of the Sabbath in Revelation 7:1-3. With this approach as starting point, it will be indicated that Revelation 7:1-3 relates to the *continuum* conflict between Sabbath and Sunday until the climax world history. To substantiate this end-time Historicist approach to Revelation 7:1-3, an exegetical-

historicism tool is utilized to identify the reference of 666 using the code number hypothesis. For this purpose, the three verbs in Genesis 2:1-3 (“blessed”, “rested”, and “sanctify”) are studied as a counterpart of the evil trinity referred to in Revelation 16:12-13. In this study the Old Testament symbolic context of Isaiah 44:25-28 and 45:1-3 will be taken into consideration.

## **1.4 JUSTIFYING THE IDENTIFIED RESEARCH GAP**

Sealing viewed by means of the Historicist approach, as well as an exegesis of Revelation 7:1-3, are important because the teaching of sealing is also found in ancient extra Biblical literature and in other Christian writings. Chaldean, Assyrian and Egyptian motifs also attest to the usage of sealing for magic, economic, political and religious purposes (Kist 2003:19-23). The same usage seems to have taken place in the Graeco Roman world and in the New Testament.

### **1.4.1 Other aspects of the justification of the research gap**

The various occurrences related to sealing in the Old Testament and in the New Testament provide a rich field of investigation for this enterprise. The terms used for sealing not only provide etymologic information, but also relate to spiritual and theological issues. The term sealing likewise depicts the Christian mission of the early Church, which was an *imitatio Christi* (Gl 4:19). The writings of the Apostolic Fathers reflect also such a posture. The symbolism of the sealing in Revelation also has a parallel with Jewish scatological thought. One of the Psalms of Solomon (15:4-7), a pseudo-epigraphical writing that dates from the second half of the first century CE, declares on the behalf of the righteous that the fire and the wreath against the wicked shall not touch the righteous when the flame is thrown from the Lord’s face against the sinners to destroy them. The Lord will protect his people because the mark of the sealing by God will be upon them for salvation. This was the Jewish idea about the mark or sealing received by the righteous which worked as a protection against God wrath (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:797-798). This resemblance is noted in Revelation 7:1-3, and it is

therefore necessary to describe in which way, from a Historicist point of view, this sealing concept is moving into the historical panorama of the future world.

#### **1.4.2 Archaeological justification of the research gap**

From an archaeological perspective, the presence of sealing is attested in four historical-geographical settings, that is, in the ANE, the Old Testament, the Graeco-Roman world, the New Testament and the peripherals of Alexandrian Judaism and Apostolic Fathers. This study presents some ANE sealing motifs from Mesopotamia (including a recent picture showing the finding of the Jezebel authenticity seal). Regarding the Graeco-Roman world and the New Testament period, however, there are only a few and non-conclusive archaeological evidence for the Roman Emperor cult, the banishment of John to Patmos and Domitian's persecution of Christians. According to Geraty and Herr (1986:243), the results of archaeological investigations in Palestine are more difficult to apply to the New Testament than to the Old Testament. The Old Testament embraces a period of a millennium or more from Moses to Ezra (Geraty and Herr 1986:243), while the New Testament period only contains a period of less than one century. Moreover, a great part of the historic books of the Old Testament have a national overtaking, while the events from New Testament times, in general, were shared only by small groups of private individuals (Geraty and Herr 1986:243). Also, the impact of New Testament archaeology is less evident because when the modern excavations took place, the Graeco-Roman period in Mediterranean history was known in a much better way than the anterior phase of the Ancient Near East (Geraty and Herr 1986:243). In spite of these limitations, there are certain archaeological findings presented in this study that will help to understand the sealing context implied in Revelation 7:1-3.

#### **1.4.3 Code number hypothesis for ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) in Revelation 13:18 and its holistic creation implication**

This study also look at the reference to the number 666 in Revelation 13:18, putting on the table a code number hypothesis for the χξς identification that is

related, in holistic terms, to creation. Several questions here are of importance: Does the sealing of Revelation 7:3 have any implication for the understanding of Revelation 13:18? If any, what are these implications? What are the possible ghematric explanations for ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἔξ (χξς)? How can this code number hypothesis help us to understand Revelation 13:18, Revelation 13:16 and Genesis 2:2-3? What is the relationship between the phrase ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου in Revelation 7:2 and 16:12? Is there any relationship between the Holy Trinity and the evil trinity of Revelation 16:13? What are the implications for sealing in connection with the verbs bless, rest and sanctify expressed in Genesis 2:2-3? What is the meaning of Holistic Sabbath? Can a relationship be indicated between marriage, Sabbath, creation and Creator? The answer to these questions (as well as the other put above) will be used to prove the hypothesis this study (see inter alia § 4.15, 4.16 and 4.17)

## 1.5 ROUTE OF THE THESIS

In Chapter 2 the sealing practices found in the Ancient Near East (ANE), the Old Testament, the Graeco-Roman world, the New Testament, Alexandrian Judaism, Gnosticism and the period of the Apostolic Fathers are discussed. The first subdivision of this Chapter deals with sealing in Babylon, Assyria and Egypt as common practice in their daily life. This section explores the value of the cylinder seal as part of the glyptic art in Mesopotamia. The presence of sealing *intaglio* is attested in this section. This subdivision also shows the mythical and magical aspects of sealing are intertwined with economic, political and religious life. The importance of the seal cutter, his workshop and possible shaman complexion are also attended to. Another aspect included in this subdivision is the seal motif concept in the ANE relating to animals, geometric patterns and cultic themes. The cultic themes on these seals relates to the images of gods for kings such as Sennacherib and Esar-Haddon.

Another important aspect of seals in the ANE attended to is the various attributes in sealing usage. The archaeological findings in Tell Meskene and Tell Asmar

denote ownership and authority. Sealing was also a factor in the control of the economy (Porada, in Sibson 1977:15-20), and a change in economic life promoted a change in the form of seals being used. Another attribute of seals found in this period is inviolability, especially in the Sargonic Period. Some Babylonian and Assyrians seals also depict a cosmogony that alluded to a particular god.

Official sealing was important in shipment of goods (Larsen, in Sibson 1977:95, 102). Sealing was also an important factor in the case of changes that took place in ancient social systems (Nissen, in Sibson 1977:15). Tattooing and branding are also part of this Chapter. Tattooing and branding are mostly related in the ANE, especially in Egypt and Syria, to religious traditions and shamanic influence. With regard to tattooing, the discovery of Ötzi the iceman gives a new perspective on the date regarding the first use of tattooing ([www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/10023606.html](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/10023606.html)).

The Old Testament is rich in sealing terminology and denotes some of the same pattern usage of the ANE: ownership, property, protection and inviolability. The seal of Jezebel and the royal impression from the time Hezekiah are solid evidence with regard to Biblical data, as well as the engraving trend in sealing within the lands referred to in the Old Testament.

There are six different usages of sealing in the Old Testament, including the legal pattern reflected in royal seals of Jezebel and Darius (Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2709); here the same seal pattern is reflected found as those in the ANE. The presence of seals is indicated on attire of the high priest attire (Ex 28:9; וּפְתַחְתָּ (*ufitachta* = and engrave). In Exodus 28:11 three words are present that relate to the sealing found on the clothing of the high priest: פְּתוּחֵי (*pituchei* = engraves); חֹתָם (*hotham* = a signet) and תִּפְתַּח (*tefattach* = shall engrave). The concept of στίγμα from the LXX is also present in the Old Testament in the sense of an allegiance or a relationship between slave and master (Ex 21:6). In the Old



Testament there is also a difference in the trace pattern in the ANE with regards to sealing functions. In the Old Testament sealing is also applied in a symbolic and figurative way to express spiritual teachings. This figurative and metaphorical application is to be found in the narratives of Genesis 4:15; Exodus 12:7,13 and Ezekiel 9:4 in the sense of the protection and preservation of certain Biblical teachings such as friendship between God and man. The concept of loyalty as sign is also present in relation to the Sabbath (Ezk 20:12,20).

The practice of sealing is also present in Alexandrian Judaism in the form of metaphorical and philosophical vocabulary combined with Greek philosophy (Mickelsen 1970:29). Sealing in the Graeco-Roman period is attested with eight Greek terms that differ from the mere obedience and submission of slave branding to the conception of character and the relationship to the world through religion and witchcraft. The latter is especially present by means of cultic motifs on jewelry (Ankarloo 1999:21, 76, 154, 190).

Sealing in Graeco-Roman world is also viewed through its description usage in letters, commercial as well as Roman official communications and the consequent forgery possibilities to tamper and violate the authenticity of the original sealing process. Related to the use of sealing in the Graeco-Roman world, sealing is present in Gnosticism in a metaphoric way (Cartlidge & Duncan 1994:34-38).

The presence and function of sealing in the New Testament is manifested in different ways. One of the ways in which sealing is attested in the New Testament is by means of legal Roman military law such as the sealing of the tomb of Jesus (Mt 27:66; McDowell 1979:209-216; also see Orr and Nuelsen 1974a:2709). Its manifestation is also evident in the sense of spiritual usage, where it denotes a relationship of ownership, property, authenticity, protection and therefore preservation (2 Tm 2:19). Guralbo (1973:110-112) also refer to



archaeological evidence of military seals used by the Roman legions, particularly the *Legio X Fretensis* that seized and destroyed Jerusalem in 70 CE.

In this Chapter the different terms used for sealing in the New Testament are also discussed. Nichol and Cottrell (1978c:511) refers to Romans 4:11 as a sign and seal of faith prior to baptism. In John 6:27 the sealing of Jesus, according to Brown (1966:156), is described in the sense of certifying his ministry. With regards to 1 Corinthians 9:2, Buttrick (1953:98) says those who did not see the blessings accompanying Paul ministry in the conversions of others (the sealing of his apostleship) might have some reason to doubt the validity of his apostleship. In 2 Corinthians 1:22, according to Ironside (1979:39-51), sealing is attached to Christian experience in three steps: conviction, sanctification and new birth through the word. The study also includes a conflict of sealing identity in Ephesians 1:13. Sealing here refers to baptism and sealing is applied to the presence and type of work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer (Barth 1974:547). Barth (1974:140) understands the sealing in Ephesians 4:30 as the Spirit himself who guarantees the final liberation. But this sealing is not in a vacuum. Barth mentions nine ascribing functions to the Christian life in terms of the sealing of the Spirit (Barth 1974:140-142). The study of sealing in 2 Timothy 2:19 is seen through the concept that in the days of Paul, to live a Christian lifestyle meant an open invitation to persecution and mocking (Brown 1990:347-348). So, sealing from this perspective has a high life testimony sense. Christians wanted to imitate Christ. In Galatians 6:17 the concept *στίγματα*, according to Ironside (1979:11-13), served as a testimony of how one should follow Christ. The study on Ephesians also includes a discussion on Pauline authorship. According to Hoehner (2002:19-20), before 1972 many scholars considered Ephesians as Pauline. Two time periods after 1972 marked a change in the developing of the Paulinist theory.

Sealing in the Apostolic Fathers *σφραγίς* is analyzed through the presence of the term sealing such term in the epistles of 1 Clement 4:3; 6:9; 8:6; 16:4 and 2

Clement 7:6 and the Pastor of Hermas 8, 2, 3 and 9, 16, 3-7 and 17, 4 where the seal is described as the water. The word σημεῖον is discussed briefly using the epistle of Barnabas 12:5 as a reference to Numbers 21:8 in the LXX.

In Chapter 3 the six least common approaches to Revelation is discussed: Patristic, Higher Criticism, Kabalistic, Aesthetic, Literalist and Astral prophecy. The Literalist approach includes 10 literary figures and thirty-two symbols from the Old Testament also present in Revelation. These literary figures and symbolic occurrences show and justify Revelation as a symbolic literature. This Chapter also discusses the four major approaches to Revelation. These four approaches are known as Preterist, Futurist, Idealist and Historicist, The Preterist approach is connected with the Higher Criticism method of interpreting the Apocalypse of John and the church in that particular time (see, e.g. the work of Schüssler 1976:43).

Futurism is an approach to Revelation invented by the Jesuits Francisco de Rivera and Diego de Alcázar (creator of Preterism; [www.rekindlingthereformation.com/2009.06.16-1081.html](http://www.rekindlingthereformation.com/2009.06.16-1081.html)) in order to divert the Reformers concept of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 and 17. In the same way as Preterism, Futurism has various hybrid compositions like Dispensationalism. The Idealist school's origin can be traced to the Alexandrian church fathers who proposed the allegorical method of interpretation for Revelation, considering it a timeless unrestricted application. Historicists see history as a *continuum* moving through time and fulfilling the prophecy contented in Daniel and Revelation. A term annexed to *continuum* is the phrase "sequential developments" or processes. This *continuum* climaxes with Christ's second coming. This way of looking at prophecy and history is also associated with the straight-line approach, which sees a sequence of events beginning in the Apostolic era and continues on step by step until the παρυσσία. Another word associated with Historicism is recapitulation. In using Ireneaus, Bernardino and Studer (1996:132-135) formed the concept of

recapitulation comprised in five definition points. Historicism also differentiates between the phrases “classical prophecy” and “apocalyptic prophecy.”

The constant appearing of symbols in Revelation makes Revelation a book of symbols. Symbols in Revelation appear in the form of σημεῖον and as transferred parallel correspondences with the Old Testament in the form of συμβολή. Some symbols are explained by other Scripture passages. Other symbols are declared to be symbols.

Each of the four major approaches to Revelation has their own venue of interpreting Revelation 7:1-3. Scofield influenced the entrance of Futurism Dispensationalism into the Protestant world, cutting prophecies from the book of Daniel applying them to Revelation to decipher the anti-Christ power. There is also mixture of Preterism-Futurism developed by Diego de Alcázar in his famous work *Investigation of the hidden sense of the Apocalypse* ([www.preteristarchive.com/Books/1614\\_alcasar\\_apocalypsi.html](http://www.preteristarchive.com/Books/1614_alcasar_apocalypsi.html)). This Preterist-Futurist approach is also supported by Ladd (1972:13-14) who introduced the concept of double fulfillment in prophecy, which is also found in the work of some Jesuit writers (see From 1948a:486-505). The concept of double fulfillment creates a gap in the *continuum* of church history. Another hybrid compose in Futurism is the addition of Dispensationalism to form a Futurist-Dispensationalism approach. This school variant uses a pre-millennialist concept, with Christ coming again but establishing a temporary reign on earth with Jerusalem as a capital and a rebirth of Jewish world power. This posture also considers a pre-tribulation rapture.

Idealism sees Revelation 7:1-3 to be a social spiritual problem taking time in our present world. For Idealism, Revelation does not contain historical correspondence and claims its prophecies are not predictive in the sense of the ultimate triumph of Christ's return to this world. One typical example of this approach is found in Julia Esquivel (1982:79-91) where she applies Thanksgiving

day in the United States of America to a Babylon characteristic which is related to the suffering of social minorities within its soil.

Preterism, according to Gentry (1989:15-19), locates the drama of Revelation 7:1-3 as being an exclusive focal and historical issue in the second half of the first century CE and connects the sealing experience with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

The fourth school of interpretation, Historicism, which is the study tool used to identify the research gap of this study, considers history as a *continuum* in prophecy through history, which under God's administration, is moving the world towards final events that will consummate with Christ second return. This school of interpretation rejects the Preterist point of view such as that of Coffen (in Reid 2005:348) who argues that John was exclusively writing to the church of the first century CE. For Coffen biblical prophetic-historicism "needs to reevaluate and reformulate the presuppositions they take to the Apocalypse" (Coffen 1976:28-29, in Reid 2005:348). According to Coffen, this evaluation is only possible if "it should be done along the lines of preterism" (Coffen, in Reid 2005:348). There are some authors that incorporate Preterist and Idealist approaches to Daniel and Revelation in the sense of multiple approaches. Goldingay (in Reid 2005:348) considers the book of Daniel as "having a message for the post exilic community, and it should be interpreted in the light of the history of that period. At the same time, Goldingay allows for multiple applications of the prophetic material" (Goldingay 1989:xxxvii-xl, in Reid 2005:349).

Referring to the combination of critical scholarship and Idealist interpretations of Daniel and Revelation, Reid notes that merging of Preterism blended with Historicism may weaken the understanding of Daniel and Revelation prophecies as viewed by Historicism, that is to say, prophecies that cover the full span of history and reveal God's plan for their children (Reid 2005:349).

It is appropriated to note here that, notwithstanding the fact that some common elements in critical Historicism are shared with Adventist hermeneutics, there

are significant differences in the way the common elements are used. Note the function of historical background studies....Historical Adventist hermeneutics seek to know how background contributed to events and teachings as the Holy Spirit transmitted divinely-given content within a local environment. In contrast, the historical critic pursues how such an interpretation of events as reported in the Bible could have arisen from the background such as we know it.

(Reid 2005:351)

As Reid, “is also important to remember that many of the procedures used in historical-critical studies were not used before there was a historical critical scholar, but they were not used to do criticism to the Bible” (Reid 2005:351).

Biblical Historicism view the sealing prophecy in Revelation as a *continuum* parallel correspondence throughout history, supported by Old Testament narratives such as the creation, the exodus and the Ezekiel sealing which are included in the book of Revelation. Historicism is primitively depicted in history through some process of change in Europe, including the Renaissance which rekindled old culture as well as an intellectual awakening. The authority of the church, supplemented by the writings of a few ancients like Aristotle, had been dominant in Scholasticism. Scholars, however, began to assert that not all knowledge had been discovered and so universities began to appear: Paris between 1150 and 1170, Oxford in about 1168, Cambridge in about 1209, and Prague in 1348. Romance languages were developed out of the Medieval Latin (Froom 1948a:17-18). In this period the study of prophecy began to flourish. Dante prophesied papal apostasy and corruption in his famous *Divine comedy* (Froom 1948a:20-28). Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374) introduced the concept that papacy fulfills prophetic terms and Babylon is called shameless (Froom 1948a:29-31) Milicz concentrated on the Antichrist and applied the principle Year-Day to Daniel 12:12 as ending between 1363 and 1367 taking the crucifixion of Christ as the beginning (Froom 1948a:32-33). Other authors such

as Nicolas de Lyra saw little in the Apocalypse but Saracens, Byzantines, Turks and the false prophet being Mohamed (see Maitland 1849:349, 430; Froom 1948a:67, 307, 317).

Adventists developed the historical-prophetic approach to Daniel and Revelation and applied its functionality to the book of Revelation, including Revelation 7:1-3 (Holbrook 1992a:19-21). For Historicism, in order to interpret Revelation responsibly, the teachings of Revelation must be compatible with the historical perspective of the book of Daniel (esp Dn 2:35, 44-45; 7:1-25; 8:1-14; 9:20-27). The onward movement of history goes beyond the prophet's own time and culminates in God's establishing of his eternal kingdom. Holbrook (1992a:19-21), using Deuteronomy and the book of Judges, suggests a repetitive pattern in the history of Israel that is repeated in principle, though not in specific detail or by means of exact parallels. This view is also seen in Revelation in the subdivisions that deal with septets (churches, seals, trumpets, angels, plagues). Historicism also considers the inconvenience of multiple fulfillments. Spiritual entities come into history only once. They become a repetition in a sense of usage rule, and not in the form of a different spiritual power than the one the prophecy is anticipating. The pattern repetition may contain certain similarity in prophecy events, but it is not exactly same repetition of the previous prophecy, especially if one considers that *continuum* fulfillment will take place in world wide drama. One typical example is to be found in Daniel 7:25. The historical process developed only, according to Historicists, during 1,260 years. In Historicist thought, the principle day-year is established by the same Bible (Ezk 4:6, Nm 14:34; see Smith 1944:320, in Holbrook 1992a:333-334). Historical *continuum* correspondence is found in Revelation 13, where that same amount of time and the same power in Revelation 13:5 is applied with a different numeric symbolism, plus the culmination of the eschatological drama including the whole world within it (Rv 13:3). According to Historicists, there is no conditionality in apocalyptic. The prophecy in Revelation is anticipated and history will develop its course. Only God knows the time of his personal intervention in the world (Mt 24:36). The

only exception for this apocalyptic non-conditionality intervention is the mercy of God in his proper time when to intervene and put an end to world affairs. The response of humanity to Christ is what is lingering the prophecy fulfillment (Rv 1:3; 6:9; 22:20; 22:17).

Chapter 3 ends with some questions on the proper analysis of Revelation 7:1-3. The answer to these questions provides the content for Chapter 4. These questions are as follows: is there any Historicist relation between the Emperor cult of the first century CE and the historicist *continuum* applied to the near future in Revelation 7:1-3? What is the historical background on the first century CE that can be traced with Historicism in Revelation 7:1-3 related to slavery, sealing and Babylon? Is there any sealing symbolism extracted from the Old Testament present in Revelation 7:1-3? What is the seal of God within the Historicist approach to Revelation 7:1-3? What are the connection between the holistic Sabbath and the Trinity? What is the relationship between the Holy Trinity and the ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς)? What is the concept of the code number hypothesis for ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) in Revelation 13:18? Do the phrase ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου in Revelation 7:2 has any eschatological correspondence with the same phrase in Revelation 16:12?

Chapter 4 contains the sealing narratives from the Old Testament that are parallel to sealing in Revelation 7:1-3. A brief description of the term genre is given which varies in terms of critical literary expression. The concept of genre and its application in this study favors the historical-grammatical method used by the Reformers. Various scholars understand Revelation as containing various important Christian doctrines such as resurrection, endurance, labor, the historical and the exalted Christ (Charles 1920:110-115).

The way in which Revelation is studied nowadays is affected by postmodernism that influenced the loss of the dominion of historical criticism (Bauman 1991:35-52, 96,101). Postmodernism have their own value of interpretations, however



archaeological bible discoveries have helped to consider and evaluating the value in the attention to the traditional historic grammatical approach for the Bible and therefore, to the book of Revelation.

With regards to the date of writing of Revelation, Chapter 4 explores five theories that claim different dates in which this book was composed, including as early as 60 CE. Other theories focus on mythical explanation of evil and other theories, such as the Nero-theory, consider the concept of *redivivus* myth and the life of this emperor. Papias posed the theory of two Johns as the authors of Revelation. The Domitian-theory is proposed as the favored date of writing of the Apocalypse of John. The issue of Christians and Judeo persecutions is also discussed as part of the Domitian-theory.

As was stated earlier, the Greek used in Revelation and its attested relationship with Hebrew has been a matter of intense discussion. The κοινή linguistic differences between Revelation and the gospel of John are also part of the research topics of Chapter 4. The obvious writing style differences between this two New Testament documents have led to the postulation of the hypothesis of double authorship. However, the investigation in this Chapter shows that is possible to find a linguistic parallelism between Revelation and the gospel of John, considering both writings as being produced by the one and same author.

Another interesting issue discussed in Chapter 4 is the concept of Babylon and its influence on Revelation 7:1-3. These Babylonian approaches are described by LaRondelle (in Holbrook 1992b:151-174). There are various approaches in considering the presence of Babylon in Revelation: Thomas (1982:333-41), using a literalist approach, sees Babylon in Revelation as an economic issue. Massingberde (1978:3-4) implies a Jerusalem-Babylonian approach to Babylon, which is mostly Preterist. Minear (1968:135-158) sees a Babylon approach in Revelation that is symbolic and universal in the sense of timeless reality.



The use of cryptic or code language applied to Babylon is present in the book of Jeremiah 25:26 and 51:41 where שֶׁשַׁח (*sheshach*) is encoded. Another interesting encoded sentence in Jeremiah is found in Jeremiah 51:1 [יהוה אמר כה] where the NKJV renders Leb Kamai for Chaldea or Babylon. In the New Testament, 1 Peter encodes the name Rome using Βαβυλῶνι (1 Pt 5:13).

After considering the Babylon schools of interpretation, Chapter 4 focuses on the description of the three Greek terms used for sealing in Revelation (εἰκὼν, σφραγίς and χάραγμα). The term θηρίον is also added on this respect. This fourth vocable is analyzed in terms of its mythological and historicist-prophetic implications. This term establishes the beginning of the historical *continuum* in which, according to Historicism, the Roman Catholic system evolved from the ashes of the Roman Empire. This beast forms a parallel chain between Daniel and Revelation (Dn 7:3, 4-8, 19-25, 3, 17, 23; Rv 13:1-18; 17:1-18). θηρίον is also associated with Sun worship, which is well attested in ANE history and the Old Testament.

The Graeco-Roman world depicts this same trend of Sun reverence and adoration in their mythology. When it comes to history, Bacchiocchi (2000:207-211) and other scholars like Batiffol (1911:19-20, 225, 227), Baus (1965:152, 227), Goodspeed (1950:78), Lebreton and Zeiller (1957:413), Reagan (1961:60, 69, 97, 202) and Turcan (2001:125-126), argues that Rome was the most probable place of Sunday observance. The prevalence of Gentiles and the diminishing number in Judeo Christians in ancient Rome influenced the process of Sunday worship evolution.

Following the consideration of these four Greek terms, Chapter 4 attends to Sunday evolution within the Christian church. Bacchiocchi (2000:161-181, 200-211), referring to Leon (1960:93-121), justifies partially this evolution process from Sabbath to Sunday in the Gentile presence within the church using

archaeological evidence and the abundance of Latin and Gentile names even among the Jews. This subdivision includes the contribution of various Church Fathers on the Sunday evolution concept.

Chapter 4 includes an interesting millenarian attribution from Constantine the Great when he began the process of joining the church and the state and also when he pronounced his famous Sunday *Edictum* in 321 CE (Schaff 1902a:380). This subdivision also has a parenthetical explanation on the term ἡλιος and the Roman emperor evolving cult from the Roman provinces (Paulien 2004:2-3; Deissman 1965:352; Friesen 2006 105:106, Turcan 2001:142-143). The Caesar worship eventually was included in the calendar too. Not conclusive archeological evidence is been founded yet on this respect though (Friesen 2006:26-27). The apotheosis idea of Roman emperors, according to some scholars, developed the concept of eschatology prosperity in Roman minds (Friesen 2006:129-130; Harrison 2002:71-96).

In explaining Domitian as the Roman emperor responsible for John's banishment, and therefore the tome of writing of Revelation(see Jones 1993:1-3), the study goes in analyzing the kingdom of this Caesar and the controversy related to his persecutions on Christian and Jews and the taxation arguments that justified that kind of behavior toward this two spiritual teachings (Jones 1993:117-221). Regarding the Christians an explanation of Luke 22:19b-20 and John 6:51:51-57 is given that counter attacks the false concept of Christian Theyestan banquets and the evidence of a cannibalistic presence in the Christians of Lyon in 177 CE (Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2603-2604; Suetonius 2006:213-249; Hislop 1959:232; White 1985:353; Billings 2006:161-165; Bauman 2007:17). After these allegations are explained, the study turns to discuss the concept of Κύριος. This word was used with reference to Caesar in a legalistic manner during the first century CE. The term connotation within the Christian community and its allegiance to this title is also discussed (Orr & Nuelsen 1974b:1267-1268; Nichol and Cottrell 1990b:1043; Kittel 1965e:1056-1058).

The concept of martyr appears in close connection with Christian loyalty to Christ in conflict with the Roman κύριος application of the term. Christians were considered atheists. The Roman concept of atheism is then discussed, which involves basically to be against the religion of the Roman state (Schüssler 1985:132-36, 144; Gaddis 2005:19; Orr and Nuelsen 1974a:2604-2605).

The setting ground for the exegesis of Revelation 7:1-3 within the Historicist approach is anticipated by the discussion between the two main numerologies for Revelation 13:18. These two numerical formulas in conflict are: χξς and χις. They have produced a variety of possibilities (Abanes 1998:127; Seiss 1865:457; Plass 2006:114; Sanders 1918:95-99). The number χις, found in the *Oxyrhynchus papyri* at the Oxford University in the nineteenth century has provoked a controversy in terms of the authenticity of ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) for the number in Revelation 13:18 (see [www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/); *Oxyrhynchus* in [www.nationalgeographic.com/](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/)). The Oxford research center has shown in these websites some interesting data on reading ancient manuscripts using a special light technique. For a better understanding of the ancient ghematric usage approach, is necessary to explain the etymologic bases for the Greek terms ἀριθμέω (Kittel 1964c:461-462) and ψηφίζω. Kittel (1974d:604-607) explains the primitive writing usage for these two verbs, not only their magical attributes from ancient cultures, but also the complicate aspect interpreting those ghematric values. In order to advance on this discussion, some examples of ghematric possibilities in Hebrew, Greek and Latin for 666 and 616 are given. On χις the Nero theory is applied (Cory 2006:61; Holbrook 1992b:203; Hillers 1965:65; Benoit and De Vaux 1962a:18, Sanders 1918:97). A ghematric application of ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) to Domitian in the Greek capital formula (Stauffer 1955:170-190) is also presented. When it comes to favor the number χις as the original number for Revelation 13:18, there are some difficulties that produce gap of non- confidence for this number formula. This study favors the comments of various authors that ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) is

the original number in Revelation 13:18 (see e g, Ireneaus [*Adv Haer* 5.30.1]; Holbrook 1992b:202; Hoskier 1929:xi; Metzger 1975:749-750, 676); Michael 2000:81). The *Vicarivs Filli Dei* traditional ghematric biblical Historicist response for explaining the  $\chi\xi\varsigma$  number secrecy is not followed by this study. This title has some dubious and not clear origins (Hutchinson & Garrison 1959:71; Coleman 1922:13). This study proposes instead the code number hypothesis as the  $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\alpha\gamma\mu\alpha$  for Revelation 13:18 (Kittel 1974f:416-417).

The Historicist-prophetic approach of this study then analyzes the various beast motifs in the narrative visions of Daniel 7:7-8, 19-25; 8:9-12 and Revelation 13:1-10, 14-18, 11-14. These beasts include the monster of Daniel 7 who has iron teeth and claws, the sea monster which is a hybrid leopard in Revelation 13 and the other beast from Revelation 13 that comes out of the earth. In order to establish the Historicist consideration of sealing as world drama, the concept of Sabbath comes to the scenario in some historical evidence of the Sabbath-Sunday change (Holbrook 1992b:41; Knight 2003:155,168; Tuberville 1649:58; Geierman 1946:50; Keenan 1876:174). The added prophecy to enhance the little horn drama is the 1,260 years of Revelation 12, which also prepares in the framework for Revelation 13 (Nichol 1985b:41-80; 1980a:106-107; Aulard 1927:151; Adolphus 1803:365; Holbrook 1992b:76-78; Trevor 1997:441; Duppa 1799:53; McNeill 1963:730-762).

The study continues by describing briefly the concept of the ten horns and the identification of the little horn of Daniel 7:25. Because some scholars consider the little horn as being Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Walvoord 1989:264-270, 184-200; Wallace 1973:138; Russell 1981:3; Strauss 1969:244-245), the study explains various reasons why this king cannot be the little horn of prophecy (Smith 1977a:126-127; Prideaux 1749:106-107; Newton 1922:222).

The Greek language forms part of the investigation when Revelation 13 is divided in phrases or short sentences for a proper discussion. Once the first

beast, ascending from the sea of Revelation 13:1-10 is described, the second beast that comes out of the earth is identified as being the United States of America. There is an application for the term ἀναβαίνω within the meaning of the prophecy. Its gradual growing process delineates the way in which this particular country rose up (Lickey 1952:550-552; Nichol and Cottrell 1990b:834). Another concept that is explained is the phrase κέρατα δύο ἀρνίων θηρίων (Rv 13:11). Horn is an elusive term, which was not possible for medieval interpreters to understand. Prophecy terminology justifies, together with Biblical versions, the Historicism horns and beast posture for a similar Constantine planned posture during the fourth century CE church and state. This separation is clear and understood in American government. The study portrays the historical tradition in that respect and also envisions a dramatic change that will, in future, produce the union of those two powers. With the union of these two powers Sunday law will be enforced, first in the United States of America and then, in time, in the whole world (Holbrook 1992b:97-99, 105-109; Shea 1996:135-145; White 1977:502-503, 515-530, 630, 636, 650). Within this context, there are some authors that notice a gradual change in the religious and political attitude of the United States of America and the Vatican and consider this gradual closeness in its diplomatic relationship as a clear evidence of the fulfillment process in the *continuum* of Revelation 13:3 (Kelly, Harbison & Beiz 1991:4, 142, 732-733; Stokes 1964:833; Pfeiffer 1989:302; Martin 1992:286-287; Scarone 2000:60-126, 151).

Notwithstanding the prophecy not totally identified in the external causes on how this phenomenon will take place, prophetic-historicists consider various hypotheses to trigger this prophecy drama. There are two words that interact with this eschatological approach on sealing: ἀδικίας and ἀνομίας. These two words look for complete dominion of human beings, including the Christian believer.

The study then turns to an exegetical of Revelation 7:1-3. This subdivision studies the characteristics of apocalyptic prophecy as guideline for this investigation. The theological concept of Revelation in the New Testament is

presented in five senses, as commented by Richards (1985:530-531): 1) revelation is a future, visible unveiling at history's end. 2) revelation is our current knowledge in Christ of God's plans, previously hidden even to Old Testament saints. 3)"revelation" is also a term applied to Jesus' expression of himself through the life of a believer. 4) revelation is the Holy Spirit's work of shaping the believer's understanding and attitudes and, 5) the inner enlightening from the Father and Jesus revelation about each other. The original audience of the Apocalypse of John was centered in the person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the exegetical work is not only to discuss prophetic truths in history, but also the fact that Christ wants to reveal himself through those messages.

The procedure to ordain the exegesis is the traditional form, that is, using separate words, phrases and in some cases, a verse partial sentence. This word outline subdivision on the exegesis begins by examining, in progressive order, from verses 1-3. Beginning with Revelation 7:1, there is what is called a parenthesis of grace (Smalley 2005:178; Barker 1992:463; Moffat 1961:394; Stefanovic 2002:253). John denotes, as occurs in other parts of the Revelation, certain limitation in the use of the language. Charles (1920:191), Smalley (2005:178) and Aune (1998a:434-439) observe some interesting points on this matter. One is the difference between the pronoun τοῦτο and the comparative particle ὥς. There is also a brief discussion on the word εἶδον related also with the terms ὁραμάτα and ὥφθη (ὁράω ; Kittel 1967a:351-353), the presence and work of angels in visions (in Aune 1998a:439) and the different related terms for vision in the New Testament. After this various vision terms, the exegesis concentrates in the universal application of the prophecy. The phrase τὰς τέσσαρας γωνίας τῆς γῆς (Rv 7:1) is considered a Babylonian mathematic application.

In Revelation 7:2 the word ἄγγελος is studied in various senses of its Old and New Testament context. Aune (1998a:434-435), in this angelic respect, refers to five points of the angelic function within the exegetical work. In the words γῆς,

θαλάσσης, δένδρον from Revelation 7:2-3 the exegesis includes the Roman divorce toward ecology and nature preservation which is commented on by Keys (2003:1-4, in [www.findarticles.com/](http://www.findarticles.com/)) and Monastersky (1996:1-4, in [www.findarticles.com/](http://www.findarticles.com/)). These two authors elaborate on the voracious contamination attitude of Romans toward nature. This section also includes the contributions of Chew (2001:92-3) and Perlin (1989:125). The previous Roman deficiency in preserving the ecologic earth balance is used to parallel briefly the actual ecological polluting degrading and the Christian responsibility of preserving the earth (in Ross, Coquereaumont & Trott 2008:28-36, 134-171). The exegesis explains, according to Historicism, the meaning of άνεμος and its Biblical connotation with this world condition. Because Revelation is seen as a cosmic controversy between good and evil, the atmosphere is also described as being a laboratory for evil work against God's children. The use of nature and plants in Revelation 7:1-3 is a symbolic description of various applications including human beings (Böcher 1978:982-985; Embry 1978:865-870; Hilleyer 1976:210-211; Maxwell 1989:234-236; Morris 1983:126-127, 206).

The concept από ανατολῆς ἡλίου (Rv 7:2) is analyzed in relation with Isaiah 44:28, Isaiah 45:21, Revelation 16:12 and Revelation 16:13. This Greek phrase from Revelation 7:2, according to this exegetical work, is linked to the code number hypothesis for the number χξς (Johnson, in Holbrook 1992b:31). Under this perspective the destruction of Babylon by Cyrus the Mede is transferred under a symbolic representation for the coming of Christ coming from the East. The vast company of angels and the manifestation of the Spirit and of the Son during this event constitutes "the kings of the East." The seizing of Babylon by Cyrus is depicted in Revelation as the destruction of the evil powers by the coming of Christ (Konroff 1954:593; Wiseman 1979, in [www.apologeticspress.org/articles/252](http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/252); Horn 1995:233; Maxwell 1989:428-434). This geographical Mesopotamian event is transferred in Revelation 16:13 as a worldwide manifestation that is part of the code number hypothesis for εξακόσιοι ἐξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) and its application.



Some numismatic scholars of ancient Roman coins have experience discrepancy in the usage accuracy of ζ instead of ξ. Regarding the ( ξ ) and its usage in numismatic, there have been a marginal discussion between the use of ξ and its possible confusion with ζ . However there is strong evidence favoring ξ as the correct number for 6 in the numismatic realm (Butcher 1988:114; Hill 1986:215; Sear 1982a:xxxvii, Sear 1982b:xxv; Jones 1986:158, Flegg 1989:88; Menninger 1970:270).

In Revelation 7:3 σφραγίς is seen as holistic sealing that not only reflects the Sabbath but the holistic term of this teaching which includes the whole being dedicated to God. In this sense sealing attributes are bestowed in the life of the Christian believer through the Holy Spirit (Kline 2006:19, 39, 180; Doukhan 2002:70-1). The δοῦλος functionality in the holistic approach for the Sabbath deals in a sense with friendship and dedication. This σφραγίς is depicted in the Pauline writings regarding the fruits of the Spirit in contraposition with the work of the flesh (White 1995:64). This contraposition depiction is also found in the moral standards and entertainments of Roman society expressed by the ancient Fathers such as Lactantius (*The divine institutes* 6.20); Clement of Alexandria (*The instructor*), Tertullian (*Apology* 3.16), Theophilus of Antioch (*To Autolytus*; see Soule 2004:3-4). The holistic sealing concept is reflected in the idea that the main point in Revelation is the invitation of Christ to humankind through Sabbath in terms of resting and emotional recovery, altogether with nature preservation and equality without any xenophobic feeling from God's part (Bacchiocchi 1997:221-223; Dressner 1970:43). The holistic Sabbath present in Revelation 7:1-3, according to the Historicist-prophetic approach, also reflects ownership, inviolability, genuine or authenticity, property and preservation. According to Biblical historicism these sealing attributes are concede to humanity in a ἄνθρωπος manner. This term is applied to humankind for humanity in general instead in the word form of ἀνὴρ (Wuest 1973:59-61; Nichol and Cottrell 1990:799; Carson 2008:641). The holistic Sabbath is also a pronouncement



against the seven Creationist philosophical and evolving postures concerning this planet earth (Roth 1998:340; Baldwin, Brand, Leonard and Younger 2009:36-37; Hull 1991:486).

After these discussions, the Hebrew and Greek terms associated with the Sabbath are discussed. These words are: בָּרַךְ ( *barakh*) and εὐλογέω (= bless); נָח (*nuah*) and καταπαύω (= rest) and קָהַשׁ (*kohesh*) and ἁγιάζω (= sanctify). These vocables are present in Genesis 2:2-3 and Exodus 20:11, and justify the presence of the Holy Trinity (Whidden, Moon & Reeve 2002:27-28). This subdivision explains and justifies the code number hypothesis, not as a ghematric term, but as contextual numerical formula based on the code number 6 as the core of that evil triumvirate. There are three evil spirits in Revelation 16:13 which are the beast, the dragon and the false prophet. Under the code number hypothesis they include the 6 number as triple power that is contextualized in Revelation. The mention of frogs in this evil trinity reminds of the ancient Triumvirates used in Rome (Mellor & McGee 2004:70-75) in Revelation 16:13. This posture associates such triple power as being like frogs. This amphibian resemblance relates to the Egyptian goddess Heqet and its Exodic symbolic plagues parallel implication with Revelation. Once again, the parallel correspondence is present in Revelation: the focal geographical frog Exodic plague event is viewed in the Apocalypse world of John not as literal amphibian or batrachian being, but a worldwide event under a spiritualist future drama that is progressing in the United States (Chaij 1966:98-114; Clouzet 2009:10; Lynn 2009:1A, 6A; Roy Brown 2006:277; Paulien 2008:173-174).

Because marriage according to Genesis 1 and 2 is considered moral and genuine when male and female are gather together under the Creator's original plan, there is also a parallelism in the three unclean spirits. Heqet was considered the goddess of birth that assisted baby delivery. This is a grotesque application that perverts the normal God's plan in Genesis for family and instead favors the non- Biblical same sex relationships. In this thesis, marriage, creation

and holistic Sabbath are justifying this exegetical approach as well (Adamson 2000:15-191; Stott 1998:24, 28, 33-35; [www.oneby1.org/same\\_sex\\_partnerships.html](http://www.oneby1.org/same_sex_partnerships.html)).

The study finally discusses a sealing narrative lesson from Exodus 12:7 where the concept of sealing and blood is justified within the figurative mode through the Egyptologist archaeological door posting and lentil evidence. The blood was spread on the house owner's name, which was engraved on the doorposts and lentils. This was the only part of the house that was made of stone. The rest of the home was clay, straw and sand (Allen 2001:79-81; Habachi 2001:40-43, 53-55, in Baker 2009:6-7). Sealing is a matter of relationship and whole being surrender to Christ. This friendship obedience is the core of sealing. This study recognizes the Historicist approach on sealing not as a mere external precept, but as a relationship with Christ that result in a joyful holistic obedience including Sabbath. According to the Historicist-prophetic approach, this study also understands Sabbath sealing in the sense of Christian relationship and intimate spiritual friendship with God, humans and nature (Bunch 1997:23; White 1948:213).

## CHAPTER 2

# SEALING: AN OVERVIEW

### 2. SEALING DEFINITION

A seal is defined in a literal sense as “an instrument of stone, metal or other hard substance (sometimes set in a ring), on which is engraved some device or figure, and is used for making an impression on some soft substance, as clay or wax, affixed to a document or other object, in token of authenticity” (Edwards in Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2708). A seal is also known as a signet containing a distinctive mark that represents the owner (Brand et al 2003:1455). Technically, the concept “seal” thus refers to two meanings. First, it refers to an instrument (such as a signet or ring [*annulus*]) that is used to imprint a desired mark once or more often on a suitable surface. Second, it refers to the imprinted stamp (σφραγίς), seal (δακτύλιον) or *sigillum*, the impression made by the instrument (Kittel 1971b: 939). As will be indicated, these differences of meaning in the concept of “seal” are important when it comes to analyzing and understanding the symbolic meaning and purpose of sealing in the biblical realm.

The majority of publications and studies on the archaeological evidence of seals have indicated that most seals are stamp or cylinder seals. These studies mostly focus on the stylistic or iconographic aspects of ancient seals. Very little, however, has been done to define the *function* of seals and the *practice* of sealing in the ancient world.

To address this shortfall in the study of seals, a discussion between Sibson, Porada and Nissen was held in Rome in July 1974 at the *Rencontre Assyriologique*, where the function of sealing was intensely discussed. During

this *rencontre* attention was also given to the various models of analysis that are used in the study of seals and sealing (Sibson 1977:5).<sup>1</sup>

From this discussion it became clear that the study of seals is related to two models of analysis (Adams, in Sibson 1977:1-4). These two models of analysis are:

- The exploring of subsets of seals or seal impressions in an attempt to specify different patterns of manufacture, ownership or use.
- A more contextual approach that seeks to establish the broad institutional setting within which some groups of seals were employed in a particular time period.<sup>2</sup>

As the evidence will indicate later, sealing was employed on letters, official documents, contracts (e.g., in the form of scrolls) and in tombs to denote, for example, property, ownership, authenticity or protection. Also, when the pottery or the material upon which the seal was applied hardened, an intact impression indicated that the particular object upon which the seal was marked had not been violated (Horn 1995:1073).

With regard to the practice of sealing, ample evidence exists that indicates that sealing was a common practice in antiquity. We now turn to a description of this practice, concentrating on sealing in the Ancient Near East (ANE), the Old Testament, Alexandrian Judaism, the Graeco-Roman world, Gnosticism, the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers.

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<sup>1</sup> This symposium was attended by Assyriologists, archeologists, historians, anthropologists and art historians (Sibson 1977:5). The groundwork for the symposium was done over a period by Frankfort, Kantor, Landsberger and Gelb, and was attended by well-known scholars like Larsen and Rathje that concentrate on this field.

<sup>2</sup> Adams (in Sibson 1977:2) expresses the opinion that although these two approaches differ in some respect, they are usually linked in practice and are essentially complementary.

## 2.1 Sealing in the Ancient Near East

### 2.1.1 Sealing in Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt

Sealing was a common custom in antiquity and it was part of everyday life in Babylon. Almost every Babylonian carried a handmade stick seal. Anything could be set under a seal: a house (doors), jars, baskets, jugs (usually sealed on the handle), even intellectual possession (Brown 1966:773).

The cylinder seal is a major contribution to Mesopotamia glyptic art (Martin 1940:3), and one of the oldest forms of sealing that is known (Horn 1995:1072-1073).



Mesopotamian limestone cylinder seal and impression in worship of Shamash (Louvre)

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cylinder\\_seal\\_Shamash\\_Louvre\\_AO9132.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cylinder_seal_Shamash_Louvre_AO9132.jpg))

Cylinders, says Martin, “originated during the Uruk period in the fourth millennium BCE and were used for more than three thousand years by the peoples of the Near East” (Martin 1940:3). Cylinder seals were most commonly engraved in



*intaglio* (an image incised into a surface) on a curved surface. These seals date before or at the evolving process in the invention of writing, and were utilized for many types of sealing purposes, including ownership (Martin 1940:3). According to Kist (2003:1), cylinder seals go back to the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, probably at the same time as the emergence of writing in the form of pictogram (the representation of a concept, object, activity, place, or event by illustration). Together with the earlier stamp seals these miniature cylinders are among the earliest-known movable objects employing recognizable and meaningful pictorial symbols for the communication of ideas and concepts (Kist 2003:1). Seals spread all over the Orient and discoveries attest to their existence in Babylon from 3000 BCE.



Stamp seal (hunting scene relief) in basalt found at Tell Halaf, dated 850–830 BCE

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Halafhunting.jpg>)

The height of cylinder seals varied from 10 mm to 200 mm. The roll was usually 2 to 4 cm long. Figures and signs were cut into the sheath of the cylinder, usually taken from the mythological or cultic sphere. During the eighteenth dynasty (1500-1300 BCE) the cylinder was replaced by seal rings with engraved images

of scarabs. Seals sometimes also used a combination of words, figures, signs and letters (Brown 1966:939). Cylinders made by professional seal cutters seem to have appeared at the same time when fine vessels of stone became a renewed fashion (Porada, in Sibson 1977:7; see also Sibson 1997:11-12, note 1 and 2). Evidence from the archaeological sites of Jarmo and Umm Dabaghiyah indicates that fine stone vessels appeared in levels of the sixth millennium BCE (Braidwood & Howe, in Sibson 1977:11, note 1; see also Tobler 1950:82). In the late Uruk and Jamdat Nasr period (fourth millennium BCE) cylinder seals developed further, most probably as a result of more effective drilling techniques (Tobler 1950:82-83). At Tepe Gawra the tombs dated to level X (approximately contemporary with Uruk V, 3300 BCE) show that the craftsmen of this site “combined unusual skill and a highly developed sense of esthetic values with imported varieties of stone” (Tobler 1950:83).

There is not much evidence of seal cutter’s workshops in Mesopotamia. We do have, however, some evidence from the tablets of Akalah (fifteenth to fourteenth century BCE) that “indicates that, like the smith, leather-worker, carpet weaver, and stonemason, the seal cutter had a workshop. This can be deduced from an Alakah text which names 16 carpenters, 3 stonemasons, 5 carpet weavers, 12 leather workers, 16 smiths and one seal cutter” (Porada, in Sibson 1977:7).

Of the techniques applied in ancient arts, the seal cutter’s technique was perhaps the most difficult to perform.<sup>3</sup> The cost of a cylinder seal is described by Oppenheim’s translation of the text of the basalt stela<sup>4</sup> in Istanbul:

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<sup>3</sup> An Akkadian agreement indicates that a certain Hasdaj (a slave of the Persian king Cambyses) apprenticed a slave for a period of five years to learn the craft of the *purkullu* (Akkadian for seal cutter; see Oppenheim, in Sibson 1977:7-8, 12).

<sup>4</sup> The Tel Dan Stele is a black basalt stele erected by an Aramaean king in northernmost Israel, containing an Aramaic inscription to commemorate his victory over the ancient Hebrews. Although the name of the author does not seem to appear on the available fragments, it is most likely a king of neighboring Aram/Damascus. Language, time, and location make it plausible that the author was Hazael or his son, Bar Hadad II/III, who were kings of Damascus and enemies of the kingdom of Israel. The stele was discovered at Tel Dan, previously named Tell el-Qadi, a mound where a city once stood at the northern tip of Israel. Fragment A was discovered in 1993,

Speculation should range from low-priced, mass-produced, carelessly carved pieces of ungainly stone to a cylinder described by Nabonidus as of “the costliest jasper, a stone (betting) a king, upon which Asurbanipal, King of Assyria, had improved by drawing upon it a picture of Sin – that his own name be remembered – and upon which he had written a eulogy of Sin and hung it around the neck of (the image) Sin, (this stone) whose exterior had been damaged in these days, during the destruction (wrought by) the enemy, (I restored/mounted and deposited) in Esagila, the temple which keeps the great gods alive, in order not to (permit an) interruption of the oracles given by him (Sin) (by means of this seal?).

(Oppenheim, in Sibson 1977:7-8)

In Egypt, as in Babylonia, the cylinder was the earliest form used for sealing, but was gradually superseded by the scarab (beetle-shaped) as the prevailing type (Edwards in Orr and Nuelsen 1974a:2708). Scarabs as seals and amulets were exported from Egypt to all the countries of the ANE. Scarabs, in the form of roll seals, came in the form of knobs, cones and cube seals with primitive figures (mostly from the animal world). Signatures on papyrus show that the seals of the signatory witnesses had figures of the gods and heroes. Other figures commonly used in Egypt for seals were fish, doves, ships, swords, bows, or images of beloved ones. Many Egyptian seals simply picture the name of the owner or a sign related to him. Scrolls, books and letters were sealed by sealing the tie, which held them together. The process of sealing was to dry or bake the seal in an oven. There is no evidence of wax seals in Egypt—clay or loam was normally used (Kittel 1971b:940).

The next section deals with the three different families of seals in the ANE based on the motifs they bear, including Nimrod cultic and some other religious scenes in the ANE.

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and fragments B1 and B2, which fit together, were discovered in 1994. The inscription has been dated to the ninth or eighth century BCE. The eighth-century limit is determined by a destruction layer caused by a well-documented Assyrian conquest in 733/732 BCE. Since the destruction layer is above the layer in which the stele fragments were found, the destruction of the stele probably took place after the stele had been erected. Because of the destruction the stele broke into pieces, and some of these pieces were later used in a construction project at Tel Dan, presumably by Hebrew builders. It is difficult to discern how long before that Assyrian conquest these earlier events took place (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel\\_Dan\\_Stele](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel_Dan_Stele)).



### 2.1.2 Seal motifs in the ANE

According to Collon (1995:67), it is possible to identify three major families of seals in the ANE based on the motifs they carry: animals on geometric patterns, cultic themes, and images of gods (Collon 1995:23).<sup>5</sup>

#### 2.1.2.1 Animals on geometric patterns

Nimrod (referred to in Gn 10) is one of the cultic themes linked to the groups of animals and figurants in the different seal epochs of Mesopotamia. Nimrod, the “mighty hunter before the Lord” (Gn 10:9), is probably a reference to the Mesopotamian god Ninurta, who was the chief god of the city of Calah (now Nimrod), the capital of Assyria during the ninth century BCE. When Austen Layard excavated Nimrod in 1850 he found a group of reliefs of the temple of Ninurta, showing the god armed with thunderbolts pursuing a monstrous lion-griffin (Frankfort 1978:47-48, 223-252, 330-346). Collon notes the following about the history of the Nimrod seal:

There is a remarkable bowl of the Halaf period from Arpachiyah in northern Iraq . . . which is painted on the interior with a bull facing a fenced enclosure guarded by a naked woman who clearly represents the concept of fertility. A hunter, armed with what is probably the earliest known representation of a composite bow with a tasseled quiver on his back, aims an arrow at a feline. Here he is doubtless protecting a bull from the attack of a predator. Lions and bulls appear ca. 2800 BCE on Proto Elamite seal impressions from south Western Iran. On seals and other contemporary artifacts from this area, animals are shown playing the role of men. Lions and bulls on the same seal alternate as the dominant creature. . . . On Mesopotamian seals these humanized Proto-Elamite bulls were transformed into the bull-man, who was human from the waist up but had bull's horns and hind-legs. The bull-man became man's chief ally in his protection of flocks and herds against predators. He is one of the few figures in the art of the ancient East who is almost invariably shown full-face whatever the period. . . . With the inclusion of the bull man, the contest scene was lifted from the realm of symbolic reality into the realm of symbolic fantasy, and the “priest king” did not survive the transition. He was replaced by a hero who is also usually shown full-face. . . . He is bearded, with an elaborately curled head-dress or hairstyle. Later, another protagonist was added to the contest scene:

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<sup>5</sup> The interpretation of these motifs is a tricky issue. The animals arranged in Tête-bêche certainly seem to be of a purely decorative nature. The most common pair, the horned animal and the lion, do not interact with one another (the lion never attacks the horned animal [Collon 1995:23]).

the human-headed bull. The frequent appearance of the hero and the bull-man on seals has often led to their identification with Gilgamesh and Enkidu, the celebrated heroes of one of the great epics of the ancient world.<sup>6</sup>

(Collon 1995:23-26)

The type of contest scenes where seals show lions and lion griffins attacking seated goats and kneeling men (which depicts the pessimistic preoccupation with death in the age of Hammurabi), declined in popularity and eventually vanished from the repertoire (Collon 1995:31). These contest scenes on seals also dealt with the issue of protection against evil (Kist 2003:16).<sup>7</sup> In this regard, Kist (2003:17) is of the opinion that sealing in Mesopotamia also had to do with white magic:

In Mesopotamia white magic is embedded in a religious and mythological framework that alleviates the basic tension between its mechanical operation and the prerogatives of divine. In the course of time the importance of magic increases, but due to its embedded nature the isolation of magical elements is not always obvious. Any stone had magical properties that concern the wellbeing of its bearer. As described by Collon the selection of stones by the seal cutter is determined in part by practical considerations, and in part by others which may well include an assessment of their magical properties. More positive results may be expected when Mesopotamian stone names have been matched with the actual stones. Many seals show diminutive elements disconnected from the main scene: animals (frogs, hedgehog, snake, scorpion, monkey), bow legged dwarf, heads (*lahmu*, *Huwawa*, *Pazuzu*), hands, mazes, rosettes, etc. In some cases, the value of an element can be established. The heads, for instance, are apotropaic, and the hands must be linked to the hand-shaped amulets prescribed in the ritual "for entering the palace," where they serve to support someone against the whims of authority. Lexical texts attest to the use of some elements as stone or metal

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<sup>6</sup> Collon suggests that these two animals, lions and bulls, probably represented the emblems of two tribes, the nomads from the mountains and the sedentary plain dwellers who made up the population of this area. Regarding Gilgamesh Enkidu's identification with Nimrod, this is to be rejected, since the hero and bull-man appear together before the historical Gilgamesh ever reigned in Uruk (2650 BCE). Furthermore, the descriptions of Enkidu in the epic make it clear that he was human in shape, and representations on seals also show him as human (Collon 1987:853-858).

<sup>7</sup> As Collon (1995:23-26; 31), Kist is of the opinion that the most profiled protagonists are the naked hero with six curls and the bull-man. They have a long uninterrupted history from their first appearance early in the third millennium to their extinction with the end of Mesopotamian civilization (Kist 2003:16).

pedants; they are mentioned in one breath with figurines of the suppliant lamassu goddess.<sup>8</sup>

(Kist 2003:17)

The *Musée du Louvre* has different cylinder seals depicting various mythological and daily life scenes. One cylinder seal from Babylonia shows Marduk with his dragon.



Marduk and his dragon

([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cylinder\\_seals](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cylinder_seals))

Among this cylinder seal collection we also have banquet scenes. An example of this is one made out of shell that comes from Mari, during the Early III Dynasty (2500-2400 BCE; see ([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cylinder\\_seals](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cylinder_seals))).

<sup>8</sup> Apart from sealing, a state of purity was of crucial importance in order to maintain good relations with the divine world. Impurity was removed with water or vegetal elements, mainly parts of the date palm, transformed by incantations into otherworldly cleansing agents. In the Old Babylonian Period (2000-600 BCE) a purification priest carrying a bucket with holy water sometimes accompanied a suppliant to ensure his pure state (Kist 2003:17). A seal, bearing a presentation scene before the ascending sun god with his foot on a mountain and a monkey in front of him, being approached by a king in ceremonial robes carrying an animal offering beneath a sun-disc and crescent, followed by a priest holding a libation vessel and bucket, attests to the importance of purity (Kist 2003:199).



Banquet scene. Serpentine cylinder seal and impression, Neo-Assyrian Period, Louvre N8379

([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cylinder\\_seals](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cylinder_seals))

As another example on the glyptic art, one Assyrian cylinder seal is representing Assur attacking a monster, while being cherished by a goddess.



Assur attacking a monster. Cylinder seal mythology from Louvre AO30255

([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cylinder\\_seals](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cylinder_seals))

#### 2.1.2.2 Cultic themes

The second main motif found on seals in the ANE is cultic themes. The worship of the sun god *Shamash* is represented by limestone cylinder seals from Mesopotamia. Coming from the same Uruk period, there is a cylinder seal picture on the next page (also made of limestone), which depicts a cattle herd at the



cowshed. We also find among these cylinder seals some erotic scenes (a composite seal made from burnt Chalcedony from the Achaemenid period in Susa (sixth and fourth centuries BCE) in which a man is shown with a trident symbolizing coitus and women symbolizing birth. Some cultic eroticism scenes are also represented, as well as a cylinder seal with a harem motif. Also from the Achaemenid period there is a cult scene before the goddess or queen Anahita. One cylinder seal made from Halcedony consists of a scene from the temple of Ishtar in Mari from the Archaic Dynasties (2600 BCE), showing heroes fighting against animals. One cultic scene (on a cylinder seal made out of a shell, dating from the Early III Dynasty [2600-2340 BC] from Mesopotamia) shows five characters going toward a pyramid-shaped building on the top of which there is the god-ship.



Cylinder seal and impression of cattle herd at the cowshed. White limestone, Mesopotamia. Uruk Period (4100 BCE- 3000 BCE; Louvre K1q17)

([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cylinder\\_seals](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cylinder_seals))



Cylinder seal with an erotic scene. Yellow marble, Armenid period (6<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE from Susa, Louvre AOD126)

([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cylinder\\_seals](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cylinder_seals))



Cylinder seal and impression on clay: battle between heroes and animals. Limestone, Early Dynastic III (2500-2400 BC, found in Mari; Louvre AO18359)

([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cylinder\\_seals](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cylinder_seals))<sup>9</sup>

### 2.1.2.3 Images of gods

Connected to this cultic theme are seals and signets that have the image of the gods as their sign. Seals with the image of a god linked the holder and user of the seal with the deity and its benefits. On an Akkadian seal cylinder (dated 2700 BCE) the god is depicted on a chariot leading a winged lion. An Akkadian roll from 2500 BCE portrays Etana's ascension<sup>10</sup> (Dalley 1989:90, 130, 183-197; Kittel 1971b:942). These two examples are an indication of the magical effect that was attributed to seals, seal stones and rings. A ring bearing the image of a

<sup>9</sup> All the cylinder seals discussed in the above two paragraphs are located in the Department of Oriental Antiquities, *Pichelieu*, ground floor, room 1B and 1C at the *Louvre*. This collection also has cylinder seals from Cyprus that show various scenes. One cylinder seal (made of Hematite and dated in the Late Bronze [fourteenth century BCE]) shows signs of the Cypro-Minoan script and contains scenes depicting animal fights. Another cylinder seal (also made out of Hematite showing signs of Cypro-Minoan script) comes from a tomb at *Sindaim*, and depicts antelopes attacked by birds.

<sup>10</sup> Etana was an ancient, legendary Sumerian king of the city of Kish and was, according to the Sumerian king list, one of the kings who reigned after the Deluge. He is listed as the successor of "Arwium" the son of Mashda, king of Kish. He is also called Etana "the shepherd who ascended to heaven and consolidated all the foreign countries," and ruled for 1560 years (some copies read 635) before being succeeded by Balih, said to have ruled for 400 years. According to a Babylonian legend, Etana was desperate to have a child, until one day he helped an eagle from starving, who then took him up into the sky to find the plant of birth. This led to the birth of his son Balih. Three versions of this legend exist: (1) The Old Babylonian version that comes from Susa and Tell Harmai; (2) a Middle Assyrian version that comes from Assur; and (3), the standard version from Nineveh. An updated discussion (Jul 31, 2007) on Etana and other ANE Mesopotamian issues can be found at [www.bibleorigins.net/ningishzida.html](http://www.bibleorigins.net/ningishzida.html).

deity protected the bearer thereof, and the image on the seal was believed to have the same power ascribed to the deity. Scarabs had the significance of luck. Harpocrates, the Greek version of Horus the Child who fought the wicked Seth, was a popular protective deity and his image was common on seal rings. With his finger on his lips, Harpocrates (the god of silence) also was a popular emblem for a seal, symbolizing “to shut off” or the concealment of something (Kittel 1971g: 942-943).

The image of the gods on the signet cylinders and other seals of the kings Sennacherib and Esar-Haddon from Kouyunjik indicates their dual earthly and heavenly power given to them by the gods—a dual power that is shown on the seal by the inclusion of animals and stars (Edwards in Orr and Nuelsen 1974a:2708). Sealing in the ANE dealt with the promises of gods and goddesses to protect kings and empower them against evil. Finally, pessimistic preoccupation with death is also reflected in the seals during the age of Hammurabi.

### **2.1.3 Sealing usage in the ANE**

#### **2.1.3.1 Ownership and authority**

Archeological evidence from the ANE indicates first of all the use of sealing to indicate ownership and authority. An example of this usage is given by Mason ([www.rbmason.ca/seals.html](http://www.rbmason.ca/seals.html)); see also Fortin 1999:1-125). Impressions of the feet of children found at the site of Tel Meskene (the ancient Emar on the upper Euphrates) which date about 1200 BCE most probably refer to an incident where a father was obliged to sell his children, but the owner found them too young and left them with their parents until they were old enough. In the meantime, he kept an imprint of each child’s foot as proof of his deferred ownership, with the seals as proof of ownership.



An example of seals used in the ANE to denote authority is the Lapis lazuli-seal<sup>11</sup> found in Tell Asmar (Horn 1995:1073), a seal king Kirikiri gave to his son Bilalama as a symbol of authority. Horn (1995:1073) also describes a cuneiform tablet from Amurru, written in the Hittite language engraved in hieroglyphic. The seal is impressed in the middle of the tablet to indicate the ownership and the authenticity of the content of the tablet. Sealing in the ANE was a good alternative for those that could not write—the illiterate simply stamped their seal on a document (Cruden 1949:571).

### 2.1.3.2 Property and ancient economy

Among the crucial functions of sealing (using cylinder seals) was the role it played in the economic life of the ANE (Nissen, in Sibson 1977:15). Sealing functioned as an important mechanism to control the economy. Cylinder seals replaced stamped ones in a short period of time in both Khudeztan (Porada, in Sibson 1977:15, 20) and Babylonia (Brun, in Sibson 1977:15, 21). Nissen (in Sibson 1977:15), in following Hrouda (in Sibson 1977:15, 22), postulates two reasons for the change from stamped seals to the cylinder form: (1) Changes in the economical system, and (2) changes in the social system that required a change in the kind of seals being used. The need for a more detailed narration of important messages to the public arose, which could not be done on the small stamp seal surface. About this Nissen notes the following:

From several approaches, I have concluded that the Late Uruk period (ca 3300 BCE) must have seen major changes in the economic system along with changes from a more kinship-oriented society to a stratified society, observable in the increase of the size of the economic units and the development of the organization of labor. These points seem to demand the assumption of a restructuring of the controlling mechanisms, since the loss of social control provided by the earlier kingship structure

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<sup>11</sup> *Lapis lazuli* (sometimes abbreviated as *lapis*) is a semi-precious stone prized since antiquity for its intense blue color (Horn 1995:1073). In ancient Egypt lapis lazuli was a favorite stone for amulets and ornaments such as scarabs; it was also used by the Assyrians and Babylonians for seals. The ancient royal Sumerian tombs of Ur, located near the Euphrates River in lower Iraq, contains more than 6000 beautifully executed lapis lazuli statuettes of birds, deer, rodents, dishes, beads, and cylinder seals. These carved artifacts and seals undoubtedly came from material mined in Badakhshan in northern Afghanistan. Sumerian and Akkadian poetry often make reference to lapis lazuli as a gem befitting royal splendor.

necessitated the introduction of more objective means of control. Looking at stamp seals and cylinder seals from this angle, we indeed find that cylinder seals provided a more effective control because the entire surface of an object could be sealed and thus protected from fraud and distortion, while the relatively small and restricted imprints of stamps seals could only partially secure the item.

(Nissen, in Sibson 1977:15)

Sealing was also used in the shipment of goods. Shipments were sometimes loaded in standardized containers and then sealed with the seal of the city, which meant that the officials who checked the containers gave them an official sealing, thus attesting to its contents (Larsen, in Sibson 1977:95, 102).<sup>12</sup>

Claiming the god's protection in the practice of storing goods inside the temple courts is also attested by examples of storage seals in the Assur temple with the inscription: "Take the bundle of gold with my seal into the Assur temple and as the kumrum priest for the sack which is deposited together with the bundles under my seal. Inspect the sealing (on the sack) and break it, and then place the bundle of gold on the sack and then, seal the sack again and have my name indicated in the front of the sealing" (Larsen, in Sibson 1977:95:102).

### **2.1.3.3 Inviolability**

Steinkeller (in Sibson 1977:41-53), referring to the distribution and function of seals in Ur-texts, mentions various functions of sealing. One function was safeguarding, associated with the technique of Bullae. This technique used clay, especially for the safeguarding of goods, which is considered the oldest and probably the most common application of seals in ancient Mesopotamia. Other sealing purposes were administrative in character, like the sealing of letter orders. The earliest examples of sealed letter orders appear in the Sargonic

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<sup>12</sup> Some Old Assyrians who lived in Anatolia were merchants and the basis of their livelihood was a constant flowing traffic of goods and money. To protect their interests all shipments had to be sent under seal. Each caravan (consisting of donkeys loaded with tin and textiles) that left the capital city of Assur was checked by officials of the city who assessed the value of the shipment. Export-tax was computed as a percentage of the silver value of the consignment. The standardized containers more or less weighed 65 mines each (Larsen, in Sibson 1977:94-95).

Period (Steinkeller, in Sibson 1977:44, 50). Another function of sealing was the sealing of legal texts, loan documents, gift documents, hire documents and court records. The conquest of reigns was also recorded on cylinder seals, as well as funerary events (Steinkeller, in Sibson 1977:44-46).

Most Babylonians normally had their own seal. The seal was a constant reminder of their god's presence, and gave assurance in all transactions done. As described earlier, cylinder seals eventually replaced stamped seals. The cylinder seal had a wide circulation until the scarab cylinder shape began to spread in the ancient world. The fact that some seals had a composition of letters, symbols, gods, and the name of the seal bearer most probably indicates that the seal carried the cosmogony belief in the god's powers of ownership, protection, inviolability and authority with regard to a sealed document. Many also believed that seal cutters (like the shamans and their tattoos), that designed and cut seals and amulets, had connections with the gods.

#### **2.1.3.4 Tattooing as protection and branding**

Apart from sealing the practice of branding and tattooing was also known in the ANE. Branding was used among Syrians to denote property or loyalty to a certain god. The practice of tattooing was utilized in Egypt mostly for protection purposes. The tattooing practice also served to establish the Shaman's supernatural hierarchy as storytellers.

Before the finding of "Ötzi the Iceman"<sup>13</sup> it was supposed that the earliest forms of tattoos were several female mummies dated 2000 BCE. Fletcher, from the Museum of York, England, says "with the more recent discovery of the iceman from the area of the Italian-Austrian border in 1991 and his tattoo patterns, this

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<sup>13</sup> Ötzi the Iceman is the modern name for a well-preserved natural mummy of a man from about 3300 BC. The mummy was found in 1991 in the Schnalstal glacier in the Ötztal Alps (on the border between Austria and Italy). The Iceman is Europe's oldest natural human mummy, and has approximately 57 carbon tattoos consisting of simple dots and lines on his lower spine, behind his left knee, and on his right ankle. It has been speculated that the tattoos may be related to acupuncture (see [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_tattooing](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_tattooing)).

date has been push back a further thousand years, when the iceman was carbon-dated 5,200 years old” ([www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/iceman.html?c=y&page=3](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/iceman.html?c=y&page=3)); ([www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/10023606.html](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/10023606.html)). On the status of tattooing among Scythians and Thracians, Fletcher comments as follows:

Tattoos served as amulets, status, symbol of love declaration, a sign of religious beliefs, adornments and form of punishment. Tattooing also expressed affiliation to supernatural powers. In 1948, a 2400 year old body of a Scythian male was discovered in ice in Siberia. His limbs and dorsum were covered in ornate tattoos of mythical animals. The same case happened with a woman founded in 1993 in Altai. Fletcher says that female mummies with tattoos figurines on their thighs were also found in Graeco-Roman burials at Akmin. Some excavators thought they were “lower class females” or “dancing girls”. But females mummies been buried at Deir-el-Bahari (opposite modern Luxor) in an area associated with royal and elite burials has demonstrated they were “royal concubines”, high status priestess named Amunet. Herodotus, among the Scythians and Thracians, considered tattoo as a mark of nobility and not to have them, was a testimony of low birth.<sup>14</sup>

([www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/10023606.html](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/10023606.html))

In some primitive pagan societies storytellers normally praised their saga heroes that overcame the powers of nature. Following the telling of the saga, these *shamans* were then tattooed or marked by supernatural animals or even by divine spirits. Through these marks the storyteller received a name and passed to an exclusive hierarchy position. In these primitive societies the development of writing (literacy) expanded the tattoo as a sign of loyalty. It also became customary to insert a seal in the text of, for example, narratives. It was believed that the mark was spiritually transferred to anyone who accepted the message of such a narrative His genre, status, and age were then traced to priesthood heritage Shaman “Shaman are the intermediaries between the mortal world and the spirit world. These worlds are represented as the upper world of the sky, or spirit levels, and the lower worlds of Nature. Humankind, along with all its

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<sup>14</sup> Figurine tattoos found on the thighs of female mummies served as amulets of protection during the very difficult time of pregnancy and birth. These tattoos, as permanent amulets, were believed to have therapeutic benefits ((see Fletcher, [www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/10023606.html](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/10023606.html))).

symbols and traditions, was the middle world. Because of their ability to enter altered states of consciousness, the shamans are able to enter the spirit world and return with visions. By interacting with the plant, mineral, animal, and spirit realms, shamans take on totemic patrons who help guide them through trial and tribulation. Shamans are the natural guardians, spiritual intermediaries, and mortal advisers to the inhabitants of the material world.” (see shaman in list 24 [www.listology.com/list/mmorpg-classes-long-list-part-2](http://www.listology.com/list/mmorpg-classes-long-list-part-2)).

The Syrians also made use of tattooing (branding), in most cases to consecrate persons to their gods. Herodotus, in referring to the Syrians, declares: “The Syrians consecrated themselves to the gods Hadad and Atargatis by signs branded on the wrist or neck. Worshippers of other gods were given marks on other parts of their bodies” like some Ethiopian tribes that dedicated their children to Apollo by a mark on the knee-cap (see Kittel 1971g:660). According to Herodotus, a runaway slave received the mark of Hercules at a temple in Egypt, thus becoming a slave of Hercules, and because of this mark his former owner was forbidden to lay hands on him” (Kittel 1974g:660).

Sealing as a therapy and religious protection was also known in other parts of the world, such as in the Pre-Columbus cultures in South America. In 2004 in the locality of Chribaya, Perú, some Inca period mummies that showed a tattooed hand were found.

Following on the next page, there is a picture that shows this particular Chribaya mummy fingering tattoo characteristic. The tattoo probably indicated protection or allegiance to a certain deity or, as it happened in the ANE, it may have been indicating mere therapy reasons:



The tattooed hand of a Chribaya mummy (El Algorrobal Museum)

<http://smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/tattoo.html#c=y&page=6>)

Tattooing as a seal was practiced also in ancient Europe. It is possible that a tattoo in the arm of Ötzi the iceman was intended to assure him strength and accuracy with his bow and arrow as a hunter, or it may have been used as a means of protection.



A tattoo in Ötzi's left arm

(<http://www.crystalinks.com/oetzi.html>)

It is also likely that a tattoo on Ötzi's knee represented some kind of ritual.





Ötzi's tattooed knee

([www.tattoosymbol.com/timeline/timeline-2.html](http://www.tattoosymbol.com/timeline/timeline-2.html))

## 2.2 SEALING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The practice of sealing in the Old Testament has many similarities with that of the practice in the ANE (e.g., ownership, protection, inviolability, authenticity, and authority), and at least eight Hebrew terms for sealing can be detected (of which some are used in a metaphoric or figurative mode). There is, however, no evidence in the Old Testament of branding, marking or tattooing words or symbols into the human flesh.

### 2.2.1 Concordance: Sealing in the Old Testament

There are about 47 references to sealing in the Old Testament. The substantive of the term “mark” appears seven times (Gn 4:15; 1 Sm 20:20; Job 7:20; 16:12; Lm 3:12; Ezr 9:4, 6), and mark is used 11 times as signet (Gn 38:12, 25; Ex 28:11, 21, 36; 39:6, 14, 30; Jr 22:24; Dn 6:17; Hg 2:23). The rest of the references to sealing occur in Deuteronomy 32:34; 1 Kings 21:8; Nehemiah 9:38; 10:1; Ezra 3:12; 8:8, 10; Job 9:7; 14:17; 33:16; 37:7; 38:14; 41:15; Canticles



4:12; 8:6; Isaiah 8:16; 29:11; Jeremiah 32:9, 10, 11, 14, 44; Ezekiel 28:12; and Daniel 6:17; 9:24 and 12:4, 9 (see Cruden 1965:416, 571).

### 2.2.2 Evidence of seals from Old Testament times

From archeological evidence we have at least two seals from the time of the Old Testament. The first seal evidence is from Jezebel (איובל), which could mean “unexalted” (1 Ki 16:31; 18:4, 13, 19; 19:1, 2; 21:5-; 2 Ki 9:7). She was daughter of Ethbaal, king of Zidonians, and queen of Ahab, king of Northern Israel. She was responsible for the persecution of Jehovah’s prophets. This queen encouraged her husband to plot against Naboth’s life to take away his vineyard. The king sealed the letters and also hired false witnesses to destroy Naboth’s life. It is evident that Jezebel had a powerful and persuasive personality. She introduced indirectly the worship of Baal and Astarte in Judah.



The seal of Jezebel (ninth-eighth century BCE), Museum of Jerusalem

(<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite.jpg>)

The second seal known from Old Testament times is a royal seal impression from the time of Hezekiah (חזקיה), the king that produced a religious reform in Judah (2 Chr 28:24; 29:3; 30:5-12, 18, 26).



Royal seal impression from the time of Hezekiah (716-687 BCE), Museum of Jerusalem

(<http://www.ferrelljenkins.wordpress.com/category/archaeology/>)

According to Karpel (Universiteit Utrecht), the seal of Jezebel (found in 1964 and pictured above) belonged to the biblical figure Queen Jezebel (Izebel), the Phoenician wife of King Ahab (1 Ki 16:31-2 Ki 9:37) who lived in the ninth-century BCE. The seal bears symbols that indicate it belonged to a woman, as well as symbols that designate a royal female owner. The seal is also exceptionally large compared to the seals commonly possessed by ordinary citizens (Korpel 2007 in [www.uu.nl/EN/Current/Pages/AncientsealbelongedtoQueenJezebel.aspx](http://www.uu.nl/EN/Current/Pages/AncientsealbelongedtoQueenJezebel.aspx)).

### **2.2.3 The use of sealing in the Old Testament**

In the Old Testament the word sealing is used figuratively (Is 8:1; Dn 12:4, 9) or stamped on important documents. The impression on an engraved ring or tool was a mark of authenticity. Seals normally were made out of stone or metal, indicated ownership and suggested security (Richards 1985:545). It had a cylinder or conic form. The picture or monogram normally included the name of

the owner as an indication of indisputable property (1 Ki 21:8; Es 8:8; Jr 32:9-14; see Horn 1995:1072).

Evidence of sealing in the Old Testament was found on the handles of three large clay jars excavated in Bet-Semes and Tell Beit Mirsim (perhaps Debir; see Horn 1995:1073), and reads as follows: “Property of Eliakim, steward of Jehoiakin.”<sup>15</sup> A seal discovered in Lachis read more or less the same: “Belongs to Gedaliah, administrator of the house” (see Jr 40:9).

Israelites were acquainted with the use in Egypt where signets were set in rings (Edwards in Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2708; see e.g., Gn 41:41-42 where Pharaoh gave Joseph his royal signet as a token of deputed authority). They were also familiar with the use of seals among the Persians and Medes (Es 3:12; 8:8, 10).

According to Edwards (in Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2709), at least six uses of sealing can be inferred from the Old Testament:

- authenticity and authority of royal commands (1 Ki 21:8);
- formal ratification of a transaction or covenant (Jr 32:10-14);
- preservation of books in security (Jr 32:14);
- as a sign of deputed authority and power (Gn 41:42; see also 1 Macc 6:15);
- to prevent the entrance of an unauthorized person into a certain place (Dn 6:17); and
- an official mark of ownership (Job 38:14).

#### **2.2.4 Hebrew terms for seals and the act of sealing**

The Old Testament uses two different Hebrew terms for a seal: חֹתֶם (*hōthām*) and אוֹת (*’oth*). The Aramaic *’izk;a’* (signet ring) is also used on an interchangeable basis with *tabba’ath* (Pick 1977:396; Edwards in Orr and Nuelsen 1974a: 2708). The terms צֶלֶם (*Tselem*) and דְּמוּת (*Demût*) used in the

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<sup>15</sup> According to Horn (1995:1073), “this could indicate that Nebuchadnezzar did not confiscate the totality of Jehoiakin’s belongings, when the Jewish king was taken captive to Babylon.”

Old Testament are translated as “image” and “likeness” respectively (Richards 1985:350). These two Hebrew words are normally translated by the Septuagint as εἰκών (image). For the act of sealing, five terms are used. Another Hebrew term related to seal is the word מופת (*m ṓph ēth*), which is applied for a sign or mark in terms of “wonder.”

## 2.2.5 A description of the terms used in the Old Testament for seals and sealing

### 2.2.5.1 חותם (*hōthām*)

The term חותם occurs 13 times in the Old Testament, and is translated by the Septuagint as σφραγίς, (Ex 35:22), which means seal or signet. Examples of this use of חותם are found in Exodus 28:15 and 36:21: The breastplate of the high priest (Ex 28:15) is adorned with 12 different precious stones set in gold, each having the name of one of the 12 tribes of Israel cut in it (Ex 36:21). In the LXX these stones are called γλύπαι σφραγίδα and the names of the 12 tribes are translated with ἔγγεγράμμενα εἰςσφράγει. Royal seals have thus far not been found in Israel, but the seal of a king's son, Gedaliah of Beth Sur (perhaps a son of Josiah at the end of the seventh century), has been found (Kittel 1971b:943-945).<sup>16</sup>

The term στίγμα has no corresponding concept in the Old Testament. The term, however, is indirectly present as a custom of expressing close attachment to a man or God by a mark on the body (Ex 21:6; Dt 15:16; Is 44:5). In the LXX the word (στίγματα) denotes the close relationship between man and God (Ex 28:36; Lv 19:28; Dt 14:1; Jr 16:6; see Kittel 1971b:661).

### 2.2.5.2 דמות (*Demût*)

Pratt (in Orr & Nuelsen 1974d:1986) says that דמות in the Old Testament refers

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<sup>16</sup> References in the Old Testament to ministerial seals are connected with the kings Uzziah and Jeroboam II (with or without the mentioning of the king's name, eg, Jaazaniahu of 600 BCE and Mizpah [2 Ki 25:23] that is referred to as דָּרְשָׁן- *overseer*). The use of the royal seal is mentioned in 1 Kings 21:8 when Jezebel sends letters to Ahab and seals them with her seal.

The word דמות is used in the Old Testament to explain something by referring to something else that is more or less the same as the thing being explained (Richards 1985:351). God makes it very clear that man cannot understand Him by comparing Him to a human being or person (Is 40:18). The nature of man, however, can be understood by comparing human beings with the Lord (Gn 1:26). It is in this regard that the word דמות is used. Sometimes the words צלם (*Tselem*) and דמות are used together to describe the human nature (Gn 1:26; 5:1, 3). According to Richards (1985:351), the use of these two words in the same context should be understood as a theological statement.<sup>17</sup>

#### 2.2.5.3 אות ('*oth*)

The term אות is used in the Old Testament primarily for describing a sign. Pratt (in Orr and Nuelsen 1974:1985-1986), in discussing the mark of Cain (Gn 4:15), opines that it is impossible to tell the nature of the Cain's sign. According to Pratt (in Orr and Nuelsen 1974d:1985-1986, following Delitzsch), the rabbis were most probably mistaken in regarding it as a mark on Cain's body. Probably it was "a certain sign which protected him from vengeance" in that the continuance of his life was necessary for the preservation of the race (Pratt, in Orr and Nuelsen 1974d:1986). It is also possible that the mark was an external sign on Cain's body as a temporal protection of his life (Nichol and Cottrell in 1978a:254). De White (1985:64), on the other hand, sees אות in Genesis 4:15 as a token of the covenant God made with Cain that his life would be spared—it is a sign that the life of Cain and his descendants should be a manifestation of the complete work of sin in rational beings. In Ezekiel 20:12 and 20 'oth is used with reference to the Sabbath as a sign.

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<sup>17</sup> "Man is a likeness-image of God. The creation story makes it clear that the likeness-image is not of physical form: material for creation was taken from the earth. It is the inner nature of human beings that reflects something vital in the nature of God. Thus, theologians agree that the likeness is rooted in all that is required to make a human being a person: in our intellectual, emotional, and moral likeness to God, who had revealed himself to us as a personal being" (Richards 1985:351).

#### 2.2.5.4 טראם (*mattara*)

“an aim,” hence a mark to shoot at. Jonathan arranged to shoot arrows at a mark as a sign for David (1 Sam 20:20). The term מטרא is also used by Job as he felt himself to be a target of sufferings to be endured (Job 16:12), and Jeremiah said that the Lord set him as a mark for the arrow (Lm 3:12).

#### 2.2.5.5 מופת (*mopheth*)

According to Stuart (in Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2789), מופת is used in the Old Testament (mainly in the Pentateuch and the prophets) to attest to the existence of the supersensible or the divine. The plagues of Egypt are “signs” of divine displeasure against the Egyptians (Ex 4:8 ff; Jos 24:17). In the same vein the rainbow after the flood (Gn 9:13), the Feast of the unleavened bread (Ex 13:3), the Sabbath (Ex 20:8-11), and the brazen serpent (Nm 21:9) are seen as “wonder signs” of the gracious God to mankind. In the Septuagint the word σημειον is used 125 times as translation for מופת. According to Kittel (1971b: 208-09), the word is associated with the Accadian *ittu* that is used to describe an “oracular sign” or “advice.”

#### 2.2.5.6 קעקע (*ka'aka*)

The term קעקע is used in the Old Testament as “a stigma,” a cut or a burn. Israelites were forbidden to follow the custom of other oriental and heathen nations in cutting, disfiguring or branding their bodies (Lv 19:28; see Pratt, in Orr and Nuelsen 1974d:1986). The specific prohibition “not to print any marks upon” themselves evidently has reference to the custom of tattooing<sup>18</sup> ([www.ncl.ac.uk/press.office/press.release/item/1156851242](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/press.office/press.release/item/1156851242)).

The practice of tattooing was common among savage tribes and in vogue among both men and women of the lower orders in Arabia, Egypt, and other cultures.

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<sup>18</sup> The word tattoo has two major derivations coming from two South Pacific Islands: (1) From the Polynesian dialect *Ta*, which means “striking something” and (2) from the Tahitian word *Tatau* which signifies “to mark something”. In 1871 the British army, for example, used some coded letters that were branded on prisoners: D = deserter; bc = bad character; d = drunkard; v = vagabond and f = church brawler ([www.ncl.ac.uk/press.office/press.release/item/1156851242](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/press.office/press.release/item/1156851242)).



This prohibition on tattooing most probably was intended to cultivate reverence for and a sense of the sacredness of the human body as God's creation.

#### **2.2.5.7 צלם (*Tselem*)**

Image in the Old Testament, according to Richards (1985:350), deals with important statements regarding the nature of man. צלם is defined as “image” or “representation” in reference to people. Five times in the Old Testament, specifically in Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1-3 and 9:6, it refers to mankind as God's image (Richards 1985:350-351).<sup>19</sup>

#### **2.2.5.8 תו (*taw*)**

The word תו also means mark, as is shown in Ezekiel 9:4 (which is dated in the second exile period (597 BCE); Buttrick 1956:56). Albright (1932:77-84) has discussed the stamped findings that belong to this period extensively. In Ezekiel (9:1-5) the divine government is confronted with a vision of the destruction of the wicked, and a mark (ת) is to be set upon the foreheads of the righteous at Jehovah's command (Ez 9:4-6; see Ironside 1949:ii). The mark of Ezekiel 9:4 is transposed figuratively here. The Hebrew letter ת, according to Stollorz (2005:123), is a symbol of the Cross. ת is used to indicate the Christ cross commitment and the resultant human transformation by grace, which is reflected in the believer's daily life. Sealing, then, also indicates God's character. According to Pratt (in Orr & Nuelsen 1974d:1986), we have a similar parallel in Exodus 12:22-23 where blood is sprinkled on the doorposts of the Israelites for their protection. ת also

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<sup>19</sup>The conviction that Yahweh is not to be depicted in the form of an image is intrinsic to true Yahweh worship. Its basis is to be found in the commandment in Exodus 20:4 and Deuteronomy 21:14. A strong belief in the spiritual nature of Yahweh underlies the Mosaic Law (Kittel 1964g:381). The pictures of animals on the great curtain of the Jerusalem temple were not regarded as depictions of deities as one might think. They were merely artistic symbols. In the newly discovered synagogue mosaics of Ain-ed-Duk and Beth Alpha there is in the middle of the picture of the Zodiac a representation of the four-steeded chariot of the sun with the Helios as the driver. Even the Byzantine artists had no thought of depicting the sun-god; they were simply adopting the traditional form of representing the sun (Kittel 1964g:383).



appears in the book of Job for the mark made on a document (Job 31:35).<sup>20</sup> The letter  $\aleph$  is also used in Ezekiel 9:4 as a mark in the form of a cross:

The seal is marked in all of those that are honoring the *ofvoma* of God. They receive the *Taw* (=  $\aleph$ ) the twenty-second and last letter in the *alef-beit*. It means “mark,” “sign” or “cross,” and it corresponds to *malchut* (“kingdom”). The Zohar states that this letter makes an impression on the “Ancient of Days” and is also as an impression of the seal of Creation. During the epoch of Ezekiel the  $\aleph$  was written in the form of X or T. Gesenius notes that this letter referred to “a sign” of ownership of property in the form of a cross brand on the thigh or the neck of horses and camels. In Ezekiel 9:4, God used this letter to mark his faithful in the vision given to the prophet.”

([www.biblewheel.com/Wheel/spokes/tav\\_seal.asp](http://www.biblewheel.com/Wheel/spokes/tav_seal.asp))

In Ezekiel 9:7-18 the grotesque pagan animal imagery engraved or painted in the Jerusalem temple is contrasted with the glorious message of God’s sealing. Albright (1953:163-167; see also Buttrick 1956:107 on Ezk 8:10) sees in these pagan rites an Egyptian influence, recalling the serpent and animal figures in the *Book of the Dead* and late magical representations thereof.<sup>21</sup> Shea (1992:19-20) states that the selected individuals, who are marked by the angel with the letter  $\aleph$  as God’s chosen people, represent the righteous remnant to be saved from the destruction of Judah. Historically, Shea continues, “the prophecy was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar’s army besieged and conquered Jerusalem a few years after this vision was given.”

In 1 Samuel 21:10 David fled to Achish, the king of Gath, and feigning madness, “scratched” on the doors of the gate. Commenting on 1 Samuel 21:10, the Critical Spanish Bible version from Bóver-Cantera explains that the original word in 1 Samuel 21:10, that is translated by the Spanish term “*signos*” (“scratched” in NKJV), is the letter  $\aleph$  (X, in the ancient Hebrew alphabet).

<sup>20</sup> The letter  $\aleph$  in the Phoenician alphabet and on the coins of the Maccabees sometimes had the form of a cross (T). In Oriental Synods it was used as a signature by bishops who could not write.

<sup>21</sup> Gaster (1961:40-323), referring to the rites of the pagan imagery of Ezekiel 7:14 and 8:7-13, suggests a hidden, frescoed cavern where the annual sacred marriage ceremony took place. As evidence of such ritual, Gaster mentions the presence of such a cave in the Ugaritic texts.

### **2.2.6 Sealing practices in the Old Testament**

In the Old Testament sealing is used to demonstrate ownership and property, whereas to God or evil. In most cases God is the one who seals men and invites them to become His own (e.g., Gn 4:15; Ex 12:1-7; Ezk 9:1-4). The consequence of the sealing by God is anticipated by a personal decision based on and determined by a real and authentic relationship with God in order to accept the seal or deny the offer of voluntary relationship (e.g., Ezk 9:4). In the metaphoric or figurative mode in the use of sealing, some of the sealing attributes are described as being previously present in the life of the believer in order to receive the remaining blessings of being sealed. Such previous attributes that must be manifested in the believer are: (1) loyalty, which must be founded on faith and, (2) authenticity, which is part of the relationship principles for which the seal is applied for in the believer's life.

When the believer incorporates into his life the attributes of loyalty and authenticity he also receives other blessings like inviolability, possession, protection, salvation, ownership and authority (see Ex 12:1-28; Ezk 9:1-4)—the sealed ones in Ezekiel 9:1-4 would be the ones whose lives would be preserved through captivity when Nebuchadnezzar's troops destroy Jerusalem.

Sealing in the Old Testament is therefore expressed in terms of allegiance and permanent service such as a slave that wants to remain permanently in his master's house. In such a case the master himself performed the ceremony at the doorpost, and pierced the servant's ear with an awl (Ex 21:6; Dt 15:17). Because of the master's love and kindness, the slave decided (elected) voluntarily to remain in his master's house. This ceremony depicts the importance of free will in the concept of sealing in the Old Testament.

### **2.2.7 The figurative use of sealing in the Old Testament**

The sealing or marking of animals, objects, and men in the Old Testament first and foremost indicated ownership (Neal, in Holbrook 1992a:255). People were often sealed by marks upon the body: A servant's ear, for example, was pierced

to show he belonged to his master forever. In Exodus 21:6 we have an example of sealing to indicate ownership. A servant wanted to remain in the house of his master because he loved him (Ex 21:1-6). The Hebrew word for love comes from אהב [*aheb*], which primarily means “to love.” It has a secondary meaning of being a “friend.” The fact that the servant loved his family and his master lead him being pierced in his ear with an awl. The term used in Exodus 21:6 for piercing is רצע [*ratsa*], which means “bore” (<http://strongsnnumbers.com/hebrew/7527.htm>).

Another figurative symbol is circumcision, which was a mark indicating that Israel belonged to Yahweh (Gn 17:9-12). The high priest in the Israelite sanctuary wore a turban with a plate over his forehead engraved with the words “Holy to the Lord” (Ex 28:36-38). This reminded him of his special consecration to God. As such, sealing was experienced as a joy of being chosen by and marked for God as His possession (Is 44:5). The associated sealing term is כתב [*yich-tov*= will write]. The fact that God engraved Zion on the palms of His hands indeed was a joyous thought (Is 49:16; see Fitzer, in Kittel 1971g:939-953). The Hebrew words for “have inscribed” in 49:16 are ירחקת [*chakkotich*].

Sealing (σφραγίς in the LXX) also meant protection (Betz, in Kittel 1971b:657-664; Fitzer, in Kittel 1971b: 939-953). This understanding of sealing is as old as the mark, אות [*ovt* = a sign, a mark] of Cain (Gn 4:15). The blood of the Passover lamb sprinkled upon the doorposts of Israelite homes is another example of sealing as protection (Ex 12:12-13): the blood (mark) was a sign to the angel to pass those homes that had their doorposts sprinkled. Sealing as protection is also found in Ezekiel 9:4-5: the writer with an inkhorn sets a mark upon the faithful to protect them from death by the executioner (Betz in Kittel 1971b: 657-664).

Apart from ownership and protection, sealing in the Old Testament also meant loyalty (Maxwell 1989:379), security and revelation (Richards 1985:545), genuineness and authenticity (Hoeksema 1969:259), authority and inviolability (Horn 1995:1072), possession, preservation (Edwards, in Orr & Nuelsen

1974a:2708-2709), likeness (Richards, in Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2708), and close relationship between God and man (Kittel 1971b:660). It is also associated with the Sabbath (Peth 2002:738-741; see Gn 4:15; 17:9-12; Ex 12:12-28; 21:6; 28:36; Lv 19:26; Dt 14:1; 15:17; 1 Sm 21:14; 1 Ki 21:8; Job 38:14; Is 8:16; Jr 16:6; 32:10-14; 38:14; Ezk 8:10; 9:1-4; 20:12, 20; Dn 12:4, 9).

### **2.2.8 Sealing and its legal pattern in the Old Testament**

Sealing in the Old Testament reflects the legal patterns and daily life particularities regarding ownership, property and loyalty in early Israel. Jezebel, for example, sealed her letters thus showing her idolatrous authority, using it to destroy Naboth's life (1 Ki 21:8). After confessing their sins, the returned captives from Babylon wrote a covenant and placed a seal on the document showing their loyalty to God (Neh 9:38; 10:1). King Ahasuerus gave Haman his signet ring as an authorization to destroy the Jews (Es 3:10-13). Darius sealed the mouth of the den where Daniel was held captive with his own signet ring, and the rest of the lords did the same (Dn 6:17).

From the above two sections it is clear that a similarity in sealing usage in the Old Testament and in the ANE is attested (except for tattooing). Both geographical realms have a relationship in terms of authenticity, authority, inviolability, ownership, property, and protection. The section explains how the concept of sealing in the Alexandrian Judaism was heavily influenced by Philo's philosophy.

## **2.3 SEALING IN ALEXANDRIAN JUDAISM**

The concept of sealing in Alexandrian Judaism was influenced by the metaphorical vocabulary of religious philosophy introduced by Philo (Mickelsen 1970:29). Philo combined Judaism and Platonic philosophy that especially influenced the thought of Ibn-Gabriel and Maimonides who lived among the Arabs and influenced western Europe in the beginning of the twelfth century CE (González 1971:236). Philo, because of his Hebrew heritage, considered the Old

Testament as superior to Greek philosophy (Froehlich 1984:7; Mickelsen 1970:29; E. Treiyrer 1996:12). However, having a great admiration for Hellenistic thought, he tried to reconcile Greek philosophy (especially the thoughts of Plato) with reflection produced by the Hebrew world.<sup>22</sup>

Plato used the concept of sealing to characterize his doctrine of ideas (Kittel 1971b:946). Philo, on the other hand, used the term σφραγίς as a signature at the end of his letters, especially to justify his allegorical approach, vis-à-vis the typological form of interpretation.<sup>23</sup> For Philo the term σφραγίς meant “under lock and key” (Kittel 1971b:947), and the seal was a symbol for the power of God: the impression of a tiny seal can reproduce copies of very large things, and similarly a tiny representation with tiny letters reveals the ineffable beauties of the creation of the world written in the laws. As the seal makes innumerable copies while remaining unaltered, so is the power of God who gives form to the formless and shape to the indistinct without losing anything of their own eternal essence.

The presence of sealing in Alexandrian Judaism is also seen in the Greek word σημειον, Philo uses this word to denote the mark of Cain in Genesis 4:15 (Kittel 1971b:221-22), the processes which lead to insight or knowledge by way of perception (the stars in Gn 1:14). The word, however, is also used by Philo to denote laughing – γέλως - α – σημειον της χαρᾶ, mathematical calculations, mental operations in the sense of “indication,” “argument,” and “proof,” as well as the introduction of evidence (Kittel 1971b:222).

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<sup>22</sup> Like Aristobolus, Philo used the allegorical method of interpretation. He wanted to defend the Jewish faith against the pagan criticism by demonstrating that Moses had possessed all the talents of the Greeks. This line of thought is present in many of Philo's works (Martinez 1984:69-70). In his work titled *On the creation of the world*, Philo describes the way in which God created the world in Platonic terms (see also Plato's *Timeus*).

<sup>23</sup> Alexandria was the intellectual center of the allegoric method in antiquity (Martinez 1984:69-72). Clement of Alexandria and Origen used the allegorical method to defend themselves against the intellectual attacks of pagan writers like Celsius and Porphyrius who mocked the Scriptures as being trivial, absurd, and immoral.

In relation to allegorizing, σημεῖον is used by Philo to indicate that fundamentally all Scripture is an inexhaustible reservoir of σημεῖα . He also uses the word to refer to the divine or “wonders” (Kittel 1971b:222), especially when he refers to God’s signs in Egypt (e.g., the miracle of the Red Sea crossing is denoted as σημεῖον τερατωδέστατον).

## 2.4 SEALING IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

### 2.4.1 Sealing, religion, and witchcraft

In the Graeco-Roman world sealing was used in various contexts such as the military, religion, slavery, and in the protection of the inviolability of documents. Sealing was used lavishly for different magic purposes: to block a spell, to represent a god, to replace or alter the power of a seal that blocked a spell, to fake enchantments, and to link a personal seal with the seals of gods (Ankarloo 1999:21, 76, 154, 190, 235, 299). Guthrie (1951:270-274) has also noted the prevalence of magic in the Graeco-Roman world linked to the inscriptions of bindings in magic formulas: the terms καταδέσμο and καταδέσει, (literally “bindings”) refer to curses, which were scribbled on tablets (often, though not always, of lead). These curses were left in tombs or buried in the ground where the spirits of the underworld, to whom they were commonly addressed, would be able to find and act on them.

Rome’s conquests brought to its capital not only Greek art and culture, but also many new gods and creeds, a situation that resulted in a variety of new cults. These new gods also brought with them their worshippers, marks, and seals.

The official beliefs and worship of the Greco-Roman world were more a part of civic stability and loyalty than of inner religious devotion. There was the worship of the Emperor, whose *Tychè*, good luck, was the cement that held the whole empire together. There were the superb Olympian deities, whom Homer had made a picturesque though not always admirable reality for the whole Hellenic world; and also those strange rustic deities still venerated at Rome, whose priesthoods were held as a mark of honor by members of the noblest families in the city. The papyri have now revealed to us the underworld of religion, the popular ideas and forms of worship, of which we

knew a certain amount, but never so much until these pathetic evidences reaches us from the hands of very ordinary men.

(Neill 1964:152)

Sealing in religious activities and witchcraft in the Graeco-Roman world provided the elements needed for ritual activities. The authentication of the animals chosen for rituals needed to be sealed before they were sacrificed. Roman religion was very strict on ritual details. In matters of witchcraft the Romans, as well as many other people, believed that seals protected them against spells and bewitching warnings. In a world considered full of demons and evil powers, sealing was a constant protection possibility.

#### **2.4.2 Cultic motifs in Graeco-Roman jewelry**

There is jewelry evidence from the Graeco-Roman period with relation to magic and cultic protection. This evidence is depicted in sealing rings that show interest in cultic protection (King 2003:99, 379).

The ring pictured below (most probably a Roman Intaglio ring from the Roman Republic period, i.e., first to second CE) depicts the god Attis, often seen as representing the cycle of life, death, and rebirth (Frazer 2003: 261-317). The three faces on the ring are looking in different directions, a depiction often associated with the earth mother, the goddess Cybele. This deity was brought to Rome from Phrygia during the Carthaginian crisis and, during the settlement worship period in Roman temples, its service was conducted exclusively by Phrygian priests who announced Cybele as the mother and protector of the mountains and a locality protection spirit that was also known as the Magna Mother (Motz 1997:9, 103= 106, 163, 223).

In the background of this Roman intaglio ring, which is shown in the next page, it is possible to distinguish two handled urns with fluted tops. The ring most probably was one of the ritual objects used in the secret practices of the Phrygian cult. Due to metal corrosion, many of these ancient discovered intaglios have been re-inserted in modern handcrafted rings intended to resemble the original work.





Republic period depicting the god of vegetation called Attis (London).  
The ring is set in a modern setting

(Stockhammer 2009, see [www.georgianjewelry.com/items/show/10382.jpg](http://www.georgianjewelry.com/items/show/10382.jpg))

Below is another interesting photo of a Roman ring from the Museum of Britain depicting the temple of this goddess at Palaepaphos, indicating a connection between magic and veneration in the cult to Aphrodite. The ring is dated between 150-250 CE. In this regard we also have bronze and silver coins issued between the emperors Augustus (27-14 BCE) and Phillip I (244-249 CE).



Gold Roman ring (dated between 150-250 CE) showing the temple of Aphrodite at the sanctuary of Palaepaphos, Cyprus

([www.britishmuseum.org/ps337280-m.jpg](http://www.britishmuseum.org/ps337280-m.jpg))

### 2.4.3 Terms for sealing in the Graeco-Roman world

In the Graeco-Roman world seven terms can be identified that were used in connection with sealing practices: εἰκὼν, μῶλῳψ σημεῖον, σκοπὸς στίγμα σφραγίς, χάραγμα, and χαρακτήρ. These terms are also present in the New Testament epistles where they are used in an interchangeable manner.

#### 2.4.3.1 εἰκὼν

The term is defined as “to be similar,” “to be like” or “to appear.” In the strict sense it is defined as “an artistic representation” (e.g., a painting, statue, or impression on a coin) and in Euripides it has the notion of “a reflection” or “apparition” (see Kittel 1964f:388). In a metaphorical sense it means “mental image” (τῆς ψυχῆς); (see Kittel 1964f:388). The term is used by Philo to describe the images of the emperor that was set up, for example, in Alexandria from 38 CE. The term is also used by Josephus (see Kittel 1964g:388) in his description of the events surrounding the καίσαρος εἰκόνες αἱ σημαῖαι καλουῦνται (military standards) in the temple that were resisted so passionately by the Jews that Pilate finally removed them from the temple.

#### 2.4.3.2 μῶλῳψ (μῶλωπιζω, μῶλωπικός, μολύνω)

According to Schneider (in Kittel 1967g:829) there is an etymologic connection between μῶλῳψ and μολύνω. This connection is especially common in the Graeco-Roman world among physicians for “weal” or “welt.” In the LXX (see Gn 4:23; Ex 21:25) and Judith 9:13 the term is used in a figurative sense describing the overthrowing of enemies (Schneider, in Kittel 1967g:829).

#### 2.4.3.3 σημεῖον (σᾶμα, σημαίνω, σημειόω, ἄσημος, ἐπίσημος, εὖσημος, σύσημον)

The linguistic and etymological data for this word is a development of *σημα* / Doric σᾶμα by way Ionic σημῆϊον, Doric σᾶμηϊον and related constructs. It only occurs in the form of *σημα* in the early epic and *σημα*; σᾶμα did not disappear until

well into the Christian era. According to Kittel (1971b:202), σημειον does not occur in the earlier Greek epic. One therefore must begin with the older but equivalent σημα to understand the meaning of this term. In Homer the word denotes optical impressions, which suggest or make certain insights possible (Kittel 1971b:202). In *Homeric Hymns* II, 2.353, the lightning of Zeus seen at the beginning of the expedition against Troy is described as a faithful sign, ἐναίσιμα σήματα, and in *Homeric Hymns* II, 9.236 the word is used to describe a happy omen making known the favor of the god: Ζεὺς δέ σφι Κρονίδης ἐνδέξια σήματα φαινὼν ἀστράπτει. The word is sometimes also used in connection with disaster (παραίσιμα σήματα,) (*Homeric Hymns* II, 4.381). In all these instances of σημα (always plural), the fact that the sign brings knowledge is underlined by its use with the active φαίνω. The word thus is clearly used in connection with revelation (Kittel 1971b:202).

#### **2.4.3.4 σκοπός**

In Graeco-Roman literature σκοπός is attested as early as in the works of Homer, and denotes one who directs a watchful glance on something, for example an overseer (Kittel 1971b:413-414).

#### **2.4.3.5 στίγμα (στιγμάτα)**

The vocable στίγμα is derived from στίξω, which means “to prick,” “tattoo,” or “mark” with an instrument. The mark was burned on the body with a hot iron. It was also customary to burn cattle with the owner’s mark to make theft more difficult (in Kittel 1971b:658).

The term στίγμα was also used to brand malefactors. A man with such a brand was regarded as dishonored. Robbers of temples, slaves and aliens carried the στίγμα on their foreheads and hands. According to Suetonius (*The Twelve Caesars* IV, 27, 3), Caligula even had these shameful marks branded on the foreheads of honorable citizens condemned to forced labor in the construction of buildings and roads. Petronius links στίγμα to the marks carried by wrongdoers

(see Kittel 1971b:658). Only in 315 CE Constantine forbade the custom of marking a person on his or her face (Kittel 1971b:658).

#### **2.4.3.6 σφραγίς (σφραγίζω, σφραγίδα, σφραγίδα, ἐσφραγίσθητε, σφραγίσιν, σφραγίσαντε, σφραγίσωμεν, σφραγίσεν)**

In Graeco-Roman culture the term *σφράγις* had important legal significance. When stamped on possessions the seal indicated ownership and protected possessions against theft. When used for the sealing of a document, the seal authenticated the message and conveyed the authority of the person that sealed the document. The seal normally was a kind of signature that could be recognized by anyone. A sealed document was only to be opened by the addressee. For those in power, such as kings or governors, the seal served as a symbol of authority (Kittel 1971b:661).

In the Graeco-Roman world there is a combination of the cultic and the legal when the word is used for the marking of sacrifices declared suitable by the priest. The priest, called *ιερομοσφραγίτης καί τῆς θεμοσχοφραγίτης*, normally put a strip of papyrus around the horns of an animal, put sealing clay on it, and set the impress of his signet ring on it. He also had to send the sacrificing priest a written authentication of the cleanness of the beast (Kittel 1971b:943).

#### **2.4.3.7 χαρακτήρ**

In the Graeco-Roman world *χαρακτήρ* is used as a technical term, that is, “to inscribe” an image or impression. The word is derived from the noun *χάραξ* that means “to cut to a point” or “to sharpen.” The term was used for branding marks on camels around 147 CE (Kittel 1974d:418), or to describe the appearance of an embryo (Kittel 197f:419). Likewise, during the second century CE the word was used to refer to a “feature” on an inscription (Kittel 1974d:419). The term *χαρακτήρ* does not occur in the works of the pre-Socratics (Thucydides and Xenophon) and the Attic orators. It is found once in Aristophanes and twice in

Plato. From very early the word also denoted the “distinctiveness” of a language or manner of speaking (Kittel 1974d:418-419).

#### **2.4.3.8 χάραγμα**

This term is defined as an engraved, etched, branded or inscribed mark or sign. In Sophocles the term is linked to *χαράσσω*, and in Philo it denotes the bite of a snake (Kittel 1974d:658). In the genitive, the term can mean money (Kittel 1974j: 416).

#### **2.4.4 Branding and sealing in the Roman army**

The Roman army often branded (στίγμα) convicted soldiers by marking them on the hand (Kittel 1971b:659). Military recruits were also branded, usually with a tattooed abbreviation of the name of the reigning emperor (Wiedeman 1981:193-194). Within the Roman legions the cult of Mithra gained support among soldiers (Clauss 2000:100-131). The first literary evidence of this cult appears in the first century CE (*Carnutum in Penonia Superior*; see Clauss 2000:20-34). The soldiers that worshipped Mithra normally wore a seal ring or other emblems like an eagle standing or an arrow with a mark (Clauss 2000:100-115). Sometimes soldiers were initiated into the cult of Mithra by being sealed on their foreheads (Griffith 2009: <http://eawc.evansville.edu/essays/Mithraism.htm>).

#### **2.4.5 Slavery and sealing in the Graeco-Roman world**

The sealing of slaves is well attested in the Graeco-Roman world.<sup>24</sup> The many slaves throughout the Roman Empire required rigorous marking – documents that indicated the ownership of slaves were sealed, as well as slaves themselves

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<sup>24</sup> All ancient societies were based on slavery (Stuart 2007:37-77). None, however, exploited slaves more thoroughly, squandered them so wantonly or depended on them as completely as the Romans did. The economy of Rome was sustained by slavery. During the first century CE the Roman fleet was captained by the emperor's slaves. Slaves also constituted the professional class of doctors, teachers, musicians, and artists (Barker, Lane & Ramsey 1969:211). The more trained and skilled slaves were, the better the price that could be obtained for them in the market. As an example we have a slave teacher being sold for 700 000 sesterces (Bouquet 1953:159). The sestertius or sesterce was an ancient Roman coin. During the Roman Republic it was a small silver coin, very rare, and issued only very occasionally. During the Roman Empire it was a large brass coin, with the value of one-quarter of a denarius.

(by being branded in their flesh).<sup>25</sup> The Romans often branded slaves (Kittel 1971b:659). The owners of slaves sometimes branded persistent runaway slaves on their foreheads, often with the letters *FUG* for *fugitivus* or fugitive (Kittel 1971b:659; Wiedemann 1981:193-194). Bouquet (1953:140-141) describes the different kinds of punishment for slaves (branding) as follows:

[F]or slaves who offended there were a number of barbarous punishments. They might be obliged to work in chains, they were frequently beaten with sticks or scourged with a whip; sometimes they were hung up by their hands with weights tied to their feet, or suspended so that their toes only just touched the ground, with the result that they had to strain their feet painfully in order to get any support. A very common mode of punishment was to make them carry a forked structure of wood around the neck while working. This was rather like the Chinese board punishment, or the pillory, of which we hear as late as the time of Charles II. It was called a *furca*, and slaves were often flogged while bearing it. Crucifixion was specially an extreme punishment for slaves. A runaway slave, and also a thief, might be branded on the forehead with indelible mark (στίγμα). Another punishment was to be sent to grind at the mill, which would be somewhat the equivalent of the old treadmill in convict prisons.

(Bouquet 1953:140-41)

Besides the branding or marking of slaves, other forms of sealing included collars that were used to identify slaves (Glancy 2002:88). Sometimes slaves wore thick metal collars inscribed with mottos, marking the wearer as a slave. These metal collars are among the most startling artifacts surviving from the ancient world. Most slavery collars we have are post-Constantinian. Many of these collars bore Christian iconography written in κοινή, such as the Α, Ω and Π. Some have suggested that most known slave collars so far are probably those of Christian owners (Shawn 2001:51-78, 167-177; see also the compilation of Porter in <http://homepage.usask.ca/~jrp638/CourseNotes/slavery.html>

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<sup>25</sup> Even though the Roman Empire lasted five centuries, only two hundred years can be considered the golden age of Rome (Horn 1995:1003). This golden age included Paul's time. By then, Rome had a population of about 800 000 to 1 600 000 inhabitants. Many of those were slaves. Vila (et al 1985:186), commenting on the social class order and population in Corinth, argues for a population of 700 000 to 800,000 in Corinth during the time of Paul. Of these population numbers, approximately 400 000 were slaves. The estimate of slave numbers in the Roman Empire in the first and second centuries varies among authors. Scheidel, for example, estimates the number of slaves in the Roman Empire before the mid-second century plague between 2 and 3 million in Italy alone (Scheidel; Princeton/Stanford Working Papers in Classics: 1-32). Corcoran (2006:4), in following Harris, Scheidel and Brunt, estimates that in Augustan Italy the total population was 7 million, including 3 million slaves.



owners (Shawn 2001:51-78, 167-177; see also the compilation of Porter in <http://homepage.usask.ca/~jrp638/CourseNotes/slavery.html>)

Slaves were often forced to wear bronze slave collars or bronze slave tablets bearing the name and address of the slave's owner, as well as instructions on how to return the slaves if they ran away, much like the dog tags of today (Ehrman 2007:317, 344-347). One such a collar discovered around the neck of a skeleton in Rome reads "if captured, return me to Apronianus, minister in the imperial palace, for I am a fugitive slave" (see Ehrman 2000:316-318).

Glancy (2006:8) describes these engraved collars as mute reminders of the brutality of ancient slavery. Nonetheless, these collars ironically may have originated as an effort to humanize somewhat one of the most inhumane aspects of the institution of slavery, that is, the practice of tattooing or branding runaway slaves on the face, a practice that Constantine forbade in 315 CE.

#### **2.4.6 Sealing of letters in ancient Rome**

It was a common practice in the Roman Empire to authenticate letters by sealing and stamp procedures. According to Richards (2004:174), letters were authentication in three possible ways:

- the use of a seal (signet) pressed in clay;
- a summary of the letter's content in the author's own handwriting at the end of the letter; or
- a word of farewell in the author's own handwriting at the end of the letter.

The author normally did not sign a letter until the carrier was actually ready to depart for the very reason that some new news could arrive and necessitate changes in the letter (Richards 2004:174-180).

Forgeries of letters to damage someone's reputation or cause were common in ancient Rome.<sup>1</sup> In antiquity, the authenticity of a letter went hand in hand with its

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<sup>1</sup>Richards (2004:174-180) suggests such a forgery most probably was done to Paul, as can be deducted from 2 Thessalonians 2:2.



handwriting and the letter's seal (in the case of the upper class). An autographed signature was the customary means of avoiding the problem of forgeries, if the recipient knew the writer's handwriting (Richards 2004:146). Proof of this custom is offered by Richards (2004:183). In a correspondence between a father and his son in the Alexandrian navy, the son wrote his father (in Latin) the following: "And if you are going to send anything, put an address on everything and describe the seal to me by letter, lest any exchange be made in route." Evidently it was not unheard of for a ship's crew to open packages, pilfer some contents, and then reseal the package and place another seal on it.

Cicero and Quintus were to inherit a portion of the state of a man named Felix. The filed copy of the will did not include them. Carelessly, Felix sealed (and thereby authenticated) an incorrect copy. Although apparently his slave (secretary) was to blame, Felix was responsible, and thus the older will stood uncontested (Richards 2004:183). Since most papyrus letters consisted of a single page (leaf), the page was folded accordion-style in a strip about an inch wide (much as children make a paper fan from a sheet of paper). Opening a sealed letter compromised it and made its contents suspect.

When ancients traveled to new places, they sought someone of status in the new location to facilitate the visit. Ideally, they asked an acquaintance of status from their hometown to write a recommendation letter. Travelers carried such letters with them as a way to introduce themselves and to gain assistance in their new location.<sup>2</sup>

The forgery of letters and seals was so common in ancient Rome that many of the wealthy used trustworthy slaves to deliver letters on their behalf. The Epicurean Papius Paetus, for example, had set two slaves aside solely for carrying his letters (Richards 2004:176-181). Many examples attest to the existence of imperial letter carriers called the Roman Imperial Postal System (*cursus publicus*). There is also literary evidence of happenstance letter carriers

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<sup>2</sup> Richards (2004:183-187) notes the following example: A Roman citizen by the name of Cicero sent a sealed letter or recommendation to be carried by the recommended person, Caecina, to be given to Furfanius. Cicero also provided Caecina with a copy of the recommendation letter so he would know what Cicero had written.

(family members, employees, friends, soldiers, businessmen and travelers). In most cases, private letter- carriers were used by the wealthy elite (Richards 2004:176-181).<sup>3</sup>

## 2.5 SEALING IN GNOSTICISM

In Christian Gnosticism novices were sealed with a hot iron on the lobe of the right ear, a sealing that represented the final baptism of fire mentioned by John the Baptist (Mt 3:11). Later, after becoming insiders, they had the sign of the cross or the name of Christ tattooed on their wrist or arms (Kittel 1971a:664). The Eucharist was also seen as a kind of seal. In the Acts of Thomas King Gunda and his brother Gad, after being converted, asked Thomas to seal them, since God knows his sheep by their seal (Kittel 1971b:952). The Gospel of Thomas 111 and the Acts of Thomas also refer to the marking of those who belong to God (Ehrman 2003:13, 57-63). It is unclear, however, if this marking refers to baptism (as a seal) or to chrism (anointing with oil; Cartlidge & Dungan 1994:34-38). In Gnosticism baptism was also understood as a seal, as can be deduced from 2 Clement 7:6; 8:6 and the Pastor of Hermas (IX, 6:16, 17:31; see also Ehrman 2003:188, 251-279). For Gnostics sealing was also seen as the mysterious means by which the Gnostic is protected when traversing through various zones and aeons (Kittel 1971b:952). Sealing is thus seen as a form of protection.

The term *σημεῖον* is also used in Gnosticism, and seems to bear no specific meaning. When it is used, the meaning thereof is not distinctively religious. The word occurs (Kittel 1971b:208) for example, in *Hermetica* (Corp Hem, 2; Nock-Fest I, 44-45) where *σημεῖον* means “constellation” (Corp. Hem., III.204, 41 ff in Kittel 1971b:207). Another use for the word *σημεῖον* is in the sense of “proof” or “example” (Kittel 1971b:207). It is also found in a magical third century CE prayer to the moon goddess in the sense of “form in which the nature of something expresses itself” (Kittel 1971b:208). The word does not occur in the so-called Mithras Liturgy (Kittel 1971b:207).

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<sup>3</sup> The people from Chloe (1 Cor 1:11) most probably were slaves sent to carry a letter from Corinth to Paul.

## 2.6 SEALING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

### 2.6.1 A concordance of sealing in the New Testament

The word sealing (in its different grammatical forms) appears 32 times in the New Testament. Sealing as a noun is used 18 times (Mt 27:66; Jn 3:33; Rm 4:11; 1 Cor 9:2; 2 Tm 2:19; Rv 5:1, 2, 5, 9; 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 7:2; 8:1; 9:4; 20:3). As a gerund (action noun) it appears 12 times (Jn 6:27; Rm 15:28; 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 4:30; Rv 5:1; 7:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). As a verb it has two references (Rv 10:4; 22:10).

### 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).

This prediction is registered also in Matthew and Mark within other prophetic settings on the same arcane (Mt 24:15, 16; Mk 13:14). The Lukan record says "Όταν δὲ ἴδητε κυλουμένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων Ἰερουσαλήμιν, τότε γινώτε ὅτι ἤγγικεν ἡ ἐρήμωσις αὐτῆς (στρατόπεδον = army; στρατοπέδαρχος = military commandant of a military camp). To attest the presence of Roman legions at that specific time in Jerusalem (Gruhalbo et al 1973:267) shows two seal fragments. One is just a seal fragment found in Jerusalem that belonged to the *Legio X Fretensis*. This Roman legion was the one that seized and destroyed Jerusalem (Gruhalbo 1973:111). A piece of that Roman legion seal is shown below.



Piece of the seal of the *Legio X Fretensis*

(Gruhalbo et al 1973: 267)

Another seal picture depicts a most complete seal device from the same *Legio X Fretensis*. It is written by Gualbo (1973:111) that legion soldiers enforced the public order during the Jewish feasts and they executed prisoners that were decreed by the Sanhedrin not without the execution ratification from the Roman Magister. The *Legio X Fretensis* operated from 41 BCE to after 410 CE. It was also known as the legion “of the strait.” They had different mascot symbols such as bull, ship, Neptune and the boar (Geva 1984:247-249).

Below there is an example of thirteen pieces of a seal used for identification of the *Legio X Fretensis*, the same legion that destroyed Jerusalem in 70 CE and seized Masada.



Fragmented seal of the *Legio X Fretensis*

(Gualbo et al 1973:111)

The following interesting of the next page is also an engraved inscription of the *Legio X Fretensis* has been found in Jerusalem that depicts this legion.



Engraved writing of the *Legio X Fretensis*, found in Jerusalem

([www.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Legio\\_X\\_Fretensis](http://www.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Legio_X_Fretensis))

### 2.6.3 Terms for sealing in the New Testament

The New Testament, as is the case in the Graeco-Roman world, uses seven terms for sealing: εἰκών, μώλωψ, σφράγις, στίγμα, χαράκτηρ, χαράγμα, σημεῖον, and σκόπός. Sometimes the meaning of these terms in the New Testament overlaps with their usage in the Graeco-Roman world, as will be indicated below.

#### 2.6.3.1 εἰκών (εἰκόνα, εἰκόν, εἰκονι, εἰκόνου)

The word appears 22 times in the New Testament. Twelve of these occurrences are found in the book of Revelation, which will be discussed in a later chapter. For the rest the vocable εἰκών (in its different tenses) occurs several times in the New Testament. As a nominative, εἰκών appears in Matthew 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:7, 2 Corinthians 4:4, and Colossians 1:15. The genitive εἰκόνος is found in Romans 1:23 and 8:29. The case of accusative εἰκῶνα occurs in Luke 20:24; 1 Corinthians 15:49; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:10 and Hebrews 10:1. This term is used mostly to refer not only to the exterior image of an object, but also to its inside character—it presents the similarity (in terms of genuine likeness and equality) between the external copy of an object and the original (Kittel 1964f:388). The term is especially used in the New Testament to describe likeness between God and Christ.



In Colossians<sup>4</sup> 1:15 εἰκὼν is utilized to describe the image of Christ (εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ), illuminating Christ's inner core and essence (Kittel 1964f:389) – the original (God) is present in the image (Christ).

In the Pauline writings, when εἰκὼν is related to anthropology, man is seen as still to be restored.<sup>5</sup> Those who possess the image of God will finally obtain it at the eschaton (1 Cor 15:45, 49). In Hebrews 10:1 this visible manifestation of His image is sharply distinguished from mere σκία (Kittel 1964f:395). The law only deals with the σκία, and not with the essence of things. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 Christ is also called the εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ, again with emphasis on the equality of the εἰκὼν with the original (Kittel 1964g:395).<sup>6</sup>

Εἰκὼν in the New Testament has to do with the half Sickle coin used as tax or tribute for the Temple to all Hebrew male from 20 years of age and on. Often, this

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<sup>4</sup> There is not unanimity amongst scholars regarding the authorship of Colossians. On the basis of internal evidence (see Col 1:1; 2:1; 4:3-4, 7-8, 13, 18; 4:18) some argue for Pauline authorship, or that Timothy acted as secretary or amanuensis of Paul (see, e.g., Schweizer, in Brown 1990:876-887). Another argument that is put forward for Pauline authorship is Paul's reference to some of his co-workers (Col 4:7-18) that accompanied him on some of his missionary travels and thus clearly link Colossians to Pauline authorship: Tychicus (Col 4:7; see Eph 6:21), Onesimus (Col 4:9; see Phlm 10), Aristarchus (Col 4:10; see Ac 19:29; 20:4; 27:2), Mark (Col 4:10; see Phlm 24; Ac 15:36-40; 2 Tm 4:11), Epaphras, possibly a natural of Colossus (Col 4:12), Luke (Col 4:14; see Ac 16:10), and Demas (Col 4:14; see 2 Tm 4:10). Some scholars, like Brown (1990:870-876), have noted the parallel between the description of baptism in Romans 6:1-4 and Colossians 2:12 as a basis for Pauline authorship. There are, however, also arguments against Pauline authorship. Gnllka (in Brown 1990:877) suggests the epistle was composed around 70 CE, and Loshe (in Brown 1990:877) opts for 80 CE, in which case the letter was written by followers of Paul. Loshe, for example, regards Colossians as the product of a Pauline school tradition located in Ephesus (Loshe, in Brown 1990:877). Another argument against Paul's authorship is the occurrence of 48 words in Colossians not to be found in other letters of Paul (of which 33 occurs nowhere else in the New Testament; see Koester 2000:572-580). Werner (1975:565-565), on the basis of Colossians' "liturgical hymn-style," also has argued against Pauline authorship. The point of departure taken here is that Colossians, on the basis of the internal evidence listed above, is to be considered Pauline.

<sup>5</sup>Kittel (1964g 395) elaborates on the juxtaposition between δόξα and ὁμοίωμα εἰκόνοσ. He says that "in Ro 1:23, though with no particular emphasis, is read that men exchanged δόξα of the immortal God for the ὁμοίωμα εἰκόνοσ of mortal man, birds, four-footed beasts and serpents. Here, there is an opposition to the heathen cult of images. The distinctiveness of the expression lies in the juxtaposition of ⇒ ὁμοίωμα, which here means the copy, and εἰκὼν, which is the original copied, the thing itself and its form. They exchanged . . . for the copy of the figure of men and animals."

<sup>6</sup>In Philippians 2:6 Christ is described as ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ and εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ (Phlp 2:6), which, according to Kittel (1964g:395), also emphasizes the similarity between the image and the original.

type of money was coined outside of Palestine and, therefore, they were engraved with human images as it happened with the Roman Sickle with Greek characters. To avoid that Jewish religious sacrilege, there were money- changers that exchanged the gentile coins for the Jewish ones before such money went to the Temple treasury. Gualbo (1973:1134) shows a half Sickle with a Caesar image and Greek characters on it.



(Gualbo 1973:143)

#### 2.6.3.2 μώλωψ

Pratt (Pratt, in Orr & Nuelsen 1974g:1986, citing Sir 23:10 and 28:17 as examples) translates μώλωψ as “bruise.” The only use of μώλωψ in the New Testament is 1 Peter 2:24 (Schneider, in Kittel 1967g:829), where the word is used in the context of slavery—slaves that are beaten without reason should remember the voluntary substitution and bruising of the Messiah (Is 53:5). When a Christian slave is unjustly beaten he should remember that paradoxically the blows which the δοῦλος Christ suffered accomplished the world’s salvation. This does not justify unjust beating, but leaves the judgment thereof to God alone (1 Pet 1:23).



### 2.6.3.3 σημεῖον (σημεῖα)

In the New Testament σημεῖον occurs 73 times. There are 10 occurrences in Matthew; 7 in Mark; 23 in Luke (Lk 10 and Ac 13); 24 in John; 8 in the Pauline literature and 1 occurrence in Hebrews (the remaining six occurrences are from Revelation and will be discussed later). It is absent from Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon and the Pastorals. Nor does it occur in the Catholic letters (Kittel 1971b:229). Σημεῖα, which is a neuter plural accusative, is often used with τέρατα, an accusative neuter plural. Τέρα is very common in Greek and fairly common in the LXX, and occurs in the New Testament only in combination with the plural of σημεῖον (σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα; see, e.g., Mt 24:24; Mk 13:22; Jn 4:48). According to Kittel (1971b: 231), the word σημεῖον is used in Luke 2:12 as an introduction to the declaration of the angel in which he adduces as a “sign” or “proof” of the truth of his message about the birth of the Messiah.

Σημεῖον is used in Luke 2:1-20 to describe the way in which the Messiah has found His first resting- place in a crib. In Matthew 26:48 the same word σημεῖον shows the sign φίλημα “a kiss” employed by Judas to betray Jesus (ὁ ἄν φιλήσω αὐτό ἐστιν; Kittel 1971b:231).

In the New Testament the concept of σημεῖον is also associated with two Messianic phrases. These phrases are: “the sign of Jonah” (Mt 12:39) and “the sign of the Son of Man” (Mt 24:30). (Kittel 1971b:232-233). These two expressions will be considered next.

#### 2.6.3.3.1 τὸ σημεῖον ᾿Ιωνᾶ in Matthew 12:39

Kittel (1971b:233) says that one of the attempts to explain that saying is ᾿Ιωνᾶ as a genitive opposition and finds in τὸ σημεῖον. According to the context and also the meaning of σημεῖον it seems very probable that the saying characterizes Jonah as the one in whom God Himself (the future passive δοθήσεται) from δίδωμι, denoting God in Mt 12:39 and Lk 11:29, (Kittel 1971b:233), shows

Himself to be present with the prophet and at work through him and his call for repentance.

#### **2.6.3.3.2 σημείον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in Matthew 24:30**

Kittel (1971b:237) says that this New Testament portion proves to be complex and deals with a previous announcement of the *Parousia* and a last history act of conversion opportunity. In the Old Testament there are three verses that show the future fulfillment of the Messianic sign (Dn 7:13 and Zch 12:12, 14).

#### **2.6.3.4 σκοπός**

This word means something observed in the distance, hence this term could be described as a “goal.” The Christian life was a goal experienced by the intensity of the Christian’s spiritual ardor, as a stadium or racecourse of the Greeks, with runners stretching every nerve to reach the goal and win the prize. In Wisdom 5:21 “they fly to the mark” is from εὐστόχοι “with true aim” (Pratt, in Orr & Nuelsen in 1974d:1986). The word σκοπός is also *hapax legomena* in the New Testament. Its only presence is in Philippians 3:14 where it is used to refer to someone that is involved in a contest in the arena with a goal or looking for a mark (Kittel 1971b:413-414).

#### **2.6.3.5 σφραγίς (σφραγίζω, σφραγίδα, σφραγίδα, σφράγισαντε, ἐσφραγίσθητε, σφραγίσεται, σφράγισιν, σφραγισάμενον, σφραγίσωμεν, ἐσφράγισεν)**

This term appears 24 times in the New Testament. In the book of Revelation sealing is parsed 31 times. These seal occurrences found in Revelation are going to be considered in a later chapter. In the rest of the New Testament the word appears in Matthew, Romans, 2 Corinthians, and Ephesians. In Matthew 27:66 σφραγίσαντες is an aorist participle. In Romans 15:28 and 2 Corinthians 1:22 σφραγισόμενος is also an aorist participle but middle nominative; however, in Romans 4:11 and 2 Timothy 2:19 σφραγίδα is parsed as an accusative. In 1 Corinthians 9:2 σφραγίς is in the nominative. Regarding this last Corinthian Bible reference, Wigram (2002:715) says that in 2 Corinthians 11:10, The Received

Text reads φραγήσεται. This is the same parsed term that also appears in the best MSS and all the versions. The verb φραγήσεται in 2 Corinthians 11:10 is a future passive indicative. In Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30, ἐσφραγίσθητε, the present aorist passive is attested. When Paul writes to the believing community in Corinth he presents his apostleship as a valid seal (1 Cor 9:2). In Ephesians 1:13 the Paulinist uses this term to denote property. The believer is sealed by the Holy Spirit and becomes God's property. Here the author of Ephesians uses well-known commercial language as a figure of speech: the shipment has been accepted, payment has been made, and the owner's seal is stamped on the product to secure it with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

#### **2.6.3.5.1 σφραγίς in Ephesians 4:30**

In Ephesians 4:30 σφραγίς is referred to in the context of a warning not to distress or grieve the Spirit. The word he uses is λυπέιτε (second person plural, present imperative active), and means "pain," "grieve," or "injure." In the passive form it means "to be sad" or "to be distressed." The verb ἐσφραγίσθητε (second person plural, aorist indicative passive) can be translated by "sealed," "to secure with a seal," "marked with a seal," "to be set apart by seal," or "affixed to be true" (Alland, in <http://www.olivetree.com>). The metaphorical meaning of ἐσφραγίσθητε here suggests the factor of anticipation. The shipment has been sent, and Markus Barth (1974:547) adds that in verse 30 of the letter to the Ephesians the act of sealing shows that it has not yet been fully received.

#### **2.6.3.5.2 σφραγίς and the Paulinist theory on Ephesians**

Conservative Historicism believes Paul as the author of this epistle (Nichol & Cottrell 1990f:991-993). Current trends consider Ephesians authorship otherwise. It is important to discuss briefly the Ephesians epistle under the non-Pauline and Paulinist theories. This discussion helps to grasp the current pros and cons arguments on the Pauline authenticity of this letter, which have been considered as such for long time. The Pauline metaphorical approach of σφραγίς proposed in this thesis for 2 Timothy 2:19 suggests one Pauline goal in his letters

to infuse in the believers practical life principles that Jesus lived by. Paul is emphatic with these applied lessons in the life of the church believers of Ephesus (Eph 1:4,5,13, 15, 2:1-9, 10; 3:14, 16; 4:17-32; 5:1-32; 6:1-9). Because practical theology is an important issue in Pauline letters, this testimonial connectivity in some of his epistles makes an interesting field to study such non-Pauline and Paulinist authorship approach for Ephesians. It is also appropriate to cite here the non-Pauline authorship position for Ephesians as another debating issue among scholars today. Hoehner (2002:19-20) points out that before 1972, the majority of scholars considered Ephesians as being Paul's. However, the same Hoehner (2002:19-22) declares that there are two time periods of thought change for this (1971-1981 and from 1981-2001) where scholars inclined to a Paulinist authorship rather than a Pauline authorship. Other scholars were influenced by an older theory developed by Evanson, an English clergyman from the nineteenth century who thought of Ephesians as being an Apocryphal writing. Evanson (Evanson 1805:314) argued that the internal evidence from Ephesians was too impersonal to be written by Paul who had spent more than two years with the Ephesians' church as is recorded in the book of Acts (19:9-10), (see Hoehner 2002:6). Another argument against a Pauline Ephesians authorship is that the letter does not have personal greetings. That implies that the author had no intimate connection with his readers (Evanson 1805:312-313 and Hoehner 2002:6). One more internal evidence for non-Pauline authorship on Ephesians is sustained in the many *hapax legomena* present in the letter and the unique combination of words, including also long sentences that are found nowhere else in Pauline literature (Evanson 1805:lxv-lxvi). This same argument is applied to the Pastorals for non-Pauline authorship. In the Pastorals the term εὐσέβεια (1 Tm 6:11) is found nowhere in the Pauline writings. The same situation goes for the other 175 *hapax legomena* which are present in the Pastorals (Guthrie in 1990:619) including ἀδραποδισται (1 Tm 1:10); ἀφθορίαν (Ti 2:7).<sup>7</sup> It is observed

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<sup>7</sup>Lea (1991:535-559) points out, for instance, that the Pastorals contain historical allusions to Paul's life that cannot be placed within the book of Acts. Paul was with Timothy and left him in Ephesus to combat false teachers while he went to Macedonia (1 Tim 1:3). Similarly, he has left Titus in Crete (Ti 1:5). Paul also referred to Onesiphorus who had been seeking for him in Rome

by Lincoln (1990:lx) that the normal Pauline emphasis on the cross and death are all but missing in Ephesians and have been replaced by an emphasis on Christ resurrection exaltation and cosmic lordship.

Notwithstanding the previous Paulinist authorship arguments for Ephesians, pro-Pauline writing authors on Ephesians also postulate their reactions against the above Paulinist authorship on Ephesians. The external evidence from Church Fathers and ancient writers is a common way of introducing these Pauline group opinions on Ephesians. Stöckhardt (1952:3) sustains that Ireneaus viewed Ephesians as a letter classified as one of ὁμολογούμενα and, therefore Pauline. Marcion and Valentinus recognized Paul as the author of the Epistle (Hiebert 1954:256). The writings of the Apostolic Fathers also attested to Paul's authorship. The fact that Clemens Romanus, Ignatius of Ephesus, and Polycarp to Philippians seemed to have used the letter as a source from some of their own writings is attesting the Pauline origin of Ephesians. Regarding the absence of intimate connection within the letter to consider Ephesians Pauline, the internal evidence of the Epistle argues otherwise. The author asks for the Ephesians' prayers and set Tychicus forward as his representative (6:21, 22). These two elements suggest certain intimacy and friendship toward the Ephesians Church. We will turn to Tychicus shortly to sustain the pro-Pauline authorship. The author of the Epistle identifies himself using a personal connection with all the believers in Ephesus (1:3-12, 14, 19; 2:3-7, 10, 14-16, 18; 3:12, 20; 4:7, 13-15; 5:2; 6:12). He approaches them with friendship, calling himself "the very least of the saints" (3:8). Justifying the difference in writing style between Ephesians and the varieties of works of the same author, Stöckhardt (1952:8-9) says that it is common for authors to use certain words frequently in one setting and infrequently in another. One simple example for this is the usage of the

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(2 Tm 1:16-17) and he is now prisoner (2 Tm 1:18, see also 2 Tm 4:16). However there are some answers for those apparent historical mistakes. Paul was released from his imprisonment (Acts 28), then he travelled back to the East and was later arrested and imprisoned in Rome again. Another argument against a different authorship for Pastoral and their historical misconceptions with Acts is the fact that the writers did not tell in detail the whole historical process of the different Pauline journeys.

preposition ἐν. In Romans chapter one, this preposition appears 25 times but in Romans chapter six it only occurs five times. Discussing the apocryphal and pseudo graphical argument in Ephesians, Hoehner (2002:42) elaborates that the New Testament period has been twisted to fit the ideas of modern scholars. For instance Lea (1991:535-559 and Meade 1987:139-153) says Ephesians would have been known as pseudo graphical but was no less authoritative. The same Hoehner (2002:43) points out that Jewish tradition such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Gospel of Peters (among others) were not considered as canonical because either they contained fake teachings or were known for being pseudonymous. The letter to Ephesians contains the author's statement for Pauline authenticity (Eph 1:1, 2).

Returning to the name of Tychicus in the letter to the Ephesians, Hoehner (2002:49) argues that if the letter is pseudonymous, the information of Tychicus and Paul's reason for sending him to the Ephesians would be idiotic (Eph 6:21-22). If Paul was dead, what would Tychicus say about how Paul was doing? The apostle Paul was a well-known figure, and if he was dead and someone claimed to have information on his well-being, no one would accept such a notion. Neither would a pseudonymous author be so naïve as to include such a reference. Adding to this previous statement Gempf (1992:10) declares that if it was his desire (the pseudonymous person) to fool his recipients into thinking the real Paul had written the letter, its pseudonymous works got into the Canon (Meade 2002:42).

After these brief Pauline/Paulinist authorship antecedents on Ephesians we turn now to the commentaries for sealing in Ephesians 4:30. In Ephesians 4:30 the author uses εσφραγίσθητε in the passive tense (and therefore suggests an already fulfilled process), it does not mean that this sealing cannot be lost. His use of λυπεῖτε emphasizes this possibility. As Dunn (1997:302) has indicated, the Paulinist wrote his letters using metaphoric language that related to various aspects of daily life in the first century. At the heart of all of those metaphors,



according to Dunn, was the consciousness of a radically new relationship with God determining the whole of life's course by the light of the imminent end.

The Paulinist never allowed the exciting newness of the “already” to silence the promise and warning of the “not yet:”

[The Paulinist] never allows the tension between the two to slacken. This is sufficiently clear from his use of the same metaphors. For the most part, he prefers to speak of the believer as already justified (Rom 5:1); but in Galatians 5:5 he talks of righteousness as something still awaited and hoped for. In one sense believers already have redemption (Rm 3:24; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14); but in another way, they still await redemption, that is redemption of the body (Rom 8:23; Eph 1:14; 4:30). Salvation is essentially an eschatological good, something still awaited; wholeness belongs to the not yet (Rom 5:9; 13:11; 1 Thess 5:8), hence the striking use of the present tense of the verb in 1 Corinthians 1:18; 15:2; 2 Corinthians 2:15: believers are in the process of being saved.

(Dunn 1997:309)

The Spirit is the key to the eschatological tension of the Christian experience (Dunn 1997:310, 443). The sealing in Ephesians 4:30 is therefore the anticipation of the eschatological fulfillment.

The Spirit is the future good which has become present for the man of faith, that power of the “not yet” which has already begun to be realized in his present experience. The same author explains that Spirit is who makes us sons (πνεῦμα υἱοσθεσία) in anticipation with a view to full sonship at the eschaton (Rm 8:15, 23). As in the case of Jesus (Rm 8:3, 5; 16:2, 4), the Spirit is the powerful manifestation of the future rule of God in and through the present life in faith (Rm 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20). To experience the Spirit is to begin (but only begin) to enter upon the inheritance of sonship (Rm 8:15-17; 1 Cor 6:9-11; 15:42-50; Gl 4:1-7; 5:16-25; Eph 1:14; Tt 3:5-7).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>According to De Vaux's (Dunn 1965:490) reference to Paul's use of the metaphors ἀπαρχή (first fruits) and ἀρραβών (first installment) supports his understanding of Paul's not yet fulfillment scheme. According to Behm in the use of ἀρραβών (in Kittel 1964c: 475), Moulton & Milligan are correct when they are of the opinion that in modern Greek ἡ ἀρραβώνα is used for “engagement ring.” In both metaphors, which are given as a part of the whole: in a transaction, ἀρραβών (money, clothes) as the total payment, the total harvest is made up of sheaves just like the one used as the ἀπαρχή. So, for Paul, the gift of the Spirit is the first part of redemption of the whole man, the beginning of the process which will end when the believers become a spiritual body, that is, when the man of faith enters into a mode of existence determined solely by the Spirit (the genitives ἀπαρχή and ἀρραβώνη πνεύματος are generally and correctly taken as genitives of opposition). For Dunn, the forward looking emphasis in both metaphors does not imply any

(Dunn 1997:311)

#### 2.6.3.5.3 σφραγίς in John 6:27 and John 3:33

In John 6:27 ἐσφράγισεν (third person singular, aorist indicative active) refers to the confirmation (to certify) of the gift of everlasting life bestowed on believers by the Son of Man (Jesus). According to Brown (1966:156) it can be translated as “certified,” and it can be argued that the usage here refers to the setting of a seal indicating approval in a legal document. In John 6:27 it is however most probably used in a Semitic way *hottam* (hottam). By accepting God’s testimony, the believer has certified (set his seal of approval) that God is faithful (Brown 1966:261).

Here God sets His seal on the Son, not so much by the way of approval, but more by way of consecration. The verb is in the aorist so that commentators think of a particular action, like the incarnation (Spicq) or the baptism (Bernard). Westcott suggests that this is a consecration to sacrifice. Others think of the Son as bearing the seal image of the Father (Col 1:15), even as He bears the divine name. It has also been proposed that this sealing of Jesus by the Father is contrasted to the crowd’s attempt in verse 15 to make Jesus king.

(Brown 1966:261-262)

In John 3:33 the term is used in the sense of “confirmation” (Kittel 1971b: 943).

#### 2.6.3.5.4 σφραγίς in Matthew 27:66

In Matthew 27:66 σφραγίσαντες, (an aorist participle active, masculine plural) σφραγίζω is used to refer to the sealing of the stone of Jesus’ tomb by the Romans. Craig (2005 in [www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/guard.html](http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/guard.html)) says the use of σφραγίζω here (Mt 27:66) has an apologetic purpose: the refutation of the allegation that the disciples had themselves stolen Jesus’ body (see Mt 28:2, 11-15). Chinnock, in following Robertson (1974:239) and commenting on the seal of Jesus’ tomb and the way in which the tomb was sealed, points to the fact that

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further giving of the Spirit, simply the increasing control of the believer by the one Spirit already given. However, Hamilton tries to safeguard his emphasis by translating ἀπαρχή with ‘the first fruits of what the Spirit has to give’ (Dunn 1963:32, note.2). According to Dunn, this is unnecessary since it suggests that the ἀπαρχή is something other than the Spirit.

the tomb most probably was sealed with a cord that stretched across the stone and sealed at each end as in Daniel 6:1 (“and a stone was brought and laid over the mouth, and the king sealed it with his own ring and with the signets of his nobles, so that nothing might be changed in regard to Daniel”). McDowell in his commentary regarding the way Romans secured the tomb, explains they secured the cords with wax and stamped it carefully with the seal of imperial Rome (McDowell 1993: 221, 228-231).

This was done to protect the stamp of the Romans. Jesus’ tomb was most probably sealed by shutting the entrance of the tomb with a 1½-ton boulder that was rolled by levers to secure the entrance. It was thus not possible to open the grave without breaking the seal, which was seen as a crime against the authority of the proprietor of the seal. Such crime was punished with crucifixion upside down. The term “guard” used in Matthew 28:11-15 refers to four Roman soldiers, although some argue that the guard consisted of 10 to 30 guards as well (McDowell 1993:228-31). The technical sealing procedure on the tomb of Christ was an authentic “stay back” sign that included in itself inviolability and property warning for anyone who attempted to tamper with the seal and open the grave for any reason. This sealing process at the sepulcher of Christ was applied in the presence of the Roman guards who were left in charge to guard the grave of Jesus. Such sealing technicality was done impressing the respective Roman seal on fresh clay. The seal impressed motif could include the military seal from the Roman Procurator or the Roman legion seal where the Roman guard belonged. The Roman procedure of authenticity, inviolability and ownership in the ancient Roman army is attested also by Vegetius during 395 CE. (Flavius Vegetius Renatus (Philips 1985:40-49; see also [www.pvv.ntnu.no/~madsb/home/war/vegetius/](http://www.pvv.ntnu.no/~madsb/home/war/vegetius/))

#### **2.6.3.5.5 δφραγίς in Romans 4:11**

In Romans 4:11 σφραγίδα (noun: accusative, singular feminine) is used as a sign and seal of faith prior to baptism.

This word was also applied to certain marks by which documents or contracts were authenticated or confirmed. The term was applied to the instrument by which the marks were done. The circumcision had the purpose of being an external mark that signified the ratification of the covenant made with Abraham and the confirmation of his previous experience of righteousness by faith. Therefore, the circumcision could not be considered as a reason why a man could be accepted by God and received the divine favor, because circumcision was only a sign and a seal for Abraham and his descendants, of the righteousness that comes from faith. The circumcision did not confer righteousness; it was only an external evidence of it. Something similar happens with the Christians: the rite of baptism doesn't give righteousness, but only is considered as a sign and seal of the faith and righteousness that is experienced prior to baptism.

(Nichol and Cottrell1988c:511)

Green (1962:106) for his part, explains the sign of circumcision in Romans 4:11 as being an afterward acceptance and exterior act of righteousness done to Abraham many years after he was declared justified. Green (1962:106-107) justifies that statement saying that Abraham was declared just (applied righteousness) 25 years before he was circumcised. Cruden (1965:571) adds that symbolically sealing in circumcision is used as a seal that implies the doctrine of righteousness by faith. Green (1962:322), commenting on Ro 15:28, suggests that sealing is an internal, unseen spiritual act that is seen exteriorly when people are sealed with the fruits of the gospel (Gl 5:20-22) and those fruits are shown in people lives.

Signs (like seals) maintain an essential relationship between two kinds of reality which can be seen and which cannot be seen. As such, seals are a constant reminder that a relationship exists. They also serve as a visible confirmation of what is otherwise no more than an intangible hope. It is a visible confirmation of what God has promised. Consequently it not only reminds, it also establishes. It is therefore natural that words used for the rite which outwardly marked the Jew's inclusion in the heritage of Israel very early were applied to baptism—the rite by which the Christian's admission to a fuller inheritance was declared (Buttrick 1953:443).

#### **2.6.3.5.6 σφραγίς in 1 Corinthians 9:2**

Another way in which sealing is perceived in the New Testament is when Paul is defending his apostleship in a figurative mode among the people of the church of Corinth in 1 Corinthians 9:2. Buttrick (1953:98) says those who had not seen the blessings accompanying Paul's ministry might have some reason to doubt his apostleship. Paul insists in 1 Corinthians 9:2 that his converts to the Gospel of Christ are the seal of his apostolic commission *εἰ ἄλλοις οὐκ εἰμὶ ἀπόστολος ἀλλὰ γε ὑμῖν εἰμὶ ἡ γὰρ σφραγίς μου τῆς ἀποστολῆς ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ* . However, the same Buttrick (1953:290-291), when commenting on 2 Corinthians 1:22, leans toward the idea that in this previous Corinthian epistle Paul is making a reference to the baptism where the believer is marked by God's own and that believer is accepted under God's protection. That is the same way in which Ironside perceives the Pauline apostleship. As in Ironside (1979:250) wherever God sent Paul, "the Spirit of God confirmed the message he carried, convicted men of their sin, led them to definite faith in Christ, and gave them the assurance of forgiveness and justification, that afterward by a new life they mightily demonstrate the reality of the work that had taken place in their souls." He also adds that:

At the time of baptism God gave the Christians the Holy Spirit as the earnest (KJV) or guarantee (RSV) of the full and final salvation, which the loyal believer might confidently expect. The term guarantee, used also in 2 Corinthians 5:5, was taken from commercial life. It meant the down payment by which the purchaser bound himself to complete the payment of the full price agreed upon. So God, in giving the Spirit at the start of the Christian life, has bound himself to give all the other blessings that belong to complete and permanent salvation (cf. Rm 8:32). Paul here implies that since he is thus established and supported by God, he cannot be charged with fickleness.

(Buttrick 1953:290-291)

#### **2.6.3.5.7 σφραγίς in 2 Corinthians 1:22**

Another interesting New Testament verse to consider within the context of sealing is found in 2 Corinthians 1:22. There are some writers, such as Ironside (1979:39-51), whose comments on this verse indicate that sealing is attached to

the operation of the Holy Spirit, who produces three building up steps in the Christian experience. These three growing steps are: 1) conviction, 2) sanctification, and 3) new birth through the word (1 Pet 1:23). For Ironside (1979:39-51) the Pauline statement “sealed us” in 2 Corinthians 1:22 is another way to express “ownership.” The Revised Version translates “sealed” for “established” in this verse. The Spirit, who regenerates and who baptizes into the body of Christ, dwells in the Christian’s life and gives certainty that Christians belong to God (Rm 8:9). So, in this respect seal is the “mark” that the believer belongs to Christ.

#### **2.6.3.5.8 σφραγίς as baptism in Ephesians 1:13**

Baptism has occupied an important part in the life of Christian converts. Whereas this rite might be practiced by aspersion or immersion, early Christians and other movements may be classified among the several baptismal currents that sprung up in and around the Jordan valley between 100 BCE and 300 CE. Some of these movements are known as the Qumran community, John the Baptist, Ebionites and several syncretistic groups by or for whom the *Sibylline Oracles* and the *Odes of Solomon* were composed. Barth (1974:133-145) explains that the *Odes of Solomon* was a collection of Gnosticizing hymns from the second century CE. or later. Pokorný (Barth 1974:138) is convinced that Christian baptism is opposed to the Gnostic imitation. Schlier (in Barth 1974:138) attributes to Ephesians a doctrine on baptism, which in many aspects closely resembles Gnostic ideas.

These and other religious associations set great importance on baptism. Some authors see the sealing as being the baptism itself. Barth (1974:95), referring to Ephesians 1:13, says that most commentators on this passage seem to agree that the term “sealing” is an image for baptism. Schlier (Barth 1974:133-137) also includes other Ephesians letter references (4:15-16; 2:21), justifying those references as being baptismal allusions in the letter to the Ephesians.



Barth (1974:139) says that evidence in literature for baptism as being sealing is not conclusive. The *Odes of Salomon*, *Shepherd of Hermas*, *II Clement* and *Pseudo Clementine Homilies* were written 100 years later than Ephesians. On the same page Barth insists that it is very dubious to consider Ephesians 1:1-6 as a liturgy of baptism, for instance. Barth (1974:140) concludes that there are various passages in the New Testament that may refer to baptism without using the very specific word baptism. There are also passages that speak of “baptism” and “baptizing” and have no direct reference to the baptism performed in the churches (Mk 1:8; 10:38-39; Lk 18:50 and, perhaps 1 Co 12:13).

According to Ephesians 1:14 and 4:30, the act of sealing is not an earnest call or assurance of the future inheritance, but is the Spirit Himself who guarantees the final liberation (Barth 1974:140). The gift and reception of the Spirit in Ephesians are especially eloquent in ascribing many functions to the Spirit. Through the Spirit: (1) God's secret is revealed. (2) God's wisdom is known. (3) There is a relationship that is given to the Judeo-Gentiles. (4) Strength is given to the inner man. (5) The unity of the congregation is established. (6) Numerous ministries are appointed. (7) The building and growing of the congregations continues. (8) The church members are inspired to converse in the language of hymns. (9) Consistency of prayer is assured (see Eph 1:17; 2:18; 3:5, 16; 4:7-16, 22-25; 6:1) (Barth 1974:140-142). In Ephesians 4:7, χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ is applied to Jesus who employs the same interchangeable Trinitarian unity work of bestowing gifts upon men (see Eph 4:8; 1 Cor 12:11).

Barth (1974:143) says this operation of the Spirit (Eph 1:19-20; 3:7, 20) is also described in other Pauline letters as having the same energy in the life of the Christian community (Gl 2:8; 3:5; 1 Cor 12:6-7, 11; Col 1:29). The central idea is to have been reborn, resuscitated with Christ. The baptism is only a designation formula.

It may be asked why should Paul use the term “sealing” in Ephesians 1:13 and in 2 Corinthians 1:22 if he meant only to say the same thing as in the other passages with less ambiguity in verbs that express “to give,” “to receive,” “to supply,” “to fill.” The possible connection between 2 Corinthians 1:22 and 3:2-3 provides an answer. While a “gift” may be handed out and received between two people in private, a “seal” instead, aims or presupposes an impact upon a third party. Sealing takes place in order to establish a public event, that is, to prove authority or authenticity for public benefit. Paul’s apostleship was challenged among the Corinthians. Unlike Jewish *sheluchim* (delegates from the Sanhedrin, a synagogue or a family) he could not produce letters, let alone a badge, proving his authority. His reply to the Corinthians was: “you’re yourselves a letter ... that anybody could read and see, and is plain that you’re a letter from Christ .... written not with the ink but with the Spirit of the living God” (2 Cor 3:2-3). The reference to “seeing” and “reading” of this letter by “anybody” manifests the public purpose and function inherent also in the act of “sealing with the Spirit” (Barth 1974:141).

#### **2.6.3.5.9 σφραγίς in 2 Timothy 2:19**

In 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:17-18 and 4:10, 14 the author of 2 Timothy says to Timothy that his co-workers in Christ cannot be trusted—some have deserted him and are not faithful in proclaiming the gospel. The most cherished hopes in life could vanish. But God’s fundament is firm σφραγίδα. Paul reminds Timothy that this fundament is the church. The word σφραγίδα means “firm,” “solid,” or “stable.”

To be sealed with God’s approbation is the maximum of what man may aspire to achieve and aim for. To all human beings that are sealed, God promises the protection of angel legions and the consoling encouragement of His divine presence.

In the New Testament, sealing is also manifested in the figurative mode applied to the life of Christ exemplified by His followers in their daily lives. Christ’s

principles. His moral integrity was manifested in some degree in the life of His followers. For Paul, to be a slave of Jesus Christ (Rm 1:1; 1 Cor 4:1; Phlp 1:1; Tt 1:1) means to be marked by the figurative sealing concept of the *imitatio Christi*. That was the core of his biographic preaching (Witherington III 1994:4; Mosley 2000:34).

In the days of Paul, to live a Christian lifestyle, meant an open invitation to persecution and mocking because that contradicted the standards of state religion (Brown 1990:347-348). The sealing in the figurative mode during early Christianity meant a testimonial and practical behavior in terms of Christian values and His moral life teachings. Such behavior meant for the Christian Ἀποστήτω ἀπὸ ἀδικία “to be far from iniquity” (2 Tm 2:19). Literally, it means to apostate, to keep away from wickedness. Such Christian behavior did promote an adverse reaction from pagan Roman society, especially when they were related to moral political pagan religious standards that were enforced by Rome. The imperial worship and the moral practices were against the seal of God for Christians (Ac 4:12; 5:29, 32; Rm 1:18-32; 1 Tm 2:5) which according Paul was to be apart from ἀδικία (Heb 2:19). This voluntary isolation from moral corruption and idolatry attracted upon Christians humiliation and eventually persecution. Evidently, to some degree, the Christian way of life was a signet of Christ-likeness.

Beside the figurative mode of sealing in their lives (*imitatio Christi*), the Roman government's and society's despise and rejection of Christianity was possibly motivated in part because Christians received anyone in their midst as an equal, slaves included. That shocked the fundamentals of Rome itself, which was grounded in the slavery merchandise of millions of human beings. This system was justified by the political and religious system imported also from Greece and beyond. Athenians, for instance, believed that there were only two kinds of people: Ἀθηναῖοι and the rest of the world (Nichol and Cottrell 1978c:489). Deissmann (1965:7-9) says that the majority of the Christian community during

New Testament times was composed of the humble-origin class, slaves included. That shows the humble origin of the Christian faith. Jesus of Nazareth was a carpenter and the apostle a tentmaker whose words dispersed throughout his letters depict the humble origin of primitive Christian congregations in great towns of antiquity. Describing the low- and humble-class society origin of Christianity, Deissmann (1965:7-146) depicts an engraved door inscription from a synagogue at Corinth (Ac 18:4; 1 Cor 1:18-21), which possibly was a meeting place for Christians. This engraved lettering is dated from the Imperial period and it says ΓΩΓ HEBP ]—Hebrews synagogue. It was without ornament of any kind. This simplistic lettering possibly shows the humble origin of the Corinthian church, which was possibly based on Christian slaves. However, according to the book of Acts (Ac 8:27, 36-39; 17:34; 13:4-12) and the letter to the Philippians (Phlp 4:22), Jesus of Nazareth was a carpenter.

The truth taught that as springtime returns each year the tree sap rises upward from below may be correctly applied to Christians in the first century (1 Corinthians 1:26-31). The prophecy of Isaiah 53:1-12 anticipates in some respects the humble humanity of the Messiah and the hidden divinity of Christ occult within His mission. The simple meeting at Caesarea of Phillip (Mt 16:13-16), the parable of the mustard seed (Lk 13:19), and the wheat grain teaching (Jn 12:24) add more evidence about the humble origin and kenotic life of Christ that penetrated the origin of the Christian community in the first century. For Christians of the first century, the concept of sealing can be seen as an authenticity of commitment and surrender to Jesus' teachings and a sense of ownership that will last to the end, no matter how much Imperial persecution and societal rejection and mocking could be brought against them. They depicted in their lives three important metaphorical sealing applications, namely: authenticity, ownership and property.

In 2 Timothy 2:19 σφραγίδα is also used in the sense of “inscription” and “trustworthiness”: a life that turns from wickedness and lives by doing God's will.

In a certain sense, the use of σφραγίδα in 2 Timothy 2:19 thus also refers to property.

#### 2.6.3.6 στίγμα (στίγματα)

In Galatians 6:17, στίγματα, (an accusative, feminine, singular) refers to a “brand” done by fire in the flesh of a slave or on other property with the name or the symbol that identified the owner. Also sometimes captives were branded in this manner, as well as soldiers (marked with their commander’s name). Slaves of a temple or followers of a specific deity were also marked in this way to demonstrate their devotion (Nichol and Cottrell 1988e:988). With the expression τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (Gl 6:17) Paul refers here to his physical being through persecutions and sufferings (see 2 Cor 4:10; 11:24-27). Paul’s opponents insisted on forcing the Gentile converts to accept the mark of the circumcision as a demonstration of their submission to Judaism. But Paul had on him the “τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ” that indicated whose slave he was, and for him there was no other loyalty but to Christ. The “τὰ στίγματα” of Paul therefore can be seen as his consecration to Christ. As such, Paul’s scars or marks testified to the inveterate hate of the Jews toward him (Gl 5:11 in Nichol and Cottrell 1988e:988). According to Ironside (1979:111-113), Paul’s στίγματα also served as a testimony of how one should follow Christ: “Men could look at him and say: That is the way Christ would have us live. And so you and I are called upon to manifest the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

#### 2.6.3.7 χαρακτήρ

The term χαρακτήρ (Heb 1:3) a noun, masculine, singular, nominative is *hapax legomena* in the New Testament. The humiliated and exalted Christ is described as an impression of God—Christ is the reflection and image of God (Kittel 1974d: 421). In the LXX the term χαρακτήρ occurs three times. In Leviticus 13:28 it is used to refer to the “scar” that results from burning. In 4 Maccabees 15:4 the likeness between parents and children is called χαρακτήρ.

The character of the former has been impressed on the latter (Kittel 1974d: 420). The term is also found in the Apocrypha. In 2 Maccabees 4:10 χαρακτήρ

(Ελληνικὸν χαρακτῆρα) it is employed for describing hell, culture, the abolishing of the laws of the fathers and the fathers and the introducing of customs contrary to the Law, such as the building of a gymnasium by Jason (Polybius 18:34, 7 in Kittel 1974f:420). It is also employed as “custom” and “practice.” It additionally denotes the distinctiveness of a language or manner of speaking (Kittel 1974d: 419).

#### **2.6.3.8 χάραγμα (χαραγματα, χαραγματι)**

The word χαραγματι (dative, singular, neuter in Acts 17:29) describes a stone engraved by art, literally “the sculpture of art and man’s device” (Wigram 2002:796). Kittel (1974d: 416-417) also registers that the word χαραγματι is used in a sense of handiwork. The word χάραγμα does not occur in LXX. Instead, we find the term Χαράσσω in the Maccabees. There this vocable, χαράσσω, is employed to explain the marking of the Jews by Ptolomey IV Philopator with the ivy leaf of Dionysus to denote allegiance for this god (3 Macc 2:29).

The term σφραγίς and χάραγμα are also present in Revelation. The word σφραγίς occurs 31 times in the Apocalypse (5:1, 2, 5, 9; 6:2, 5, 7, 9; 7:2, 3; 8:1, 4 and 20:3, 10) and χάραγμα appears eight times in the same book (13:16, 17; 14:9, 11; 19:20 and 20:4). These vocables will be discussed in § 4.2.

## **2.7 SEALING IN THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS**

In the Apostolic Fathers references to sealing are rare (Kittel 1971b:951). It is used only in 1 Clement 4:3. The author makes use of the story found in Numbers 17:16. Moses sealed 12 staffs or clubs representing the 12 heads of the tribes with their rings. In 2 Clement 7:6, the word “seal” is interpreted in the light of 1 Clement 8:6, “keep the flesh and seal inviolate.” In Clement 6:9 it is said of baptism that it should be kept pure and unspotted. A suggestion of sealing is represented by baptism when the two terms are used for describing the same thing. Yet, the antitheses of flesh and seal suggest rather the author takes the seal to represent the Holy Spirit (see Eph 1:13). In these passages Clement is



describing how converts go down into the water as dead men and rise up from the water alive (κακείνός ἐκηφυχθη ἡ σφραγίς αὕτη) (1 Clement 16:4). These passages are the earliest known evidence where baptism is clearly and unambiguously called a σφραγίς.

The most significant “seal” reference that declares the seal as being the water is found in the book of *Pastor of Hermas* 8: 2-3 and 9, 16:3-7 and 17:44 (Kittel 1971b:951-957). One particular comment states: “those who have received the seal of the Son of God,” and “we are told plainly that the seal is the water (ἡ σφράγις οὖν ὕδωρ ἐστίν). The vocable σημεῖον, as such, is not present during the Apostolic Fathers period either in Hermae, Epistle of Diognetus, Polycarp or Ignatius. The use of σημεῖον in Barnabas 12:5 is outside the common framework at a first glance. Here the serpent, which Moses lifted up, is typologically referred to as Jesus. In Nm 21:8, God told Moses to set up the brazen serpent upon a sign ἐπὶ σημείου (Kittel 1971b:261).

By the time of the Christian Fathers the term became a synonym of prophecy (Shea, in Ouro 1998:326-342).<sup>9</sup>

## 2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

From the Uruk period in the ANE up to the New Testament and inclusive of Gnosticism, a similarity in the use of sealing can be traced. These sealing use similarities throughout such history periods were expressed in economy, politics, religion, and social order. Some of those applications in history were used for indicating authenticity, inviolability, ownership, and protection.

With regards to the meaning and applications of sealing it is important to remember the presence of the sealing instrument used to place those meaning applications. Those applications were placed on various kinds of sealing techniques and materials throughout the ANE and so on. The stamp and cylinder

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<sup>9</sup> For a more detailed explanation of use of the apotelesmatic method in the prophecies of Daniel, see Ford (2007:10, 12-13, 17, 48, 65) and Blavatsky (2003:326).

seals were the first ones to be used for such purposes. The origin of stamp and cylinder seals dealt primarily with various objectives in mind, including illiteracy. In a world where so many people did not know how to read and write, sealing was also an appropriate way to solve that issue. It was a matter of one simple stamped seal as a signature. That process of stamping a seal was also important for economy, politics, religion, and social order applications.

As much in the Ancient Near East as in the New Testament world, the presence of property and ownership inviolability was crucial for ancient economy, where sometimes religion played a roll of authenticity in protecting seals. Shipments and cargo sometimes were stored in temples prior to their departure and the priests required an authentic proof of ownership and property from the enquirer in order to have access to the storing temple house where the product was seal protected and stored. The sealing was, in this particular, the technical element that united five honesty aspects involved in the act of storing the sealed contents in the temples and the careful attitude of priests in demanding a proof of transparency when people came to the sanctuaries asking to see or inspect their supposed property. In this sealing temple storing process, ownership, property, authenticity, inviolability, and protection were the five applicable figurative elements involved in this action.

In the cylinder seal, for instance, there was a chance of a little more writing area for writing or engraving the blessings from the gods that included protection against evil powers and also provided inviolability and genuineness. The contest scenes are observed in many seals, mainly that of kings fighting against evil powers in the form of mythical animals.

One of the most respected persons related to the art of seals in the ANE was the seal cutter. This was possibly because of a Kosmogonic tradition bestowed on him of a certain blessing from the gods and goddesses for which the seal cutter engraved their motifs and names. In the Babylonian market, the seal cutter work,

was important because he engraved the sealing motifs, which indicated ownership, protection, property and magical powers of preservation. The seal motifs were made in a variety of stones, according to the wealth the seal buyer needed.

Besides the engraved or etched seals, tattoos were also part of daily life in the Ancient Near East. In Egypt, they were like an omen or amulet for protection in the travail of baby delivery. The finding of Egyptian female mummies tattooed on their heaps confirms this protective approach on seals. Actually, because of the fear of demons and evil spirits anything could be sealed to propose security.

In the Old Testament the marking or branding is also present to denote ownership, property, and protection, and even as a symbol of salvation as well. The Passover in Exodus 12 evidences this fact when the Israelites are ordered to mark the doorposts of their homes with the Lamb's blood for salvation, protection, and ownership against the angel of destruction who brought the last plague upon Egypt. In a few Bible occurrences, the mark is also used to seal a person on their skin to show loyalty to a certain cause. Cain was marked by God Himself (Gn 4:15). By this act, Divinity let the world know of Cain's behavior and rebellion against God's principles. A different scenario is seen when a slave voluntarily decided to remain in their master's house. The master then branded the servant in the earlobe besides the door its post door (Ex 21:5-6; Dt 15:16-17).

With the exceptions of Genesis 4:15, where God marked Cain in the forehead, and Ezekiel 21:5-6 and Deuteronomy 15:16-17, where the earlobe piercing was allowed if the servant consented to remain in the master's house, God did not prescribe tattooing or branding Israelites bodies with signs (Lv 19:28).

A metaphoric scenario in the use of sealing is seen in Ezekiel 9:1-4, where the divine scribe uses the heavenly *taw* as a seal on the forehead of the faithful to

protect God's children from imminent judgment. These examples also show ownership, property, and protection.

One example of the figurative use of sealing is found in Ezekiel 9:1-4. The sealing in the passage is not a literal bodily or visible sealing. It deals within the mind. The godly attitude against sin and injustice (vs. 4) is shown by Isaiah (in 8:16), who intends to illustrate the same picture as Ezekiel 9:4. This aspect is also present when the prophet Ezekiel wrote about the law written in the heart of Judah (Ezk 36:25, 26). The sealing scenario described in Ezekiel 9:4, which was originally designed in an Old Testament geographic fulfillment for the returning of captives from the Babylonian exile, was also developed by Paul into a worldwide Christian application. This figurative use of sealing is climaxed in Pauline writings (Gl 4:19; 1 Cor 13:1-13; 2 Cor 3:1-3; Heb 10:15, 16) when the apostle is obviously transferring the meaning of the Decalogue written in stone to the intimate sealing experience of that same law written in the mind-heart of the believer, which is actually Christ transforming the human life.

The sealing in the New Testament recaptures the Old Testament sealing characteristics. Such attributes are inscribed in the mind-heart of the believer. It is not located in the body itself as a physical brand, but the body has the stamped seal of a living sacrifice of consecration and morality (Rm 13:1). The sealed Christian "product" is not stored in the chambers of a temple merely. Actually, it is a living and an open letter (2 Cor 3:1-4). The seal is marked within his life, wherever the Christian goes or whatever he experiences; sealing is a response of loyalty and faith, a growing process of experience toward Christ-likeness.

The concept of sealing is also present in the work of the Holy Spirit. He combines the believers' responses with the sealing attributes coming from the Old Testament but present now in Christ's life: ownership, protection, authenticity, property, loyalty, and obedience. It is a voluntary sealing because it is cored on

faith, friendship, and obedience on the believer's part. One interesting fact is that sealing in the OT sometimes is externally applied but with an internal reaction. Circumcision is a good example of such a premise. Circumcision shows an act of faith.

The letters engraved in the high priest's tiara "Holiness to Jehovah" (Ex 28:36; 39:30), indicated God's practical ideal for all Israel. The priesthood had to be a living example of sealing authenticity. Through the teaching of the Torah, this teaching must be reproduced in the life of Israel.

In the Graeco-Roman world it is possible to see a similar sealing pattern in different matters such as slavery, legal documents, and military activities where ownership, authenticity, protection, loyalty, obedience, and property were required and demanded. Likewise, tattooing, for instance, was included to show loyalty to a legion commander or emperor. The concern for authenticity in letters and shipment cargo, which happened during Babylonian times is seen equally in Hellenism and in the Roman world.

In the writings of some Latin authors, such as Seneca, external slavery sealing could not steal the inner mind of the servant, and Paul explains the importance of a Christian attitude between slaves and masters and vice-versa (Phil). The Roman branding and marking of slaves with cruel devices, such as collars, shows a cruel similitude also present in other ancient cultures and is rooted in money and selfishness. The sealing of slaves during the Graeco-Roman world shows that power and property are more important than human rights. Branding and marking in today's society also portrays slavery in ways such as social and moral depravity, including economic injustice. Those slavery symbols depict a certain reality that also echoes back to the sealing and branding characteristics of the Graeco-Roman slavery system.

In addition it is true that the Graeco-Roman world was a realm considered by their inhabitants as being full of demons, witchcraft, and spells. Magic in seals and animal sacrifices in the Graeco-Roman world were also intended to pacify gods and to ask for their protection. The presence of σημεῖον in the Homeric writings which were widely used in the Graeco-Roman learned society was applied mostly in an anthropological-religion sense.

The concept of sealing is vague and metaphorical in Alexandrian Judaism. Plato used the term to characterize the doctrine of his ideas. Philo, instead, uses “sealing” just to illustrate the constant and ever presence of God. It is the same seal tool reproducing multiple benefits in human beings. According to him, Gnosticism shows the sealing as being baptism itself. In the New Testament, sealing finds its climax in the symbol of its application.

Jesus shows the sealing aspect of authenticity. This authenticity is reflected and ἐσφράγεν “certified” (NKJV) in his ministry (Jn 3:33). In Romans 4:11, Paul shows another sealing aspect. He shows obedience or loyalty in the external evidence of the sealing through circumcision, mingled with the other part of such reality: Faith in Christ Jesus through baptism. In Corinthians 9:2, the same apostle discusses another important fact of the sealing: property. Christians belong not to Paul but to Christ. He only presents them as a seal of his apostleship conferred by Jesus Himself.

The term σημεῖον is an interesting word, which describes the wonders of God specially shown when He intervened with His sign wonders in Egypt. But the term is also abundantly used within the New Testament, where it is employed by the archangel telling the shepherds they will recognize the σημεῖον when they see the Messiah resting in a crib. It is also necessary to remember that such a word in the New Testament period is combined with the word τέσσαρα throughout the different occurrences where the two terms are used.



The scars suffered by Paul (στίγματα in Gl 6:17) were introduced after the Gnosticism period as a sign of sainthood within Roman Catholicism. In this scenario, the στίγματα are shown temporarily in the palm of the hands, feet, side and more rarely on the temples or around the head of a few pious people. According to Roman Catholicism, certain chosen people will be sealed on a temporary basis with these particular open wound scars. For Paul, the scars are more than physical. They also represent the transformation of his character and life. Now he is able to stand for Christ and suffer for Him. Before he was a persecutor, now he is a slave.

In Ephesians 1:13 scholars look at two different approaches for the sealing of the Holy Spirit. One group sees the sealing as baptism and relates that experience to the different communities as Ebionites, Qumran, and Gnosticism who considered such a position. Another group of scholars considers the sealing of the Spirit in those Pauline passages as a reference to the work and operation of the Spirit through and in the life of the early Christian church. In Ephesians 4:30, the same Paul proposes two more metaphorical symbols on sealing: protection and inviolability for the day of Redemption. This assurance is already present but not yet fulfilled.

In 2 Timothy 2:19, the sealing captures, in a figurative statement, all of the previous sealing characteristics in one sentence expressed by the apostle: to be apart from ἀδικία. Sealing is property and ownership based on friendship and love. Those heavenly blessings given by the Spirit produce obedience and loyalty and a deep sense of belonging to Christ. Sealing in the NT is not an isolated mark. It means Christ's holistic rest and commitment, a character that is portrayed as a process of Christ-likeness in the life of believers.

The next chapter contains the various schools of interpretation by which the book of Revelation is studied and interpreted. The chapter will comment on the origin and approach on each school's method of interpretation.

## CHAPTER 3

# APPROACHES TO REVELATION

### 3. PRELIMINARIES

This Chapter discusses the four major approaches to Revelation (Preterism, Futurist-Dispensationalism, Idealism and Historicism), which contain a good deal of information on seal/sealing. The Historicism approach, which is part of the bone marrow of this investigation also contains the concept of *continuum* and is linked in some instances with the Recapitulation and the straight-line modes. There is also a brief explanation of seal/sealing in Revelation 7:1-3 and its school approach interpretation. As part of the discussion of the Historicist approach, there is a preview of questions and answers on this specific method, which will be developed and discussed in detail in Chapter 4. At the end of this Chapter there is also an explanation of the presence of six less common approaches to Revelation known as: the Patristic, Higher Criticism, Kabalistic, Aesthetic, Literalist (which includes ten literary figures), and the Astral prophecy approach. In some of these six approaches the concept of seal/sealing is mostly vague and absent in its description. A list of thirty-two symbols found in the Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰωάννου, are included to indicate the existing connectivity with the same type of symbols also present in the Old Testament.

### 3.1 THE FOUR MAJOR APPROACHES TO REVELATION

#### 3.1.2 A brief description of the four approaches

Regarding the most known schools of studying and interpreting Revelation, the Apocalypse can be situated within four major schools. They are Preterism, Futurism, Historicism, and Idealism.

The first of these schools of interpretation for Revelation is Preterism (from the Latin *praeter* = past). This school emphasizes the idea that Revelation contains a

message exclusively for John and the Christian church members of Asia Minor. According to Paulien (2004:28-29), certain portions of Revelation indeed fit this description (Rv 1:9-11; 22:16). Hyper-Preterism is also another approach in this school (in Mathison 2004:1-63, 121-155).

The second school of interpretation for Revelation is Futurism. This school contends that the content of the Apocalypse is exclusively for the final crisis of earth's history. Its relevance is primarily for the final generation and is associated with Dispensationalism (Anders 1997:47-74; Paulien 2004:28-29; La Haye 1999:60-74, 110).

The third possible major approach for interpreting Revelation is the Historicist method. According to Historicism, Revelation portrays a sequence of history or *continuum*, from the time of John until the second coming of Christ. This approach is grounded in the book of Daniel, in which such historical sequences can be indicated. The Recapitulist thought in prophecy is also associated with Historicism (Paulien 2004:28-29; see [www.historicism.com](http://www.historicism.com); MacArthur 2002:55, 93, 98, 99, 100, 102, 104, 209, 233; Wholberg 2001:1-71; Greeve 2006:57, 59, 63, 94, 97, 104).

The fourth major approach to the study of Revelation is the Idealist method. Primarily, this method suggests that Revelation is not merely historical, futurist or Preterist. Instead, it contains timeless truths in symbolic forms, principles that can be applied in any time and any place (Paulien 2004:28-29; Hanegraff 2007:7-9; see also [www.idealistarchive.com](http://www.idealistarchive.com)).

According to Paulien, all of these four approaches have validity when related to the doctrine of Inspiration. He points out that:

For the preterists have a point because Revelation also speaks to an original audience. Futurists will prove to be at least partly right in the sense that the book describes important events that are still in the future in our day—the Second Coming of Jesus and even beyond. At the same time,

Revelation describes a sequence of events from the time of the apostle John to the end of the world (such as Rev. 12). Finally, the book of Revelation contains many themes applicable to any age (Rev. 2:7).

(Paulien 2004:29)

As was stated earlier, the remaining content of this Chapter will proceed with a discussion on each of these four methods of interpretation applied to the book of Revelation. This discussion is important because it shows the different concepts of sealing, depending on the school chosen for its view and consideration. This discussion also includes the principles and forms ruling each approach. Likewise, this Chapter shows how these four approaches of interpretation influence the study of Revelation 7:1-3, the kinds of questions asked when Revelation 7:1-3 are analyzed, and the kinds of answers that are produced.

## 3.2 PRETERISM

### 3.2.1 The Preterist approach to Revelation

In the Preterism way of thinking John exclusively addressed real churches that faced problems in the first century CE. Two quandaries in particular provided the impetus for the recording of the book, according to the Preterist school of interpretation. These two quandaries have two fundamental purposes related to its original (*praeter*) hearers:

Preterism is comprised of two camps in the fulfillment of Revelation that is:

(1) To steel the Church against the gathering storm of persecution which was reaching an unnerving crescendo of therefore unknown proportions and intensity. This brought the entrance of the Imperial Rome into the scene. The first historical persecution of the Church was by Nero Caesar from A.D 64 to A.D 68.

(2) To brace the Church for a major and fundamental reorientation in history needing the destruction of Jerusalem the center not only of Old Covenant Israel but of Apostolic Church (chaps. Ac.1:8; 2:1ff; 15:2) and the temple (chaps. Mt. 24:1-34 with Rev. 11), takes place in the first century A.D. with the fall of Jerusalem and, finally the fall of Rome in the fifth century.

(Gentry 1989:15-19)

A modern representative of the Preterist view is Elizabeth Schüssler. For her, John's Apocalypse is a "prophetic interpretation of the situation of the Christians in Asia Minor at the end of the first century" (Schüssler 1976:43). Her book concentrates solely on her position of Revelation, on the universal political conflict between Christ's claim as Lord and the Roman civil religion and its imperial cult that claimed totalitarian power and divine honors: Caesar is Lord and God. In this approach, the basic message of Revelation is that Christians must resist the idolatrous totalitarianism of any oppressive world power, because they share in the kingship of Christ. In such a perspective, mainline Christianity has reduced end-time salvation to a purely spiritual deliverance of the soul from this world. As a consequence, the mainline churches have accepted the theological policy of John's opponents: "adaptation of the present societal ruling powers" (in Schüssler 1976:51-60).

For his part, LaRondelle (in Holbrook 1992b:151-154) says Preterism is attractive for its religious-moral application to this present age. However, its difficulty is that the Roman Empire does not fulfill *all* the described features of the beasts in Revelation 13 and 17. LaRondelle (1992b:152-154) points out that there is a new spiritual and political power that will rise up, the new Babylon. This power will play a major role in the final events, leading up to the judgment of the seven last plagues and Armageddon (Rv 16), and therefore cannot be restricted to the ancient Roman Empire and its emperor worship (LaRondelle, in Holbrook 1992b:153-154).

Preterism is an attractive tool for all kinds of theology. For the conservative it provided a seemingly more workable principle of interpreting Scripture. After all, the prophets of the Old Testament knew what they were talking about when they predicted an age of peace and righteousness. Man's increasing knowledge of the world and scientific improvement, which were coming, could fit into this picture. On the other hand, the concept was pleasing to the liberal and skeptic too. If they did not believe the prophets, at least they believed that man was now able to

improve himself and his environment. They too believed in a golden age in future (Wolvoord 1993:20).

Within Preterism, there are some hybrid approaches to Revelation, such as Preterism-Futurism, that are necessary to describe next.

### **3.2.2 Preterism-Futurism**

The origins of post millennialistic Preterist nascent can be traced to some of the Church Fathers like Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, and Augustine. However, Preterism as an interpretation method is attributed to Diego de Alcázar (who died in 1613), a Spanish Jesuit who produced a monumental work titled *Investigation of the hidden sense of the Apocalypse*, which was published posthumously in 1614 (Holbrook 1992a:5).

It is possible to also find a combination of various schools of interpretation. One of those mingling ways of thinking is called Preterist-Futurist. This approach looks at Babylon as the pagan city of Rome in the past and, more specifically, as a pagan Rome again in the future. To mend this gap, Ladd (1972:13-14) talks about double fulfillment. "Rome was historical forerunner of Antichrist.... The beast is both Rome and the eschatological Antichrist" (Ladd 1956:4-30). Some other similar statements on this futuristic Apotelesmatic approach can be found in Rivera, Viegas, Malvenda, Cornelius of Lapide, and Manning (see Froom 1948a:486-505, 736-737).

Historicist LaRondelle (in Holbrook 1992b:153-154) says that this futurism does not agree with the prophetic sweep of prophecy. He opines that John the Revelator outlines an unbroken succession of persecuting powers from pagan Rome until the final judgment, symbolized by the seven successive "heads" on the beast. The interpreting angel explained, "They are also seven kings (or kingdoms), five of them have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come (Rv 17:9-10). No gap of time is suggested here. Ladd (1972:13-14), nevertheless, tried to

combine both opposing views in his arrangement of a double fulfillment: “Rome was historical forerunner of the Antichrist.... The beast is both Rome and the eschatological Antichrist and ... any demonic power which the church may experience in the hands of the world, whether by first century Rome or by later evil powers” (Ladd 1972:13-14).

Ladd opts for the method of blending the Preterist and the Futurist method; thereby he accepts a wide gap of many centuries of church history. Thus, the Christian era remains largely outside the focus of Revelation. Ladd’s view of a “moderate futurism” recognizes the validity of both the contemporary and the end-time focus of prophecy, that is to say, the familiar double-focus perspective of the Old Testament prophets. But he ignores the unique style of a *continuum* of history in Daniel’s prophetic outlines. Ladd’s methods for the main prophetic model of John’s Apocalypse are the unique Danielic pattern of a *continuous historical perspective* that culminates in the end-time events of the divine judgment and the restoration of the kingdom of Israel’s God (LaRondelle, in Holbrook 1992b:154). This theological system is known as “postmillennialism,” which teaches that Christ will return after the millennium, a period of bliss on earth brought about by the conversion of the nations because of the preaching of the gospel. The credit for formulating the postmillennial doctrine is usually given to Whitby (who died in 1726), a Unitarian minister from England, and Thomas Brightman (who died in 1607) who popularized this method (Wolvoord 1993:19-20).

Such is the acceptance on the part of many theologians, liberal and conservative, in today’s world also. Influenced mostly by the rising tide of intellectual freedom, science and philosophy, coupled with humanism, have enlarged the concept of human progress and painted a bright picture of the future. Whitby’s view of the golden age for the church was just what people wanted to hear. It is not strange that theologians scrambling for readjustments in a changing world could find in Whitby just the key they needed (Wolvoord 1993:20).



According to Roy (1998:32) the optimistic humanism progress that sustained the well-being of humanity by good human moral efforts and actions alone, culminating with an earthly millennium of prosperity and human peace, suffered a crash and collapse when the two World Wars took place during the twentieth century.

### 3.3 FUTURISM

#### 3.3.1 Futurism as approach to Revelation

Most popular mass futurism interpretation for Revelation started during the Middle Ages. They were introduced by Francisco Rivera (who died in 1591) and Luis de Alcázar (who died in 1613) in order to diminish and blurry the teaching of the Reformers, presenting the Catholic system as the beast of Daniel 7 and Revelation chapters 13 and 17 (Holbrook 1992a:5). As occurred with Preterism and its hybrid ways of interpreting Revelation, Futurism has been mixed with Dispensationalism to form another approach in Revelation.

Jesuit scholar Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) started the futurist interpretation by publishing a 500-page commentary on the book of Revelation (Froom 1948a:500-520). Ribera took the last “week” (seven day-years) of the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9:25, divided it into two 3½ year periods, and applied it to a future Antichrist, while avoiding any application to the papal system.

Ribera’s views would have fallen away quickly if not for Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), a cardinal who promoted Ribera’s ideas. His lectures were published as *Polemic lectures concerning the disputed points of the Christian belief against heretics of this time*. Froom describes these lectures as “the most detailed apology of the Catholic faith ever produced.” Froom (1948a:500-520) also says they “became the arsenal for all future defenders and expositors.”

Below there is a diagram made by another Spaniard Jesuit, named Luis de Alcázar. He wrote a monumental work entitled *Investigation of the hidden sense of Apocalypse*. This book was published post-mortem in 1614. In the following

diagram, Alcasar depicts his creation of the preterism-futurism approaches developed in 1604.

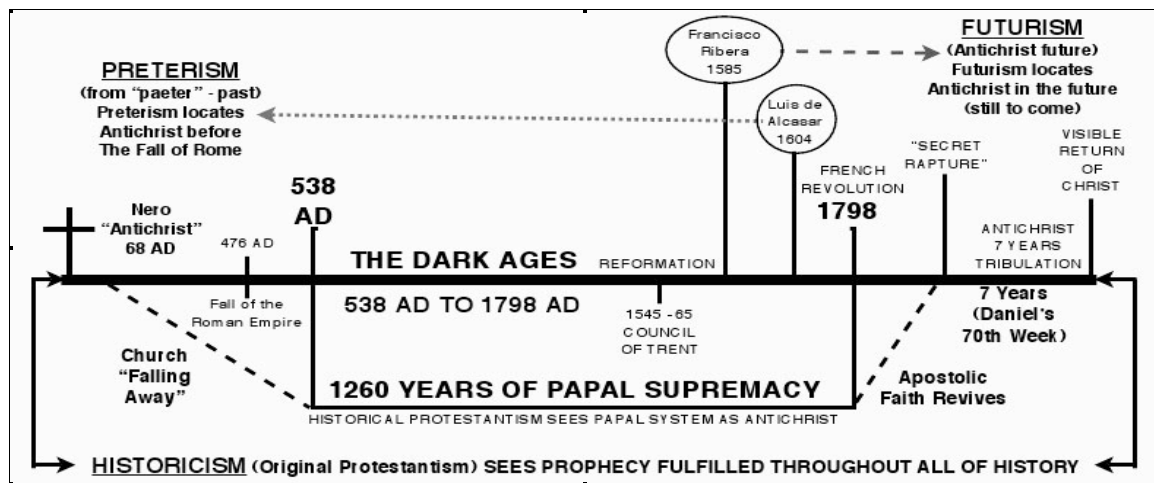


Diagram of Preterism and futurism by Diego de Alcázar

(Froom 1948a:508; see also Diego de Alcázar in [www.rekindlingthereformation.com/2009.06.16-1081.html](http://www.rekindlingthereformation.com/2009.06.16-1081.html)).

His book, *Investigation of the hidden sense of the Apocalypse*, was published in 1614. Froom states:

Applying the New Jerusalem to the Catholic Church, Alcazar contended that the Apocalypse describes the twofold war of the church in the early centuries—one with the Jewish synagogue, and the other with paganism—resulting in victory over both adversaries.” Revelation 1 to 11 he applied to the rejection of the Jews and the desolation of Jerusalem by the Romans. Revelation 12 to 19 Alcazar allotted to the overthrow of Roman paganism and the conversion of the empire to the church, the judgment of the great Harlot being effected by the downfall of pagan idolatry; Revelation 20 he applied to the final persecution by Antichrist, and the day of judgment; and chapters 21 and 22, referring to the New Jerusalem, he made descriptive of the glorious and endless triumphant state of the Roman church.

(Froom, in Alcázar & Ribera 2009: [www.rekindlingthereformation.com/2009.06.16-1081.html](http://www.rekindlingthereformation.com/2009.06.16-1081.html))

### 3.3.2 Futurism-Dispensationalism as approach to Revelation

In the twentieth century one of the varieties for premillennialism derived from the Biblical word “dispensation”, a term referring to the administration of God’s earthly

household (1 Cor 9:17; Eph 1:10; 3:2; Col 1:25). Dispensationalists divide salvation history into historical eras or epochs in order to distinguish the different administrations of God's involvement in the world. Scofield, after whom the enormously popular Scofield Bible was named, defined a dispensation as a "period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God" (Ryrie 1965:74).

During each dispensation, humankind fails to live in obedience to the divine test, consequently bringing that period under God's judgment and thus creating the need for a new dispensation. Read this way, the Bible can be divided into the following eight dispensations (though the number of names varies to the different schools of thought): innocence, conscience, civil government, promise, Mosaic law, church and age of grace, tribulation, and millennium. Some are talking now about the Old and New Covenants (Scofield 1986:128). The hallmark of Dispensationalism has been its commitment to a literal interpretation of prophetic Scripture. This has resulted in three well-known tenets cherished by adherents of the movements:

- (1) A distinction between the prophecies made about Israel in the Old Testament and the Church in the New Testament must be maintained. The Church has not replaced Israel in the plan of God. The promises He made to the nation will occur. The Church is only a parenthesis in the out working of the plan. The dispensationalism distinction between the Church and Israel is solidified in many by two major historical events on Israel's behalf. The Holocaust elicited by many a deep compassion for the Jewish people and the rebirth of the State of Israel in 1948.
- (2) Dispensationalists are pre-millennialists: Christ will come again and establish a temporary, one reign of a thousand on earth from Jerusalem.
- (3) Dispensationalists believe in the pre-tribulation rapture, that is, Christ's return will occur in two stages: the first one for his church, which will be spared the Great Tribulation; the second in power and glory to conquer his enemies.

(Pate and Grundy 1998:29)

Another author that has contributed to the thought of pretribulationism/dispensationalism is Wolvoord in his book titled *The revelation of Jesus Christ: A commentary*.

Holbrook (1992b:6) adds that this particular approach normally interprets Revelation 4:1-19 as occurring in the seven years period still future to us – a period beginning with a “secret rapture” and marked as its close by the glorious visible appearing of Christ. The pre-tribulationists/dispensationalists consider this seven years period as the seventieth week of years in the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27.

Holbrook (1992b:151-77) mentions that prolific literature has been produced by exponents of this view beginning with its originator Darby of Ireland, who put together the essence of pretribulationism/dispensationalism during the late 1820s and the 1830s. Darby was most prominent for his activity in England (he is usually considered to be the founder of the “Plymouth Brethren” movement), but personally also promulgated his views on the European continent and in North America, taking six trip to the United States. The Scofield Reference Bible has had considerable influence in popularizing the view, enhanced in recent years by publications of Hal Lindsay. The pre-tribulation thinking of Alva McClain (2001:442-519) also espouses this view.<sup>1</sup>

### **3.4 IDEALISM**

#### **3.4.1 The Idealism school’s interpretation of Revelation**

The origin of this school is traced to the allegorical method of symbolic hermeneutics exposed by the Alexandrian Church Fathers, especially Clement and Origen. Some also suggest that Cyril (368-444), bishop of Alexandria, followed the Idealist approach (see [www.preteristarchive.com/](http://www.preteristarchive.com/))

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<sup>1</sup> See Ladd (1956:19, 22, 23, 25, 37, 112-126) who offers a critique on pretribulationism/dispensationalism.

Idealism/index.html).<sup>2</sup> These Alexandrians were under the influence of Hellenism and the traditional allegorical school, which came to a head in Philo (Charles 1913:11-12).

One of the modern earlier proponents of this idealist approach to Revelation in the Western world was Samuel Lee (1851:XXI), who wrote that “in all which cases it should be remembered, that language is the mere vehicle of things conceived of, or entertained, in the mind and that the things themselves, so entertained, are the great objects of our inquires and hence, that we should not confuse ourselves and others, inconsiderately mistaking one for the other.”

Attached to the spiritual significance of the text, Clements of Alexandria, for instance saw τέσσαρας πρεσβύτερους in Revelation 4:4 as a symbol of the quality of Jew and Gentiles within the church, and interpreted ἀκριδόν, ἔχουσιν ὄνυρα σκορπίοις in Revelation 9:7-10 as the destructive influence of immoral teachers (Charles 1913:11-12). Likewise, Origen, along with his opponent Methodius, rejects as Jewish, the literal interpretation of Chapter 20, and in the hands of his followers, the entire historical contents of the Apocalypse were lost sight of. This Idealistic school of interpretation of the Apocalypse is also called the spiritualist view of Revelation. It interprets the book in a totally symbolic way. The ongoing conflict of good and evil does not have immediate historical connection to any social or political event (Charles 1913:11-12). Another interesting example regarding Idealism in Revelation is found in the interpretation of Revelation 12:5 and 14, that is, the 1260-day prophecy. Preterism applies this to the escape of the Palestinian church to Pella at the outbreak of the Jewish war in 66 CE. God's children have often been in flight (Mounce 1977:200). Historicism, for its part, will utilize this prophecy using a symbolic time (= 1260 years) and apply it to the great persecution of the true church during the Dark Ages (538-1798). Futurism will apply this same prophecy by saying the woman in Revelation 12 is not the church, but Israel and its existence in the last days during the great tribulation

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<sup>2</sup> For additional comments on Cyril Idealism regarding Christ, see McGukin (2004:50-350).

period. The 1260 days element is literal time but the period occurs at the opposite end of the Christian Age. Such a futurist interpretation produces a great gap, not solved by this approach (Wolvoord 1966:191; in Holbrook 1992a:344). Instead, Idealism applies this period to the Christian Age in general. Hughes (1990:137) makes the following comment on this approach:

There, *nourished* by God, she is enabled to survive for *one thousand two hundred and sixty days*, otherwise defined, in verse 14 below, “as a time ant times and a half a time” and in 13:5, as “forty-two months,” that is, for a period of limited duration which is short in comparison with the limitless eternity of peace and freedom that will follow in the new heaven and earth.... The symbolism in St. John’s vision depicts the history of the people of God for whom the wilderness is the world in its fallenness and its hostility to the truth.

(Hughes 1990:137, in Holbrook 1992a:344)

Some authors think that using the Apocalypse in a symbolic approach is a false claim. For example, Calkins (1920:3) says that “to use Revelation in this way is to abuse it, for the book it self makes no claims to be a key to the future.”

The book of Revelation itself, however, uses different Greek words for time in the sense of future fulfillment (Rv 1:3, ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς; Rv 12:12 εἰδὼς ὅτι ὀλίγον καιρόν ; Rv 22:10, ὁ καιρὸς γὰρ ἐγγύς ἐστιν). However, symbols in Revelation are not solitary planets. They do belong to a prophetic structure that, according to Historicism for instance, are a representation of the *continuum* controversy between good and evil throughout history.

The Idealistic approach, however, suggests that Revelation does not contain historical correspondence and thereby denies that the prophecies in the book are predictive except in the most general sense of the promise of the ultimate triumph of good at the return of Christ (Pate and Grundy 1998:24). Akin to the Alexandrian interpretation of Revelation was the a-millennial view propounded by Dionysius, Augustine, and Jerome. Thus the Alexandrian School, armed with the a-millennial method, became the dominant approach to Revelation until the Reformation (Pate and Grundy 1998:24). Following the Idealistic thought, some

have seen in the book of Revelation a present exodus, related to the liberation of the poor inhabitants of the third world. Latin American theologians like Gutierrez (1983:219) and Bonino (1979:1-69) see in Revelation a liberation from dependence on poverty.

### **3.4.2 Idealism and Preterism**

It is appropriate to recollect here some of the Idealist/Preterist authors and their different statements favoring this approach. Pieters (1954:44) says that “today scholars are prevailing in favor of this system ... preterist either unchanged or combined with the ideas of the philosophy of history (spiritual) idealistic school.” For his part, Steve Gregg (1997:2-3) views Revelation as “spiritual or recurrent, finding representative expression in historical events throughout the ages, rather in one time, specific fulfillments. The prophecy is thus rendered applicable to Christians in any age.” Hendricksen (1998:43-5) affirms that “seals, trumpets, bowls of wrath, and similar symbols refer not to specific events with particular happenings or details of history, but to principles of human conduct and of divine moral government that are operating throughout the history of the world, especially in the new dispensation.” Garland (2004:2, 3, 12) associates the term idealism with “timeless.” He also adds the term “eclectic” or “mixed” (Garland 2004:2, 5, 24) in which there is a mixing of the Idealism/Preterist posture. Garland suggests that Idealists avoid the obvious implications of a horrified time setting present in Revelation (Garland 2004:2, 3, 12).

## **3.5 HISTORICISTCISM**

### **3.5.1 Historicist approach in Revelation**

This posture considers that history is a *continuum* under God’s control, moving ever closer to that glorious consummation when God’s own kingdom of righteousness will be established for eternity. Besides Christ (Mt 24:15, 16-30, 37-39) and the apostles (2 Th 2:1-7), Mussies (1997:2) says the earliest known person to use the so-called recapitulation approach was Victorinus of Pettau (who died in 303). He implies that each of the successive groups of visions, namely



those of the seven seals, the seven trumpets and the seven bowls, foretells one and the same sequence of events (see Mussies 1997:2). He also refers here to Hugo Grotius (Mussies 1997:2), who supposed the Apocalypse to be a combination of originally separate visions, which he maintained, however, have been seen by one and the same man. One Reformation writer of the historic-prophetic method is Rupert of Deutz (who died in 1129; Backus 2000:xvi). Nicolas of Lyra (1270-1349), a Franciscan who wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse, interpreted Revelation 7 as the consolation of the Christian church under Constantine after the persecution. Lyra saw two sections here for his time: the consolation of the militant church and the triumphant church (Lyra 1997:93). An example of this approach is found in some of Rupert of Deutz's comments on Revelation 4 where the celestial church service receives an historical-based interpretation. John's vision of the door in heaven thus signifies heavenly life, which Christ, through his resurrection, guaranteed for the church, which also rose with him. The first resurrection is the resurrection of Christ, which also caused the church to rise to life. The twenty four ancients around the throne pose a problem to Rupert, as he notes that the figure was variously interpreted by the Church Fathers. Jerome saw the twenty four ancients as representing the twenty four books of the Old Testament. Others, notably Primasius and Bede, took the figure to symbolize twelve patriarchs and twelve apostles, the church of the New Testament and its precursor in the Old Testament. Rupert, for his part, sees the twenty four elders as representative of the history of Israel. These are the twelve Judges (Rupert includes Samuel) who preceded David. The other twelve are those who succeeded David's direct descendant Christ – in other words, the twelve apostles. The "sea of glass" evokes to Rupert the crossing of the Red Sea in the Old Testament and baptism in the New Testament. Both denote liberation. The Christocentric nature of his commentaries, coupled with his interest in the Old Testament and in the story of the early church in general, was probably what made Rupert's commentary popular with Reformers like Sebastian Mayer (Backus 2000:xv-xxii).

### 3.5.2 Two sequential approaches of the Historicist method

Historicism observes that Revelation is (1) a sequence of events through history climaxing at Christ's coming in a process of recapitulation that (2) has the same ground form, from the prophet's own time until the climax of history. Next, there is a short explanation of these two historical approaches (see Holbrook 1992a:2-6).

### 3.5.3 Straight-line approach within Historicism

The straight-line approach sees Revelation portraying a sequence of events that begins in the Apostolic Era and continues on step by step until the grand eschatological climax. According to Holbrook (1992a:4-6), a number of well-known interpreters from an earlier generation, people such as Barnes (see Garland 2004:121), Clark (see Newport 2000:239), Elliot (in 1862:562-563 in <http://historicist-historicism.com/> and Keith (see Wholberg 2004:119), were adherents of this view. Keith for example, defines historicism as

that view which regards the prophecy (of Revelation – CM) as a prefiguration of the great events that were to happen in the church, and the world connected with it, from St. John's time to the consummation; including specially the establishment of Pope doom, and reign of Papal Rome, as in

some way or other the fulfillment of the types of the Apocalyptic Beast and Babylon.

(Keith 1832:564)

Newport (2000:174) discusses the presence of an eisegetic hermeneutic in the Adventist historicism approach. In regards to the historicist method of interpretation to the seals in Revelation, Barnes, for example, treats the seven seals as belonging to a sequence of events in the early post-Apostolic Era, the seven trumpets as beginning with Visigoth's sack of Rome in 410, the little book opened in Revelation 10 as the open Bible at the time of the sixteenth-century Reformation, and the seven last plagues as reflective of the French Revolution of the late eighteenth century (Holbrook 1992a:4-5).

#### 3.5.4 The Recapitulation approach within Historicism

This second historicist approach interprets the various visions in Revelation as going over the same ground from the prophet's own day until the end time. In either case the prophecies are understood to meet their fulfillments in historical time between the days of John and the establishment of the eternal kingdom.

The Recapitulation approach was popularized by Tyconius (Johnson and Webber 1993:458-459) and practically canonized by Augustine in his renowned work *The city of God*, written under the impact of Alaric's conquest of Rome in 410 CE (Hamilton 1995:1; O' Daly 1999:53-67, 160-196). However, some consider Ireneaus as the one who introduced the Recapitulation approach (see Berardino & Studer 1996:132). Explaining the Recapitulation mode, Augustine referring to Tyconius said: "He speaks by recapitulating, as returning to that which he had omitted, or rather had deferred.... That is, therefore, what I have said, that by recapitulating he returned to that which he had passed over" (Düsterdieck 1887:13). Mulholland (1959b:397) explains Recapitulation as going back and describing something previously mentioned and violating the chronological order of the book. This method is used by Augustine to remove the chief difficulties he finds in the Apocalypse. Regarding the seals, Collado (in Düsterdieck 1887:14) considered that in the seals, trumpets, and vials the same thing is always described, and it is described as such that while the seals contain only a brief sketch, the trumpets and vials always afford the more detailed images. The final conclusion in comparing those visions is the final judgment.

Berardino and Studer (1996:132-135), using the writings of Ireneaus, develop the concept of Recapitulism with five concepts. These concepts are to be found in the life of Jesus and his work for humanity:

1. Recapitulation as *cosmic redemption in the reality of the new Adam* (Haer 3.16.6; see Berardino & Studer 1996:132). The work of Christ does not

merely contradict, but is the antithesis to the sum of all apostasy in the devil (*Haer.* 3.23.3, 5, 8; 4; see Berardino & Studer 1996:132).

2. Recapitulation as *summary, inauguration, and redemption*. Christ summarizes humankind in himself and at the same time gives a compendium of salvation. All the types of the past are fulfilled in Him (*Haer.* 3.18.1, see Berardino & Studer 1996:133).
3. Recapitulation gives *the meaning of the whole history of salvation* in the one Christ (*Haer.* 3.16.6, see Berardino & Studer 1996:133). This event takes effect in humanity. As a true mediator, He joins humanity to God (*Haer.* 4.20.4, see Berardino et al 1996:133).
4. Recapitulation as *restoration and life* (*Haer.* 5.18.2.3; Dt 28:66, see Berardino & Studer 1996:134). Ἀφθαρσία is regained by the recapitulation which takes place at the cross where our life hangs on a tree.
5. A *Gnostic belief* is linked, according to the author (Berardino & Studer 1996:135), to the communion of early Christianity when he declared that “salvation was not reconciliation of humanity with God, but the reconstitution of the divine fullness from the divine sparks scattered in the world.” An additional brief description on the term recapitulation, using Ireneaus’ writings and, related to the work of Jesus, is also expressed in the following terms:

The question “what is recapitulation?” runs into the question “who recapitulates?” and the answer is “the word made flesh.” Recapitulation consists in summarizing or making a statement, and he is the statement that covers every age, from childhood to maturity (*Haer.* 2.22.4). Our new birth follows his mysterious birth from a virgin (*Haer.* 4.34.4). Through him, humanity enters God and God enters humanity (*Haer.* 4.33.4) so that the detail of his life is important as a moral example (*Haer.* 2.22.4) and as the means by which we may share in his likeness (*Haer.* 3.22.1).

(Berardino & Studer 1996:134)

Where the Bible and history are concerned, the Recapitulation model has been a standard type of interpretation for Seventh-day Adventists. As Holbrook explains (1992a:4-22), still perhaps the best known example of a Recapitulation pioneer

author is Uriah Smith (1832-1903). Another Recapitulation author well known in Adventism is Ellen White (1827-1915).

In modern times, Adventist writers such as Goldstein (1995:3-143; 2003:7-174); Timn, Baldwin, Hasel, Canale van Bemmelen, Diop (see Reid 2005:5-153); Japas (1980:128); Maxwell (1989:17-537); Shea (1996:1-171); Treiye (1992:10-337); Treiye (1985:1-103); Veloso (1998:11-226) and others, have also reaffirmed the Recapitulation approach as part of Historicism.

Outside of Adventism, there are no other writers that work with this approach, except for a partial or incomplete use of the method in incomplete repetitions of sequences that are set forth (see Morris 1983:53-289; Hendricksen 1998:7-215).

Holbrook clarifies that an apocalyptic approach to history is not unique with the book of Daniel for instance. The extracanonical apocalypses have indications of the same approach. For example, the brief *Apocalypse of weeks* in Ethiopic Enoch 91:12-17 and 93:1-10 divides history into ten successive periods, the last one embracing the final judgment and introducing the eternal age (Holbrook 1992a:5, 16). Another illustration is Baruch's parable of a thundercloud in chapters 53-74, which rains down clear and inky waters in twelve alternately bright and dark periods, finally reaching the eschatological consummation. And there are a number of other examples as well, including the vision of the multi-winged eagle in 4 Ezra 11-12, and the dream-vision of bulls and sheep (plus a wide array of other animals) in Ethiopic Enoch 85-90 (Holbrook 1992a:17).

Holbrook (1992a:17) asserts that sequential developments or processes are also apparent in the divinely inspired book of Revelation, for example, the sequence of the seven seals and of the seven trumpets, the seals being broken *in succession* and the trumpets being blown *in succession*. Likewise, the depiction of the animosity of the dragon in Revelation 12 embraces a sequence, for he first attacks the man-child, then the woman, and finally the remnant of the woman's offspring. Also indicative of the same sort of sequential perspective is the reference in Revelation 17:10 to the seven heads of the beast as being *seven*

*kings*, of whom five “have fallen” “one is (in John’s time),” and “the other has not yet come.” This is a “horizontal continuity” dimension of the apocalyptic, for two reasons: 1) It is absolutely central to the apocalyptic portrayal of history as a succession of events, and 2) because of the writings of Ladd and Morris, prominent evangelical scholars that have confused the apocalyptic view of history with the classical-prophecy approach of “dual fulfillment” or “two foci” (Holbrook 1992a:17).

It is necessary to remember here that classical prophecy has an emphasis on the prophet’s own day and an occasional “two foci” perspective, and never elaborates on the events leading up to the great “day of the Lord.” In classical prophecy there is no reference to an upcoming, end-time Antichrist power (Holbrook 1992a:18-19). Ladd sets forth the idea that the book of Revelation envisages the leopard-like sea beast of Revelation 13 as a symbol of both the ancient Roman Empire of John’s day (Preterism) and an Antichrist still to come (Futurism; Ladd 1972:13; see also La Haye 1999:11-125; Blomberg 2006:518).

### **3.6 THE USE OF SYMBOLS IN THE HISTORICISM APPROACH TO REVELATION**

#### **3.6.1 The presence of symbols in Revelation**

The English word for symbol is derived from the Greek σύνβολον which originally referred to each of the two halves or corresponding pieces of a tile which two strangers or any two contracting parties broke between them and kept so that later they could match the pieces to prove the identity of the holders. Then, the σύνβολον came to be used on other devices used for identification, for example, a seal impression on wax. The adjective form frequently meant symbolical (Liddell 1954:1676, in Mulholland 1959b:293). The word συμβολή is used for the Hebrew חבר, which means to unite or join and for טבר, which means a seal or a seal ring. Thus, both the ancient Greek and Hebrew support the idea of a symbol as a visible representation (Hatch and Redpath 1954:258, 317-318). In Revelation the use of symbols to illustrate prophecies and messages is attested. Mulholland

(1959b:278), citing Ironside (1919:12-13), says that the claim of the use of symbols has been made and that John's use of σημαίνω (ἐσήμανεν in Rv 1:1, third, singular, aorist, active, indicative) demonstrates the symbolic character of the book. Ironside (1919:13) states "He is said to have signified it: that is he made to bear this in mind. This book is a book of symbols." Mulholland (1959b:278, citing Arndt and Gingrich 1957:755) says that while both the Authorized Version and the American Standard Version used the translation "signified," the Revised Standard Version more properly translates it "made known." The verb is used in all ancient Grecian literature to mean "make known" or "indicate" except that Plutarch has Heraclitus say concerning the Delphic Oracle, οὔτε λέγει, οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει ("neither declares nor conceals, but communicates by symbols"). A similar usage can be found in Epictetus and Josephus (Arndt and Gingrich 1957:755). Tenney (1957:186) refers to Xenophon who carries relationship in symbols to the word σημαίνω. "Socrates thought that they (the gods) know all things ... that they are present everywhere and grant signs (σημαίνειν).

Mulholland (1959b:375) describes the following symbols for which interpretation is given within the Apocalypse itself: seven stars (angels of the seven churches, Rv 1:20); seven lamp stands (the seven churches, Rv 1:20); seven lamps of fire (the seven spirits of God); seven horns and seven eyes (seven spirits of God sent forth into all the world, Rv 5:4); incense (the prayers of the saints, Rv 5:8); a great multitude (they that came out of tribulation, Rv 7:9, 14); a star from heaven (there was given to him the keys of the abyss, Rv 9:1); the great dragon (the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, Rv 12:9); the great harlot (the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth, Rv 17:1, 18); many waters (people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues, Rv 17:1, 15); the beast (was, and is not; and is about to come out of the abyss, himself also an eighth, and is of the seven, Rv 17:3, 8; 17:11); seven heads (seven mountains and seven kings Rv 17:3, 9, 10); ten horns (ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, Rv 17:12); fine linen (the righteous acts of the saints, Rv 19:8); and the wife (the bride of the Lamb, Rv 21:9-10). These symbols are part of the whole narrative



structure of the Apocalypse (Rv 1:20; 5:1-5; 6:1-17; 8:1-13; 9:1-21; 10:1-11; 11:1-14; 11:15-19; 12:1-17; 13:1-18; 14:1-20; 15:1-8; 16:1-21; 17:1-14, 15, 16-21; 18:1-24; 19:1-21; 20:1-15; 21:1-27; 22:1-20). According to Mulholland (1959b:374), the presence of symbols in Revelation is involved in three of the following categories:

### **3.6.1.1 Symbols declared to be symbols**

Scroggie (1920:90) includes in this subdivision those elements of the text which the author declares to be symbolical, but can only be accepted as such by the interpreter. Mulholland (1959b:374) cites Arndt and Gingrich (1957:755) who declared to be signs or “terrifying appearances in the heavens, never before seen, as portents of the last days (Lk. 21:11, 25; Ac 2:19): “a woman arrayed with the sun” (Rv 12:1), a “great red dragon” (Rv 12:3) and “seven angels having the last plagues” (Rv 15:1).

### **3.6.1.2 Symbols explained by other texts in Scripture**

Mulholland (1959b:376-379) explains that other Biblical symbols, literal accounts, and doctrines provide much information necessary for the comprehension of the symbols in the Apocalypse. Tenney (1957:187) lists only ten of these apocalyptic symbols explained by other texts in Scripture, the first five of these are imagery of verbal expression, figures of speech; not symbols. Some examples: the tree of life (Rv 2:7), hidden manna (Rv 2:17), the rod of iron (Rv 2:27), the morning star (Rv 2:28) and the key of David (Rv 3:7). Mulholland (1959b:376-379) gives thirty two symbols that are explained by other texts in Scripture. They are as follows:

#### **Symbols related to Scripture**

##### **From Revelation**

1. Candlestick (Rv 1:12-13, 20; 2:1, 5)

##### **From the Old Testament**

(Ex 35:14; 27:20; 25:36:37:23;  
1 Ki 7:49; Zch 4:2; Mt 5:14;

Phlp 2:15; Heb 8:2, 5; 9:2, 23).

2. Son of man (Rv 1:13; 14:14) (Dn 7:13; Ezk 1:26; Mt 24:30).
3. 24 elders (Rv 4:4, 10-11; 5:6, 8-10, 14) (1 Chr 24:7-19; Dn 10:13; Is 24:23; Tt 1:5).
4. A Lamb (Rv 5:6, 8, 12; 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9) (Is 53:4, 7; Gn 22:13; Jn 1:29; Mt 8:17; 1 Pt 1:19; 1 Jn 3:5).
5. Four horsemen (Rv 6:2) (Zch 6:2-7; Ezk 1).
6. Mountain (Rv 6:14) (Jr 51:25; Is 2:2; Dn 2:35, 44).
7. Four winds (Rv 7:1) (Ezk 7:2; 37:9; Jr 49:36; Zch 6:4; Mt 24:31).
8. Sealed of Israel (Rv 7:4) (Ezk 9:4; 7; 2 Tm 2:19; Dn 12:1; Mt. 21:43; Dt 29:18-21; Lv 24:10-16).
9. Thunders, fire (Rv 8:5) (Lv 26:12; Ezk 10:2; 38:22; 39:6; Hs 8:14; Am 1; 2:5; Dt 32:22).
10. Burning mountain (Rv 8:8) (Ex 7:20; Jr 51:25; Hs 4:1-3; Zph 1:3; Is 2:16).
11. Burning star (Rv 8:10) (Jr 9:13-15; 23:15; 8:14; 9:15; Lm 3:15; Ex 7:18-24).
12. Eagle (Rv 8:13) (Dt 28:49; 2 Sm 1:23; Is 40:31; Jr 4:13; Hs 8:1;

Hab 1:8).

- |            |                                 |                                                                               |
|------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>13.</b> | Locusts (Rv 9:1-11)             | (Ex 10:5; Pr 30:27;<br>Ezk 9:4-6; Jl 1:6; 2;<br>Jr 51:27).                    |
| <b>14.</b> | Two witnesses (Rv 11:3-13)      | (Zch 4; Ml 3-4; Mt 11:13;<br>17:11-13; Lk 1:17; 2 Ki 1:10;<br>Jr 5:4; Ps 79). |
| <b>15.</b> | The woman (Rv 12:1-17)          | (Gn 37; Mt 24:15-28;<br>Mk 13:14-23; Hs 2:14-15;<br>Zph 2:3).                 |
| <b>16.</b> | The man-child (Rv 12:5)         | (Ps 2:7-9; Ac 1:9-11; Heb 1:3).                                               |
| <b>17.</b> | The beast (Rv 13:1-18)          | (Dn 2; 7; 9:27; 11; Ps 52;<br>Jr 43:11; 15:2; Mt 24:9-27<br>2 Th 2:1-12).     |
| <b>18.</b> | The false prophet (Rv 13:11-17) | (Gn 3:1; 49:17; Dn 3. Mt 24;<br>Mk 13:22; 2 Cor 11:3).                        |
| <b>19.</b> | The 144 000 (Rv 7:4-8; 14:1-5)  | (Jl 2:32; Zch 14:2; Is 24:23;<br>Mi 4:7; Heb 12:22; Gl 4:26).                 |
| <b>20.</b> | The harvesting (Rv 14:14-16)    | (Ps 21:3; Jr 51:33; Jl 3:13;<br>Mt 13:37, 41 24:37-42;<br>Jn 5:27).           |
| <b>21.</b> | The winepress (Rv 14:17-20)     | (Dt 32:32-33; Is 34:1-18;                                                     |

- Jl 3:12-15; Zph 3:8).
- 22.** Babylon the great (Rv 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21) (Is 13:19-21; 21:9; 34:13-15; Jr 50:39; 51:37; Dn 4:27; Zch 5:1-11; Zph 2:1-15).
- 23.** The great harlot (Rv 17:1, 3-7, 18) (Is. 1:21; 23:17; Ezk 16:15; Hs 2:5; Nah 3:4).
- 24.** Many waters (Rv 17:1, 15) (Jr 51:13).
- 25.** The scarlet color beast (Rv 17:3, 8, 11; 19:19-20) (Is 41:2; Dn 2; 7; 9:21; 11:23).
- 26.** Seven heads (Rv 17:3, 7, 9) (Jr 51:25; Dn 2:35; 7; Zch 4:7).
- 27.** Ten horns (Rv 17:3, 12-14, 16-17) (Dn 2; 2 Th 2:11).
- 28.** Rider on a white horse (Rv 19:11-16) (Ps 45:3-6; Is 63:1-6; 9:5 Zch 9:9; Lk 19:27; Jude 14-15).
- 29.** Lake of fire (Rv 19:20; 20:14) (Dn 12:2; Mt 25:41, 46 Mk 9:43; Jn 5:29).
- 30.** Binding of Satan (Rv 20:1-3) (Mt 13:30, 39-42; 1 Pt 5:8; 2 Pt 2:4; Jude 6:1).
- 31.** The millennium (Rv 20:4-6) (Ps. 122:5; 49:14; Is 9:7; 24:23; 29:18:32:1; 33:6, 24 65:20-23; Jr 3:17; 23:5;

Ezk 43:7; Dn 7; 12:2; Mi 4:7;  
Jl 3:12; Zch 14:9; Matt 19:  
28; 25:30-31; Lk 14:14; 22:30,  
34-36; Jn 5:29; 11:24-26;  
1 Cor 15:51; Phlp 3:14; 1 Th  
4:16-17; 1 Tm 3:16; Heb  
11:35).

**32. The holy city (Rv 21:1-22:5)**

(Is 60:3, 14, 19-20; 64:11-12;  
Ezk 40-48; Eph 5:25-33; Heb  
11:15-16; 12:22).

There are some specific uses of other symbols as well. The palm frond, for instance, in the Greco-Roman world was traditionally a representation of victory (Ferguson 1954:36).<sup>3</sup> According to Ferguson (1954:180), the scroll, besides being used in place of a book, also suggested the gifts of an individual as a writer. As it was discussed in Chapter 2, the concept of sealing can be associated with the mark, or signature, of the owner. In the Apocalypse of John, the symbol of the seal signature is applied to God (Ferguson 1954:180).

Another symbolic aspect found within the original audience of Revelation is the cryptic character of Rome. This is justifiable because of the danger of Roman government persecution. Richardson (1939:12-13) explains that John concealed his imprecations against Rome in the cryptic imagery of beasts and the harlot. He is presented as using recipients of the message because Christians, especially Judeo-Christians, knew these symbols from the Old Testament (see e.g., Daniel 7-8) and other Jewish apocalyptic literature (see Nicklesburg 2005:73, 260-270, 123, 290-295; Michelsen 1970:24). The safety of the reader and the author obeyed this imagery and symbolic concealment depiction. Summers (1951:5) said that such imagery was incomprehensible and unknown to outsiders, but it

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<sup>3</sup> For an additional description of the palm, see Horn (1995:893).

was revealed to the insiders or initiated. On this same symbolic realm, some authors also see John extracting Old Testament experiences and applying them to the Christian church. To this end, Anderson (1962:177-195) suggests that Isaiah 65:17-19 is expanded by John when he describes the New Earth of Revelation 21:1-3. Von Rad (1965:243-250) points out that there can be no doubt that in Revelation John is evoking the Exodus and transporting it as a symbolic event: the exodus of the redeemed from Babylon as the counterpart in the saving history to Israel 's departure from Egypt in the far-off past.

### **3.7 THE FOUR APPROACHES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION 7:1-3**

#### **3.7.1 Preterist reading of Revelation 7:1-3**

Thomas and Barker (1992:465), commenting on the seals of Revelation 6, says that the first six seals represent the early stage of the Jewish war, wherein Vespasian fought his way through Galilee toward Jerusalem. But before he had an opportunity to besiege Jerusalem, the action paused as the angels sealed 144 000 from the twelve tribes of Israel (Rv 7:3). Before the Jewish war reached and overwhelmed Jerusalem, God providentially caused a brief cessation of hostilities, allowing the Jewish Christians in Judea to escape (as Jesus urges in Mt 24:16-22). This happened when the emperor Nero committed suicide (68 CE), which caused the Roman general Vespasian and Titus to cease operations and withdraw for a year because of the turmoil in Rome. Later he returned to Judea and captured Jerusalem (Thomas and Barker 1992:465)

Thomas and Barker (1992:465-466) talks about the Hebraic terminology of Matthew 24:15 as occurring when “you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near (Lk 21:20), and at that time his followers are to flee (Lk 21:21; cf Mt 24:16). In 68 CE general Vespasian and Titus “had fortified all places around Jerusalem ... encompassing the city round about on all sides” (Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, 4.9.1). But when Vespasian and Titus were “informed that Nero was dead (*Jewish Wars* 4.9.2) they did not go with

their expedition against Jews (*Jewish Wars* 4.9.2, cf *Jewish Wars* 4.10.2) until after Vespasian became emperor in 69 CE. Then “Vespasian turned his thoughts to what remained unsubdued in Judea (*Jewish Wars* 4.10.15). With this approach the ones that escaped to the city of Pella in the year 66 CE would have been the “sealed ones” before the horrors and destruction of 70 CE took place.

### **3.7.2 Futurist reading of Revelation 7:1-3**

As Morris (1983:129) suggests in his futuristic exegesis on the sealing how the angel will affix the seal to the foreheads of the servants of God and what insignia it will be like is not revealed. He proposes that the angel could be Christ. He refers in this regard to the parallel found in Ezekiel 9:4.

Futurism argues that multitudes will turn back to God during the first years of the tribulation period. Especially will this be true in Israel, where the remarkable deliverance from Gog (Russia) will have had a traumatic effect on the whole nation even before the period of judgment begins. Many such believing Israelites will go further, believing in Christ as the Messiah and Savior. Then, before it is too late, a forthright witness for him will begin in the manner of Psalm 2:10-12 and Romans 1:16-17, which is probably one of those upon whom the Lord, through the angel, places his seal (Morris 1983:129).

Dispensationalism and progressive dispensationalism (which has three different stages throughout history; see Pate and Grundy 1998:30-33) within the field of Futurism accept this meaning that a literal interpretation or approach of the 144 000 servants of God, for instance, must be accepted. According this posture, there is an ethnic Israel, physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The first example in history that the church is being called Israel exists in 160 CE (Pate and Grundy 1998:227).

It is appropriate to re-observe here that there are different approaches in Dispensationalism. Classical Dispensationalism, as it was mentioned previously,



was articulated by the Irish Anglican clergyman John Nelson Darby (Ryrie 2007:14, 67, 158).

The doctrine of Dispensationalism was spread across the United States with the publishing and circulation of the 1909 version of the Scofield Bible. Some important developments unfolded within this movement during the twentieth century: 1) The earliest stage for Dispensationalism was propounded by Darby and Scofield. This period emphasized the dispensations themselves. 2). A second stage emerged in 1960, thanks to the work of Ryrie (2007:79-197). With this second development two noticeable changes transpired: Faith was highlighted as the means of salvation in any of the dispensations (against the old Scofield Bible's statement about works being the means of salvation in the Old Testament), and the individual dispensations were no longer the focal point; rather the emphasis development arose, commonly called progressive dispensationalism. This thought interprets the prophecies of the Bible literally in their fulfillment, therefore, it is perceived as still future. The key verse is Revelation 1:19, "what you have seen," and "what is now and what will take place later" (Rv 4:22). Classical Dispensationalism believes that the lack of mention of the church from Revelation 4 onward indicates that it has been rapture to heaven by Christ before the advent of the Great Tribulation (Rv 6-18). This postulate presents a pessimistic view of world history.

Progressive Dispensationalism appeared when by 1980 certain theologians launched a rethinking of the system and developed what has been called "progressive" or "modified" Dispensationalism. They use the term already/not yet hermeneutic. Such term It was first popularized by Oscar Cullmann (Pate and Grundy 1998:31). Cullmann (1963:297-306, 319-338), a Swiss theologian of a generation ago, views in this system the first and the second coming of Christ through the lens of eschatological tension. The first talks about the kingdom inauguration; the second refers to its full realization. Until then, Christians live in the tension of the age to come. They believe that: 1) Jesus began his heavenly

Davidic reign at the resurrection (Ac 2:22-30, 36; Ps 110:1); 2). The church is not a parenthesis in the plan of God. It forms a part of the one people of God (Rm 2:11, 26-28; Gl 6:16; Eph 2:11-22; 1 Pt 2:9-10); 3) The New Covenant is fulfilled in the church's beginning (2 Cor. 3:1-4:6). The end of history is also experiencing partial realization in the church (Rm 15:7-13).

### **3.7.3 Idealist reading of Revelation 7:1-3**

The Idealistic approach does not restrict the contents of Revelation to a particular historical period, but rather sees apocalyptic symbols that are multivalent in meaning and, without specific historical reference the application of the book is limitless (Pate and Grundy 1998:24). Schüssler Fiorenza claims that her purpose in writing on Revelation is to “liberate the text from its historical captivity and rescue the message of Revelation for today” (Schüssler Fiorenza 1991:24-25). For Schüssler Fiorenza (1991:27-28), the meaning of Revelation is not to be sought in the first century, nor in the remote events of the end time, but rather in the ongoing struggle between those disadvantaged socio-politically and their oppressors. Thus understood, Revelation would be a powerful tool in the hands of liberation and feminist theologians for throwing the joke of capitalism and chauvinism, respectively. For example, in the idealistic viewpoint of Revelation 17:18, Thanksgiving Day in the United States is the sad description of the Third World that is possessed by the Babylonian power of America (Schüssler Fiorenza 1991:22-28). In this feminist idealistic concept, the United States of America resembles the ancient destructive power of Babylon/Rome. Julia Esquivel (1982:79-83) cited by Schüssler Fiorenza (1998:227-228), describes this position in a poem entitled *Thanksgiving Day* where she expresses poetically the politics of interpretation that animates a reading strategy critical of all forms of domination. Julia Esquivel, a Guatemalan refugee, looks into the eye of Babylon/Rome, and does not see a woman. Rather she sees the imperial power of the United States of America that has been and still is so destructive of all native peoples:

In the third year of the massacres by Lucas and the other coyotes against the poor of Guatemala, I was led by the Spirit in to the desert. And on the eve of Thanksgiving Day I had a vision of Babylon: the city sprang forth arrogantly.... Each day false prophets invited the inhabitants of the Unchaste City to kneel before the idols of gluttony, money and death: Idolaters of all nations were being converted to the American way of life.... The Spirit told me in the River of death flood the blood of many peoples ... the blood of the Indian ancestors who lived on those lands, of those who even now kept hostage in the Great Mountains and the Black Hills of Dakota by the guardians of the beast.

(Esquivel 1982:79-91)

Another of the defenders of this theological Idealism position is Lohmeyer (1953:138-147), cited by LaRondelle (in Holbrook 1992a:154). In his view, he opines that the great prostitute of Revelation 17 could not symbolize Rome or any historical city, because all cities would have been destroyed during the seventh plague, recorded in Revelation chapter 16. Consequently, the harlot must signify a demonic figure, the satanic power of the apostate world, as in ancient mythology (LaRondelle, in Holbrook 1992b:154).

The contemporary hermeneutic procedure to interpret Revelation within the concept of Idealism is in a certain way an expression of the insufficient character of the rules of interpretation expressed by some actual theologians. As for them, the correct interpretation is only possible through the situation of the interpreter itself, which accede to the text with their own presuppositions (*Vorverständnis*, “previous intelligence” or “pre-comprehension”) to produce a dialogue in which, the interpreter, from his personal emotive situation, asks the text and, at the same time the text questions the interpreter. This is called the “hermeneutic circle” in which the interpreter acquires a new understanding that modifies and perfects their concepts by the “fusion of horizons”: 1) the personal horizon of the interpreter and 2) the one that corresponds to the text. The interpreter, then, feels appeased by the content of the text (Gadamer & Weinsheimer 1989:213, 245-246, 252, 305, 306, 337, 370, 390, 398 cited in Treiyr 1996:3-6).

The traditional hermeneutic procedure works with the text, using the words, the context, their literary style, and its historical background. The “hermeneutic circle” insists upon the importance of the interpreter according to its personal context. There is danger in this approach because it sometimes does not lead to an honest interpretation of the text, but to an adaptation of the text to the philosophic-religious conceptions of the interpreter (Gadamer & Weinsheimer 1989:213, 245-246, 252, 305, 306, 337, 370, 390, 398 cited in Treiyer 1996:4). The major challenge for idealism when it forms an approach totally separated within the context of the passage is the endless interpretation possibilities that may result from imagination. Thus, for Idealism, sealing in Revelation 7:1-3 could have endless and timeless applications.

### **3.8 QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE HISTORICISM APPROACH**

#### **3.8.1 History: bone marrow of prophecy**

Historicism recognizes that Daniel and Revelation reveal a divine lordship and mastery regarding the onward movement of history beyond the prophet’s own time – and a future history when God will establish His eternal kingdom on earth.<sup>4</sup> Because Historicism considers history as the bone marrow of prophecy (in this context, history is fulfilled prophecy and prophecy is history not yet fulfilled), it is necessary to discuss some of the differences between it and the other approaches in the interpretation of the Apocalypse. There are various elements in discussion: 1) The *continuum* emerging in Revelation and its difference when it is compared to classical prophecy; 2) the prevalent opinion found in Idealism and Futurism upon the idea of repeated fulfillments and 3) the conditionality in Revelation. These three issues/questions are discussed next in order to establish an answer when it comes to justifying the reason for the Historicist approach of interpretation chosen to analyze Revelation 7:1-3.

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<sup>4</sup>The discussion of the Historicism approach of Revelation 7:1-3 will be considered in Chapter 4, where an exegesis and various commentaries will be used to explain the meaning of Historicist thought within the sealing prophecy of Revelation 7:1-3.

### **3.8.2 Why does the concept of historical *continuum* emerge in apocalyptic in distinction from the “two foci” concept of classical prophecy?**

It is suggested that a specific background from Biblical literature itself serves as the pattern for this characteristic of apocalyptic, namely the Old Testament historical narratives. Apocalyptic prophecies project into the future a continuation of the Bible’s historical record. Strand (in Holbrook 1992a:11-34) remarks that God’s sovereignty and constant care for His people are always in the forefront of the Bible’s portrayal of the historical *continuum*, whether it is depicted in past events (historical books) or in events to come (apocalyptic prophecy; Strand, in Holbrook 1992a:19).

Daniel and Revelation reveal a divine lordship and mastery regarding the onward movement of history beyond the prophet’s own time – a future history that will culminate when the God of heaven establishes his own eternal kingdom that will fill the whole earth and stand forever (Dn 2:35, 44-45; Rv 21, 22). Theological interpretation of Revelation, in order to be sound, must be compatible with this historical perspective. Revelation embraces, as does the book of Daniel, a step-by-step progression through history, not a polarized focus on either the ancient period or the eschatological climax or both. Those commentators who wish to combine Preterism and Futurism as the best approach to Revelation, says Holbrook, fly right in the face of the very nature of the book itself as an apocalypse. Expositors who accept a historicist fulfillment (in the past) of certain visions of Daniel and Revelation, but who then opt for a second and primary end-time fulfillment of the same, come under this structure as well (Strand, in Holbrook 1992a:19).

### **3.8.3 Does the Apocalypse contain the concept of repeated fulfillments?**

Strand (in Holbrook 1992a:19-21) posts some other interesting questions about the multiple fulfillments in Revelation. Can there be repeated fulfillments in

apocalyptic prophecy? There is a certain “philosophy-of-history” perspective in this kind of prophecy. According to Holbrook, “philosophy-of-history” does not mean the “value-philosophy” approach that sets forth philosophical considerations or “ideals” without touching historical reality. It must be emphasized that apocalyptic prophecy deals with *real events* and *developments* in the historical *continuum* from the prophet’s time onward to the end of time (Strand, in Holbrook 1992a:19).

Any approach that divorces fulfillment of apocalyptic forecasts from real history is contrary to the very essence of apocalyptic historical portrayal. This kind of “philosophy-of-history” to which attention is called has a certain kind of recurring application. There is a need to first look for evidences and/or illustrations of the phenomenon; and second, we will note the type of material to which the phenomenon is applicable. In the book of Baruch there is an indication that “history repeats itself.” This non- canonical apocalypse, in its parable of the thundercloud divides its historical *continuum* in *alternately* “clear” and “inky” periods. There is, indeed, an almost “sing-song” pattern of historical repetition. In the canonical book of Daniel, the rise and fall of kingdoms conveys the same thought with regard to repetitiveness in history, especially so in view of the under girding statement that God “removes kings and sets up kings” (Dn 2:21). The concept is expressive of the “blessings-and-cursing” formulary of Deuteronomy 27-28 and finds graphic illustration in Israel’s own history. This is well illustrated, for example, in the book of Judges (Strand, in Holbrook 1992a:19-21).

Whenever Israel failed in its covenant commitment, oppression by foreign nations resulted. Deliverance came whenever Israel turned to the Lord in sincere repentance. Although each instance was a different episode, with a different judge leading the deliverance, the *kind* of historical phenomenon in each case was the same. Thus, it may be said that Israelite “history repeated itself” in principle, though not in specific detail. In the book of Revelation there are found

similar suggestions of repetitive patterns, such as in the four-three division within various septets (Strand, in Holbrook 1992a:19-21).

One may think, for example, of the striking similarities that occurred in the letters to Ephesus and Sardis and again in those to Smyrna and Philadelphia (the first and fifth churches and the second and sixth churches, respectively in Revelation 2-3). Furthermore, the very manner in which symbolism is used in Revelation implies at times a repeated (and possible a continuous) application. Particularly impressive is the expression in Revelation 11:8 “the great city” which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, where their (the two witnesses) Lord was crucified. Here we find three places (Sodom, Egypt, Jerusalem) brought together and identified in such a way as to carry our minds back to events both in the *distant* past and in *much closer time*. These events were also separated geographically (Strand, in Holbrook 1992a:20). White (2000:588), in commenting on John’s vision, makes some remarks indicative of this kind of historical repetition in the following statement:

Looking down through long centuries of darkness and superstition, the aged exile saw multitudes suffering martyrdom because of their love for the truth. But he saw also that He who sustained His early witnesses would not forsake His faithful followers during the centuries of persecution that they must pass through before the close of time.

(White 2000:588)

There is not a single instance where this author in her writings indicates dual or multiple fulfillments of the little horn or any of the beasts of Daniel or Revelation and their time periods. Those entities come into existence once and once only. Their kind of service as vehicles for Satan’s attack upon God and God’s saints may readily, however, lead to a *repetition of the general processes* used, whether these are deceptions or persecutions (see Jn 8:44). But apocalyptic prophecy is not understood to embody dual or multiple fulfillments in and of itself. What this text tells (Rv 11:8) is not that there is going to be a second or even a third fulfillment of Sodom or multiple fulfillments of the ancient Egypt that held Israel in



oppression. Rather, the message is that these three distinct entities can be identified in a sort of “togetherness”; they fittingly serve in a symbolic way for the “great city” that embodies and repeats a similar character of wickedness and oppression (Strand, in Holbrook 1992a:20).

#### **3.8.4 Is there any conditionality in apocalyptic?**

This third question is also crucial since Dispensationalism occupies a vast theological realm among many Protestants today. To respond to this question, Holbrook declares that apocalyptic prophecy sets forth an historical progression that allows no room for variability, as God foretells what “must shortly come to pass” (Rv 1:1; KJV). There is, for example, no question whether the four horsemen of Revelation 6 are going to ride; they will *indeed* go forth in the progression indicated. The same holds true with the trumpet warnings, the plagues of doom and the destruction of Babylon. These are all things John is shown and told would happen. There simply is no element of contingency involved (Strand, in Holbrook 1992a:21-22).

Some argue that there is an element of conditionality in the letters to the seven churches. This is indeed so. The whole concept of these letters has conditionality as an underlying frame of reference. But this particular conditionality does not relate to the historical portrayal of the churches’ situations, but to how churches and individuals in them will respond to Christ’s appeal, how they will decide to stand in the future regarding their covenant relationship with the Lord. The hortatory nature of epistolary comes to the fore. The fact that Revelation is a letter as well as an apocalyptic prophecy gives it a certain flavor of exhortation. But this exhortation is limited to appeals (see, e g, Rv 16:15; Strand, in Holbrook 1992a:22).

The exhortation does not apply to the specific type of prophetic forecast that is part and parcel of the natural apocalyptic literature. The book of Daniel, too, has elements of conditionality in its historical sections and in any appeals that are

made. Neither Daniel nor Revelation is the prophetic forecast itself subject to conditionality. The events are fixed and the prescribed time periods are definite and invariable. These elements fit the patterns of what Daniel said to King Nebuchadnezzar: “God has made known to the king what shall be hereafter. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure” (Dn. 2:45; Strand, in Holbrook 1992a:22).

### **3.9 A PREVIEW OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE HISTORICIST APPROACH FOR THE ANALYSIS OF REVELATION 7:1-3**

#### **3.9.1 Questions on the preview analysis**

After discussing the above discussion of the different approaches for the interpretation of Revelation, it is appropriate to ask the questions that will comprise the analysis of Revelation 7:1-3 within the Historicist method of interpretation in Chapter 4 of this study. The questions that will be discussed in this matter in Chapter 4 are:

- What is the historical background of the first century CE that can be traced within Historicism in Revelation 7:1-3 related to slavery, sealing and Babylon?
- Is there any Historicist relationship between the Emperor cult and the historicist *continuum* applied to the future in Revelation 7:1-3?
- Is there some symbolism extracted from the Old Testament present in Revelation 7:1-3?
- What is the seal of God in Revelation 7:1-3 according to the Historicist approach?
- What are the connections between the holistic Sabbath and the Trinity?

- What is the implication between the Holy Trinity and the ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς = 666) in the phrase ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου from Revelation 7:2 and Revelation 16:12?
- What is the concept of the code number hypothesis for χξς?
- What is the relationship between Exodus 12:7 and the metaphorical meaning of σφραγίς?

In Chapter 4, the following aspects will also receive attention:

- The presence of spiritual Babylon as a spiritual religious power that enslaves and seals.
- The historical record that shows that Roman religion during the first century CE was woven into the State politics and the Emperor Cult.
- The symbolism extracted from Exodus 12 and the Passover, Ezekiel 9 and the judgment in connection with Revelation 7:1-3, including all of the New Testament verses for sealing. The various words that offer a field of a symbolic study such as τέσσαρας, ἀνέμους, γῆς, θαλάσσης, δένδρον, ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου, δούλος and μετώπων. These Greek words are full of biblical symbolism that Adventist historicism uses to describe the process of sealing.
- The presence of the holistic Sabbath meaning of sealing.
- The connection and counterpart between Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Ezekiel. 20:12, 20; Mark 2:27, 28; Hebrews 4:1-10; Revelation 7:1-3; 2 Corinthians 3:1-3; Galatians. 4:19; 2 Timothy 2:19; Revelation 7:1-3; Revelation 13:18; and Revelation 16:13.
- An explanation of the Hebrew verbs “blessed,” “rested” and “sanctified” of Genesis 2:1-3. These three verbs will be discussed within the LXX language as well. There also will be a parallelism consideration between the holistic Sabbath and marriage according to Genesis 2. This section will also include a description of Revelation 16:13 and the concept of maligned Trinity. This section includes the exegetical study of the phrase ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου found in Revelation 7:3 and 16:12.

- The code number hypothesis resides in the sense of considering the meaning of ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) within Revelation 13:18 and other Biblical contexts such as Isaiah 45:1-3 and Revelation 16:12-13.

Notwithstanding this research considers the four major approaches to Revelation, as being the most important tools to study the Apocalypse, it is useful also to be informed about other interpretations for this particular book. As it was declared at the beginning of the present Chapter, there are at least six others approaches to Revelation. Next, there is a brief discussion of such list of schools in the study of the Ἑποκάλυψις Ἰωάννου.

### **3.10 THE SIX MINOR APPROACHES TO REVELATION**

#### **3.10.1 PATRISTIC APPROACH TO REVELATION**

As it is known, the study of Revelation has had different groups of consensus interpretation throughout its theological consideration. Käsemann (in Berardino et al 1996:72), for instance, suggested that the apocalypse was the mother of all apocalyptic theology (Berardino & Studer 1996:72). Similarly, Käsemann pointed out that hope in the Lord's coming was one of the factors that contributed to the development of New Testament theology (Käsemann 1967:137). According to Berardino and Studer (1996:71), the Biblical apocalyptic approach was entirely something inherited from the Jewish world. Referring to the Patristic approach to Revelation, we may start by saying that one of the most important contributions of this approach to the study of the Scriptures was to translate Semitic genres into Hellenistic genres without excessively altering the content of the message (Berardino & Studer 1996:72). The term "Fathers" was used in two different ways during the Patristic period: 1) "Fathers" were regarded as transmitting spiritual life and, 2) they were thought to have an authoritative place, especially in the area of doctrine. During the fourth century, however, a new dimension was added to the "Fathers" – that of calling the participants in the Council of Nicaea "Fathers." To these "318 Fathers," such as Athanasius, were gradually added to the reliable interpreters of the Nicene faith. Thus, the act of the Synod of Ephesus speaks of

the phrase “*sententiae Patrum*” (“testimonies of the Fathers”). During the same period, the title “Father” began to be given to renowned theologians of the past, of whom almost all were bishops. The historical evolution of the concept of Father becomes clear chiefly from the testimony of the following writers: Augustine; Athanasius; Basil of Caesarea; Cyril of Alexandria; Eusebius of Caesarea; Jerome; and Theodore and Vincent of Lermis (Berardino & Studer 1996:368-369).

During the Patristic period Jerome, Augustine, and some other authors worked with the Patristic approach to Revelation which mixes spiritual reality and heavenly worship. With this in mind, some theologians argued that Revelation alludes to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (Han 2007:10, 12, 16, 56, 141, 185). Berardino and Studer (1996:369-370) also explain that the Patristic Fathers developed “the patristic method of argumentation,” which aims to explain Biblical truths using other author’s writings. Augustine, for instance (see *Ep* 147.f in Berardino 1996:587), was one of the first who interpreted Ambrose with the help of other particular texts. Basil elaborated in the belief in the Spirit, not only through the apostolic tradition but also by citing some other Fathers’ texts (Berardino & Studer 1996:369, 586). Basil (Travers 2003:95-106, 131-140. 212), argues about the terms *sub-numeration* and *con-numeration* for the Spirit. On the first term Basil situates the Spirit as Servant, Master. *Con-numeration* is employed for the Spirit’s quality as the Father and Son. Basil favors the *sub-numeration* concept. The way the Bible considers Trinity equality for the Father and the Spirit (Ac 5:3, 4) questions such Basil approach. Depending on Silvas (2005:95) the only Capadocian Father to teach the Holy Spirit was ὁμοίωσις with the Father was Gregory Nazianzen. Justin (*Dialogue with Triphon* 90.2, in Berardino & Studer 1996:125) is cited referring to prophecy as spoken parables and types that hide the truth and require strenuous study. In the Patristic period there is discussion on eschatology regarding the millennial concept. Ireneaus, Justin, and Tertullian saw a materialistic reign of the just on earth with Christ before the final judgment. However, Origin opposed this view, saying that

Revelation 20 must be considered using a spiritual interpretation of an allegorical kind, and Dionysius dedicated attention to the Apocalypse of John from the same perspective (Berardino & Studer 1996:193; Kelly 1960:41-48). The concept of sealing is vague in the writings of the Fathers, and intends mostly to show the divine protection from evil (Berardino & Studer 1996:193, Kelly 1960:40-48).

### 3.10.2 HIGHER CRITICISM METHOD TO REVELATION

This method is a branch of literary analysis that investigates the origin of texts in terms of chronological answers about when and who wrote the text (Burkert & Raffan 1985:1-20). It is Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) that is usually credited as the first to study the Bible using this method (Durant 1961:125,162, 201). In the eighteenth century, German Bible scholars from the Tübingen School at first viewed Revelation from the historical-critical method approach. Regarding this approach, scholars thought that Revelation and its message happened within the first-century CE context with the genre of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature. According to the historical-critical method, the time setting for Revelation is exclusively for the seven churches of Asia Minor cited in the book and takes place during that period. There are no future events taking place, only *praeter ex vaticinia* (see Higher criticism in [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higher\\_criticism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higher_criticism)). In this context scholars discuss the genre of Revelation in terms of whether its literary function was the fact that it was written by the apostle John during the first century CE or if it was just a proactive apocalyptic literature against the Roman Empire exclusively (Bauckham 1993:1-17; Beale 1999:37-43; Mazaferri 1989:53, 54).<sup>5</sup> Recently Ratzinger (2007:xiii), in citing Schnackenburg (1995:318), explains that “the efforts of scientific exegesis to examine these traditions and trace them back to what is historically credible” draws us “into a continual discussion of tradition and redaction history that never comes to rest.” According to Ratzinger (2007:xiii), the work of Schnackenburg “is intended to help believing Christians ... who have been made insecure by scientific research and

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<sup>5</sup> For the use of a modified version of the historical-critical approach by Adventist scholars, see Rodriguez (in Reid 2006:339-353).

critical discussion, so that they may hold fast to faith in the person of Jesus Christ as the bringer of salvation and Savior of the world.” In this respect, Mercatante (1988a:359-361) includes Jesus among the many world myths and legends. Another area, which uses higher criticism is the examination of the text of Revelation with regard to the text itself, its variations problem and its transmission through history. Aland and Aland (1987:4) discuss one typical example of such data found in Erasmus. He was unable to find in Basel any manuscript of Revelation of John so he borrowed one from his friend Johann Reuchlin. Because its last portion was lacking, Erasmus simply translated Revelation 22:16-21 from Latin back into Greek (introducing several errors). Erasmus relied on manuscripts of the twelfth or thirteenth centuries represented by the Byzantine imperial text. The translation of Erasmus is considered one of the most careless translations ever produced (Aland and Aland 1987:4).

In the Higher Criticism School of studying Revelation the sealing in Revelation is strictly viewed under the siege period of the second Jewish war when the Jerusalem temple was completely destroyed by the Romans during the year 70 CE (Düsterdieck 1887:78-80; Russell 1999:365-406). A posterior explanation on this critical study associated with Preterism, will be discussed later in this Chapter.

### **3.10.3 KABALISTIC OR ESOTERIC APPROACH TO REVELATION**

There are also some esoteric schools that see Revelation in terms of multiple levels of meaning. The understanding of Revelation is then associated with Kabalistic symbols. This term is attributed either to Salomon Bin Bariral (1021-1058) or to the thirteenth Spanish Kabalist by the name of Bahya ben Asher. The presence of Kabalistic symbols is related to early written works known as *Heichalot* and *Sefer Yetzriah* (dated in the first- or second-century CE). The Kabalistic approach is related to the study of esoteric knowledge and practice in the Jewish writings contained in the Torah (Matt 1996:23-165). This esoteric study sometimes is linked to magic (Christopher 2006: 353-359, 315-331). This



secret knowledge was acquired in four different levels: 1) The *Peshat*, which was the simple meaning of the text, 2) *Remez* or biblical allusions or allegory, 3) *Peshat midrash* (Rabbinic scriptural exegesis), and 4) *Sof* or the *kabalah*, the secret meaning of the Torah. Blabastky, Eliphas Levi, Steiner, and Aun Weor are some of the defenders of this position that view the Scriptures in terms of layers of wisdom (Leet 1999:75-113, 117-164, 380-412). For Kabbalistics, the Bible is an encrypted document with not just information but infinite spiritual energy lies in potential awaiting man connection (Berg 2008:7).

This school considers Revelation to have secret codes of interpretation that have an infinite variety of meanings comprised within the four levels of kabalistic knowledge. Therefore, the concept of sealing is also understood in any of those four levels of interpreting prophecy.

#### **3.10.4 AESTHETIC APPROACH TO REVELATION**

Another approach to Revelation is the Aesthetic and literary mode of interpretation. This approach considers Revelation within the realm of art and imagination, viewing the imagery as symbols that contain depictions of timeless truths and the victory of good over evil. Aesthetic thought in Revelation is considered by Roman Catholic writers, such as O'Connor and Percy (in Sykes 2007:1, 136), as being one thought expressed in a secret desire for the end of the world, hoping that a universal catastrophe would bring renewal. This liberation is seen through a dramatized variety of lenses and focuses in aesthetic memory that has characterized fiction in Revelation. An example of this is *Love in the Ruins* (Percy 1980:1-416), in which the author tells the fictional story of a faithful Roman Catholic member named Tom who is struggling in a badly polarized United States where the Roman Catholic Church has split into many factions. He remains faithful to Rome and walks a middle road between political extremes. Sykes justifies this view, saying that Maritian Art and Scholasticism emphasizes the idea that the virtue of the artist lies in the skill peculiar to his kind of making, rather than in some extrinsic moral end (O'Connor, in Sykes 2007:4). As a

marginal point, Simpson suggests that the work of O'Connor and Percy represented a new direction for literature from the American South (Simpson 1997:1-290, in Sykes 2007:1). Within Catholicism, Catechism teachings also find their way into the Apocalypse (Hardon 1975:87-88).

The Aesthetic approach to Revelation is also used by some Jewish authors such as Braiterman (2007:xvii-xxx). He says that art and aesthetics will cast religion in a new unfamiliar light, tossing its thought away from an exclusive preoccupation with epistemology and ethics by underscoring the shape of revelation in physical sensation and the visual imagination. In this way, Braiterman applies some of the Jewish modern history experience, including World War II, the Holocaust and Zionism, among others. There are many historical scenarios, including the history of the modern pilgrimage of the Jewish people (Braiterman 2007:3, 9, 35, 133, 141, 154, 165, 73-74, 190-191, 199-206). In this sense, sealing could be contemplated as a new reassurance of protection and favor to the risen nation of Israel.

### **3.10.5 LITERALIST APPROACH TO REVELATION**

The literalist approach considers the prophecy of Revelation as being literally fulfilled. Actually, the tension is between lesser and greater degrees of spiritualization. For example, some authors, such as Chevrier (2005:2-70) and Amirault (see <http://www.tentmaker.org/Dew/Dew6/D6-Understanding Scripture.html>) suggest that the literalist approach ignores the concept that languages of the Bible use many communication techniques. The Hebrew language in particular contains various language expressions. These language expressions include parables, metaphors, symbols, hyperboles, similes, litotes, repetition, euphemism, apostrophes, anthropomorphisms, metonymy, irony, allegory, hypocatastasis, antithesis, allegory, fables, riddles, typology and synecdoche. One typical example of symbolism in Revelation is the Euphrates, which according to Beale (1999:828) cannot be considered a literal river in the book of Revelation. "A figurative interpretation of the Euphrates is also suggested

by the figurative use of “sea,” “river,” and “water” in the renewed exodus plagues of the second and third bowls, as well as elsewhere in the book in conjunction with the dragon, the beast, or their followers (see on 16:3-4, as well as 12:15, 16; 13:1; 15:2; 17:1, 15” (Beale 1999:828; see also Prigent 2001:246).

Based on what has been said above, the literalist approach to Revelation thinks of sealing as being fulfilled in the literal context of the Preteristic and critical school, as well as a protection exclusively applied to the Jewish people in the first- and second-centuries CE. For example, a literalist neglects the various literary communication techniques used throughout Revelation which implies also a figurative and symbolic context within the book itself. Therefore, regarding the presence of those communication techniques attested to in the Apocalypse of John, it is necessary to cite and explain ten communication techniques, which appear (not exhaustive) in that book. These literary forms are:

#### **3.10.5.1 Metaphor**

By definition, a metaphor is an implied comparison which does not use the word “like.” These include eighteen anthropomorphisms (Rv 1:5; 2:23; 3:5, 14, 21; 5:5, 6; 7:17; 13:8; 17:8, 20:12, 15; 21:7, 22; 22:16; Mulholland 1959:193).

#### **3.10.5.2 Hypocatastasis**

According to Lord (1857:61, in Mulholland 1959a:196) this literary form appears 100 times in the first chapters of Isaiah. By definition, hypocatastasis is the artificial use of an act that is used for illustration, not the use of the word. In the Apocalypse of John, it occurs more than ten times in the first three chapters (Rv 2:17, 22, 24, 25; 3:2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11; 16:15; 18:6).

#### **3.10.5.3 Metonymy**

Metonymy is the denomination of something by a noun that is the proper name of something, with which it is intimately connected (Lord, in Mulholland 1959a:196-197). In the book of Revelation this appears twenty five times (Rv 1:5, 10, 12;

2:13, 22, 24; 3:4, 7, 7, 14; 5:9; 6:8; 7:14; 8:3; 11:8, 13; 14:13; 19:6, 11, 13, 15; 20:2; 21:6; 22:13).

#### **3.10.5.4 Synecdoche**

Synecdoche is defined as the use of a term that properly denotes only part of a thing. It is mentioned some twenty one times in the Apocalypse (Rv 3:1, 4, 10; 5:11, 13; 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9; 9:17; 14:11; 16:3; 18:6, 8, 10, 17; 20:4,15; 22:15, 16; Mulholland 1959a:197).

#### **3.10.5.5 Apostrophe**

By definition, apostrophe is a turning away from the present discovery and addressing a person or object (Rv 18:1-4; Lord, in Mulholland 1959a:197-198).

#### **3.10.5.6 Simile**

A simile is a comparison that uses the particle “like.” According to Mulholland (1959a:183), similes occur fifty six times in the book of Revelation (Rv 1:13, 14, 15, 16, 17; 2:18, 27; 4:1, 3, 6, 7; 5:6; 6:1, 6, 12, 13, 14; 8:8, 10; 9:2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 17, 19; 10:1, 3; 11:1; 12:15; 13:2, 3, 11; 14:2, 3, 14; 15:2; 16:15; 20:8; 21:11).

#### **3.10.5.7 Personification**

Personification is a technique which is used for inanimate beings that are spoken of as animate, or endowed with life and volition (Dungan 1888:322-324, in Mulholland 1959a:183-184). It is cited three times in Revelation (Rv 6:9-10; 14:2; 18:5).

#### **3.10.5.8 Hyperbole**

Hyperbole is an exaggerated statement of things as greater or less in dimensions, more or less in number, or better or worse in kind. It occurs once in Revelation 14:20.

### **3.10.5.9 Interrogation**

Interrogation means affirming or denying with great force a rhetorical question (Dungan 1888:326). It appears three times in the Apocalypse of John (Rv 7:13; 13:4; 18:8).

### **3.10.10 Polysindeton**

Polysindeton is defined as the use of the word “and” to emphasize the elements which are connected (Mulholland 1959a:222-223). It is used ten times in Revelation (Rv 1:11; 3:17; 6:15; 11:17-18; 12:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; 13:1-9; 18:12-13; 20:9-15; 21:8, 22-27; 22:1-6, 17).

### **3.10.11 Asyndeton**

By definition asyndeton occurs when the “ands” are excluded so the reader can hurry over the details and attend to the great climax (Mulholland 1959a:223). It is used three times in Revelation (Rv 3:7-8; 7:5-8; 21:18-20).

The parable and the allegory, which is an extended metaphor, do not appear in Revelation.

The presence of the literary forms referred to above, which are present in Revelation, give evidence against a total Biblical literalism. In terms of prophecy and symbolism, the application that Babylon symbolizes merely latter-day Rome is inconsistent (Beale 1999:1013). Referring to the terms “spiritualize” and “spiritualization,” Berckof (1951:151, in Mulholland in 1959a:5-9) carefully avoided the mentioning of such words in his hermeneutical text and heartily supported the literal concept that “as a rule, the languages of the prophets should be understood literally.” The literalist approach destroys symbolism and the different literary forms present in Revelation (Rissing 2004:27, 85, 94-98, 193, 125, 175, 183, 184). Arguing against literalism, Pieters (1950:127) says that the promises to Israel were fulfilled spiritually in the Church. There are some religious cults, such as the Rastafarians, that combine the literalist approach when applying

Revelation to their leaders. This religious group emerged out of the peasant black people in Jamaica in 1930. They consider their founder to be Haile Selassie I, the former emperor of Ethiopia, who was considered to be an incarnated god, called “Jah.” The term “Ras” is an Ethiopic word meaning “Head” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Revelation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Revelation)).

### **3.10.6 ASTRAL PROPHECY APPROACH TO REVELATION**

Another popular approach to Revelation is called Astral prophecy. Maier (2002:10) points out that “John is an astral prophet. His prophecies were rooted in reading the sky by means of observations, sky visions.” According to Malina (1995:12-13), Revelation can be understood only within the astronomy and astrology approach. History tells us that the Greek philosopher Theophrastus (370-287 BCE) is credited with calling the study of the stars and their impact on the earth and its inhabitants “astronomics” (τὰ ἀστρονομικά; *On Weather Signs* 1.1, in Malina 1995:11-15). The one who introduced to the modern world this method of study for the Apocalypse was Charles Francois Dupuis in the eighteenth century (Dupuis 2001:342-408). He believed all religions were rooted in the worship of the sun (Bradlaugh 1895:60-63). This position was proven wrong later (Malina 1995:11-18). Franz Boll in 1914 also attempted an astronomical interpretation for the major scenarios of the book of Revelation. He was neither a Bible scholar nor a theologian. However, his contribution on the study of ancient stars was of an erudite. His work was discontinued after the First World War (Malina 1995:11-18).

Malina (1995:13) mentions that the work of Boll catapulted some other contributions in that same field. Wilhelm Gundel, Wilhelm Kroll, and Andre Festugière (Malina 1995:10-30) among others, wrote about the value of astronomy, especially for understanding the first-century CE view of the cosmos. Freuendorfer (in Malina 1995:146) points out that in the Hellenistic world, specifically in the time of Revelation, the Babylonian worldview and the Athenian worldview were closely focused together into a new worldview which

governed the beliefs and ways of dealing with life and the environment. Boll intended to demonstrate that John's visions were "literary fictions," purely literary constructs and translations of astral objects and motifs. The main concern of ancient sky scholars was the impact of celestial bodies on human beings (Malina 1995:26). For a contraposition view on the Astral approach to Revelation see Seiss (2009:1-178).

### 3.11 SUMMARY

The various approaches on Revelation give evidence of the complexity of the interpretation of Revelation. The six minor schools view the meaning of Revelation according to some other traditions of human thought. Critics of the German world of the eighteenth century consider Revelation as a mere literature tradition, exclusively for the original audience during the Roman Empire of the first century CE. After Apostolic times, the Patristic writers were very vague and general in defining the concept and function of sealing. Modern thinkers such as Malina have rediscovered and published much older writers from the second decade of the 1900. Those authors absorbed ancient Greek astronomic and astrological concepts. In recent years, Jewish scholars have seen Revelation as a reproduction of the pilgrimage of Israel since 1948 and they portray that imagery into Revelation. Some other Jewish scholars have concentrated on four study methods described by some Rabbis. Within this approach, the Kabbalistic approach tends to divide the concept of meaning and knowledge by the phrase layers of study and understanding. The Aesthetic approach defends the idea that Revelation can be understood in a certain way through art and imagery.

The four major schools of interpreting Revelation is Preterism, Futurism, Idealism and the Historicist approach. Preterism mostly agrees with German criticism. Futurism is mixed sometimes with Preterism and Dispensationalism. Idealism does not consider any prophetic period or *continuum* necessary, nor a Recapitulation approach or straight-line mode as a Historicist does. Paulien



(2004:29) has reminded us that in a certain way all of these four major approaches have a certain point of validity. However, the internal evidence suggest that Revelation – which includes at least ten literary figures and about thirty two symbols (that are attested in many Old and New Testament writings) – requires an extensive evaluation beyond the original audience approach that some claim as the only way of interpreting the book. As was described above, there is an obvious reason why Francisco de Rivera and Diego de Alcázar crafted Futurism during the Medieval Period. Reformers made Roman Catholics' hair stand on end in the use of the Reformation Historicist approach. Idealism, on the other hand, has been recently adapted by modern theologians that introduced the concept of “fusion of horizons,” in which the reader may feel or see one interpretation that not necessarily follows the context or the exegesis but, instead goes after the personal feeling application of what the text or the book is telling the reader or what the reader feels about the text meaning.

Historicism recognizes that Scripture is related in purpose and meaning. This approach to Revelation delineates a conflict between good and evil that goes throughout human history and that has certain particular historical patterns and recapitulist parallelisms forming part of that *continuum* that is shown through signs and events. Historicism also recognizes the presence of symbols and their application within the announcing and fulfillment of events. It pays attention to the historical-grammatical method of interpretation developed by the Reformers during the sixteenth century.

The next chapter will analyze and discuss the historical symbolism present in Revelation for seal/sealing and its meaning. It will make use of an exegesis oriented in the holistic meaning of seal/sealing.

## CHAPTER 4

# A HISTORICIST INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION 7:1-3

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

#### 4.1.1 A brief survey of contents

This Chapter employs the historicist approach as method to explain and justify the presence of the holistic Sabbath in Revelation 7:1-3. As it has been previously noted, in the ANE, the Old Testament, the Graeco-Roman world, and the New Testament, the usage of sealing terminology denotes authenticity, identity, inviolability, ownership, protection, and security. These sealing characteristics, together with the various historical and figurative references to sealing in Old and New Testament, will be used to illustrate the term of sealing as a *continuum* in history. A theological study of terms for sealing (εἰκων, στίγμα, σφραγίς, δοῦλος and χάραγμα) found in the book of Revelation will provide additional explanation for the Historicist approach to Revelation 7:1-3. Also, there are some other words, such as ἀριθμέω, ψηφίζω, θηρίον, that that will be discussed with relation to the meaning of ghematric functionality in the New Testament world. This Chapter also includes a brief description of the various Caesar kingdom-theories regarding the date of writing of Revelation. The Domitian-theory is supported in this study. In the discussion of the Domitian-theory, attention is also given to the Domitian persecutions. The connection between the evolvment of sun worship and the Roman emperors is described as well. This section includes the emperor *apotheosis* and a possible eschatological presence in Roman religion. The explanations of Κύριος, ἥλιος, δοῦλος and θηρίον are depicted in the cultic realm to show the difference between Christ worship and that of Caesar.

The research gap of this study relates to the comparison between the seal of God (Rv 7:1-3) and the χάραγμα of the beast encoded in the number ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἑξς and its ghematric meaning variants. An analysis of the number χις

(Rv13: 18) is given based on the *Oxyrhynchus* papyri. In Revelation, the mark of the θηρίον is branded upon their worshippers in the spiritual kingdom of βαβυλών. For a better view of Babylon in prophecy, an analysis is given of the various Babylonian interpretations. From the Historicist perspective, the presence of the Holistic Sabbath in Revelation 7:1-3 is not only part of history, but is also present in the life of the believer and will play a major end time role in the world.

Historicists and Recapitulism scholars accept the fact that there was an evolving change in church history regarding the Sabbath. Because historicism sees the Sabbath as a part of the seal in end time prophecy, it is also necessary to give a brief summary of the Bacchiocchian historicist approach on Sunday evolution and the legacy of Constantine in this respect. At the same time, it is well known that in the Genesis record there are two institutions established by the Creator: Sabbath and marriage. Therefore, the Chapter will also discuss a few parallels between Sabbath and marriage in the context of God's creation as understood from the perspective of the Historicist approach.

This Chapter also includes an exegetical discussion of the seal of God in Revelation 7:1-3 from a Historicist perspective. To undergird the hypothesis of this study, a connection between the holistic Sabbath, marriage and Trinity – which includes the relationship between the Holy Trinity *versus* the χξς – will be postulated. This triple number will be studied in relation with the code number hypothesis. The three verbs in Genesis 2:1-3, that is, “blessed,” “rested,” and “sanctified,” which form a triple reaction of the Trinity against the maligned alliance of Revelation 16:13, are also discussed.

#### **4.1.2 Historicist methodology**

The historical narratives in prophecy events connected to sealing from the Old Testament present in Exodus 12; Ezekiel 9; Daniel 2; 7; 8; 9 and Revelation 13; 14; 16; 17; 18 form part of the *continuum* parallel patterns that Historicism utilizes as a method for studying and interpreting Revelation 7:1-3. One peripheral example of this narrative historicist pattern between the Old and New Testament is found in Paul. Paul constructed his theology within the historical narratives he

extracted from the Old Testament (Witherington 2001: 2-4, 230-231, 237).

According to Witherington, there are five stories that are threaded in all the letters of Paul: 1) the story of God, 2) the story of the world after the fall of Adam, 3) the story of the people of God from Adam to Moses and beyond, 4) the story of the Jewish Messiah (Christ), and 5) the story of the Christians.

Paulin (2004:33-41) opines that Biblical narratives are also present in the historical *continuum* shown in past events. Historicism assumes a step-by-step progression throughout history without a polarization either in the past or in the eschatological future. Historicism neglects the endless interpretation of idealism. The so-called “fusion of horizons” school presented in the “hermeneutic circle” of some postmodern theologians undermines the historical-grammatical approach, which was previously affected by the increasing polarization towards the historical-critical reading of the Bible. This critical hermeneutic position views Revelation as a mere literary genre. As far as Revelation’s genre is concerned, Baird (1972:2, 226-227, 382) says that genre is the tool of Biblical criticism for studying the Apocalypse. For him genre-criticism can be defined as a category for classifying literary works as a whole. It is basically a literary designation, a mode that includes uniqueness, recurrence, coherence, persistence, and transference. For Blomberg (2006:512, citing Mathewson 1992:193-213) the genre of Revelation is a hybrid of other well known Jewish and Graeco Roman genres. Different scholars, including Collins (1993:6-9,41-54) and Bauckham (1993:6-9), frame Revelation within such a literary genre definition. Collins, for example, defines the genre of apocalypse as follows:

A genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an other-worldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation and spatial, insofar as it involves another supernatural world.

(Collins 1979:9)

Porter (1997:159) observes that the Apocalypse differ in form and content from other apocalypses. These differences are, among others “the visual imagery, the

commission of the prophet (Rv 1:17-19; 10:8-11:2); prophetic oracles (Rv 1:7, 8; 13:9-10; 14:12-13; 16:5; 19:9-10; 21:5-8); oaths (Rv 10:5-7), and the seemingly liturgical use of various forms like hymns (Rv 4:11; 5:9-14; 7:10-12, 15-17; 11:15-18; 12:10-12; 15:3-4; 16:5-7; 19:1-8) and dirge (Rv 18:2-4).

This study adopts the concept of Thomas and Barker (1992:362-363) for the Apocalypse vocable, which consider Revelation not as a mere Jewish literary work, but as a book applicable to every age. Even though the term apocalypse provides a useful literary field of exploration among Jewish literature, this study does not situate this book of Scripture under a Preterist-literalist Jewish production, but instead to a Historicist equivalent term for the book of Revelation. Therefore, this study considers Revelation to have relevancy for today, as much exegetically as devotionally. Charles (1920:110-115) presents the value of Revelation as follows: 1) The value of endurance and labor (Rv 2:2, 10, 19, 26; 3:2; 13:8, 19; 17:8, 14; 20:12; 22:12), 2) the doctrine of resurrection (Rv 15:4; 20:4-6; 21:9, 24; 22:9, 14-17), 3) the High Priest and the Lamb (Rv 1:18; 5:6, 7, 12; 12:11; 13:8; 7:19), 3) the historical Jesus (Rv 1:2, 5; 11:15; 12:10; 22:21), 4) the exalted Christ (Rv 1:13; 2:27; 3:20; 12:5; 14:13, 14; 19:15), the 5) Christ's judgment (Rv 1:7; 14:14, 18-20; 19:11-21; 20:7-10; 22:12), and 6) Son of God, pre-existent and divine (Rv 1:6; 2:8, 18, 27; 3:5, 14, 21; 6:10; 14:1; 21:6; 22:13).

Beside the various interpretative ways of thinking of consensus for the Apocalypse, the appearance of the postmodernism concept instills a very complex view on this book and its meaning for today. Historical-criticism, however, lost its dominion during the second half of the twentieth century. At that time it began to lose influence due to the emergence of postmodernism, which according to Bauman (1991: 35-52, 96, 101), is a product of four trends: 1) decline of the West, 2) legitimate crisis, 3) intellectual market place and, 4) the process of deconstruction. Under this perspective anything could be true; it just depends on the community where the consensus for that particular truth is borne or discussed. The moral and Biblical principles are then subjected to

circumstance and ethics-communities (Adam 1995:12, 60, 411-435; Thiselton 1992:50-51, 60, 112, 157, 314, 320-321, 380-381, 398-399, 414, 444, 436-437; Aichele 1998:100-130). The development of the science of Biblical archaeology came to the fore to support the historicity of various Biblical incidents (Kitchen 2004:9-19, 37-56, 108-20; McRay 1991:17-22, 65, 225, 243-250, 274, 360; Wright 1962:85-146, 245-260). Using these archaeological Biblical findings, Historicism has an opportunity to show the value of the historical-grammatical approach to Revelation.

Historicist methodology considers that symbolism sometimes is used in the Apocalypse to call for prophecy repetition using different symbology throughout the Biblical narrative, showing every time a different and new aspect in the prophecy drama that appears. The limitation of previous assumptions is the fact that *continuum* is determined and ruled by the Biblical context. To this end, Holbrook (1992a:20) speaks about the idea that Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem in Revelation 11:8, for example, embody a togetherness for a symbolic way for “the great city” which also represents the mystic Babylon. The whole context of symbolism repeats a similar characteristic of wickedness and oppression manifested in Revelation by Babylon (Rv 17: 6, 8; 18:3, 4, 8, 9, 11-17).

Historicism also considers conditional, for instance, how churches and individuals in them will respond to Christ’s appeal; how they will decide to stand in the future regarding their covenant relationship with the Lord is part of that conditionality (Holbrook 1992a:22). Therefore, Historicism does not neglect a devotional and spiritual response during the *continuum* periods through history. With regard to Historicism in Revelation 7:1-3, this study will consider a historical setting with a devotional and spiritual sealing perspective of Christians in the first century CE. This study process must also describe the writing paternity, Greek-styling of the authorship on Revelation. The next section will discuss the issues related to these implications.

## 4.2 REVELATION: DATE OF WRITING

Brown (1966:773) says that, even though the Apocalypse stands at the end of the New Testament, it was not the last book of the New Testament to be completed. Related to this statement, there are four theories on the date of writing of Revelation. Those theories are known as the Nero theory, the Domitian theory, a composite hypothesis that is called the Babylonian theory, and the Papias theory. This study adopts the Domitian theory as the time frame for the writing of Revelation.

### 4.2.1 The Nero theory

The Nero theory looks to revert the traditional writing date (96 CE). Reuss (1872:369, cited by Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2584) is of the opinion that Revelation was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, during the reign of the emperor Galba, that is, in the second half of the year 68 CE. To defend this date, supporters of this date of writing use Revelation 13 to describe the Roman Empire as the *θηρίον* of Revelation 13 with seven heads meaning seven emperors, one to live again, one of which has been mortally wounded, but is for the present healed (Rv 13:3), and to live again as Antichrist (Rv 17:10).<sup>1</sup> The key of this theory is Revelation 13:18, where the number of the *θηρίον* is declared to be *ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ* (χξς). In this theory the application method of numerical values (the Jewish ghematria or dual meaning of earth measure; see Berkoff 2000:16-17) is found to correspond with the name “Nero Caesar.” According to this Preterist interpretation, Nero is the fifth head that is to live again; an interpretation confirmed by rumors prevalent at that time that Nero was not really dead, but only hidden, and was soon to return to claim his throne. As if to make assurance doubly sure, it is found that by dropping the final *n* in “Neron,” the number becomes *χις*, a number which Ireneaus (*Adv Haer* 13.30), in his comments on the subject (see Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2584), says was actually found in some ancient copies. Therefore, writing under the emperor Galba, the

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed explanation of the seven heads representing the emperors, see Minear (1968:250-251) and Strand (in Holbrook 1992b:177-201).



sixth emperor (reckoning from Augustus), the author anticipates, after a short reign of a seventh emperor (Rv 17:10) the return of the Antichrist Nero, and eighth, but of the seventh, with whom is to come the end. Jerusalem is to be miraculously preserved (Rv 11), but Rome is to perish. This is to happen within the space of three and a half years, “the final catastrophe, which was to destroy the city and empire, was to take place in three years and a half. The writer knows ...that Rome will in three years and a half perish finally, never to rise again” (Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2584). It does not matter for this theory that not one of the things predicted happened – that every anticipation was falsified. Nero did not return; Jerusalem was not saved; Rome did not perish; three and a half years did not see the end of all things. Yet the Christian church, though the failure of every one of these predictions had been decisively demonstrated, received the book as of divine inspiration, apparently without the least idea that such things had been intended (in Orr and Nuelsen 1974a:2584). Another remark that can be used against the Nero theory is the *gematria* absence in the book of Revelation. Minear (1968:257) observes that *gematric* formula appears to be foreign to this book in particular. Therefore is not a phenomenon characteristic of John’s writings. Keppler (1957:148) suggests on this *gematria* arena, that some interpreters apply Latin number values to the name Nero, but Kepler (1957:147-148), remarks this is not representing the main stream of Preterist tradition, which mostly follows the Higher Criticism approach for justifying Nero’s theory. Brady (1983:285-297) adds a little more dubious complexity to this *gematric* crux proposal for 13:18 saying that between 1560 and 1830 there were 147 different identifications including Nero’s on 13:18. Gentry (1998:127-129) cites that during the Patristic times there is no evidence of naming Nero for such *gematric* calculation, nor even whole or fragment writing of Patristic for Revelation in that sense. Afterward in this Chapter, there is a discussion that attempts to explain the identity of 13:18 and its relationship with sealing from Revelation 7:1-3 in connection with 16:12-13; Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-3 and Genesis 2:1-3.

#### 4.2.2 The Nero *redivivus* myth

The *redivivus* myth appears the *Sibylline Oracles* 4.49-124, 137-139 (see Terry 1973:101-107). These so-called oracles, dated towards the end of the first century CE, were written between the second century CE and the fifth century CE in imitation of the *Greek Sibyl*, a pagan prophetess that, according to Salisbury (2001:323-24), were described by Varro, a Roman scholar during the Republic, who listed ten of prophetesses in the Hellenistic world. Salisbury (2001:323-24) suggests that probably the first Sibyl was the daughter of Trojan, but the most famous was a prophetess Lydia from Eritrea. The twelve extant books (out of an original fifteen works) contain a mixture of pagan, Jewish, and Greek items. In Book 4, within the context of a broad historical survey dealing with world kingdoms from Assyria to Rome and setting forth doom proclamations against a variety of places (such as Sicily, Greece, Thebes, Rhodes, Corinth, Carthage, Laodicea, and Armenia), there is an allusion to the Roman attack on Jerusalem that laid waste the temple of God (obviously the destruction in 70 CE).

Regarding the *redivivus* myth, the *Sibylline Oracles* render the following:

[A]nd then shall a great king from Italy flee away like a deserter, unseen, unheard of, beyond the ford of Euphrates, after he has polluted his hands with the hateful murder of his mother, doing the deed with wicked hand. And many round his throne shall drench the soil of Rome with their blood, when has fled beyond [or, “over”] the land of Parthia. Then shall come to the west the strife of war stirred up, and the exiled man of Rome, lifting up a mighty sword, crossing the Euphrates with tens of thousands.

(*Sibylline Oracles*, Book 5:141-143, in Terry 1973:101-107)

In this writing there are several references that clearly allude to Nero. One of these prophecies claims great evil at the return of a person “who shall make honey-sweet songs with a voice of melody, playing the actor, and shall slay both his wretched mother and many besides.” Within a year after Nero’s death, some *impersonators* of him began to appear. The first such was a Nero “look-alike” who, 69 CE with a group of “vagrants,” landed on the island of Cythnus (Tacitus, *History* 2.8-9, in Holbrook 1992b:194-197). This man not only resembled Nero in physical features, but also had a singing voice much like that of Nero. The deception was rather limited in outreach, though it temporarily aroused

considerable local interest. The “illusion”, as Tacitus calls it, vanished quickly when the pretender was captured and killed. (Tacitus, *History* 9, in Holbrook 1992b:194-197). In 79 CE Terentius Maximus, another individual reputed to be much like Nero, also impersonated the latter. He fled with some adherents to Parthia and there caused a stir by planning to invade Rome. Benson (1900:165, 166) has concluded that it was the escapades of this individual that gave rise to the *Nero redivivus* myth in the form in which it is set forth in Book 4 of the *Sibylline Oracles*. In the *Oracles* reference is made to eastward flight of “a great king from Italy” who had murdered his mother (which the real Nero indeed did) and who would cross the river Euphrates with a large army (Benson 1900:165). It is also possible to suggest the *Nero redivivus myth* as a superstition concept associated to the apotheosis adjudicated in this case, to Roman emperors. The traditional cruelty and pagan arcane attributed to Nero’s return could have sprout this myth into a temporary narrative among the superstitious Empire mob. This legend were told even in the time of Augustine of Hippo (2003:895-964, XX.19.3)



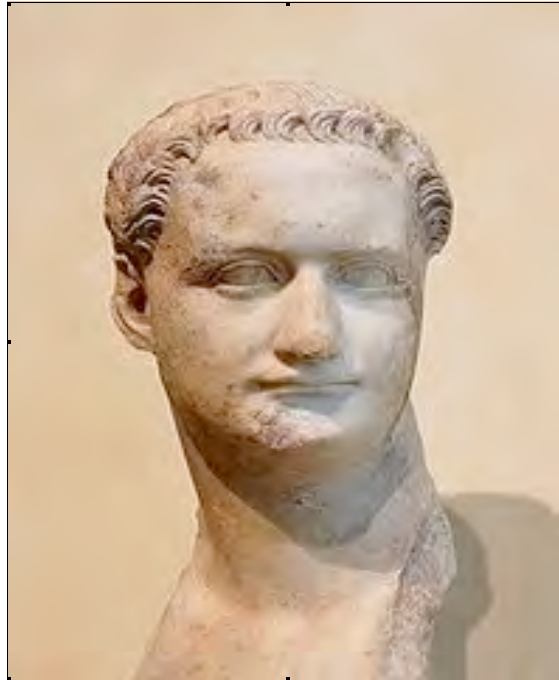
Bust of Caesar Nero in the *Musei Capitolini*, Rome

([www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Number\\_of\\_the\\_Beast](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Number_of_the_Beast))

#### 4.2.3 The Domitian theory

Eusebius, in summing up the tradition of the church on this subject, assigns John's exile to Patmos and consequently the composition of the Apocalypse to the latter part of the reign of Domitian (81-96 CE). Ireneaus (180 CE) says of the book of Revelation: "For it was seen, not a long time ago, but almost in our generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian" (*Adv Haer* V.30, 3, in Orr and Nuelsen1974a:2584). This testimony is confirmed by Clement of Alexandria (who speaks of "the tyrant"), Origen, and other later writers. The former date answers to the conditions of the book (decadence of the churches; widespread and severe persecution), and to the predilection of Domitian for his persistent mode of banishment (cf. Tacitus *History* i.2; Eusebius, *HE*, III, 18, in Orr and Nuelsen1974a:2584). Epiphanius (315-403 CE), bishop of Salamis, puts the exile of Patmos in the reign of Claudius (41-54 CE, see *Haer* li.12, 223); but in the same sentence speaks in an anachronistic way of the apostle John as being 90 years of age; it is obvious there is a strange blunder in the name of the emperor (in Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2584). Another interesting statement on the Domitian theory comes from Victorine of Petavius (who died in 303 CE) when he says that "when John said these things, he was in the island of Patmos, condemned to work in the mines (Latin = *metalus*) by Domitian Caesar. Therefore, there he saw the Apocalypse (Petavius 10:11, in Nichols and Cottrell 1990b:751). The Latin word *metallum* can refer to either a quarry or a mine. Patmos has quarries, but no vestige of a mine. Thus it is very probable that Victorinus is referring to the first. Regarding the identity of Patmos, Pliny wrote in the year 77 CE that the island was used as a penal colony (see *Natural History* iv, 12.23, in Nichol and Nuelsen 1990b:751).

Below is a bust of Domitian who reigned from 81-96 CE and signed the *relegatio* banishment for John to Patmos:



Bust of Caesar Domitianus in the *Capitoline Museum*, Rome

([www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domitian](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domitian))

#### 4.2.4 The Domitian theory: The banishment to Patmos

Ruiz (in Muoyise 2002:74) citing Friesen (1993:159-164) suggests that Domitian approved the establishment of the cult of the *Sebastoi* in Ephesus. This type of cult symbolized significant faces of life in Roman Asia in the late first century C.E: the benefits of imperial authority, gratitude toward and dependence upon the emperors, the ordering of the cities of the province, and the role of the elite in the mediation of imperial influence. The Cult of the *Sebastoi*, term associated to *Augusti*, provided regular opportunities for entertainment, travel, social intercourse, and extra economic activity (Trebilco 2004:28-35). Finally, this particular provincial cult affirmed local religious traditions and the larger heritage of the Greek world as a mode of life in the period of Roman supremacy. Ruiz (in Muoyise 2002:74) says that John seeks to motivate Christians either to give obeisance to the power and empire of God and the Lamb or to the dominion of Bayblon/Rome. The result was the apostle's banishment to Patmos.

Evidences for the Patmos banishment of John by Domitian in 90 CE is the testimony of Ireneaus (*Adv. Haer.* 5.30.3) who stated that John's apocalyptic vision occurred and was composed during Domitian's reign. Ireneaus also affirms that he had a personal relationship with John via Polycarpus, and says about the Apocalypse "that was seen not too long ago, but almost in our present time, toward the end of Domitian's reign" (Eusebius, *Hist Eccl* 3.18).

Hardinge (2005:19-20), citing Eusebius (*Eccl Hist* iii 20:8-9), writes that Eusebius and Tertullian agreed that Domitian was angry with John. Jones (1993:185), citing Suetonius (*Dom* 18.2), reinforces this anger from Domitian, saying the emperor was unable to cope with personal criticism of any sort. This personality disorder most probably quickened John's banishment. The apostle John kept pointing out the sins of Domitian and the empire were committing. The fact was that the empire was ignoring the ideals that God was holding up before him, and Domitian ordered John to be boiled in a caldron of oil before the *Porta Latina* at Rome. Eusebius and Tertullian remarked that he stepped from it as from a refreshing bath without suffering injury. Domitian, terrified, banished John to Patmos. Paulien says that "no one knows for sure why John was on Patmos, but most external traditions tell he was there as a prisoner. Perhaps Patmos was an ancient version of Alcatraz" (Paulien 2004:10). Revelation says plainly that he was there because διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ (Rv 1:9). Adams and Laurence (2001:43) notes that in Roman army maps found so far, there is no evidence of this island named as a penal center, although the lists are somewhat confused and disorganized. The Antonine itineraries survey is organized roughly into regional subgroups, sometimes explicitly so titled. The text begins, as was common in ancient geographical writing, from the pillars of Hercules (actually illustrated and so labeled in the earliest manuscript itself of Spanish origin). There are lists of islands, beginning with those around Britain (no distances) and continuing with those between (inter) various regions in the western Mediterranean and Adriatic, with distances from the shore in stades. After this, the collection peters out with a disorganized and somewhat confused



listing of islands in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean with a reasonable number of which are attached notes illustrating their role in classical mythology. Patmos is not even listed (Adams & Lawrence 2001:43; Saffrey 1975:393-407). Patmos was not barren in the time of John. It was inhabited and had a gymnasium and various religious temples (Adams & Lawrence 2001:8-9). The earliest Greek map in any form and the first relief map was discovered by Johnston on coins from the fourth century BCE. In the tale of a very learned man in the second century CE, the imperial doctor Galen, a reference is made to a special kind of blood-red soil only to be found in Hephaistias on the Greek island of Lemnos and, as a true scholar, he wanted to do “hands on” research on this feature personally. He says: “I had known that there are two cities on the island, but had assumed that, like Samos, Chios, Kos, Andros, Tenos and, all other islands in the Aegean, Lemnos as well had only one city by the same name on the island” (Adams & Lawrence 2001:9-10). There is a discovery of an antique mosaic in a rich third- or fourth-century CE villa in Ammaedara (modern Haidra) in the North African hinterland, some 160 miles southwest of Carthage. In a graphic display, which resembles a map, more than a dozen Mediterranean islands are presented, including Cnidus, Cyprus, Egusa, Naxos, Rhodes and Galen-Lemnos (Adams & Lawrence 2001:10-11).

Notwithstanding the apparent absence of evidence on Roman maps of the Mediterranean islands founded so far, there are also some interesting ancient authors’ statements that mention Patmos (see Spence & Exell 1950a:v-vii). This island is about the same distance east-south-east of Miletus as Miletus is to the south of Ephesus. Classical geographers designate the Icarian Sea, in the subdivision of the great Aegean, and in that group of its innumerable islands, which the ancients well named “Sporades” (“scattered” ones). The name of Patmos seems to derivate from Mount Latmos, where the goddess Diana was worshipped. Patmos was well known in the ancient world. It is mentioned by Thucydides, Pliny and Strabo (Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2264). Pliny, in 77 CE, describes the island as being a penal colony (Pliny, *Natural History*, iv.12.23).



There is a tradition of Victorinus of Pettau (who died in 303 CE) being considered (see Kovacs and Rowland 2004:29, 80, 98) as the earliest Revelation commentator that uses the Latin word *metallum* to describe the mine penal work of John in Patmos. *Metallum* can be used to refer to a mine or to a quarry, since Patmos has some quarries but there is not any mine vestiges as Ramsay (1904:85) affirms. Lanciani (2003: 6, 8, 14, 40, 100, 271, 272, 311, 335) observes that Romans considered it to be a common form of punishment to banish criminals, or those Christians considered as such, to rocky and desolate islands. Suetonius says that Caesar banished some dilators *in asperrimas insularum* and Tacitus (*Ann* 4.30) adds that exile in its various forms was on the whole for the upper class, and hard labor for the lower. Beyond this point came the death penalty. Talbert located Patmos using the reference of the classic history (Talbert 1985:216-31). Another point to consider here is that according to Geraty and Herr (1986:3) “with the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity and the consequent decay of paganism, the motivating spirit of the classical geographers was lost, if not heir legacy itself.” This situation could also have been influential in the disappearing of many ancient maps related to various islands, including Patmos.

Eichhorn (Stuart 2007a:36-38), founder of the New Testament criticism, is of the opinion that the banishment of John was an imagination matter that only happened in the mind of John. Stuart objects to such a suggestion saying that no one doubts the permanency of Ezekiel beside the Chebar River when he had the visions narrated in Ezekiel 1, or the staying of Daniel in Susah in the province of Elam. John could have chosen a different place such as Sinai, Carmel, or even Hermon, if he had been able to. But he was sent as *relegatio*, exiled for a limited period of time to a small Greek island, which is mentioned only one time in the Scriptures and, scarcely three times in ancient pagan writings. It is interesting that the Romans had two classes of exiles: 1) *deportatio*, an exile for life to one isolated place, altogether with loss of property and other rights and, 2) *relegation*, a term that could indicate a temporary exile punishment. The latter was the case

of Ovidius (see *Tristia* ii.135). Twice Tertullian applies the term *relegatur* to John's banishment (Ireneaus, *Apology* 5; *Prescriptions against Heresies* 36) and Jerome did the same (*Lives of Illustrious Men*, IX in Ciguere 2009:2).

Nerva was the successor of Domitian from 96-98 CE. During his reign, institution of *alimentations*, the most genuinely charitable institution of the pagan world prospered (see Grainger 2003:59-66; Koch 1901:128). According to Jones (1891:117), this emperor's temper and administration was direct contrary to that of Domitian. He reversed the cruel decrees of Domitian, recalling many of the banished and prosecuted instead of encouraging the informers. Nerva rescinded the *relegatio* and *deportatio* condemnations of many politicians and thinkers such as *Dio* and pantomime actors (Grainger 2003:48, 54). He was the one to set free John from his Patmos exile (Jones 1891:91; Grainger 2003:86).



A bust of Caesar Nerva in the *Pallazo Massimo alle Terme*, Rome

([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nerva\\_Tivoli\\_Massimo.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nerva_Tivoli_Massimo.jpg))

#### 4.2.5 The composite hypotheses of the Babylonian theory

After 1882 a flood of disintegrating hypotheses came that were based on the idea that the Apocalypse was not a unity, but either a working up of one or more Jewish apocalypses by Christian hands or at least incorporated fragments of several apocalypses. Grotius, although he held that the apostle John was the author of the Apocalypse, for instance said that the apostle wrote the book in ten different parts on different occasions (Grotius 1644:1-19; IV.I; XIV.1, in Barton 1898:776-780; see also Weiysäcker 1882:78-79). Gunkel, in his *Schöpfung und Chaos* (Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2584-2585), started another line of criticism in derivation of the conceptions of the author of Revelation, not from Jewish apocalypse, but from Babylonian mythology, finding the beast number not for Nero, but for the primeval chaos (Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2584-2585).

#### 4.2.6 The Papias theory

This is the only testimony from the first two centuries that disagrees with the Johannine authorship of the book of Revelation. Papias, a church father (who died in 163 CE), has not left a complete written work because most of them are lost. The only written evidence comes from later writers. Two of this writings refer to John's death. One manuscript seems to be a summary of the Chronicle of Phillip of Side (fifth century CE). This manuscript declares: "Papias says in his second book that John the theologian and Jacob his brother were killed by the Jews." Another manuscript, the Chronicles of Georgius Harnotolus dated 860 CE, reads similarly: "because Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, being an ocular witness of this, in the second book of the proverbs of the Lord, it says that (John) was killed by the Jews, fulfilling clearly, with his brother, the Christ's prediction relative to them (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:735). There are some objections to these statements of Papias. The fact that the first statement refers to John as "theologian," indicates that it suffered modifications done by a medieval writer, because that term is not present in any Biblical manuscript prior to the eighth century CE. The Georgius Harnotolus is only found in one manuscript. The other manuscripts say simply that John died in peace, but do not cite Papias

(Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:735-736). A third Papias statement is registered by Eusebius (who died in 340 CE), and read as follows:

[A]nd I shall not hesitate to append to the interpretations all that I ever learnt well from the presbyters and remember well, for of their truth I am confident. But if ever anyone came who had followed the presbyters, I inquired into the words of the presbyters, what Andrew or Peter or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples, had said εἶπεν and what Ariston and the presbyter John, the Lord's disciples, were saying λέγουσιν. For I did not suppose that information from books would help me so much as the word of a living and surviving voice."

(Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* III.39.4, in Nichol & Cottrell 1999b:735)

The passage from Eusebius has been the subject of much conjecture. Eusebius interpreted it to mean that there were two men by the name of John who had lived in Asia in the late first century CE; the apostle, and another man who was a presbyter, or elder. Eusebius' opinion was that this latter man was the one whom Papias had known personally and that it was he who had written Revelation, whereas the apostle had been the author of the gospel of John (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:735-736). Zahn (1909:451-453), interpreting Eusebius' reference to Papias, points out that there is no real distinction made between presbyters and apostles. On this topic, Papias says that he "inquired into the words of the presbyters," and immediately goes on to list apostles; then when he mentions "the presbyter John" he identifies him at once as one of "the Lord's disciples." The real distinction between the two groups he mentions lies in the words εἶπεν (said) and λέγουσιν (were saying) – which suggests that those in the first group mentioned were disciples of Jesus who had lived and borne their testimony before Papias' time, whereas those in the second group were still living, and available for information in his day. If Ireneaus' testimony is accepted, the apostle John would be included in both groups, and so might conceivably have been mentioned twice (Zahn 1909:451-453).

#### **4.2.7 Influence of Dionysius of Alexandria on Eusebius' Papias theory**

Eusebius' effort to derive two Johns from Papias' statement is made more understandable if one sees that his conclusions were influenced by the work of Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria (who died in 265 CE; Eusebius in Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:734-736). In reaction against some Christians who were stressing a literal millennium, Dionysius wrote the work titled *A treatise on the promises*, in which he sought to show by scholarly arguments that Revelation was not written by the apostle John, but by another man of the same name (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b: 734-736).

Another issue to consider when speaking of the fourth Gospel and Revelation being of the same authorship resides in the linguistic difference between the two works. These *adversis* situations, including the influence of Hebrew and the linguistic parallelism in the book, are now discussed.

### **4.3 THE GREEK USED IN REVELATION**

#### **4.3.1 The wrong conception about the usage of κοινή**

Erasmus and other humanists considered Κοινή as an imperfect and deformed language (Vila & Escuin 1985:447-448). Others estimated its peculiarities related to the subjects treated about the divine revelation. They maintained that it was a "language of the Holy Spirit" (Vila & Escuin 1985:447-448). With such an approach, a great number of expressions and terminology would have then been locked or encoded for the function of transmitting the revelation of the New Testament. This posture was sustained during the eighteenth and part of the nineteenth century, especially due to its difference to classical Greek (Deissmann 1965:1-61).

The discoveries in 1896 and 1897 of a great quantity of Greek papyrus in *Oxyrhynchus* in Egypt gave a lot of material about the Greek grammar and syntax of the first century CE. Many of the terms that were *hapax legomena* in the New Testament appeared also in these papyri in commercial contexts

such as domestics. This made it possible to identify the language of Κοινή: the common language of the Greek Roman world (Vila & Escuin 1985:447-448).

The New Testament Κοινή was not a divine codex language. God, instead, was talking to the Graeco-Roman world in a language that was familiar to them and perfectly understandable, that is, a popular Greek, the ideal vehicle for communication that would be assimilated very easily. Thus, the Biblical Greek is no other than the Κοινή that was used in the daily communication of the Graeco-Roman world from 300 BCE to 300 CE (Vila & Escuin 1985:447-448).

#### **4.3.2 The influence of Hebrew in Revelation**

Mussies (1997:335) postulates a theory of a translator and *Bilingualism*. According to him, the Greek language has been in contact with Hebrew and/or Aramaic. For his part, Lancelot, elaborating on the verbs in the Apocalypse, offers the theory of “haphazard shifts,” which Bousset renders as “*das regellose Scheanken*.” In other words, there is a Biblical Hebrew verb system in the underlying substrate in Revelation (Mussies 1997:335). Lancelot (see Mussies 1997:335) is one of the few, if not the only scholar, that thus far devoted a special study to of the use of tenses in the Apocalypse. He holds the view of “haphazard shifts.” John wavers between past and present, and present and future, and this is due to the timelessness of both of the Biblical Hebrew indicatives. If the influence of Biblical Hebrew was so strong still that John could not clearly distinguish between present and future tenses, it is difficult to understand then why he did not avoid using the Greek future at all. The present indicative could then be used either as a present, past or future tense and the aorist as a past tense. Mussies (1997:311) says that Lanceloti’s point of view would be proved if in the Apocalypse future indicatives were misused for past tenses or with the value of the present tense, or if aorists were used as present or as future tenses. As long as this is not the case, it is more probable to assume that underlying Hebrew had developed to a great extent toward *Mishanic* Hebrew or was perhaps already identical to it. As it is, Mussies (1997:311) continues, the

transitions to the future tenses in the Apocalypse are usually preceded by another kind of transition, namely those from a past tense to the present indicative. Such a use of tenses seems quite natural for an author who has to recount visions actually seen in the past, but which at the same time predict future events. Mussies (1997:311) offers that this contact may have arisen in two ways: 1) John as a multilingual person was himself acquainted with Hebrew Aramaic and Greek, and his use of the latter was influenced by his mother tongue, and 2) John had no mastery of Greek, and composed the Apocalypse either in Hebrew or in Aramaic. The book was afterwards translated into Greek by another person, who must at least have been bilingual (having knowledge of Hebrew and Greek or of Aramaic and Greek). Mussies (1997:311) suggests that it is unlikely that this translator knew both languages. In this particular theory, the translator could have been a Christian of Jewish origin and knew both languages. This theory is simplified if it is admitted that John had limitations with the Greek language and that he himself wrote the book, incorporating Semitism from his mother tongue. One example of such Hebraism in Revelation is found in Revelation 9:11 where he translates a Hebrew name *expressis verbis* into Greek, אֲרַבְּאָ transiterated into Ἀβαδδών, καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἑλληνικῇ ὄνομα ἔχει Ἀπολλύων. The same happens with in Revelation 16:16 with the word ἁρμαγεδών. Another Hebrew influence term is noted in δισμυρίαδες in Revelation 9:16. It represents a Hebrew multiplicative dual (Mussies 1997:353). Thompson (1985:107-108), cited by Carson (et al 2008:627), explains that the Hebrew language that influenced the writer of Revelation is in fact Hebrew from the New Testament age and not posterior to it as some suggest, arguing for such posture that it is a translation from a later written source. Thompson agrees with the idea of the writing style for Revelation being Jewish-Greek. Porter (1989:582-603) reacted to this point of view saying that Thompson exaggerated the evidence in this regard. For Porter there is a reassessed conclusion in a socio-linguistic perspective.



#### **4.3.3 Qumran and Nahal Heber research on Semitic writing influence on Revelation**

Mussies (1997:311-315) asks the following important question: By which of the known varieties of Hebrew or Aramaic can be assumed that John's (or his translator's) use of Greek was influenced? The only contemporary documents of that New Testament period that can be compared are a few Hebrew and Aramaic letters and contracts found in the caves of Murabba 'at and Nahal Heber that definitely prove that Hebrew and Aramaic were used side by side in first-century Palestine. Mussies (1997:311-315) further opines that a second collection, which is roughly contemporaneous with the New Testament writings, are the Qumran scrolls which can be dated from the first century BCE up to 68 CE. Although they contain a sufficient quantity of linguistic material, neither of these may be used for comparison because the character of the Hebrew is classicistic, imitating the Biblical use of the language, though slightly modified by modernisms which crept in during the manuscript tradition. If the Qumran community, as is often supposed, is identical to the Essene sect, this manuscript tradition may have covered two centuries or more. Mussies (1997:311-315) adduces that this kind of Hebrew is not better, unless they know that the language, which underlies Apocalypse, is classicistic too. He is of the opinion that the Mishnah, which was drawn up in 200 CE (but that does not mean that the language dates from that time, the Mishnah Hebrew being a collection of material dating from the two centuries which preceded its final redaction) is the best basis for comparison with the use of the Greek in the Apocalypse because it is contemporary with Revelation, it is not classicistic but reveals the development of Hebrew after the Old Testament period, and the quantity of literature composed in it is sufficient. Mussies is opposed to the term "Mishnaic Hebrew" from used by Segal (2001:10-250) because it is somewhat anachronistic, covering the period 300 BCE-300 CE. The Palestinian Pentateuch Targum, which until recently had been preserved only in fragments, is considered by some scholars to contain the Aramaic that was spoken in Palestine during Jesus' time. One of the arguments that lead to this conclusion is the fact that this

Targum contains a considerable quantity of Greek loan words, which would point to a Hellenistic environment (Black and Kahle, in Mussies 1997:311-315).

#### 4.3.4 κοινή in Egypt

The tendency to reject one characteristic as Semitic because it is found in the Egyptian papyrus does not take into consideration the Jewish influx in the formation of the Κοινή language of Egypt as an abundant Hellenized Jewish colony. Deissmann (Vila & Escuain 1985:448) makes a positive contribution when he identifies many of the “biblical” and “ecclesiastical” words as belonging to the common use of the age in the land of Egypt. Some of these examples are very peculiar to New Testament terminology: ἀποστολός, βαπτισμός, παροικός, et cetera. In the κοινή characteristic findings in connection with New Testament Greek was the forming of composed words with one or two prefixed prepositions, for example: ἀνταποκρίνομαι, συναντιλαμβάνομαι, et cetera (Villa & Escuain 1985:448). Another Hebrew influenced term is διςμυριάδες in Revelation 9:16. It represents a Hebrew multiplicative dual.

It is interesting that Mussies (1997:251-355) mentions that the linguistic peculiarities in the Apocalypse do not point to a specific era or area. In solving these problems, he says, it will have to remain dependent on non-linguistic evidence. Mussies concludes with a rather vague *terminus ante quem* based on the absence of the orthographical υ-οι from the best manuscripts in that field, the Codex Alexandrinus. This led Mussies (1997:231-365) to the conclusion that Egyptian Κοινή Greek being the original language, which is hardly surprising in view of the fact that the author himself mentioned Patmos and Western Asia Minor as the setting of his visions.

#### 4.3.5 The κοινή linguistic differences between John and Revelation

The Greek style and syntax in the Apocalypse is certainly different to that of the gospel of John. Westcott (1971:lxvvi) tried to explain the Greek styling differences between John and Revelation under a compatible mode with a

literary common paternity. This suggests a period of time of some 30 years between the writing of the gospel of John and Revelation that explains the gap in writing styling on these two works. In this hypothesis, the gospel of John was written in 90 CE and Revelation in 60 CE. However, according to Mounce (2007:627), this elapse of time does not solve the styling problem between the two writings. The Greek grammar in John is simple and correct and the book relates the life of Jesus in a stunning, masterful way (Paulien 2004:9).

Revelation, on the other hand, contains numerous grammatical flaws in its original language. Paulien (2004:9) says that the Greek of Revelation reminds scholars of the practice writing of first-century school children. The difference in word occurrences between the gospel of John and Revelation caused Philo of Alexandria to apply the authorship of Revelation to someone other than John.

The following examples of differences are particularly notorious: κόσμος, is present 79 times in the gospel of John but only 3 times in the Apocalypse.

Ἀλήθεια, appears 25 times in John, but is absent in the Apocalypse. Φῶς occurs 22 times in John and in Revelation there are only 3 occurrences (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:736). Ἀγαπάω is found 37 times in the gospel of John but only 4 times in the Apocalypse. The term πιστεύω, is used 100 times in the gospel of John; and not once in the Apocalypse. Ἐνώπιον, appears once in the gospel of John but is found 36 times in Revelation. Ἐμός, occurs 42 times in John and only once in Revelation. When the John refers to Christ as the “Lamb” it always uses the word ἁμνός, Revelation the word used is ἄρνιον. Both words have the same meaning. In the Gospel, Jerusalem is ἱεροσόλυμα, while in Revelation it is ἱερουσαλήμ (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:736).

Mussies (1997:352) presents another authorship problem related to the morphological data in the gospel of John and the Apocalypse. For him, it was highly improbable that both the book of Revelation and the Corpus Johanneum were composed by the same author because several of the categories (such as the perfect indicative) that are seldom used in the Apocalypse, are not at all unusual in the Johannine writings. Chantraine adds to this that the Fourth Gospel

has 77 “resultative” perfects and 100 intransitive perfects. His remark, namely that the Apocalypse “*se trouve dans une situation analogue ... mais moins nette*”, is not maintained by Mussies (1997:352).

Another peculiarity is that the oppositional use of the nominative with any antecedent case is wholly absent from the Fourth Gospel. Mussies (1997:352) says that word order in the Apocalypse is divergent from that of the rest of the New testament, including the Fourth Gospel. One example of this is that the adjective in the Apocalypse is always placed after the substantive, but not so in the Johannine works (Mussies 1997:352). The author cites some pronouns that are virtually absent in the Apocalypse, but constantly present in the Corpus Johanneum. The progressives ἐμοῦ, σοῦ are only used in Revelation 2:20, but 51 times in the Corpus Johanneum. Mussies rejects the theory that John improved his style when writing the Gospel: if one should remove the un-Greek idioms from the Apocalypse, the result would be far from identical with the use of Greek as found in the Fourth Gospel (Mussies 1997:352). One possible theory for this significant linguistic problem of the Apocalypse is the exilic situation of the apostle (see Rv 1:9) where he did not have an actuary or scribe, and he, an Aramaic-writing background person, had to use his limitations in writing Κοινή in the Apocalypse. The Gospel of John was written in Ephesus, probably with the help of more than one scribe (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:736-737). Charles (1920:355) suggests that grammar flaws in Revelation were deliberate. He wrote that way, probably for the sudden nature of the vision.

Next, there will be a brief parallelism study between the Gospel and Revelation that indicates that, notwithstanding the real facts of styling differences, it is also possible to find linguistic parallelism between Gospel and Revelation in the Corpus Johanneum.

#### 4.3.6 Linguistic parallelism in the Κοινή of John and Revelation

Even if the previous evidence concerning writing style is significant between the two works, there are also certain literary parallelisms between Revelation and the gospel of John that suggest the same literary paternity. Revelation speaks of ὕδωρ ζωῆς (Rv 21:6; 22:17) and the Gospel of ὕδωρ ζωῆς (Jn 4:10; 7:38). The Apocalypse invites Ἔρχου. καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω, ὁ θέλων λαβέτω ὕδωρ ζωῆς δωρεάν (Rv 22:17), while Gospel declares: Ἐάν τις διψᾷ ἐπχέσθω πρὸς με καὶ πινέτω (Jn 7:37). The Greek word ὄψις is used in the New testament only in John's writings (Jn 7:24 and Rv 1:16). The same can be said of the phrases τερεῖν τὸν λόγον (Jn 8:51-52, 55; 14:23-24; 15:20; 17:6; 1 Jn 2:5; Rv 3:8, 10; 22:7, 9) and ὄνομα αὐτοῦ (Jn 1:6; 3:1; Rv 6:8).

Beza writes that in its style Revelation is an imitation of an Old Testament prophecy for which only Hebrew models were available to John, therefore he says "no one should be surprised that his style is not particularly polished, seeing as he did not depart from the prophets who wrote in Hebrew either by his vocabulary or by his style" (Beza, in Backus 2000:27).

Paulien (2004:9) declares that both John and Revelation make much use of the number seven, if not directly, at least by implication. In the gospel of John Jesus performs seven miracles and uses seven "I am-sayings". The number seven is even more crucial to the book of Revelation. Another common element in the two books is the use of the word μαρτυρία that appears in John 18 times in its different tenses and 7 times in Revelation. This word is used to describe fidelity to the gospel, and how the imagery of φῶς and ζόφος represent truth and error. Also, only John (Jn 1:1, 14; 1 Jn 1:1; 5:7) and Revelation (Rv 19:13) refer to Jesus as λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ (Paulien 2004:9).

The linguistic differences in Revelation and the Gospel could be explained to certain extent through different approaches. The internal evidence for Revelation reflects a possible Hebrew substrate. Did this substrate theory come simply

because John mother's language (Hebrew/Aramaic) and therefore, Patmos absence of a proficient and skilled Gk scribe or actuary? Do the Greek In Revelation points an intentional flaw methodology as it has previously suggested and, in that case why? Did John write in Hebrew or Aramaic and then, a non-skill scribe translated later the message into Gk? These questions probably, will never be explained in a total erudite satisfied accuracy. We can speculate if John had at hand a LXX scroll for the OT quotations or all of them came to his mind by Holy Spirit inspiration? Kowalski (2004:11-222) reacts on this previous respect that although some of Revelation's allusions to Ezekiel can only be actualized through an LXX text and some only through Masoretic like text (ninety six texts of Revelation containing allusions that could be actualized through either text) it does not necessarily follow that John had both the LXX and the MT text in front of him as he was writing. It is not easy to respond these questions. The κοινὴ from Egypt is a dubious proposition to accept because as far as we know John never traveled or stood that far. The external evidence points Asia Minor most of his life and, according to Domitian theory, some years? in Rome and Patmos. With this complicated scenario, and the limited research evidence on this field, this thesis suggests that John wrote Revelation in Gk as his second language in a limited proficiency but, within a Hebrew background that controlled the book's structure. The visions and the constant past, present, future and vice versa it seems to promote this view.

We now turn to consider the presence of Babylon in the crypticism and the *continuum* simulated with Rome and fighting against God and His people in the context of Revelation 7:1-3. The analysis of Babylon under its crypticism and the various approaches for its functionality is important for Historicists because this name describes a message against God and His principles. Therefore, the recognition of such Babylonian symbolism in the Bible is useful due to its connection with 666 and its Historicist sealing counterpart in Revelation 7:1-3.

## 4.4 BABYLON AND REVELATION 7:1-3

### 4.4.1 Babylon and Rome crypticism

Because Revelation 7:1-3 was written in the first century CE it is important to understand why cryptic language was used in Revelation to describe Rome and its attitude toward Christianity. In 1 Peter 5:13 the apostle makes a cover reference when he says “she, who is Babylon” (βαβυλῶνι ἐκκλησίᾳ see Aland K and Aland B 2001: 8798). Here Peter uses the name Babylon in a cryptic manner. The term Babylon appears frequently as a secret code in the first centuries of Christianity. It appears in the Jewish literature to refer to the city of Rome and the Roman Empire. The *Sibylline Oracles* present a prophecy that has a parallel with the one of Revelation 18:5-8. It speaks about Rome as being a “wicked city” that loves “sorcery,” that delights in “adultery,” and has “a bloodthirsty heart and a wicked mind” (*Sibylline Oracles* Book 5). In the pseudepigraphic 2 Baruch the name of Babylon is used to refer to Rome as is in Revelation 11:1-3. Another example of the cryptographic method is found in Jeremiah 25:26, known as *atbash*, a code word for Babylon (Nichol & Cottrell 1985a:479-480). The *atbash*-system consists of the letters of a word that are replaced by the one that corresponds starting with the last letter of the alphabet. In Hebrew, the word *Babel* has twice the second consonant of the alphabet and one in the twelfth. Counting from the other extreme, the *sh* (*shin*) is the second letter while the *n* (*jeth*) is the twelfth; so *sheshaj* is obtained. (Nichols and Cottrell 1985a:479-480).

Another cryptogram appears in Jeremiah 51:41, where the Chaldeans are coded as רשש (*sheshach*; see Nichols and Cottrell 1985a:561). Tertullian and Ireneaus declare that the vocable Babylon, since its origins through Nimrod, demonstrated its ambition of conquest and dominion (Hislop 1959:23-25). Rome represented the mystic Babylon referred to by Peter, the capital of imperial Rome in the first-century CE (Tertullian iii: 13; Ireneaus 26.1, in Hislop 1959:23-25,615). The Jewish writers of early Christianity applied the name “Edom” as another designation for Rome (Midrash Rabbah 1:V, in <http://www.betemunah.org/edom.html>). In the Old Testament, the Babylon by the Euphrates of Isaiah 47:1,



9, 12-13 and Jeremiah 25:12; 50:1 have a correspondent parallelism with the Babylon by the Tiber in Revelation 14:8; 16:12-21; 17:1-7, 18 and 18:1-24.

The etymology for Rome is obscure and diverse. Besides the Romulus tradition, there are different opinions on the origin of the word “Rome.” Tucker considers that Rome comes from *urosma*, hill or high point. Michelet and Tucker suggest the Etruscan term *Rumon* or *Rumo*, formerly the word for Tiber ([www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=Rome](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=Rome)). Hislop, citing Aurelius, says that on the Capitoline hill, the famous great high place of Roman worship, the name of Rome was known as *Saturnia*, or the city of Saturn, the great Chaldean god. Virgil, referring to the remote age of Evander in Aeneid, called Rome *Saturnia* or *Janicula*. Other Latin writers such as Ovid, Pliny, and Aurelius Victor are included by Hislop as showing Rome and its etymology with *Saturnia* as well (Pliny, *Natural History*, lib 4. 55; Ovid. *Fasti*, lib. i.1. 238, vol. iii. 29; Aurel Vict *Origo Gent Roman*, iii, in Hislop 1959: 270). Aune (1998b:920-3), Rist (1957:345-613), and Smalley (2005:439) consider that behind the image of the Babylon harlot stands the goddess Roma (*Dea Roma*), the personification of the state. They do this on the basis of the *sestertius*, a Roman coin minted during the reign of the Emperor Vespasian (69-79 CE ), which depicts on the reverse the goddess Rome in military dress seated on the seven hills of Rome. There are some Latin words for Rome that insinuate its power and influence: *Caput Mundi* (capital of the world); *la Cittq Eterna*; *Limen Apostolorum* (threshold of the apostles); *La Citta dei settte colti* (the city of the seven hills); *L’ Urbe*. ([www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome)). One of the most grotesque words to symbolize Rome/Babylon in Revelation is “πορνή” (Rv 17:1). It has its literary roots in Old Testament prophetic literature, where several corporate entities are represented in this way (Nah 3:4; Is 23; Ezk 26-27). Friesen (2006:208) associates this harlotry with the exploitation of international markets in the *pax Romana*. The verbs *πορνεύσαντες* and *στρηνιάσαντες* occur in Revelation 18:9, confirming that it is a central issue. The aggrandizement and self-gratification will be paid double by God for this sin. According to Friesen, the kings are not simply those who have committed

adultery with the prostitute, but also those who have lived lives of luxury, and wanted in excess στρηνιάσαντες (Friesen 2006:208).

Latin has a richer pornographic terminology for the concept of harlotry. Firebaugh ([www.ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl\\_prostitutionnotes2.htm](http://www.ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl_prostitutionnotes2.htm)) lists 33 terms used for prostitution in the Roman world of the first century CE. The prostitution places in the Roman world are as follows:

- *Fornix*: the arcades, under the theatres;
- *Pergulae*: *Balconies*: where the harlots were shown
- *Stabulae*: Inns, houses of prostitution
- *Diversiorum*: a lodging house, house of assignation
- *Tugurium*: a hut, low den
- *Turturilla*: a dove cote, frequently part;
- *Casuaria*: road houses, brothels;
- *Lupanaria*: wolf dens; and
- *Tabernae*: bakery shops.

Firebaugh also defines the terms for the work of the prostitute in the ancient Roman world. They are as follows:

*Meretrix*: (harlot) they worked by night, wages honor;

*Proседа*: sat at front cellar stall;

*Nonariae*: mime players;

*Cymbalistræ*: cymbal players;

*Ambubiae*: singing girls;

*Cithraristae*: harpists;

*Scortum*: strumpet, secrecy implied;

*Scorta erratica*: clandestine strumpets, streetwalkers;

*Busturiae*: tomb frequenters;

*Copae*: bar maids;

*Delicatae*: kept mistress;

*Fanosae*: soiled doves from respectable families;

*Doris*: harlots of great beauty, they wore no clothing;

*Lupae*: she wolves, they had wolf like cry and rapacity;

*Aeliciae*: baker's girl;

*Noctiluae*: nightwalkers;

*Blitidae*: lower class, sold by a cheap drink in dens;

*Forariae*: country girls who frequented the road;

*Gallinae*: thieving prostitutes;

*Diobolars*: two obol price girls;

*Amasiae*: devoted to Venus;

*Amatrix*: female lover, homosexual;

*Amica*: female friend; and

*Quadrantariae*: older prostitutes, the lowest class of all.

([www.ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl\\_prostitutionnotes2.htm](http://www.ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl_prostitutionnotes2.htm))

With such a grotesque and sad list Historicism understands why, among other Rome *in situ* characteristics, the apostles used adultery and fornication as a symbol of the spiritual contamination and teaching corruption (2 Cor 4:2). This adultery/false teaching would prevail, not only in the New Testament Roman world, but it would be crafted in paganistic men traditionally through history, as a *continuum*, through the sea-monster beast religious system (Rv 2:14, 22; 13:1-18; 17:2; 18:3; 22:15). Nussbaum and Sihvola (2002:319-320) adds the social political fact that many ancient prostitutes were slaves due to wars and different social limitations of the epoch. Slavery robbed the original idea of the craftsman on the human species, that is, in the beginning mankind was cut in two, and then made into two types of genitals, the one female and the other male. This made a strong desire (ἐπιθυμίαν ἰσχύραν) for the other, produced ὁμιλίας κοινωνία and mixed into both a strong longing (πάθον ἰσχύρον; Nussbaum & Sihvola 2002:319-320).

Smalley (2005:364) refers to Babylon in Revelation 14:8, as does Mounce (1998:21), and says that Babylon (Dn 4:28-31; Is 14:4; Jr 51:7; Rv 17:2-4; 18:3)

and Rome were renowned for their luxury and moral corruption, and oppressed Jews and Christians alike when they conquered Jerusalem in 587 BCE and Rome in 70 CE. The fall of Babylon is more than literal in the kind of oppression it inflicts. It symbolizes in John's visions the secular and unjust spirit of humanity which, in any age, forces others to compromise the truth and instead to worship idols rather than the Creator (Rv 13:15; 14:7) and to behave as followers of the devil rather than of Christ (Rv 13:16-17). Smalley (2005:364-366) also suggests that Babylon did not keep her idolatry and consequent immorality to herself, but forced them onto others like an intoxicating drink (Rv 17:4). Like the many Latin terms for prostitution cited above, Firebaugh add an additional external evidence for this devilish persecution system; it is also useful to use internal evidence from Revelation 14:8 as a counterpart of this Biblical corruption process that contaminates the world. Smalley (2005:364-366), citing Aune (1998b:920-925), points out that the final clause of Revelation 18:3 uses four types of genitives in the Greek: 1) τοῦ οἴνου of the wine, which is partitive; 2) τοῦ θυμοῦ of the passion, exegetical; 3) τῆς πορνείας, which is a descriptive; and 4) αὐτῆς 'of her, which is possessive. These four types of the genitive case are not only that Babylon has these evil characteristics, but that she also delights in infusing those by means of her system.

#### **4.4.2 The internal continuum threat of spiritual Babylon within the Christian community and beyond**

LaRondelle (in Holbrook 1992b:151), a Historicist scholar, says there is a continuous historical connection and perspective on the beasts describing Babylon in Revelation 13 and 17. These chapters provide the scriptural foundation for identifying the harlot/beast symbol. According to LaRondelle (in Holbrook 1992b:151-156), the Babylon of Revelation 17 is not merely a political but religious entity. He says this mystical Babylon will play a major role in the final events the lead up to the seven last plagues and Armageddon (in Holbrook 1992b:151-152). He also remarks that a popular view among both Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars is that the Babylonian harlot of Revelation 17

symbolizes exclusively that ancient city of Rome, situated on seven literal hills and ruled by seven selected dynasties of Roman emperors from Augustus to Domitian. Some have attempted to combine this Preterist position with a futurist fulfillment, so that the Babylonian/harlot/beast may have both a first century and an end-time application. Neither, however, he says, is in agreement with the prophetic data in the scriptural setting (LaRondelle, in Holbrook 1992b:151-155).

From LaRondelle's perspective, the book of Daniel is the main prophetic model for the book of Revelation (LaRondelle, in Holbrook 1992b:151). Daniel's unique style of a *continuum* of history – a *continuous* historical perspective that culminates in the end-time events – is embodied in the substructure of Revelation. There are no gaps portrayed in Christian history between its initial setting and its end-time culmination in the restoration of God's eternal kingdom. The author of Revelation demonstrates his argument by spelling out the strong links between the sea beast in Revelation 13 and the little horn in Daniel 7 (LaRondelle, in Holbrook 1992b:151-153). The two prophecies identify the same anti-Christian power. In turn, Revelation 12-13 provides the immediate contextual basis for identifying the Babylonian harlot. The typological links between the New Testament harlot of Revelation 17 and the Old Testament harlotry of ancient Israel indicate that the Babylonian harlot is not being used as a symbol of political Rome, but of a predicted Christian apostasy that would develop within the church, break covenant with God, become an oppressor of His true followers, and play a significant role in the events of the end time. Schüssler (1976:43, 51-59) argues it was during the Roman Empire that the book of Revelation had its only fulfillment with the claims of Christ as Lord and the Roman civil religion as an imperial cult present in the person of Caesar supposedly to be Lord and God.

Some scholars have considered at least three other approaches to the understanding of Babylonian in Revelation, especially its work on humanity. These approaches are the symbolic-universal, literalist, and Jerusalem-Babylon approach.

#### **4.4.3 The symbolic-universal approach to Babylon**

Some Christian exegetes like Minear have used the symbolic-universal approach for the apocalyptic Babylon. This method of interpretation is considered for a timeless and universal reality, which have many historical counterparts. Minear (1968:135-158) says, “Babylon embraces more than one empire or culture. It is defined rather by dominant idolatries than by geographical or temporal boundaries.”

Collins (1983:122, in Holbrook 1992b:156), cited by LaRondelle, states her opinion by pointing out: “John’s probable expectations (a revived Nero coming from the east to conquer Rome) with regard to historical events were not fulfilled.” Nevertheless, she discerns the climax of Revelation 17, which predicts the destruction of the harlot by the beast and the ten kings, a *moral lesson*, which is valid for similar historical situations: the will to power “does not unite; it divides.” LaRondelle, citing Johnson (in Holbrook 1992b:156), says that in this symbolic-universal approach Jerusalem and Rome are only some of the multiple manifestations of Babylon history. Sealing is a constant work of God throughout history and will have its climax usage during the end-time fulfillment of Revelation 13:18 and 17:1-18.

#### **4.4.4 The literalist approach to Babylon**

Thomas (1982:333-341) comes to an extreme conclusion known as the literalist approach on Babylon. According to this view, the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18 does not signify any political or religious power, but is exclusively “an economic entity” which will oppress all men by an international commercial collapse. The seal/sealing concept is vague and not firmly defined by this approach.

Thomas (1982:340) further opines that the term “harlot” is not used in the Scripture to refer to an ecclesiastical system, but “to actual (purely commercial)

cities similar to that in Revelation 18. In this regard Thomas cites Isaiah 23:17 and Nahum 3:4. LaRondelle (in Holbrook 1992b:155) argues against the approach of Thomas saying it is reductionist exegesis. He says that the cities of Babylon, Tyre, Nineveh, and Jerusalem were not primarily commercial harlots, but religious apostates in their self exaltation, idolatry, and hostility against Yahweh, His truth, and His true covenant people (Nah 1:2; 7-11, 13-15 for Nineveh. Ezk 26:2; 28:2 for Tyre and, 2 Th 2:4 for Rome). Actually, the Scripture itself describes more than commercial or political power on the two Lucifer fall descriptions regarding his behavior and conduct as a demon against Go being associated with kings of Babylon and Tyre, to describe their spiritual symbolism with evil (Is 14: 1-14; Ezk 28:12-19).

#### **4.4.5 Jerusalem-Babylonian approach to Babylon**

This study points out that the harlot Babylon represents Jerusalem where the prophets were slain, and not Rome (Mt 23:29-39). In this regard, Massingberde (1978:3-4) assumes that Revelation 4-22 were written primarily as a Jewish-Christian apocalypse before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. According to Massingberde “it is the covenant which makes the bride, the breaking of it which makes the adulteress (Massingberde 1978:3-4). Babylon, in Massingberde’s (1978:3-4) view of the harlot’s forehead, is a symbol of Jerusalem’s lewd priesthood, whose high priest wore the name Yahweh on his forehead (Ex 28:36-38), a priest harlot (Ezekiel 16:32-43). LaRondelle (in Holbrook 1992b:155-156) comments that Massingberde’s (1978:3-4) approach’s weakness is the implicit denial of the fundamental Christocentricity of John’s Apocalypse. The Jerusalem application remains oriented to the old covenant people of God, instead of to the new covenant people, the church of Jesus Christ, as stressed in Revelation 1-3. Furthermore, how can one conceive of this Jerusalem harlot as “sitting upon,” or “acquiring sovereignty” over imperial Rome (the beast) if Jerusalem was destroyed and enslaved by Romans in 70 and 135 CE. Sealing, under this Jerusalem-Babylonian posture would then be positioned in an unrealistic setting. Massingberde considers Revelation 1-3 and 22:16, 20, 21 as a later addition by a



Jewish-Christian disciple of John the Baptist (Massingberde 1978:3, 277) LaRondelle (in Holbrook 1992b:156) says that the attraction of this original interpretation is its continuation of the covenant framework of the Old Testament, in particular to its reference to the cultic Day of Judgment. It is appropriate to cite here that Beale (1999:86-94) established that the book of Revelation is structurally and thematically dependent specifically on Daniel and Ezekiel. In this respect, Historicists consider this aspect as a *continuum* of evidence, which is based on the same pattern of symbols to describe the unfolding of history.

#### 4.5 Κοινή WORDS RELATED TO SEALING IN REVELATION

The occurrences of εἰκόν, σφραγίς and χάραγμα in Revelation are interdependent with the seal of God in Revelation 7:1-3 and the mark of the beast (Rv 13:16, 17, 18; 14:9). A theological study of these terms in the Apocalypse of John may provide an additional starting point in the general meaning of the χξς mark and the significance of the sealing of God.

##### 4.5.1 εἰκόν (εἰκόνα)

This word may express an etymological link with ἕιοκα, “to be similar,” “to be like,” “to appear.” It means an image in various senses, for example, as an artistic representation like a painting, a statue or the impress of a coin (Mt 22:20), or the image of a god (Rv 13:14). According to Kittel (1964g:388), the phrase εἰκόνα τῷ θεῷ in Revelation 13:14; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 19:20, and 20:4 (which advocate the worship of the emperor) is one of the important themes in the second half of Revelation, a worship that was resisted by the early Christians. This clash between the cult of rulers and apostates, or enemies of the Roman state in this case, is not new. Obeisance to the divine image of the ruler is also present in Daniel 3:5. The erection of a statue of Caligula in the temple of Jerusalem that was prevented only by his death in 41 BCE is also well known (see Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.261, in Kittel 1964g:388). The worship of imperial images played a similar role in the persecution of Christians. The presumed life of images (e.g., they could speak; see Rv 13:15) reminds many of priestly devices

like images of a lion's head made to spit out fires by means of a concealed pipe ending in the lion's mouth. It was also said of Simon Magus that *ego statuas moveri feci et animani examina* (Cumont, in Kittel 1964g:388). The εἰκόνα τοῦ θηριοῦ is against the renewal of the image and likeness of Christ in the human kind (Richards 1985:351-2).

#### **4.5.2 σφραγίς (σφραγίζω, κατασφραγίζω, κατεσφραγισμένον, σφραγίσιν, σφραγίδας)**

Revelation makes frequent and distinctive use of the word seal in the framework of apocalyptic images. The divine does not seal the words of prophecy (Rv 22:10). This means that he is not to keeping them secret or concealing them (Kittel 1971b:950). Σφραγίζω occurs in Revelation 20:3 in the sense of inviolable sealing as in Matthew 27:66; the angel from heaven, who binds the devil and casts him into the abyss, closes and seals the abyss for a thousand years – as the record is closed and sealed (Kittel 1971b:950). On the other hand, the word is also used in a much weaker sense: “to close,” “to conceal,” not “to reveal” (see Rv 10:4). Elsewhere what is written is sealed against misuse and unauthorized knowledge (Kittel 1971b:950). A group of “seal” references makes mention of the “sealed book,” the book with seven seals.

It is a double document. The seven seals reminds of Roman law with its six *testes* for a will along with the testator and military signing (Kittel 1971b:941). The metaphor shows the opening of the seven seals successively carries events forward, whereas all the seals must be broken or loosened at once in the case of a deed (Kittel 1971b:950). In the only occasion on which the compound κατασφραγίζω is used in the New Testament in Revelation 5:1 it denotes the sealing of this heavenly document. Only the Lamb has the right and power to undo this seal (Rv 5:1, 2, 5, 9). One seal after the other is broken (Rv 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 8:1). Each enclosed the apocalyptic event, which then takes place. The legality of the seals depends also on those who posses them. The number of seals is significant only because of the difference in the contents, which for its

part determines the course of eschatological events. The choice of the number seven is not based on Roman law; the number seven is a religious symbol (Kittel 1971b:950). The last group of seal statements in Revelation refers to those who are sealed by God and for God. The second angel has "the seal of the living God" (Rv 7:2; 9:4). He restrains the four angels of destruction until "we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads" (Rv 7:3). From each of the 12 tribes 12 000 are sealed (Rv 7:4-8). From this standpoint of the divine, this sealing is a marking of all the members of the people, in its entirety, as belonging to God, as God's possession. Hence this seal keeps them through the terrible events of the end time. Revelation 7:2 and 9:4 certainly have a specific sign in view (Kittel 1971b:951). For Kittel this seal is the יהוה (YHWH) or standing form of X (ת), membership of God's people or fellowship is denoted by the seal of God. They are His property. Here is included the ancient custom of providing something with a sign of ownership which becomes an aspect of the *σφραγίς* and is normative here (Kittel 1971b:951). By specific technical development the sign became a seal and the seal again became a sign, taking on material significance theologically, serving both as literary image and also as a mode of speech among believers. Signs are indications and need interpretation. In the language of revelation, image and reality become a distinctive unity. The reality can take shape only in the metaphor, the transferred use, the figure, the non-literal. It can be expressed only in the impression of the seal. In these basic questions the metaphorical use of the word seal in the New Testament is also implicated (Kittel 1971b:951).

#### 4.5.3 χάραγμα

Kittel (1974d:416-417) indicates that Revelation 13:11-18 describes the appearance of the second beast, which comes as the pseudo-prophet of the first beast, demanding religious recognition of its cultic image. The incident gains in dramatic force as this image itself comes to life and begins to speak (Rv 13:15). It demands of all men without exception ἵνα δώσιν αὐτοῖς χάραγμα ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν τῆς δεξιᾶς ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῶν, καὶ ἵνα μὴ τις δύνηται ἀγοράσαι ἢ πωλῆσαι

εἰ μὴ ὁ ἔχων τὸ χάραγμα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου ἢ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ (Rv 13:16). That the religious totalitarianism of emperor worship is indicated here is evident. Probably the choice of the word χάραγμα points to this if the reference is to the imperial stamp. Materially, however, the required acceptance of the χάραγμα means religious signing with the mark of the beast, which is branded on the right hand or the forehead. This marking as stigmatization was common in antiquity (Kittel 1974d:659).

In order to describe the holistic approach of sealing in Revelation 7:1-3 according to the Historicist method of interpretation, there are two other Greek terms that must also be considered: θηρίον and ἡλιος. In addition, the consideration of ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) is also part of the next terms discussed.

#### **4.5.4 θηρίον (θήρ, θηρία)**

In the context of beasts, Mounce (2007:352) writes that ancient traditions alluded to two monsters that dwelt in the depths of the sea and dry land. According to 1 Enoch 60:7-10, it refers to Leviathan (feminine monster) who lived in the abyss of the sea. Behemoth (male monster) occupied instead, a desolate desert. Mounce (2007:352; see also 2 Baruch 29:4; 2 Esdras 6:19-52) argues that it is evident that ancients of the Old Testament world were aware of mythological monster imagery. Therefore it was no problem for John to reflect and transpose this same imagery upon evil and use it in his visions. He also cites Job 40:15, 41; 41: 34 in describing Leviathan and Behemoth. Mounce (2007:352) suggests that the social-political aspect of John's time must also be understood in the manifestation and function of such a monster. As Kittel (1965e:133) states, θηρίον is a diminutive of θήρ, originally meaning a "wild animal," or in Hellenistic Greek an "animal living wild." Plato (in *Menex* 237:d) uses θηρία with βοτᾶ a "pastured beast". Θηρίον is also occasionally including insects and birds (in Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* I 6, 39, in Kittel 1965e:133). The same word is employed later to describe any "animal" (in *Plat. Rep.*, IX. I (571). In the New Testament θηρία is depicting a snake (in Ac 28:4). The LXX is restricted to land animals,

usually those living wild, and must be distinguished from ἰχθύες, πετεινά, ἔρπετά and κτήνη in the LXX (Gn 7:14, 21; 8:1, 17, 19; 9:2; Hs 4:3). There is an exact equivalent in the Hebrew ה'ח (Can 2:15). When Apollonius of Tyana (*Philostr Vit Ap*, IV, 38, in Kittel 1965e:134) calls Nero a θηρίον, the context shows that he is thinking of a beast of prey with claws and teeth, a carnivorous animal. The occurrence of θηρίον in theological passages such as Revelation 13:2 links it to Daniel 7. For Rabbinic exegesis up to the first century CE the fourth beast of Daniel 7 is Edom=Rome (Kittel 1965e:134).

In the imagery of Revelation, satanic and demonic powers are consistently represented as beasts (Kittel 1965e:135). Linked with man and yet distinct from him, the animal world with its dominion of instincts seems to have in fallen creation the significance of a perversion of what man is called as the image of God. This fact is evident throughout the animal kingdom, but is particularly clear in wild animals. Hence individual animals, and especially the θηρία, can serve as a figure of the demonic power, which perverts the divine similitude of man into that of sub-human (Kittel 1965e:135).

#### **4.6 HISTORICISM AND THE CONTINUUM IN θηρίον CONCEPT**

The historicist thought views the concept of beasts-kingdoms as portrayed by the Bible itself (Dn 7:3, 4-8, 19-25, Rv 12:1-18; 13:1-18). Some authors apply that symbolism of the hybrid monster of Daniel 7 and the sea monster of Revelation 13 to the Roman Catholic system. They say that from the ruins and ashes of the Roman Empire would arise the power of the Roman Catholic Church (Von Harnack 1903:269; Flick 1900:150; Eckhardt 1937:1, Ford 1978:152). The concept of θηρίον is associated with sun worship and its theological implications. This is the study of the next sections.

##### **4.6. ἥλιος**

The sun has been worshipped with different names throughout the ANE and the Graeco-Roman world. With regards to the ANE, sun worship stood in Egypt

under the names of Ra and Osiris; in Phoenicia and the land of Canaan under the names of Baal, Melkarth, Adoni, Shamas, and Moloch; in Syria under the names Tammuz and Elagabalus; among the Moabites under the names Baal Peor and Chemosh; among the Babylonian and Assyrians under the name of Bel and Shamas; and among Medes and Persians and other kindred nations under the names of Ormuz and Mithras (Jones 1891:183). Jones (1891:184-198) explains that even Israel and Judah were not free from sun worship (1 Ki 11:1-8; 16:30-33; 2 Ki 10:26-29; 23:7-12; 2 Chr 33:3-7; 34:3-4; Ezk 8:14-16). The Graeco-Roman world also devoted itself to sun worship in Greece, under Adonis, Apollo, Bacchus, and Hercules; in Phrygia, under the term Atys; and in Rome under the names of Bacchus, Apollo and Hercules (Jones 1891:183). Some Roman emperors began to include the sun in their personal imperial adornment during the first century CE. Nero was the first emperor that wore a royal crown with rays that represented the sun, probably to indicate that he was protected by the sun god Apollo (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:1006). Jeffers (1999:93) also indicates that a popular Greek god for the Romans in the time of Paul and John was Apollo (son of Zeus). Its cult was based in Delphi. Here a priestess, acting as oracle or mouthpiece of the god, had long made prophecies (Turcan 2001:142). It is evident, according to Friesen, that sun worship was transposed to Rome in the form of new religions and by means of war slaves and soldiers, including personal requests from the East provinces (Friesen 2006:124). Gibbons (2008:22-3) describes how the “black conical stone” from the Emesa temple, the symbol of the function of the sun, was transferred to Rome in a solemn procession led by the Roman emperor Elagabalus all the way from the temple of the Sun in Emesa up to a sun temple on the Palatine Hill. Aurelian instituted the *Deos Sol Invictus* cult in 274 CE. The imperial sovereignty and sun worship among the late emperors, according to Turcan says (2001:142), “passed from hand to hand up to the fourth century. As in Plato (*Rep.* 6,508; in Turcan 2001:142), the Sun was the visible image of the invisible Good. The Emperor, the actual and personal incarnation of the life, was represented as the one who imparted the Day Star and who, by handing the glove of the world to him on the

reverse of coins, made him his Vicar and a kind of co-regent.” (Turcan 2001:142).

We now turn to briefly analyze how the Sunday worship sneaked into the Roman Christian church and later was ruled the worship day for Christendom. For this purpose the Bacchiocchianian Historicist position on the Sunday evolution is considered next.

#### **4.6.2 The Sunday evolution in the Roman church from a partial Bacchiocchianian-historicist approach**

Scholars in the Archaeological field have discussed the authenticity of the literal Genesian's weekly cycle and in consequence the reality of Sabbath observance. Greenberg<sup>2</sup> (2001:34-38) points that Sabbath was originated lately in Israel and it came from Babylon. Babylonians believed certain days of the month (7, 14, 19, 21, 28) were considered unlucky and no work should occur or sacrifice be performed on those days. Therefore, by extension, Sabbath was also based in Canaanite agriculture tradition. Greenberg (2001:40) says that one likely explanation for the Sabbath observance comes from *Enuma Elish*. This Babylonian Creation Epic shows a Near Eastern precedent for this believing that Sabbath and the day of rest are inextricably intertwined. Marduk defeated his enemies and became chief deity of Babylon. He destroys god Kingsu. From his blood mankind was created and Marduk imposed upon humanity the duty to serve the gods. Greenberg (2001:40) quotes one portion of such legend, of which we extracted just the following verse: “we remove the yoke imposed upon the gods. Marduk created humanity, the god were free to rest.” For Historicism the Sabbath is interweaved with the Creation of mankind and directly attached with the beginning of mankind through history. Even though, Historicists believe in the literal occurrences of Genesis Chapters 1-11, others erudite work proposes

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<sup>2</sup>Gary Greenberg is the President of the Archaeological Society of New York. For this writer, scribes omitted the blessings from the end of the second day of Genesis creation but inserted one in the middle of the third and sixth days. Logical analysis showed that the omission of the blessing of the second and its insertion in the middle of the third day resulted from scribal error. Moving the events in the first half of Day three to the second half of Day two restored logical and textual consistency of Genesis.



Genesis 1-11 as folklore or mere aesthetic narrative (Weeks 1978:12-19). One historical issue for Prophetic Historicism to deal with is the debate between Sabbath and Sunday. Recently John Paul second said that Sabbath was the celebration of Creation on Sunday of Redemption (John Paul II 2007: 1-31). Prophetic Historicism observes an evolving *continuum* trend in that controversy which is moving through history and will climax in the context of Revelation 7:1-3. Historicism also believes pagan and papal Rome play a pivotal role on this Sabbath Sunday dilemma. Bacchiocchi (2000:164, 207-211) who comments that the church of the capital of the Roman empire, whose authority was already felt far and wide in the second century, appears to be the most likely birthplace of Sunday observance. He states that the predominance of Gentile converts had influenced the Sunday change issue. Paul's addresses in his letter to the Romans, particularly the last chapters, presuppose that the Christian community of Rome was composed primarily of a Gentile-Christian majority (Rm 11, 13) and a Judaeo-Christian minority (Bacchiocchi 2000:164). "I am speaking to you Gentiles" (Rm 11:13), the apostle explicitly affirms, and in Romans 16 he greets the majority of believers who carry a Greek or Latin name. Bacchiocchi continues by saying that this is not a conclusive argument, since archaeology inscriptions of ancient Rome give evidence that many Jews preferred Latin and Greek names. There are a compilation of 254 examples of Latin names and 175 examples of Greek names used by Jews in ancient Rome (Leon 1960:93-121, in Bacchiocchi 2000:188). The predominance of Gentile members and their conflict with the Jews, inside and outside the church, may have necessitated a differentiation between the two communities in Rome earlier than in the East. This situation could have added a reason for the future Sabbath-Sunday controversy within the church. With regard to the tension between Gentiles and Judaeo-Christians, Goppelt supports this view when he writes:

The Epistle presupposes in Rome, as one would expect, a Church with a Gentile-Christian majority (11, 13) and a Judaeo-Christian minority. This co-existence of the two parties provoked some difficulties comparable to those known at Corinth at the same time. The situation of the Church of Rome in relationship to Judaism, as far as the Epistle to the Romans allows us to

suspect, is similar to the one presented us by the post-Pauline texts of Western Christianity: a chasm between the Church and Synagogue is found everywhere, one unknown in the Eastern churches which we have

described above. Judaism does not play any other role than the one of being the ancestor of Christianity.

(Goppelt 1961:202-203, in Bacchiocchi 2000:188)

The fact that the Christians by 64 CE, as Bruce (1958:140, in Bacchiocchi 2000:166) comments, “were clearly differentiated at Rome ... while it took a little longer in Palestine (where practically all Christians were of Jewish birth),” denotes important data that Sunday approval developed faster in the West. This suggests the possibility that the abandonment of the Sabbath and adoption of Sunday as a new day of worship may have occurred first in Rome as part of this process of differentiation from Judaism. Possibly Rome recognized that Christians had no nationalistic aspirations and consequently posed no political threat (Bacchiocchi 2000:172). In the church of Rome Sunday worship was urged, but concrete measures were also taken to wean Christians away from any veneration of the Sabbath. Some Christian writers, such as Justin, described the Sabbath as a temporary ordinance, derived from Moses, which God did not intend to be kept literally, for He Himself “does not stop controlling the movement of the universe on that day.” One could argue that Justin’s position does not necessarily reflect the attitude of the whole church of Rome toward the Sabbath, especially since Rome was the crossroads of all ideas. While this caution deserves attention, it is well to note that Justin does not represent a solitary voice in Rome against the Sabbath (Justine, *Dial* 23.3; 29.3; 16;1; 21, 1, in Bacchiocchi 2000:174). Similar views regarding the Sabbath were expressed by the renowned heretic Marcion who in 144 CE established his headquarters in Rome (Bilmeyer & Tuechle 1969:186, in Bacchiocchi 2000:174). The transformation of the Sabbath from a day of feasting and joy to a day of fasting and mourning represents a measure taken by the church of Rome to degrade the Sabbath in order to enhance Sunday worship (Regan 1961:60, in Bacchiocchi 2000:175, 202). On the one side, bishop Victor of Rome (189-199 CE) championed the

Easter-Sunday custom (i.e., the celebration of the feast on the Sunday usually following the date of the Jewish Passover) and threatened to excommunicate the recalcitrant Christian communities of the province of Asia who refused to follow his instruction (Reagan 1961: 60, 202, in Bacchiocchi 2000:180). Bacchiocchi says that numerous patristic testimonies suggest that the weekly and annual Easter-Sunday is treated as basically the same feast commemorating the same event of the resurrection. In a document attributed to Irenaeus it is specifically enjoined not to kneel down on Sunday nor on Pentecost, that is, the seven weeks of the Easter period, “because it is of equal significance with the Lord’s day” (Bacchiocchi 2000:182). The reason given is that both feasts are a symbol of the resurrection. Tertullian confirms this custom but adds the prohibition of fasting as well: “On Sunday it is unlawful to fast or to kneel while worshipping. We enjoy the same liberty from Easter to Pentecost.” (Irenaeus, in Bacchiocchi 2000:182). Reagan (1961:97, in Bacchiocchi 2000:182) comments on this text saying: “In the season extending from Easter to Pentecost, the same custom was followed, thus showing the relation between the annual and weekly feasts” (Reagan 1961:97, in Bacchiocchi 2000:182). Origen explicitly unites the weekly with the yearly commemoration of the resurrection: “The resurrection of the Lord is celebrated not only once a year but constantly every eight days” (*Homil in Isaiarn* 5, 2, in Bacchiocchi 2000:110, 182). Eusebius similarly states: “While the Jews faithful to Moses, sacrificed the Passover lamb once a year . . . we men of the New Covenant celebrate every Sunday our Passover” (*Solemmitate Paschali* 7, 12, in Bacchiocchi 2000:182). Pope Innocent I, in a letter to bishop Decentius of Gubbio, confirms the unity existing between the two feasts: “We celebrate Sunday because of the venerable resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, not only at Easter but in actuality by the single weekly cycle (i.e., every Sunday)” (Bacchiocchi 2000:183). About the year 95 CE, Clement, bishop of Rome, wrote a letter to the church of Corinth (*Epistola I ad Corinthios* 47:1-2) to settle a discord which had broken out within the church and had resulted in the deposition of the presbyters. The prestige of the Roman church in this case is implied by the resolute and, in some cases, even threatening tone of the letter

that expects obedience (see *Epistola I ad Corinthios* 47:1-2; 59:1-2; Goodspeed 1950:78, in Bacchiocchi 2000:183-185). As Lebreton observes: “Rome was conscious of its authority and the responsibility which this involved; Corinth also recognized it and bowed to it.” Batiffol has described this intervention as “the Epiphany of the Roman Primacy” (Lebreton & Zeiller 1957:413, in Bacchiocchi 2000:185). The fact that the letter was highly respected and regularly read, not only in Corinth but in other churches as well, so much so that it came to be regarded by some as inspired, implies, as Baus notes, “the existence in the consciousness of non-Roman Christians of an esteem of the Roman Church as such which comes close to according it a precedence in rank” (Baus 1965:152, in Bacchiocchi 2000:185). Ignatius, a few years later (about 110-117 CE) in his *Letter to the Romans*, similarly attributes unusual honorific and fulsomely respectful epithets to the church of Rome (see his Prologue). While in his letters to the other churches Ignatius admonishes and warns the members, in his *Letter to the Romans* he expresses *only* respectful requests. The singular veneration of the bishop of Antioch for the Roman church is evident when he says: “You have never envied anyone; you have taught others. What I desire is that what you counsel and ordain may always be practiced” (*Romans* 3:1, in Bacchiocchi 2000:185).

In his prologue Ignatius describes the church of Rome as being “worthy of God, worthy of honor, worthy of felicitation, worthy of praise, worthy of success, worthily pure and preeminent in love.” In his final recommendation he requests: “Remember in your prayers the church of Syria, which has God for its pastor in my place. Jesus Christ alone will oversee it, together with your love” (*Letter to the Romans* 9:11). Though these statements do not define the actual jurisdictional power exerted by the church of Rome, nevertheless they do indicate that Ignatius, at the beginning of the second century, attributed to her a precedence of prestige and honor (Bacchiocchi 2000:185).

Ireneaus, bishop of Lyons (from circa 178 CE), in his book *Against Heresies*

(composed under the pontificate of Pope Eleutherus; 175-189 CE), describes the church of Rome as “the very great, the very ancient and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul.” He then states categorically: “For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority (*potentior principalitas*) that is, the faithful everywhere” (*Adv Haer* 3.3.1, in Bacchiocchi 2000:185).

Ireneaus’ high regard for the office and authority of the bishop of Rome is best exemplified in his embassy to bishop Eleutherus (175-189 CE) intended to solicit his intervention in the Montanist heresy which was disturbing the peace of the churches of Gaul, as well as in his letter to bishop Victor (189-199 CE) on the Quartodeciman problem (Bacchiocchi 2000:186). In the latter instance, it is worth noting that though Ireneaus protested against Victor’s excommunication of the Asiatics, as Batiffol aptly observes, “he did not dream of questioning Victor’s power to pronounce this excommunication” (Batiffol 1911:227, in Bacchiocchi 2000:186). The bishop of Rome demonstrated his unsurpassed authority when enforcing the Roman-Easter. Asian bishops, such as Polycarp and Polycrates, though they refused to accept the Roman custom, nevertheless took cognizance of the request of the Roman bishops. The former felt the compulsion in 154 CE to go personally to Anicetus of Rome to regulate the Passover question and other matters. The latter complied with the order of Victor to summon a council. “I could mention the bishops who are present,” Polycrates wrote to him in about 196 CE, “whom you required me to summon and I did so” (Eusebius, *Hist Ecc.* 5.24.8, in Bacchiocchi 2000:186).

When notified of the Asian bishops’ refusal to accept Easter-Sunday, Victor drastically “declared all the brethren there wholly excommunicated” (Eusebius, *Hist Eccl* 5.24.9, in Bacchiocchi 2000:186). This is perhaps the most explicit evidence of the authority of the Roman bishop to enforce a new custom, and even to cut off from the communion of the church an entire dissident community.

Batiffol aptly comments in this matter: “It is Rome alone that Ephesus answers and resists. We see the authority Rome exercises in this conflict. Renan has said

appropriately in reference to this case: ‘The Papacy was born and well born’” (Batiffol 1911:225, in Bacchiocchi 2000:186).

Other indications could be added, such as the designation of the church of Rome as the “Chair of *Peter – Cathedra Petri*” by the Muratorian fragment, by Cyprian and by Firmilian of Caesarea; the role played by the Pope in the question of the lapsed as well as of the heretical baptism (Bacchiocchi 2000:186); and the introduction and enforcement by the church of Rome of the date December 25 for the celebration of Christmas (Bacchiocchi 2000:186, 256-261).

#### **4.6.3 The Constantine legacy on Sunday worship**

According to Klaasen (1992:5), Constantine, after his alleged “conversion” to Christianity, contributed to the demise of the literal interpretation of Daniel and Revelation, favoring the Alexandrian allegorical method of interpretation. Thus favoring uniting the church with the interest of the state, Constantine applied Revelation 11:15 telling the kingdom this prophecy was fulfilled through him (Eusebius *Hist Eccl* X. 9; *Oration* XVI. 3-8, cited in Klaasen 1992:5). One interesting law related in a certain way with this allegorical postulate was the Constantine promulgation of the sun worship law on Sunday in 321 CE. The translated excerpts render:

On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in the cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits, because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain-sowing or for vine planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost.

(Constantine, *Codex Justinianus*, lib. 3, tit. 12, 3, in Schaff 1902a:380, see also Jones 1986: 81, 91-2, 552)

Hefele says the first Sunday law decree of a Christian council was given 16 years after Constantine's. The Council of Laodicea remarks the following:

Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday, but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honour, and as being Christians, shall, if possible, do not work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ.

(Council of Laodicea, 337 CE, Cannon 29, in Hefele 1883-96:316)

With the previous section in mind, we now turn to the Roman sun imperial cult from the time of John and its gradual growth process some years previous to Constantine's edict.

#### **4.6.4 ἥλιος and the development of the Roman imperial cult**

According to Fausset, sun worship was the earliest idolatry. Hatsberghe (1972:26) mentions that this practice was one of the oldest components of the Roman religion. However, sun worship and the imperial cult were something gradual, mainly developed at first in the East provinces of the Roman Empire (Paulien 2004:2). Paulien recognizes that the process began to build up from the Domitian reign, although he recognizes such evidence is mixed (Paulien 2004:2-3). The worship of kings and queens is attested in the Graeco-Roman world. Deissmann (1965:352) points out that Ptolemy XIII was called τοῦ κυριοῦ βασιλεία θεοῦ. Alexander the Great, Ptolemy XIV and Cleopatra were called, τοῖ κύριοι θεοῖ μαγεστίοιν, and Antiochus IV of Syria was the first to be represented as a god in his coins. As it was said of the Romans earlier, the Roman victories in faraway lands also transported new gods to Rome by way of the *evocatio* and the influx of slaves who brought their various forms of worship with them. Contact with Greek life and oriental luxury, the inevitable price of conquest, had a corresponding effect on the outlook of the conquerors, hence the xenophobic reactions of Livy and Juvenal for whom the Syrian Orontes overflowing into the Tiber is the image of an apocalyptic cataclysm (Friesen 2006:105-106). Scipio Africanus made out that he held private conversations with Jupiter Capitolinus, and let the rumors spread that he, like Alexander the Great, was a son of a divine serpent (*Liv* 26, 19.7, in Friesen 2006:105-106). Therefore, the development of



the imperial worship had its origins in Asia Minor with the provincial temple, approved in 29 BCE for Pergamon and their Hellenes population. Dio Cassius remembered this temple as the starting point for imperial cult practice spanning several centuries. This temple was built at Pergamon and dedicated by the whole province of Asia. Altogether with Cassius, Tacitus recounted that Augustus did not prohibited Asia to build it (Tacitus, *Ann* 4.37; *Dio* 51.10.27, in Friesen 2006:27).

One suggested evidence of the imperial worship in the East provinces is Pontius Pilate which, according to Taylor, was promoting Roman religion in Judaea. In that respect Taylor says:

While Pontius Pilate is often seen as agnostic, in modern terms, the material evidence of his coinage and the Pilate inscription from Caesarea indicate a prefect determined to promote a form of Roman religion Judaea. Unlike his predecessors, in the coinage Pilate used peculiarly Roman iconographic elements appropriate to the imperial cult. In the inscription Pilate was evidently responsible for dedicating a Tiberieum to the *Dis Augustis*. This material evidence may be placed alongside the report of Philo *Legatio ad Gaium* ... where Pilate sets up shields-likewise associated with the Roman Imperial cult-honoring Tiberius in Jerusalem.

(Taylor 2009)

It appears that the imperial worship system started in Rome with Julius Caesar, in terms of hero worship: the god like were appropriate for good rulers after death (Horn 1995:1006). Horn recounts that two years after the death of Augustus in 44 BCE Julius Caesar was deified. Augustus was allowed to be called “god” by the eastern provinces mainly. Tiberius refused such honors in his homeland, but he promoted it in the provinces. Shrines in this regard were called ἥρων (shrine for a hero), reserving the term τέμενος or “precincts” for imperial cult temples in the provinces. There is no archaeological evidence for the period of the last half of the first century BCE, except for Ephesus (Friesen 2006:26-27). Friesen also mentions a double altar and a double temple, which could be representing the starting point with the imperial worship (Friesen 2006:26-27). The argument for identifying these foundations with the cult of Rome and Julius Caesar, however, is circumstantial. The Ephesian temple ruins represent the correct historical

period – the last half of the first century BCE. The location, near the *πριτανεῖον* (civic religious center), and the *βουλευτερίον* (meeting place of the city council) would be appropriate for a cult with governmental implications (Friesen 2006:26-7). Moreover, the foundations and the modest courtyard are the earliest known example in Asia of a distinctive Italian design, in which a *podium* temple is set near the back wall of a peristyle courtyard. Although identification as the *τενμένος* of Rome and Julius is likely, definitive proof has not yet been found (Friesen 2006:26-7). Turcan says that in the reign of pathetic Claudius it is possible also to see the apotheosis and the farcical account Seneca gives in his *ἀποκολουντόσις*, in which he ridiculed the institution. Nero himself deconsecrated the site of the *templum divi Claudii* by turning it in to the *nymphaeum* of his Golden House (Turcan 2001:140; Vos 1982:370-1). Tacitus (55-120 CE) writes how Nero made scapegoats of the Christians when he provoked the fire of Rome that began on July 18, 64 CE, to build such a house (*Ann* lib 5, cited by Coloma 1944:262-63). This fire lasted for six days, destroyed three of the 14 districts of Rome, and damaged seriously another seven leaving only four districts undamaged (Tacitus, *Ann.* XV.40).

The development of imperial worship in Rome was presented in the calendar as well. The realignment of Asia's calendar, according to one proconsul, had been determined by the birth and achievements of Augustus. It was argued that Augustus was a cosmological deity. He had saved the world from itself, ending warfare and returning order to the world. The beginning of the year and the beginning of each month were to become a commemoration of his birth. Augustus would make a sense of time. This calendar realignment is one of the enormous symbolic resources of a solar calendar for imperial authority. The comparative regularity of the solar reflects nicely the imperial requirement for order and conformity (Turcan 2001:125-126). Another example referred to by Turcan (2001:125-126) shows how, with time, imperial cults molded the experience of time, using different kinds of festivals for that purpose: processions, sacrifices, athletics, gladiator battles, and musical competitions. All levels of society were affected. Elite families now had more opportunities and

more responsibilities for public celebrations. Average and poorer Asians now had more occasions to experience the benefactions of the elite to increase their moral responsibility to support the leadership of the elite. The logic of reciprocity within the dominant discourse required such responses (Turcan 2001:125-126).

People from all the Roman provinces, mainly from the East, and finally in the last half of the empire, many inhabitants in Rome, ascribed the attributes of the gods to both emperors and empresses. Seals were crafted to remember these events. Augustus and Septimus Severus were represented as Jupiter, Livia as Venus Genitrix or Cybele, Hadrian and Sabina as Mars and Venus, Julia Domna as Juno, Isis, or Demeter. In the third century CE the solar epiphany of the emperor became almost official (Turcan 2001:142-143).

Caracalla displayed himself in a chariot like the Sun, laying claim to that likeness. Later, Gallienus had his hair dusted with gold and often appeared *radiatus* (Turcan 2001:142-144). He is said to have considered having a statue of himself erected on the Esquiline as the Sun in his quadriga, in an idol twice the size of Nero's colossus.<sup>3</sup> Because of this Aurelian called himself "*deus et dominus*", like Carus whose profile faces that of the Sun (as those of the emperor and empress of his son had formerly in the legend). Aurelian described himself as "*deo domino nato*" with a dative of homage as to a true predestined god *nato* (Turcan 2001:142-143).

Below, in the next page, there are two pictures of the cult of heroes promoted in Greece and in the Near East, which eventually influenced also the western part of the Empire, including Rome.

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<sup>3</sup> The testimony is unreliable but one gets the feeling that conditions at the time were favorable for institutionalizing a universal solar cult, consecrating the religious unity of the Roman world.



A hero-shrine of heron at Sagalassos, Turkey

([http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek\\_hero\\_cult](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_hero_cult))



Offerings to deified hero and another deity, depicted on a Greek marble relief (300 BCE)

([http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek\\_hero\\_cult](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_hero_cult))

The cult of the emperors was considered under a certain Roman eschatology presence in the death of the Caesars. This is going to be considered briefly in the following section

#### 4.6.5 Roman eschatological presence in the death of the Caesars

Friesen (2006:129-130) points out that the discourse of imperial cults after an emperor death was committed to prevent the imagination from imaging the end of the world. This was a constant feature in the evolving imperial religious institution. The commitment to the longevity of Roman imperialism expressed in a damaged text of the imperial hymnody from 41 CE had the intention of preventing disorder and chaos in Rome and the empire (Friesen 2006:129-130). The hymnody begins: “[on behalf of the etern]al continuation of Tiber[rius Claudius Caesa]r Sebastos Germanic[us and of] his [who]le house.” Forty years later, an Ephesian inscription echoed the same sentiments: “On behalf of the health of our Lord Emperor Titus Caesar and [on behalf of] the permanence of the rule of the Romans, the damaged wall surrounding the *Ανγύστειον* was repaired.” There is also a text from a small marble altar that confirms the previously damaged hymnody’s veracity. It was found in Phrygia, and it says: “Euphrastos, slave of Caesar [prays] for the eternal continuation and victory of emperor Nerva Trajan Caesar Sebastos Germanicus Dacicus. Year 188 (= 104. CE) in the ninth month” (Friesen 2006:129-130).

The apotheosis of the Roman emperor after his death is another context in which personal Roman eschatology intersected with imperial cults. The ritual and concept of apotheosis were more important in the capital than in the provinces because divinization of living emperors was common outside Italy. The imagery of the emperor ascending to heaven in the chariot of the Sun was also well known in Asia; it affirmed a special geography of the afterlife for deserving emperors (Cannadine and Price 1993:56-104). Harrison (2002:71-96), commenting on the imperial cult at Thessaloniki, refers to the presence of “an aggressive imperial eschatology and the widespread circulation of Augustan apotheosis traditions competed with early Christian proclamation of the risen and returning heavenly *Κύριος*.” Harrison (2002:71-96) says the apostle responded by “injecting” heavily loaded Roman political terms into his presentation of Christ ... and overturned the absolutist claims of the imperial cult.”

We analyze now the presence of Domitian and the imperial worship and the persecution allegations on Jews and Christians.

#### 4.6.6 Domitian and imperial worship

Jones (1993:1-3), writing about the early years of Domitian, explains that this emperor was born in Rome on October 24 of the year 54 CE. It was the eleventh year of Claudius's reign. According to Jones (1993:1-3), there is a myth on Domitian poverty, that is called a tradition by Suetonius, that due to poverty he sold himself to various senators including the future emperor Nerva. During Domitian's reign provinces were taxed rigorously beyond dispute. Suetonius (*Dom* 12.2, in Jones 1993:76, 118-119, 160) himself was present at a sitting of the procurator's court when a man of 90 years of age was examined to see if he was circumcised and so eligible for the Jewish tax. An Alexandrian Jew, more than a century after Domitian's death, referred to Domitian worship with the words: "all men worship and gladly obey." Domitian had concern for Greek culture. In Athens his cult was associated with that of Zeus Eleutherios (Jones 1993:1-3).

According to Fears (1981:233-245), Domitian's ideal seemed to have been a return to Augustan standards in money and religious matters. He was influenced by two factors: The Flavians needed to bolster the new dynasty with supernatural support, and his personal sincere belief in the traditional religion. Vespasian and Titus had stressed the family's connection with the more reputable Julio-Claudians and thus, indirectly, with Venus. In Flavian propaganda, Jupiter regularly appeared on Vespasian coinage; he was associated with the benefits of the new regimen provided – victory, peace, and food. Price (in Cannadien and Price 1993:79-95) and Jones (1993:11-112) deal with the idea that educated Romans, as expressed by Aelius Aristides in his *Cyzicus Speech*, were aware of the clear difference between old pagan gods (*dues*) and deified emperors (*divi*). No one ever prayed to a *divus*. Domitian and Trajan are portrayed on some of their coins with a thunderbolt.



It is correct to say that Domitian supported the state religion and promoted temple repairs such as *Divroum Fortuna*, *Ianus Quadrirons*, *Custos Minervas* and altars dedicated to Vulcan and other gods (Jones 1993:84-88). In external evidence Domitian is mentioned by Suetonius and Martial, referring to him as “*dominus et deus*” (Suetonius, *Dom* 13; Martial, *Epig* 9.56.3, cited by Hemer 1986:86-87). Jones (1993:148-150) also points out that there are no signs in the epigraphic or numismatic evidence from Asia that unusual divine titles were employed by Domitian, but the fact that when he died the Roman Senate ordered that his name be excised from inscriptions, and that his name would certainly have been removed from temples, could indicate the Domitian excess in being considered as a god (Jones 1993:148-150).

#### **4.6.7 Domitian persecution**

##### **4.6.7.1 Against the Jews**

According to Jones (1993:221), the only persecution accountability in Domitian texts was to tax Jews. Jews were far more numerous. There are hints of anti-Semitism in Latin literature at least 150 years before Cicero. Neither Martial nor Quintilian were free of it (Cicero, *Flacco* 167; Tacitus, *Hist* 5.5, cited by Jones 1993:117) In Talmudic and Midrashic sources reference is made to Jewish persecution. The reference is made to a Jewish proselyte named *Onkelos*. He is described as a son of *Kalonikos*, a nephew of Titus. On three occasions the emperor wanted to arrest him but failed to do so. Also, the *Midrash* and the Babylonian Talmud refer to a senator named Ketī' ah bar Shalom who converted with his wife to Judaism and was put to death by the state (Jones 1993:117).

##### **4.6.7.2 Against the Christians**

The evidence of Domitian persecution against Christians is diverse and not abundant beyond the Latin writers and practically not present in Roman archaeology thus far. It is certain that, from the time of Nero, Christians were charged with having Theyestan banquets (Fergusson 2001:333) and with



committing Oedipean incest and child murder (Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2604; Suetonius 2006:213-249). Hislop (1959:232), however, describes sacred cannibalism that was present in the Baal cult, including the legend of Cyclopes. The words of Jesus in Luke 22:19b-20 and John 6:51-57 must have been misunderstood by Romans. These words of Jesus have to be interpreted in the symbolical context of receiving Him as a personal Savior, believing that He is the One that cleanses and forgives from sin (White 1955:353). Bible laws forbade the ingestion of human blood and flesh (Gn 9:4; Dt 12:16). Billings (2006:151-165) discusses the issue of the Roman allegation of Christian cannibalism in the Lyon persecution during 177 CE. It is probable those Romans, in slander and mocking, ascribed the cannibalistic rites of Baal and the legend of Cyclopes to the Christians' rites (Hislop 1959:232). There are evidences of jurisdiction of consuls and praetors in mass trials in other religions other than that of Christians. Such is the case of the Bacchanalian question in 186 CE (Bauman 2007:17).

In Roman law, the term *Obstinatio* describes Christians and their religion, who would be left undisturbed if they would only render formal obedience to the religion of the state. Later in the Empire, Aurelius refers to Christianity in the words φιλη παρατάζις – sheer obstinacy – and Aristides apparently refers to Christianity as ἀὐθαδεία – stubbornness (Bauman 2007:204).

Jones insists that the Christian tradition of the second Roman persecution, or so called Domitianian, began in the writings of cardinal Caesar Baronius 1 500 years after Domitian's death, and that no pagan literature refers to Christian persecution by Domitian (Bauman 2007:114). However, Jones (1993:116, in citing Suetonius) considers as external evidence the fact that Eusebius uses the first precise reference in saying that Melito was bishop of Sardis (170 CE) to the effect that Nero and Domitian were persecuted by evil advisers to slander Christians. Scullard (1982:319-332), commenting on this issue, says that the account for the original persecution of Christianity by Nero was not an intuition that Christianity did threaten the stability of the Roman Empire.

## 4.7 κύριος IN THE FIRST CENTURY CE

### 4.7.1 The Christian allegiance to κύριος

In the Johannine literature the statement of Thomas in John 20:28: Ὁ Κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου, is the equivalent in the LXX of the Hebrew יהוה (Orr and Nuelsen 1974c:1267-1268; 1974e:1583-1584), the same word which is transliterated as “Jehová” in the Reina Valera Spanish Version and “Yahveh” in the Jerusalem Bible Version. By this confession Thomas related Jesus as the same Jehovah of the Old Testament. These words of Thomas evidently later became a faith confession using Κύριος Ἰησοῦς (1 Cor 12:3). Θεός appears in the Septuagint as a translation from the Hebrew אלהים *Elohim* (Orr and Nuelsen 1974c:1264-1270), which is used mostly for God the Father (Rm 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3), but in the Thomas declaration, these words are used in the same way as in John 1:1 θεός ἦν ὁ λόγος (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:1043). Notwithstanding the references from Latin writers such as Suetonius (*Dom* 13.) and Martial (*Epig.* 9.56.3) concerning the use of *dominus et dues* by Domitian, Kittel (1965e:1058) says the use of the word *dominus* at the beginning of the imperial period had another role. During the first century CE of the Roman Empire, Rome rejected the use of the term in the same way as the oriental-style monarchy was utilized. However, with the passing of time, κύριος, slowly but surely, established itself in Roman society. However, there is no passage in which κύριος, when used to describe a Roman emperor, establishes such usage during the first and second centuries. Kittel emphasizes, however, that there is no passage in which κύριος when used to talk about a Roman emperor, is sufficient in itself to describe the emperor as a god (Kittel 1965e:1056). The imperial priest, for example, is practically never called ἱερεὺς τοῦ κυρίου. Κύριος is not found on the private domestic altars of Hadrian, for instance, in Miletus, which apparently once stood in every citizen's house in Miletus. On coins, the term is rare and apparently not used before the second century CE. The difficulty lies elsewhere. If the emperor is not κύριος as a god, he can be god as κύριος (Kittel 1965e:1056). That is what the following epigram dedicated to Augustus shows:

Καίσαρι ποντομέδοντι καὶ ἀπειρῶν κρατέοντι  
Ζανί, τῷ ἐκ Ζανός πατρός, Ἐλευθερίῳ  
Δεσπότη Εὐρώπας τε καὶ Ἀσίδος, ἄστρῳ ἀπάσας  
ἑλλάδος, [ὅς] σωτ [ῆ] ρ Ζεὺς ἀν [έ] τ [ει] λ [ε] μέγας.

It is not surprising that in the acts of Christian martyrs opposition to the absolute claim of the Roman state, with its implication of deity, is also found in the form of distinction between *dominus noster imperatur* and *dominus meus, rex regum e imperatur omnium gentium*. The use of *rex* and *imperator* along with *dominus* shows that the point at issue was not the mere title, but the religious claim of the state that Christians were forced to resist in demonstration of their loyalty to God and the state (Kittel 1965e:1058). Revelation shows the divine allegiance between the supreme risen God Κύριος and His dominion, which Christians thought Rome was part of (Rv 1:10; 16: 5; 17:14; 19:16). In Roman thought, neglect and rejection of the gods of Rome was seen as atheism.

#### 4.7.2 The Roman concept of atheism

The “atheism” accusations by which Christians were persecuted could well be represented by their negative thought toward worship of the emperor or the gods to which the Roman state was established and protected. Because of this, Schüssler (1985:144) says that the plight of the Christian was even more difficult because their refusal to worship the emperors increased the threat of economic deprivation, imprisonment and execution. Gaddis (2005:19) reminds us that the Roman Empire will bequeath its persecution legacy to the Roman church when he says that the Roman system depended upon the glorified hierarchical authority, while remaining intensively aware of the danger of its abuse by the all too fallible men to whom that authority was entrusted; as it was with the emperor, so too it could be with the bishop. Gaddis (2005:19) adds a sense of necessary violence against “others,” including Christians to preserve its order.

Schüssler (1985:132-36) also adds that the imperialist setting gave Revelation its urgency. Also, it is possible that John’s rhetorical response in Revelation occurred because he had to confront groups of individuals in the synagogues

and churches in Asia that had a positive opinion about Roman power. One very important factor in Rome's persecution of Christians was the Christian's aggressiveness in witnessing Christ to the pagan world. Christians were not only happy with their uncompromising withdrawal from the practices of heathen worship; they also actively assailed the pagan cults. To the Christians, these cults became doctrines of demons (Orr and Nuelsen 1974a:2604). As it has been discussed previously, it is also known that the imperial cult and worship for the Genius of the emperor and the Roman state were very unholy in the Christians' eyes. Hence they fell under the charges of disloyalty to the emperor and could be proved guilty of *majestas* (Orr and Nuelsen 1974a:2605). This is what the Romans called *Odium generis humani* – “hatred by the human race” – by the populace and educated classes. Most of the early adherents to Christianity belonged to the slave, freedman, and artisan classes and were called *Asinariio*, “the sect that worshipped the ass's head” by the Romans (Orr & Nuelsen 1974a: 2605). Tacitus, instead, called them *atrocia aut pudenda* – atrocious and abominable thing. He also called them *superstitio exitiabilis* – baneful superstition (*Ann.* XV 44, in Orr and Nuelsen 1974a:2605). Suetonius called the Christians *novae ac maleficae* – novel and malefic (*Ner* 16, in Orr and Nuelsen 1964a:2605). It is evident that Christians found the difference between the γινώσκω and ἀναγινώσκω. In the Johannine literature, the first term means one that received and has the recognition and reception of love. The Son has been sent to make that possible because of His revelation to a sinful κόσμος (Kittel 1964a:711). The ἀναγινώσκω vocable interacts with exterior knowledge like to know exactly or to recognize. It is used for a person reading a letter (Ac 15:31; 23:34; 2 Cor 1:13; 3:2; Eph 3:4). In Revelation 1:3 the reference is to the reading of the prophecy presented (Kittel 1964a:343). In early Christianity both terms produced a deep impact in a system based on slavery, polytheism, and self-exaltation as happened with the Roman emperors and the state.

The consideration of the Roman emperor as *divi* or god is something supported mostly, thus far, by the internal evidence of Latin writers. Some archeological evidence is needed to back up the Roman writers.

Revelation 13:18 defines the beast as having a number, χξς. This identity and ghematric validity of the term has provoked different views on its meaning. To help in this study, there is a description of the usage of the words ἀριθμέω and ψηφίζω during the Graeco-Roman world. The next sections discuss the various postures on the beast number.

## 4.8 THE ἀριθμός OF THE BEAST

### 4.8.1 ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς)

Referring to the literal use of ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς), and its function in the Bible, nothing – either linguistically or grammatically – indicates that the mark of the beast of Revelation 13 is a literal mark on or in the skin (Abanes 1998:127). However, there has been a current of thought that tends to over emphasize its symbolic use. Seiss (1865:457) says that the mark, even being used as it appears in the Greek to demonstrate the middle letter (ξ), actually resembles a serpent. According to Seiss, the mark is both a name and a number. The number, as John gives it, is made up of two Greek characters, which also stand for the name of Christ (Χριστός) and, with a third, the figure of a crooked serpent put between them (χ [ξ] ς). To this Seiss add “is the name of God adulterated and transformed into a devil sacrament” (Seiss 1865:457). Luther (see Plass 2006:114), the German Reformer, said that the number of the beast was in a tonsured hair cut worn by Roman Catholic clergy. Since as early as Irenaeus, the number of the beast was used in the ghematric style. According to Sanders (1918:95-99), Irenaeus used, among others λαμπέτις (the illustrious one), Ἀμνός ἀδικός (unjust lamb), Τειταν Παλαιβασκανος (an ancient sorcerer), and Κακός ὁδεγός (bad guide). Regarding the translation of ἀριθμός ἀνθρώπου (see Rv 13:18), Minear (1968:258) suggests that the translation of this phrase can be rendered as “The brand, the name of the beast, or the number of its name ... is

an ordinary human number. His number is 666.” Before discussing the various ghematric issues relating to Revelation 13:18, it is first necessary to define and explain the terminology of the verbs ἀριθμέω and ψηφίζω.

#### 4.8.2 ἀριθμέω (ἀριθμός)

In the New Testament these words are often used in the literal sense of “to count” or “to reckon a sum or number” (Mt 10:30; Ac 11:21; Rm 9:27, 5:11). According to Kittel (1964c:461), it is in Revelation 13:18 where this term has special theological significance in the study of sacred numbers. Before the abstract system of numbering was invented, man simply took as many pebbles as he had objects in view. The Latin *Calculus*, from which the word to calculate derives, points back to this primitive sphere. Man came to sense either a power or regularity behind numbers, perhaps because some of them recur in definite sequences. Because he could not properly grasp this regularity, that which he could not comprehend in numbers was a mystery to him. He read a potency into them, as in the case of the letters of the alphabet (Kittel 1964c:461). The task of changing the word and replacing it with a numerical value is not an easy task, since every number represents a variety of possibilities. For this reason, it was a favorite procedure in the ancient world to present numerically a name that one wished to keep secret. Kittel (1964c:462), citing Zahn, says the latter gives an excellent and instructive example from excavations at Pompeii. There is a wall inscription with the declaration of love: φιλω ἥς ἀριθμός φμε – the name of the lover is concealed; the lover will know it when she recognizes her name in the sum of the numbers of the 3 letters φμε (f= 500 + m= 40 + e=5 = 545). But the passing stranger does not know in the least who the beloved is, nor does the nineteenth century investigator know how many letters there are in the name, which gives us the total of 545 when added numerically. Kittel (1964c:462) continues by saying that it also needs to be recalled that the number 888 appears as a symbol for Jesus (I = 10 + h = 8 + s = 200 + 0 = 70 + u = 400 + ~ = 200 = 888). In ghematria a good deal depends on correct guessing (*Sib.* 1, 326-330 in Kittel 1964c:462). In regard to the concept of epigrams, these are attested

to in their presence in the Greek anthologies and other Hellenistic sources (Nisbet 2004:200-210), where the isopsephic epigrams of Leonides of Alexandria are a case in point: the letters of the first distich of a four-line poem add up to exactly the same as the letters of the second distich.

With the previous ghematric function in mind, it is good to anticipate that Historicism does not attach exclusively to the ghematric view of the number 666 in Revelation 13:18 as the only Biblical clue to decipher the sea monster beast identity. The  $\chi\xi\varsigma$  interpretation complexity based on the data source that follows in § 4.10.1.2.3 and 4.17.1.2, requires a more comprehensive study of characteristics in order to identify the sea/monster of Revelation 13 and relate it to the sealing scenario of Revelation 7:1-3. The word  $\Psi\eta\phi\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$  is another term that depicts a little more descriptive function of this ghematric complexity in Revelation.

#### **4.8.3 $\Psi\eta\phi\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ ( $\Psi\eta\phi\acute{o}\varsigma$ , $\Psi\eta\phi\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ , $\sigma\upsilon\mu\psi\eta\phi\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ , $\Psi\eta\phi\acute{\iota}\zeta\epsilon\iota\nu$ )**

Kittel (1974d:604) mentions that the normal  $\Psi\eta\phi\acute{o}\varsigma$  usage in the normal Greek denoted small stones that were used in board games, counting, or numbers. They were used in votes.  $\Psi\eta\phi\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ ,  $\sigma\upsilon\mu\psi\eta\phi\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$  are used in terms of to vote, to reach a decision, to be condemned.  $\gamma\chi\eta$  is used for a little stone or pebble (Lm 3:16). Philo uses the term in the sense of pronouncements, verdict, or judicial verdict. In the New Testament, the term is employed in the Lukan corpus (Ac 26:10). Paul says that he had part in sentencing Christians to death by giving his voice against them. The white of Revelation 2:17, on which the new name is written, reminds one of the magical formula; in this case the new name mediates supernatural powers and offers protection against demons and evil forces. This idea gives an indication of the supernatural, the distinctive (Kittel 1974d:605). In Revelation 13:18 the number of the beast, which is also the number of a man, is to be counted. This counting, according to Kittel (1974d:607), can only mean putting the number in the correspondent Greek or Latin letters and thus arriving at the mysterious number.



Next, there are various ghematric possibilities for the 666 and its identity characteristic with the sea/monster beast. However, this study considers only the code number hypothesis associated with other Apocalypse passages that produce the Historicist exegetical approach on the identification of the beast in Revelation 13:18. This code number hypothesis will be discussed in § 14.1.2.

#### 4.8.4 ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) and its ghematric application to Nero in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin

Cory (2006:61) repeats the idea that χξς was a codex language to disguise the real character of the Roman Empire in the person of Nero.

The Greek spelling, “Nerōn Kaisar,” transliterates into Hebrew as “קסר נרון” or “nrvn qsr,” and adding the corresponding values yields 666, as shown:

| Resh (ר) | Samech (ס) | Qof (ק) | Noon (נ) | Vav (ו) | Resh (ר) | Noon (נ) | TOTAL |
|----------|------------|---------|----------|---------|----------|----------|-------|
| 200      | 60         | 100     | 50       | 6       | 200      | 50       | 666   |

Commenting on the intent of justifying Nero and the Preterist ghematric approach by some scholars, Strand, by citing Sanders (1918:97 in Holbrook 1992b:203), says that adding an *n* to Nero appears to be an unjustifiable device in spite of a so-called illustration from Murabba’t proposed by Hillers (1963:65, in Holbrook 1992b:203) who called attention to an Aramaic document published, discussed, and given in a partially reconstructed text in the *Textes* volume (part 1) in Benoit and Vaux (1962:18, Pl 29) and given in photographic reproduction in the *Planches* volume (part 2) of the same work in Pl 29. Looking at the photograph of this rather fragmentary document as it is pieced together, Sanders (1918:97) did not have the same confidence as Hillers. Sanders explains that there is no room for a *’* (*yodh*) after *ק* (*qoph*). He continues by saying that working from photographs is hazardous, in any event. Nevertheless, in this text as it appears in the photograph, a small part of the *ק* is missing (this letter can nevertheless be

identified), but lacking too is the rest of the word – indeed also the rest of the line. The assumption is that the spelling is *qsr* on the basis of estimated space for the letters, but throughout the text the scribe was not consistent in his spacing of letters, sometimes even running them together. In any case, even if קִסְר (*qsr*) does occur occasionally in texts, why should we give priority to an uncommon form of the word rather than to the usual form קִסְר? Sanders also mentions that the translation of Caesar into קִסְר is quite atypical. In numerous examples he found קִסְר to be the form consistently used. He recognized that translation is a Preterist approach problem (Sanders 1918:97).

#### 4.8.5 ἐξακόσιοι ἐξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) and its ghematric Domitian application

Another Preterist assumption for χξς is applied also to Domitian (Stauffer 1955:170-190), arguing that ghematria had been the most popular form of numerology, not only among Jews, but also in the Graeco-Roman world. The Greek terminus technicus is once again ψηφίζεῖν which literally means counting or calculating with stones. This Greek ghematric procedure was intended to explain the number χξς for Domitian, because he reigned in the time of the Apocalypse writing ΑΚΑΙΔΟΜΕΤΣΕΒΕΓΓΕ, as derived from the abbreviations on coins and inscriptions. The following ghematric diagram explanation on the Greek language gives one example of this approach:

|   |    |   |    |   |    |    |   |     |     |   |   |   |   |       |
|---|----|---|----|---|----|----|---|-----|-----|---|---|---|---|-------|
| Α | Κ  | Α | Ι  | Δ | Ο  | Μ  | Ε | Τ   | Σ   | Ε | Β | Γ | Ε | TOTAL |
| 1 | 20 | 1 | 10 | 4 | 70 | 40 | 5 | 300 | 200 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 666   |

#### 4.8.6 ἐξακόσιοι ἐξήκοντα ἕξ (χξς) and its ghematric *Vicarivs Filii Dei* application

Considering some other ghematric possibilities for χξς, one must say that some Protestant Bible commentators shortly after the Reformation paired and equated the “beast” of Revelation 13 with the Papacy (Halley 1978:726). To this end, the letters of an alleged title of the Pope, *Vicarivs Filii Dei* (Vicar of the Son of God),

are summed to total 666 in Roman numerals. One of the earliest extant records of a Protestant writer on this subject is that of Andreas Helwig (1572-1643), who wrote under the pseudonym of *Irenechoreaus* in 1612 in his work *Antichristus Romanus*. Actually, he computed 15 titles in three languages for such a purpose, and among these was: *Dux Cleri, Dic Lux* (Froom 1948a:605-608). The title *Vicarius Filii Dei* was contained in the *Donation of Constantine*, a forged document from 752 CE falsely claiming to come from the emperor Constantine the Great, by which large privileges and rich possessions were conferred to the pope and the Roman church (Hutchinson et al 1959:71). This earliest collection of Catholic canon law reads: *Beatus Petrus in terries Vicarivs Filii Dei esse videtur constitus* (*Decretum of Gratian*, part 1, div. 96, in Coleman 1922:13). However, this title was never an official title used for the Pope. This interpretation also requires the disregarding of letters that had no numerical value for the Romans (such as the AR and S in *Vicarivs*).

Following, there is one Latin ghematric explanation on 666 as the Papacy:

|   |   |     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |   |   |     |   |   |       |
|---|---|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|-----|---|---|-------|
| V | I | C   | A | R | I | V | S | F | I | L  | I | I | D   | E | I | TOTAL |
| 5 | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 50 | 1 | 1 | 500 | 0 | 1 | 666   |

#### 4.8.7 Veracity tension accuracy of *Vicarivs Filii Dei*

The tension to find *Vicarius Filii Dei* outside the *Donation of Constantine* or in later affirmation of any papal mitra has been a complex one. The fact that the *Donation of Constantine* document was a forgery attaches a dubious credibility to this particular ghematric postulate (Fried 2007:1, 3, 4, 15-18, 22-28, 30-40, 108, 115, 116). The shortest evidence for this is the well-known term *Vicarius Cristi* (Froom 1948a:607). Pope titles became increasingly common after the French Revolution (Froom 1948a:607-608). Froom does not quote any official Roman Catholic document beyond *Antichristus Romanus*, where the title is applied. However, some other research ([www.biblelight.net/666.htm#official](http://www.biblelight.net/666.htm#official)) adds to this

discussion more earlier dated material to explore on the antiquity of *Vicarius Filii Dei* existence.

Wilks (2008:2) mentions Agostino Trionfo (1243-1328), a fourteenth century Canon Lawyer who applies *Vicarius Filii Dei* to the Pope. The same *Vicarius Filii Dei* is the phrase supported by Leland Saak (<http://www.hol.com/~mikesch/666.htm>). Another discussion in the search for a document to authenticate *Vicarius Filii Dei* under the  $\chi\xi\xi$  ghematric possibility is that by Correia ([www.biblelight.net/666.htm#offical](http://www.biblelight.net/666.htm#offical)).

One interesting archaeological finding during the nineteenth century was the discovery of the *Oxyrhynchus papyri* or  $p^{115}$  in southern Egypt. This unearthing of evidence lead to a turnabout from the traditional occurrence ghematric interpretation for the  $\chi\xi\xi$  number writing.

## 4.9 THE $\chi\iota\xi$ IN THE OXYRHYNCHUS MANUSCRIPT

### 4.9.1 $p^{115}$

The place where this papyrus was found is  $O\xi\upsilon\rho\rho\upsilon\gamma\xi o\xi$ , which means sharp-snouted or sharp-nosed fish. It seems that this particular fish was linked to Egyptian mythology ([www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/)). The Greek settlers after Alexander's conquest adopted Egypt's sacred animals alongside their own gods. The descendants of these settlers ran Egypt for a thousand years, right down to the Arab conquest. In their towns they spoke, wrote, and read Greek; worshipped their fish; and learned their Homer.

Below, in the next page, there is a bronze sitatnette of the *oxyrhynchus* fish from which the locality that bears its name and from where the  $\chi\iota\xi$  was found.



Bronze statuette of the fish ὀξύρρονυχος at the Ägyptisches Museum in Berlin

(www.nationalgeographic.com)

Classical Greek and Roman literature is being read for the first time in 2 000 years thanks to new technology especially for illegible texts of the ancient world. The new technique consists in using multi-spectral imaging.

This new technique was used to work with the findings of two Oxford scholars, Grenfell and Hunt, who in 1890 found a lot of information about the rise of Christianity during the Roman period with their discovery of a collection of papyri, known as *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, which they found in an ancient garbage dump in Egypt. These papyri contain writings of Homer, Sophocles, and Euripides. They say Christians started out as a small social phenomenon, and then took over everything.

Obbink (in Owen 2005:1-2), a lecturer in papyrology and Greek literature at Oxford and research director of this technology study, says the digital imaging process was first developed for researchers who studied Roman texts buried during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in Italy in the first century. They exposed the documents to either ultraviolet or infrared range. The Oxyrhynchus papyri finding also presented p<sup>115</sup>, which to some estimate is the oldest Revelation fragment so far. In this papyrus the internal evidence for the ἀριθμός θηρίων is χις instead of χξς. Favoring χξς for Revelation 13:18, Irenaeus talks of 600 tens plus 6 units which indicates a fullness of apostasy (*Adv Haer* 5 30.3).

Kepler (1957:148) points to another method used by some Preterist interpreters which is to give to the letters in the Latin word *Neron* numerical equivalents which total  $\chi\xi\varsigma$  or  $\chi\iota\varsigma$  if the same name were given simply as *Nero*. According to Strand (in Holbrook 1992b:202), this ghematric point of view is not representative of mainstream Preterist tradition.

The p<sup>115</sup> found, according to Comfort and Barret (2001:664-677), covers various portions of Revelation, from Revelation 13:18 to 14:7, also including Revelation 15:1, 4-7. It also contains Revelation 2:1-3, 3-15, 27-29; 3:10-12; 5:8-9; 6:5-6; 8:3-8, 11-13; 9:1-5, 7-16, 18-21; 10:1-4 8-11; 11:1-5 8-15, 18-19; 12:1-5, 8-10, 12-17; 13:1-3; 16:1-16, 18; 14:1-3, 5-7, 10-11, 14-15, 18-20 and 15:1, 4-7. It has 12 codex fragments. Each sheet measures 15.5 cm x 23.5 cm with 33-36 lines. It is likely that the scribe used a codex that was already bound before he began his work, inasmuch as the width of the writing of the pages with binding to the right-hand side. (i.e., the odd-numbered pages, see Comfort & Barret 2001:664-677; Jay 2004:5-55). The possibility exists that if the particular papyri was bound first, there could be a scribe mistake on the proper number  $\epsilon\acute{\xi}\alpha\kappa\omicron\varsigma\iota\omicron\iota$   $\epsilon\acute{\xi}\eta\kappa\omicron\tau\alpha$   $\epsilon\acute{\xi}$  ( $\chi\xi\varsigma$ ) for Revelation 13:18, because of the handwriting angle of the copyist, or as we explain later as a possible unintentional actuary mistake.

According to Michael (2000:79-80) the veracity for  $\epsilon\acute{\xi}\alpha\kappa\omicron\varsigma\iota\omicron\iota$   $\epsilon\acute{\xi}\eta\kappa\omicron\tau\alpha$   $\epsilon\acute{\xi}$  is attested by A,  $\kappa$ , p<sup>47</sup> and Vulgate, among other manuscripts. Michael also cites Hoskier (1929:xi), who says that in order to have an impartial accuracy it is better to follow the manuscripts that are independent of church use and which contain the  $\chi\xi\varsigma$  number. To that end, Hoskier emphasizes that:

[t]he documents to which attention should particularly be directed are those which have a history independent of Church "use", and which owe their freedom from Ecclesiastical standardization to their transmission apart from the documents collected as our "New Testament." They are found in collections of treatises on mystical subjects and are listed under many numbers, and include no less than forty of our manuscripts, among which are 35, 36, 38, 58, 81, 122, 140, 143, 148, 152, 170, 174, 176, 200, 222, 233, 240, 251, all documents meriting attention."

(Hoskier 1929:xi, in Michael 2000:81)

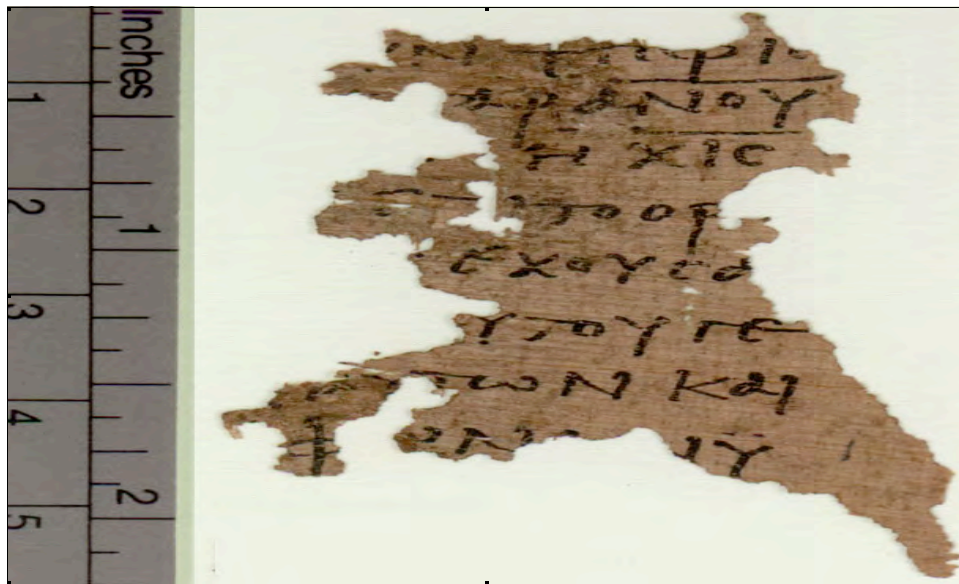


Michael (2000:82), citing Metzger (1975:749-750), who for his part refers to Tischendorf on the 616 instead of 666, refers to one possible intentional change on some manuscripts. In this regard Michale and Metzger say:

It should be mentioned that Metzger notes that according to Tischendorf's 8<sup>th</sup> ed., the number 616 was also read by two minuscule manuscripts which are no longer extant (nos. 5 and 11). Metzger himself is inclined to think that the change was intentional, seeing that the Greek form Neron Caesar written in Hebrew characters is equivalent to 666, whereas the Latin form Nero Caesar is equivalent to 616.

(Michale & Metzger 1975:749-750)

In the following photo, there is a photocopy of the p<sup>115</sup> found at Oxyrhynchus, showing the particular number  $\chi\iota\varsigma$  instead of the traditional  $\chi\zeta\varsigma$  in Revelation 13:18. This papyrus fragment is currently located at the Museum of Oxford.



Papyrus 115, with  $\chi\iota\varsigma$  at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

(www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Number\_of\_the\_Beast)

Irenaeus, referring to the  $\chi\zeta\varsigma$  issue, also cautioned that is better to wait for the fulfillment of the prophecy rather than to make conjectures because there are many manes that can play that number. Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer* 5.30.1) also comments that  $\chi\iota\varsigma$  was indeed a faulty number which “he is inclined to think”



happened as a slip on the part of copyists (*Anti Nicene Fathers*, in Holbrook 1992b:202, see also Metzger 1975:676).

After considering the complexities and limitations of ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοτα ἑξ and χξς in their different ghematric and manuscript scenarios, we now turn to the Historicist approach on the two beasts of Revelation 13 and their relation to the sealing of Revelation 7:1-3.

#### **4.10 HISTORICIST APPROACH ON τὸ χάραγμα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου**

##### **4.10.1 The first beast and its mark**

The presence of animals in seals, such as lions and bulls, could well represent, as Collon says, the most ancient emblems of two tribes (Collon 1987:853-858). Later in history, the symbolism of kingdoms through hybrid animals was also present in ANE motifs. One of those earliest animal motifs depicted is the winged beast. This hybrid animal is shown beside Marduk, patron god of Babylon (Langdon 1964:116, 117, 118, 227-282). This sealing hybrid symbolism was transposed later and attested in Scripture prophecy as part of the apocalyptic literature in the Old Testament, mainly in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, to depict world kingdoms (Jr 4; 50; Lm 4; Ezk 17; Dn 7; see also Langdon 1964:116,117, 227-282). This symbolical hybrid prophetic beast shape pattern is also found in Revelation (chap 13) and in some extra-biblical sources such as 2 Baruch 29:8 (in Charles 2004:378); 4 Ezra 12:10 (in Box 1912:250). In the Apocalypse of Abraham (13:4-9), commenting on Genesis 15:11, Azazel is shown as a bird of prey. Another extra biblical source where winged beasts are depicted is located in the Sybiline Oracles (1973: *Books I-VIII*. 9-55; IX-XIV. 52-78).

It must be remembered that the Historicist Protestant Reformation brought the insight that certain Bible passages (such as Dn 7:8, 25; 2 Th 2:1-8; Rv 13:1-18) portray not an individual, but an ecclesiastical *system*, long present in the church, namely the papacy (Maxwell, in Holbrook 1992b:41). There have been many

commentators since the fourteenth century CE. Some well-known Reformers included John Purvey (Wycliffe's associate), Andreas Osiander, Nikolas Von Amsdorf, Herinrich Bullinger, and Nikolas Ridley. Also included were other well-known scientists such as sir Isaac Newton, mathematicians such as the Scottish sir John Napier, John Cotton (the early American preacher) and Timothy Dwight (president of Yale; see Knight 2003:168).

According to Maxwell (in Holbrook 1992b:67), Seventh-day Adventists consider that no commentator prior to the rise of Adventism applied the mark of the beast to the Sabbath-Sunday issue. Because of this, Historicists look to the Roman Catholic writings and historic statements to justify and sustain that posture. On this topic, Tuberville (in 1649:58) presents two Roman Catholic declarations concerning the Sabbath-Sunday confrontation evolution with its posterior change. These historical statements are as follows:

*Q. How prove you that the Church hath power to command feasts and holidays?*

A. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her, -she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.

(Keenan 1876:174; Knight 2003:155)

*Q. Why did the Catholic Church substitute Sunday for Saturday?*

A. The Church substituted Sunday for Saturday, because Christ rose from the dead on a Sunday, and the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles on a Sunday.

*Q. By what authority did the Church substitute Sunday for Saturday?*

A. The Church substituted Sunday for Saturday by the plenitude of that divine power which Jesus Christ bestowed upon her.

(Geierman 1946:50; Knight 2003:155)

Speaking about the pope's power to modify and change the Decalogue, it is quoted: "The pope can modify divine law." (Petrus de Ancharano, in Ferraris 1772; Art Papa II).

Here is another interesting statement from the Council of Trent: "The Sabbath, the most glorious day in the law, has been changed into the Lord's day ... by the authority of the church" (Archbishop of Reggio, Council of Trent, in Mansi 1960-1961:529-530).

These Historicist conclusions must be discussed in the context of the Roman papacy and the posterior Constantine law favoring Sunday. Because Biblical Historicism believes that prophecy is unfulfilled history and, of course, that history, in some important and particular instances, when it refers to the *continuum*, history is fulfilled prophecy. One of the prophecies in historicism that links the Sabbath-Sunday controversy is found in Revelation 12:1-17. This prophecy narrative has been called the 1260 years. The next section focuses on a brief study on this vision and its implications, as a historical *continuum* preamble for Revelation 7:1-3.

#### **4.10.2 The 1 260 years of τῆς θαλάσσης θηρίων (τὸ θηρίον τὸ πρῶτον) in Revelation 13:1-10**

Historicist believes that prophecy is unfulfilled history and history is a *continuum*. On this respect the *continuum* is "evolving" up to the ἔσχατον, which is not isolated but including the message of sealing. The 1 260 years prophecy depending on Historicism is part of the *continuum* core of events. The background of this prophecy is a controversy between God and Satan, with the characteristic Semitic language tension past-future-past-present-past-future. Historicists talk about the 1 260 days/years in terms of a 360-day year (Nm 14:34; Ezk 4:6, Dn 7:25; Rv 11:2; 12:7; 13:1-5; Nichol & Cottrell 1985a:41-80). This principle is based on a symbol approach, not a literal year of 365 days. Even though the amount of days of each year was variable, the Jewish calendar was

corrected with the occasional addition of an extra month (Nichol & Cottrell 1980d:106-107). Historicists consider the beast of Daniel 7 and 8 and Revelation 13 and 17 as powers that have a crescendo in the religious conflict against God. Because of this, the beast of Revelation 13 and its hybrid indicate a paganistic-religious compromise. This sea-leopard hybrid beast denotes a gathering process of the pagan rites and the fight and rebellion of past prophecy kingdoms against God and His people (Dn 2:31-44; 7:3-25; 8:3-12). According to this approach, non-Biblical teachings, such as Sunday keeping, were introduced into the modern world through the Roman Catholic system. Historicism considers that the political function which was kicked into the process of this hybrid beast power had its starting point in the year 538 CE when the Catholic army of the Roman Empire commanded by Belisarius drove the fatally enfeebled Arian Ostrogoths away from Rome. These Ostrogoths were the last of three horns to fall according to the prophecy of Daniel 7:24 (Holbrook 1992b:76). The other two Arian powers that were plucked out earlier were the Herules and Vandals. Emperor Justinian, with his famous Decree of Justinian, called the bishop of Rome the head of all the holy churches and head of the holy priests of God. In an additional letter, he pronounced the bishop of Rome as heresy corrector (*Justinian Codex*, Book 1. Title 1, in Nichol & Cottrell 1985a:854). The end of the papal supremacy in terms of state and religious worldwide control in Historicism thought ended in 1798. Historicists apply Revelation 13:3 to the end of the 1260 years on February 15, 1798. The terms *μαχαίρη* and *ἀιχμαλωσίαν* from Revelation 13:10 imply military action (Holbrook 1992b:77). During the French Revolution, under orders from the revolutionary French government, general Alexander Berthier issued a proclamation in Rome on February 15, 1798, informing Pius VI and the people of Rome that the pope should no longer exercise any function (Adolphus 1803:365, cited in Holbrook 1992b:77). Aulard (1927:151, in Holbrook 1992b:77) explains that general Berthier was carrying out an order issued by the central French government. When the armies of France were enjoying victories in Italy in 1797, Napoleon received a communication from the Directory dated 13 *Pluviôse* of the year V, signed by *La Revellière-Lépeaux*, *Barras*, and *Reubell* saying that “the

Roman religion would always be an irreconcilable enemy of the Republic, it must be struck in France; but there is one thing more essential, to the attainment of the end desired, and that is to destroy, if possible, the centre of unity of the Roman Church; and it is for you [Napoleon] ... to realize this aim if you consider it practicable” (Aulard 1927:151). Historicists claim, even though the papacy had experienced other military defeats and even captivities during its long 1260 years of supremacy domain, the 1798 captivity was unique in at least two significant aspects: 1) It came at the climax of several centuries of decline in the influence of Catholicism in the minds of Europeans, and 2) it was not merely a military power or political coup, but a stroke deliberately intended to terminate the papacy forever. Spain was for long more loyal to the pope than Italy, but when the exiled Pius VI sought asylum in Spain, it was denied to him, except on such conditions as could not in reason be complied with (Duppá 1799:53). When the pope died in 1799 in France “half [of] Europe thought ... with the Pope the Papacy was dead” (Trevor 1997:441). According to McNeill, 1798 was set in a major transitional era which began with the French Revolution. The author indicates three major aspects: territorial expansion, industrialism and democratic revolution (McNeill 1963:730-762).

In order to unify the historical *continuum* in the prophecy connection between Daniel 7 and Revelation 12 and 13, we must explain the reasons why Historicists deny Antiochus Epiphanes IV as the little horn in Daniel 7:25 and 8:10-12. This next section discusses these adverse points toward the Preterist and futurist approaches on this Seleucid-Syrian king.

#### **4.10.3 Antiochus Epiphanes IV as the little horn**

Preterist and Futurist writers have considered Daniel 7:25 and 8:10-12 as being fulfilled not in Rome as Historicism teaches, but in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes IV who conducted military campaigns between 169-163 BCE in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine (Walvoord 1989:185, 264, 257-266; Wallace 1973:138; Russell 1981:3; Strauss 1969:244-245). He desecrated the Jewish

temple, offering swine sacrifices on the temple altar in 168 BCE. (1 Macc 1-6; 1 Macc 3:57; 4:29; 5:52; 6:15). He died in 163 BCE. The military conquests were temporary and local and he had to renounce them when the Romans sided with Ptolemy and, through Marco Popilio Laenas, a Roman legate sent by the Senate, commanded Antiochus to desist and abandon that territory (Smith 1977:126). The little horn must be opposing to the Prince of princes, an expression which denotes Jesus Christ (Dn 9:25; Ac 3:15; Rv 1:5). But Antiochus died 164 years before Christ was born (Smith 1977:126). Antiochus was simply the octave of the 26 Syrian kings that reigned in succession over that territory. He did not have the *continuum* prophetic cosmic power implicated in Daniel 8. He took the nickname of ἐπίφανες “illustrious,” but because of his vile folly and oddness, some called him mad and changed his name to ἐπίμανες “crazy” (Prideaux 1749:106-107). According to Newton (1922:222), a horn of a beast never is interpreted as being one person alone (with the exception of Jesus in Lk 1:69 καὶ ἤγειρεν κέρας σωτηρίας ἡμῖν....), but it is always representative of a new kingdom. However, the kingdom of Antiochus already existed. He did not represent a new kingdom.

Historicism suggests that in order for the sea/monster or hybrid beast of Revelation 13 to reach and achieve a worldwide power again with a χάραγμα obedience in all human population, there is another land/beast in Revelation 13 that will be helping it in one global dominion proposition favoring the sea/monster beast attempt. This is the purpose of the explanation in the following subdivision.

#### **4.10.4 The ἄλλο θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς γῆς in Revelation 13:11**

Historicists indicate that, even though the power of the beast was undermined and ceased in 1798, Revelation 13:3 points out that καὶ ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ἐθεραπεύθη καὶ ἐθαυμάσθη ὅλη ἡ γῆ ὅπισω τοῦ θηρίου. Technically, the wound of the beast in the Historicist's postulate means the sea/monster beast would no longer have a world religious dominion. But, this Recapitulist approach has the same power rising again with the help of another land/beast in the historical scenario that in the end process will help the first beast of Revelation

13 to re-obtain the same power it imposed during 1260 years of worldwide supremacy. This second beast in this Historicist narrative portrays the United States of America. Lickey (1952:550-552) indicates that this country was born shortly before 1798. There is also a difference between the ways in which both beasts rise up. The first comes out the sea (Rv 13:1). The second beast comes from the earth (Rv 13:11). However, the Greek in the verse shows that both beasts share some characteristics and the second beast collaborates to restore the power of the first one. The term ἀναβαῖνον, which is in the present, active, participle, neuter sing, accusative, could be indicating a process of growing. From this perspective the idea is similar to a plant growing process (Mt 13:7). The prophet watches the action in his gradual development (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:834). This kind of scenario sees a nation that grew up, not in the Old World, witnessed by multitudes, but in the New World, with their relative few inhabitants. Wesley, writing 22 years before the American Declaration of Independence, said about the land/two-horn beast: “He is not yet to come: though he cannot be far off. For he is to appear at the end of the forty months of the first beast” (Lickey 1952:550-551).

#### **4.10.5 The ἄλλο θηρίον ... εἶχεν κέρατα δύο ὅμοια ἀρνίῳ καὶ ἐλάλει ὡς δράκων (Rv 13:11)**

The attempts made in the Middle Ages to understand the κέρατα δύο ἀρνίον θηρίον were doomed to failure (Maxwell, in Holbrook 1992b:97). This beast has two horns that are like a lamb. Twenty-eight times in the Apocalypse (29 times in the RSV) lamb refers to Jesus Christ. Horns are a symbol of power and dominion. In Luke 1:69, when referring to Jesus and salvation kingdom, uses κέρας σωτηρίας. In terms of horns (Maxwell, in Holbrook 1992b:98) comments that many breeds of sheep have no horns on either the males (rams) or the females (ewes). However, the rams of the most common sheep in Biblical Palestine, like the broad-tailed sheep (*Ovis laticaudata*) did have horns, prominently curled ones. The main application for two horns in the Historicism



view is summarized in the separation of church and state in the Declaration of Independence issued on July 4, 1776. The statement reads:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.... Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

(First Amendment of the Bill of Rights [1791], in Holbrook 1992b:99)

The grandest achievement of the American Constitution was the creation with a friendly separation of church and state. The world has never seen such a thing. Every other nation since ancient times had taxed its people to support a state religion, and most had oppressed religious dissidents. The French Revolution, a little later than American Revolution, experimented with a hostile separation of church and state. In time, Marxist countries exceeded France's temporary example.

(Maxwell, in Holbrook 1992b:99)

This particular Historicism view point considers κέρατα δύο ὅμοια ἀρνίῳ...ἐλάλει ὡς δράκων in the sense that this kind of dragon's speech (Rv 12:9) is similar to τὸ θηρίον τὸ πρῶτον in Revelation 13:5-7 and to θηρίου (Dn 7:23-25; LXX). In this scenario, the dividing of imperial Rome into ten kingdoms in 476 CE (see the map in Shea 1996:135) made way for the rise of yet another power: the little horn in Daniel 7:25 is the Roman Church. The consideration juxtapositioned here is that the United States of America will become a Roman Catholic nation in terms of uniting church and state (Shea 1996:137-145).

According to White (1977:515-530), a national Sunday law will be promulgated, first in the United States of America with subsequent worldwide impact (White 1977:630, 502-503, 636, 650). The argument that the Bill of Rights is secured and unchanged is not consistent with this approach. Evans, who was Supreme Chief Justice in 1930, said that for practical purposes the Constitution is what the Supreme Court says it is (Kelly, Harbison & Beiz 1991:4, 142, 732-733). There have been cases in which the Bill of Rights was violated (Maxwell, in Holbrook 1992b:105-108). The most pathetic was during the Second World War when 70,000 Japanese Americans were suddenly placed in "relocation camps" under

orders issued by an army general at the request of the President and with the approval of Congress.

The following sections will analyse the growing tension of Sunday-keeping acceptance in the United States in the context of the wounded blow being healed in Revelation 13:3.

#### **4.10.6 Revelation 13:3 and ἄλλο θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς γῆς**

Napoleon intended that there would never be another pope. However, in 1801, he signed a church-state treaty or concordat with a new pope. Historicists saw this event as the beginning of the wounded-blow healing process. In 1870 the new emergence of Italy deepened the church's woes by taking away the Papal States. They constituted an independent country, which occupied 16 000 square miles in the center of the Italian peninsula, counted a population of 3 000 000, and had been owned by the papacy for centuries. In 1929, Benito Mussolini signed a concordat granting the pope full authority over the State of Vatican City, 108.7 acres inside the city of Rome, which included the St Peter's Cathedral (Maxwell, in Holbrook 1992b:109).

Historicists believe there has been a change in the attitude of the United States, a country which was mostly Protestant, toward the Roman Church. For example, in 1852, when Pope Pius IX sent a block of granite to be included in the Washington monument, then under construction, mass protest took place. So intense was American outrage that the masons did not dare hoist the stone into place. Two years later feelings were still running so high that irate Americans found where the stone lay in a storage shed, fitted a chain around it, and dragged it into the Potomac River (Stokes 1964:833). In 1951, when President Harry S Truman asked the Senate to approve his nomination of an ambassador to the State of Vatican City, America was plunged into a vortex of protest. Truman pointed out that hardly a Protestant church group in the country failed to express its opposition formally and often acrimoniously (Pfeffer 1989:302, in Holbrook 1992b:110). But 33 years later, in March 1984, the religious Senate panorama

changed in the United States of America when President Ronald Reagan's nomination of William A Wilson as ambassador to Vatican City was quickly approved and passed by the Senate 81 to 13. Only a few voices worried about church and state (Maxwell, in Holbrook 1992:110). Reid (2005:105-115) gives an explanation for this healing diplomatic relationship process between the United States and the Vatican. It is interesting that on this global and uniting process, Martin (in Scarone 2000:151), who wrote about the global philosophy of Roman Catholicism, distinguished between two groups of people (the approach Historicists recognized, that is to say two groups sealed either by: *θηρίον χάραγμα* and *θεοῦ σφραγίς*): globalists, the ones who accept a geo-religion, and the minimumlists, the ones that assumed an exclusion world (Martin 1992:286-287, in Scarone 2000:151). An amplifying explanation of the Roman Catholicism growth in this Historicist consideration of Revelation 13 and 17 is to be found in Scarone (2000:60-126).

In the Historicism approach, the Sunday-sealing political and religion enforcement observance is still in the future. In that future perspective, worship, in this Apocalypse school of interpretation, is dependent on loyalty and obedience (Ex 20:1-5; 8-11; Mt 4:9-11; Ac 5:32; Rv 12:17). Therefore, this context sees Paul's expressions such as *ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας; ἀποδεικνύοντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἔστιν θεός, τὸ γὰρ μυστήριον ἧδὼν ἐνεργεῖται τῆς ἀνομίας* (2 Th 2: 3, 4, 7; in the NKJV *ἀνομίας* = lawlessness) as a continuum development against God's kingdom and His people throughout history that culminates with a worldwide apostasy prior to the Coming of Christ. Historicism sees Sunday observance as a submission to beast power and an extension of the dragon (Rv 13:4). The external reason that would cause deployment and impose such a law in the future remains a guess. The clue lies under some possible future combined world threat factors in the near future, climaxing first in the United States and then throughout the rest of the world: economic issues in terms of collapse, devastating climatic changes, major natural calamities and disasters (White 1977:648).

Although God's people through the ages have been sealed (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 4:30), He has had special seals for special crises. For example, the blood on the doorposts of the Israelite homes at the time of the Exodus was, in a sense, a special sealing. In a similar way, the angel from the sun rising in Revelation 7:1 seals the servants of God to prepare them for the greatest tribulation in world history. It must be recognized here that the sealing is happening now and also during the end-time crisis. The eschatological seal is a special protection for God's children during the final crisis. The mark-sealing controversy in the last days has to do with a conflict between the powers of Christ and the antichrist (Paulien, in Holbrook 1992a:259).

The next section contains the concluding methodological steps of this study. It includes an exegesis for Revelation 7:1-3 and a hypothesis which introduces the holistic meaning of the sealing.

## **4.11 REVELATION 7: 1-3: EXEGESIS AND THE HOLISTIC SABBATH**

### **4.11.1 Exegetical guidance for Revelation 7:1-3**

In order to study Historicism through exegesis as a tool, various points to guide its hermeneutics must be considered. Some of these guidance points have been referred to in this Chapter. The exegesis to follow will continue to use these and other Historicist tools in order to assist the development of hermeneutics in Revelation 7:1-3. These guidance points are as follows:

- The apocalyptic text of Revelation is full of symbols, mostly hybrid beasts;
- Most of these beasts come out of the sea;
- The same periods of time are presented in different numeric formulas;
- The use of symbolic numbers;
- A cosmic controversy between good and evil;
- A constant participation of angels;

- A prophetic structure that has a relationship with the book of Daniel;
- The Apocalyptic prophecies are based in Old Testament narratives (e g, Ex 12:7, 12-13 and Ezk I 9:1-4 that correspond with Rv 7:1-3);
- The final establishment of Christ's kingdom;
- There is a *continuum* correlation to the "micro apocalypses" found in the New Testament (Mt 24:4-44; Lk 21:7-36; Mk 13:1-37; 2 Th 2:1-8; 2 Tm 3:1-5; 2 Pt 3:1-14); and
- The apocalyptic symbols must be interpreted in the context of Scripture.

These eleven Historicist guidelines will be used in the remaining sections of this Chapter.

#### **4.11.2 The theological concept of Revelation in the New Testament**

In Vila & Esquain (1985:64) the characteristic theme of Revelation is the public government of God in how he confronts evil and the manifestation of righteousness. Historicists view the purpose of the Apocalypse as an outline of human history and of church and the fight between good and evil until the time of the end. In this historicist scenario, the book's purpose is to keep alive the hope and love the central message of the book, which is the promise of Lord's coming and his victory against evil (Vila & Esquain 1985:65).

Apocalypse scholars from the seventeen and eighteen century such as Edward Bickersteth (1786-1850) considered Joseph Mede (1586-1638), a pre-millennialist is considered the Father of modern prophetic interpretation. He is known for his interpretation works in Revelation (Jue 2006: 77-171; Clark 1968:16).

The constant symbology in this book is an evidence for some authors that Revelation paralleled those symbols to Old Testament narrative. Lestringrant (1942:148) for example, suggests that one seventh of the substance of the Apocalypse it is drawn from the OT. Mulholland (1959b:376-379) enumerates

thirty two symbolical descriptions from Revelation that are also found in almost any OT books, including the book of Ezekiel. Boxall (2006:255) finds eighteen symbol correspondences in Revelation extracted from Ezekiel including Revelation 7:1-2 [Ezk 7:2-3] and chapters 7-8 [Ezk 9-10]. The influence of the book of Ezekiel on Revelation is indisputable. It can be detected most obviously in the many allusions to virtually in every chapter of Revelation (Boxall 2006:147).<sup>4</sup> Kowalski (2004:11-400) points also an extraordinary and comprehensive explanation for the structure's similarity between the two books in terms of exile, Patmos, desert, the Jerusalem temple, kingdoms, periods, symbols etc.

There are other authors, as de Villiers (2009:17-39) and Rowland (1996:409) that includes a mystical natural Christophany presence in Revelation, especially in Chapters 1-3. Rowland (in de Villiers 2009:17-39) regarded apocalyptic as the knowledge of divine mystery through Revelation is deeply indebted for him. Depending on Rowland, apocalyptic mysticism is decisively determined by the person and life of Christ who reveals the divine secrets.

Historicists see in the Old Testament passages a connection in the sense that there is a *continuum* prophetic chain throughout the Bible. They justify this *continuum* connection aspect saying Bible prophets were inspired by the same Spirit (1 Cor 14:32; 2 Pt 1:19-21; Rv 22:8,9,10,17), therefore this unity reflects also a *continuum* in the prophetic message. In order to elaborate an exegesis on Revelation 7:1-3 it is necessary to remember the various usages in which the word revelation is discussed in the New Testament. Richards (1985:530-531) observes there is a two group of words related to Revelation: ἀποκαλύπτω and ἀποκάλυψις. The first group is constructed on a stem that suggests “bringing to light” or “making manifest.” The words for this group are φανερώ (“to reveal,”

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<sup>4</sup> The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the *UBS Gk New Testament* for example, lists no less than eighty-four allusions and verbal parallels to Ezekiel in the Apocalypse spread on every chapter except 12-13 (B Aland K Aland, Karavidopoulos, Martini & Metzger 1983:857-862; see also Vanhoye 1962:436-476).

“show,” “make known”); ἐπιφαίνω (“to show” or “appear”); ἐπιφάνεια (“an appearance” or “revelation”); and φανέρωσις (“a disclosure” or “revelation”). In Gk culture this words had an ordinary meaning but also the religious of intervention by, or the personal appearance of a deity (Lk 2:26; Jn 1:31; 2:11; 17:6; Rm 10:20; 16:26; 1 Cor 4:10-11; 2 Tm 1:10; 1 Pt 1:7,13; 4:13; Rv 1:1). The second word group is more significant, for it provides us with the noun ἀποκάλυψις that is nearly always used with theological significance. As a verb (Mt 10:26; 11:25,27; 16:17; Lk 2:35; 10:21,22; 12:2; 17:30; Jn 12:38; Rm 1:17,18; 8:18; 1 Cor 2:10; 3:13; 14:30; Gl 1:16; 3:23; Eph 3:5; Phlp 3:15; 2 Th 2:3, 6, 8; 1 Pt 1:5, 12; 5:1); as a noun (Lk 2:32; Rm 2:5; 8:19; 16:25; 1 Cor 1:7; 14:6, 26; 2 Cor 12:1, 7; Gl 1:12; 2:2; Eph 1:7; 3:3; 2 Th 1:7; 1 Pt 1:7, 13, 14; 4:13; Rv 1:1). For Richards (1985:530,531) ἀποκάλυψις and ἀποκαλύπτω had little religious neutral words and infuse them with distinctive meaning. Five concepts of revelation appear in the NT: four in the Epistles and one in the Gospels. First, revelation is a future, visible unveiling at history’s end (Rm 2:5; 8:18,19; 1 Cor 2:7; 3:13; 2 Th 1:7; 1 Pt 1:5, 7, 13; 4:13 5:1; Rv 1:1). Second, revelation is our current knowledge in Christ of God’s plans, previously hidden even to Old Testament people (Rm 1:17,18; 16:26; 1 Cor 2:10; 14:6; Gl 1:12; 3:23; Eph 3:3, 5). Third, the term is applied to Jesus as an expression of himself through of a believer (Gl 1:16). Fourth, revelation is the Holy Spirit’s work of shaping the believer’s understanding and attitudes to bring them into harmony with the truth (Eph 1:17). Fourth, revelation is applied in the sense that Jesus reveals the Father in a sense of inner enlightening (Mt 11:27; 16:17; Lk 10:22). It is good to maintain the concept that Revelation preserves a great sense of Christology (Rv 1:8, 12-20; 22:13; Carson et al 2008:643). This Christological sense is not in an isolated sphere but it is related to all historical events, including creation and Sabbath.

#### **4.11.3 The interlude of Revelation 7 in the exegesis**

With regards to Revelation 7, some authors esteem the interlude and parenthetical system present in Revelation 7. Thomas and Barker (1992:463) points out that “Rev 7 is an interlude between the sixth and seventh seals.”



According to him, this is proven by the change in tone from the subject matter of the sixth seal and by the delay until Revelation 8:1 in the opening of the seventh seal. Moffat (1961:394) remarks, that “the description is provided to answer the question of 6:17 by way of showing that some will survive and even prosper spiritually under the blessing of God during earth’s terror.” To introduce the scenario of Revelation 7:1-3, Stefanovic (2002:253) also suggests that the “scene of Rev 7 is inserted parenthetically between the opening of the sixth seal and that of the seventh.” The conclusion of the sixth seal brings us to the final events of earth’s history which lead up to the second coming of Christ.

It is appropriate to cite here, before this exegetical study, that apocalyptic historicism must consider the original time, place, and circumstances in which the prophet received the vision in order to have a proper historical-grammatical contextual understanding. The apocalyptic study does not fulfill its purpose unless a Christ-centered study is pursued. In this regard Paulien says:

God speaks to prophets in the context of their own time, place, and circumstances. He communicates in language they can understand and appreciate, even when He employs apocalyptic terms. It is imperative that we seek to understand them in terms of the original time, place, language, and circumstances, as well as the content of the whole Scripture. Thus God’s meaning for today will not contradict the message that He placed in the vision in the first place. The purpose of apocalyptic visions is not simply to satisfy human curiosity about the future.... They are a message about divine character and workings. God is not only communicating something about the future course of history—He is revealing Himself as the one who is in control of that history. To study apocalyptic only as a key to unlock details of the future is to miss its message about a Deity who seeks to be known by His people. From a Christian perspective, apocalyptic is never rightly understood unless its central focus is on the “son of man” Jesus Christ.

(Paulien 2008: 214)

According to historicists, the sealing in Revelation 7:1-3 is anticipated by the events that unfold after the death and enthronization of the Lamb (Rv 5:1-14). This sealing imagery echoes the common ancient practice where in order to prevent tampering with or the unwanted reading of scrolls, scrolls were often

sealed with clay impressed with the owner's mark. John may have in mind Roman wills which were sometimes witnessed (and sealed) by seven witnesses and put into effect only upon the death of the testator. It is also possible, however, that the number seven ("seven seals," Rv 5:1) in his context may simply have allowed for a dramatic unfolding of events as historicists recall (Rv 6:1-17; Smith 1944:85-107; Nichols & Cottrell 1990b:790-796; see also NIV, Archaeological Bible Notes 2005:2053).

From this perspective, the exegesis shall now be divided into verses for its study.

## **4.12 REVELATION 7:1**

### **4.12.1 Μετά τοῦτο**

According to Charles (1920:191) the three precedent chapters of Revelation reflect a continuous movement. The seer had a progressive vision. But Revelation 7 is parenthetical. Charles (1920:106), referring to the clause of Revelation 4:1, *μετά ταῦτα εἶδον καὶ ἰδοῦ*, explains that this phrase, with or without the *καὶ ἰδοῦ* (Rv 7:1 *τοῦτο*), always introduces a new and important vision in the Apocalypse. The same note of emphasis and unexpectedness is also conveyed by the clause *καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοῦ* (P 6:2, 5, 8; 14:1, 14), or by *καὶ εἶδον καὶ ἤκουσα* (Rv 8:3). Lockyer (1982:97) also calls this section "a parenthesis of grace." Smalley (2005:178) explains the *μετά τοῦτο εἶδον* as an interval in the unfolding process of salvation history, completed by the breaking of the seventh seal in Revelation 8:1. A cosmic disaster has been unleashed by the opening of the sixth seal. Smalley, citing Aune, talks about a stylistic modification, "since John uses the neuter singular of the demonstrative pronoun *τοῦτο* (this) rather than *ὧς*, elsewhere in the Apocalypse, the plural form is introduced *ταῦτα* (these things)". In Revelation 7, Smalley (2005:178) continues: "as so often in the drama of the Apocalypse, heaven and earth are intersected." This parenthetical interval does not identify the elapsed time between the two visions (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b: 782). In the Historicist approach, each of the six seals of the previous vision (Rv 6:1-17) that have been unsealed and unfolded have shown a different

phase of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, and each of those seals helps to demonstrate the justice and the righteousness of God before the universe that observes (Rv 5:13). Now, there is a pause in the work of opening the seal because there is one question that must be answered. The dramatic question is “who is able to stand?” (Rv 6:17). This solemn question comes because of the terrible descriptions of the events that precede Christ’s second coming (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:796). Revelation 7 interrupts the sequence of the seals with the purpose of giving a proper answer to this question (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:796).

#### **4.12.2 εἶδον (ὁράω, εἶδεν)**

Aune (1998a:439) finds in Revelation 7:1-8 nine aorist verbs interrupted only by the present subjunctive πνέη “might blow” in the ἵνα clause in verse one. Aune (1998a:439) adds that Revelation 7:1-8 is affirming the indissoluble connection between Israel and the church. Smalley (2005:178) opines that the view of the church is included in the term εἶδον. Smalley insists this view presents God and the Lamb (7:9-12; 15-17). The term εἶδον refers to what is visible (in a man or object; Kittel 1967a:316). In the New Testament revelations by dreams are not very frequent. The term φαίνεσθαι, which is applied to Joseph’s circumstances (Mt 2:12, 13, 22; 27:19), is used mostly to give him instructions. These are not true dreams of visual kind but a variation of revelation by word (Kittel 1967a:350). Angelophanies are much more frequent instead (Kittel 1967a:351). That is the typical vision in Revelation (Rv 5:2, 11; 7:1, 2, 11; 8:2; 10:1; 15:6; 15:1,6; 16:5; 18:1, 21; 19:17; 20:1; 22:8). For Nichol, John uses this expression when he introduces new scenes and important new symbols (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:782-783). This vocable is described in Revelation 1:2 parsed with ὅσα, a pronoun correlative, neuter, plural, accusative. Εἶδεν, a third, singular, aorist, active, indicative to form what the NKJV translates as “and to all things that he saw.” Depending on Nichols and Cottrell (1990b:747), vocables that signify communication and visual perception, appear 73 times in Apocalypse, and words that denote communication and auditory perception, 38 times. Kittel (1967a:370,

371, 372) associates εἶδον with ὄπτασία, ὄραμα and ὄρασις. ὄπτασία, is a vision (Lk 1:22 where is an angelophanic “visionary appearance”; Ac 26:19; where the appearance outside Damascus is called οὐράνιος ὄπτασία; 2 Cor 12:1). The term is a noun deriving from ὀπτάνομαι or ὀπτάζομαι. It occurs six times in the LXX. Except for Daniel where it means vision, the rest of occurrences is “appearing.” The word ὄραμα is “that which is to be seen.” There are thirty-three instances on the LXX, seven in Isaiah and twenty-five in Daniel. In the N.T. ὄραμα (always singular) occurs outside Acts only in Matthew 17:9. Here the verb is in the participle. In the pos-apostolic fathers the τὰς ἀποσκαλύψεις καὶ τὰ ὀράματα of Herm. v. , 4, 1, 3 reminds of 2 Corinthians 12:1 (Kittel 1967a: 371-372). The term ὄρασις (Kittel 1967a:370-371, which is syno. To ὄψις the same sense of “seeing,” “sight,” “eyes.” In the LXX ὄρασις is used 110 times (38 in Ezekiel and 18 in Daniel). In the New Testament, the word is used twice in the sense of “appearance.” In Revelation 4:3 (cf. Ezk 1:27), and also in the sense of “vision” in Revelation 9:17 (cf. Dn 9:21Θ; 8:1 LXX) and Acts 2:17 (Jl 2:28 LXX). In the post-apostolic fathers ὄρασις means “eyesight” in 2 Cl., 1.6 (transf), “sight,” “spectacle.” In 2 Cl., 6, 6; 17, 5, also “vision” 13 times in Herm. v., 2-4 (Kittel 1967a:371).

#### **4.12.3 τέσσαρας ἀγγέλους (ἀρχάγγελος, ἰσάγγελος)**

This term means one who brings a message, a messenger. In the Bible messengers are presented as created beings with individuality and personal identity that exist in a spiritual dimension that touches, but not the same as our material universe (Richards 1985:43). They cover various types of work like defending God’s children (Gn 19:10-22; 2 Ki 6:13-9; Ac 5:19; 27:23). They also communicate messages and help others to understand God’s purpose (Dn 8:16; 9: 21, 22; Mt 1:20; Lk 2:9; Ac 7:53; Rv 1:1). They collaborate in men’s salvation (Ac 8:26; Heb 1:14; Rv 7:1; 22:16). According to cosmology, probably derived from Babylonians, the earth was considered to be a square, with an angelic watcher of each of the four winds stationed at each corner (Gaebelien 1982: 417). Mounce (1998:179) comments that the term γωνίας (corners) is present in

Job 11:12 and 37:3. The LXX speaks of four τέσσαρας ἀνέμους (four winds) and four τεσσάρων ἄκρων (four extremes or points) of the earth (Jr 25:16; Ezk 7:2 defines πτέρυγας -corners-). The New Jerusalem is described with the term τετράγωνος (Rv 21:16). It is useful, then, to consider a symbolic number of universality and creation that includes the whole earth (Jr 49:36; Mt 24:31). The angels of the winds are mentioned as the angel that has power over fire (Rv 14:18), and the angel of the waters (Rv 16:5; see Mounce 1998:179). The only term for ἰσάγγελος in the New Testament, where ἰσάγγελος takes place, is in Luke 20:36 (Kittel 1964c:74, 84-86, 87). The term ἀρχάγγελος, on the other hand, is found in different books (Jos 5:14; Dn 10:13; 12:1). In the New Testament that same term is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Jude 9. The first reference to seven special angels is found in Ezekiel 9:2. Later in the New Testament the phrase ἐπὶ ἄγγελοις is found in Revelation 8:2, 6 and 16:1. Another exegetical question is posed in Revelation 1:20, where the phrase reads οἱ ἐπὶ ἀστέρες ἄγγελοι τῶν ἐπὶ ἐκκλησιῶν. In Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18 and 3:1, 7, 14 the phrase is τῷ ἄγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν (place) ἐκκλησίας γράψον. (Kittel 1964c:87). Kittel (1964c:86) remarks that the only explanations which demand serious consideration are those which have a reference to bishops.

The Bible uses ἄγγελος for human beings (Mt 11:10; Mk 1:2; Lk 7:24, 27; 9:52; 2 Cor 12:7). In the time of John, the term was used for the πρεσβύτερος (the local church elder). With the possible exception of the angels of the seven churches, the word ἄγγελος, which appears 75 times in Revelation, John use it in a literal sense (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:757). Aune (1998a:434-435) refers to an angelic speech in Revelation that exhibits the following action present also in Revelation 7:2-3:

- Introductory phrase: καὶ εἶδον (Rv 7:2; 10:1; 14:6; 18:1; 19:17).
- Object of vision: ἄλλον ἄγγελον (Rv 7:2; 10:1; 14:6, 8, 9; 18:1; 19:17).
- Movement of the angel: ascend, descend, fly, emerge, follow; to the center of the action (Rv 7:2; 10:1; 14:6, 8, 9, 15; 18:1; 19:17).

- A statement that the angel cries with a loud voice (Rv 7:2; 10:3; 14:7, 9, 15; 18:2; 19:17).
- A brief statement uttered by the angel (Rv 7:3; 14:7,8, 11, 15, 18; 18:2, 3; 19:17-18 and Rv 10:3 (What he says is not mentioned; only that he cried with a loud voice as a lion roars)

#### 4.12.4 ἐστῶτας ἐπὶ τὰς τέσσαρας γωνίας τῆς γῆς

Various authors are of the opinion that a new scenario is introduced in Revelation 7:1. Smalley (2005:178) says that a change of subject is indicated and a new text unit is introduced. Gaebelien (1982:397-608) and Stefanovic (2002:254) mention that the phrase was used in the ANE, much as westerns use the four points of the compass to describe a globally significant event. Thus Isaiah speaks of gathering the outcasts of Israel and of those dispersed from Judah from the four corners of the earth (Is 11:12). Ezekiel envisioned the end coming from the four corners of the earth (Ezk 7:2). Smalley (2005:175) refers to an interval in which the church is protected in Revelation 7:1-3. He says that instead of τέσσαρας being read by the major witnesses as three appearances of the number Revelation 7:1, the variant τέσσαρες is attested by A. The accusative ending ες is likely to be an earlier form used in Doric dialects. "Four" in Greek is the only cardinal number with a separate firmly accusative case (Smalley 2005:181). Four is also a number related to universality (Rv 4:6, 8; 6:1; 7:4; 9:13-14; 20:8), and is associated in Revelation 7:1-3 with devastation (Rv 7:2-3); hunger, thirst, and scorching heat (Rv 7:16); drought and sorrow (Rv 7:17); and conflagration (Rv 8:17; Smalley 2005:210). Another vocable to analyse in this exegetic section of 7:1 is the word γῆ. It is also used in relation with the redemptive work of Christ and the erroneous Persian mythological concept of dualism. Kittel (1964a:679-680), The vocable γῆ -the Land as a dwelling place of man can be explained in a geographical way but also to the Creation that groans for Redemption. The vocable γῆς is related also to the mythological sense of Christ descending to Hades. Christ is the Redeemer because He is not ἐκ τῆς γῆς but ἄνωθεν, ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (Jn 3:31), not ἐκ γῆς but ἐξ οὐρανοῦ (1 Cor 15:47). He is ὁ καταβάς who



has come down from heaven εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς (Eph 4:9) and who has ascended far above, lifted up ἐκ τῆς γῆς (Jn 12:32). Kittel (1964a:680) says that at this point, the NT conception and terminology are apparently influenced by an oriental myth, based on Persian dualism, of the redeemer who descends from the upper world to the depths of the world of darkness. But the ambiguity of τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς (Eph 4:9) which can mean either “the lowest parts of the earth,” i.e., “the underworld,” or (γῆς as gen. epexeget.) “the spheres of the deep, namely, the earth,” means that καταβαίνειν might refer either to the descent into Hades or to the incarnation in the sense of Philippians 2:7. We thus see the difficulty of applying the terminology of this dualistic redeemer myth to the biblical Christian faith (Kittel 1964a:680). This previous insight from Kittel provides a reference of the work of Christ, which is intending to reach humanity....ἡγάγησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν.... (Jn 3:16). The redemptive description is also hidden in the sentence ἐστῶτας ἐπὶ τὰς τέσσαρας γωνίας τῆς γῆς (7:1). This redemptive ministry from Jesus in the γῆ is viewed by John. The angelic forces are ministering and κρατοῦντας τοὺς τέσσαρας ἀνέμους τῆς γῆς ἵνα μὴ πνέῃ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς...(7:1). Angels are commissioned to protect and to minister for those who will inherit salvation (Heb 1:14). Horn (1995:1205) explains ἄνεμος in the context of its effect on the inhabitants of Bible lands. It could signify the heat torture, drought and sand storms (Gn 41:6; Is. 21:1; Jr 4:11; Hs 13:5; Lc 12:55 etc). For Historicists, ἄνεμος in apocalyptic context means beyond the four cardinal points of earth (Dn 8:8; Mk 13:27). They do represent destruction produced by wars (Jr 18:17); uncertainty of life (Job 7:7; Ps 78:39); the inexorable judgments that come upon wicked (Job 21:18; Spr 10:25). In the figurative sense means the vanity of things (Jr 5:13). Horn (1995:1206) uses the wind as a symbol of God’s power. Some of those comparative applications are: the interpersonal and visible intervention of God in human matters (Is 66:15); the manifestation of the Holy Spirit (Ac 2:2); the work of the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:8). Besides the previous symbolism, Revelation offers more of that realm when it comes to the ecological aspect 7:1, namely the terms γῆς, ἄνεμος, θαλάσσης and δένδρον. They are part of the natural complexity that



will have an effect on the planet's deterioration, including human activity (Rv 11:18). The vocable γῆ is a generic term that involves Nature. The double emphatic of διαφέρω, [διαφθεῖραι, an aorist, active, infinitive] and [διαφθείροντας, participle, present, active, plural accusative] could be suggesting a continuous human attitude that will reach eventually mammoth and uncontrollable proportions. The term involves various meanings: "ruin," "pass," "decay," "destroy" and, "depraved" (1 Tm 6:5). The term Θάλασσα is part on this ecologic discussion in Revelation 7:1-3. In Acts 27:5 the term is circumscribed to πέλαγος (depth or sea). In the apocalyptic symbology θάλασσα is attached to τὰ ὕδατα from 17:15. This πόρνη called Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη, ἡ μήτηρ τῶν πορνῶν καὶ τῶν βδελυγμάτων τῆς γῆς. She is seated on many waters and the word βδελυγμάτων implies her spiritual behavior and attitude toward religion (17:5, 15). Walvoord (1971:20-252) views the term βδέλυγμα from LXX (in Dn 11:31; 12:11) through a Preterist lense, depicting in Daniel 11:31 to Antiochu's intrigues, through which he robbed the richest places under his control (Syria and Egypt). For Stefanovic (2007:426-427) "the literalist application of this passage is not limited to the time prior to the first coming of Christ. In Matthew 24:15, Christ linked this type of desecration with to the beginning of the great tribulation at the end of times." The same Stefanovic (2007:444-445) suggests Historicists propose Daniel 12:11 as an expression to the history of the church which stretches between 508 and 1798 C.E.<sup>5</sup> Commenting Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 with Mathew 24:15 and Mark 13:14; is possible to consider a *continuum* historical-parallel indication of a global religious conflict at the end of the time. Historicists points Daniel 11:21 and 12:11 as an inclusion of the Roman Catholic system persecuting the people of God during 1 260 years. In Matthew 24:15, at the same time, Historicists see the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. but also find a *continuum* parallel which

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<sup>5</sup> Prophetic Historicism (in Nichol & Cottrell 1985a:904) understands Daniel 11:11 as forming part of 1 260 years which begins in 538 C.E. and ends in 1 798, with the exception that 1 290 years got started not in 538 C.E. but in 508 C.E., with Clodoveus (king of the Franks) and his conversion to Catholicism. His victory over the Godos signified an important step in the establishment of Roman Catholic supremacy. Examining Daniel 12:12, Historicism say the 1 335 period ending not in 1798 but in 1843, an important date in relation with the great Adventist Millerite awakening in North America (see Clark 1968:15-83).

illustrates end time issues (Nidhol & Cottrell 1985a:898-899; White 1977:19-43). The crescendo of τὰ ὕδατα is first anticipated by the literal Babylon that had the literal Euphrates (jr 50:12, 38) controlling the ancient world from 605 to 538 B.C.E., but by the time of Pliny a new Empire seized the world. This author speaks (Pliny1960:291-297) that Babylon was part of the grain of Rome. It produced a vast and rich abundance of food supplies for the Empire. Historicists based in Jeremiah 50:12, 38 (in Nichol & Cottrell 1985a:556-557) comment the destruction of Babylon that dwelt among many waters and that it will be converted in a vast amount of ruins covered by the desert (Is 13:19). The reference of Babylon in Chapter 17 of Revelation depicts now, nor a geographical limited prophecy scenario but a worldwide power, coming out from the sea (13:1-2; 17:3,15) and a πόρνη....γυναῖκα καθημένην ἐπὶ θηρίον κόκκινον....(17:3) governing the waters of the earth (Is 8:7-8: 14:6; Jr 51:12-13; 14:6). The flexure of the verb καθημένης (a present middle, participle, singular, feminine, genitive) shows to τῆς πόρνης τῆς μεγάλης (17:1) exerting its power in a continued form (Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:863). For prophetic Historicism this is an emphatic resurgence of this power in the last days. The εἶδον in which John is involved describes the destruction of the environment and the judgment for this wicked and destructive behavior. The angel is uttering a judgment because of the irresponsibility of human beings, which has resulted in worldwide contamination. Keys (2001:1-4, in [www.findarticles.com](http://www.findarticles.com)) states that just as the people of this postmodern world are precocious polluters, so were also the Romans. Scientists analyzing copper isotopes and trace metals present in Roman copper coins have determined that Rio Tinto, Spain, Cyprus, and to a lesser extent Tuscany, Sicily, Britain, France, Germany, and other parts of Europe and the Middle East, were sources of copper for the Empire. The Romans in their heyday produced nearly 17 000 tons of copper annually, more than would be produced again until the Industrial Revolution in Europe (Keys 2003:1-4, in [www.findarticles.com](http://www.findarticles.com)). In fact, the copper and brass contamination found in ancient Rome is still haunting the world today. One former Roman copper mine and smelting site in Wadi Faynan, Jordan, is still, after ceasing operations 2 000 years ago, a toxic wasteland

littered with slag from copper smelting. Researchers have discovered that vegetation and livestock in Wadi Faynan today have high copper levels in their tissue (Monastersky 1996:1-4, in [www.findarticles.com](http://www.findarticles.com)). Rome also contributed to the endangerment of animal species when they sacrificed an innumerable amount of animals in their games. *Naumakias* and *venatios* in ancient Rome, for example, consumed a lot of animal lives during Roman festivities. During one single occasion of 117 days of Trajan's game in 108 CE 10 000 gladiators fought and 11 000 animals were killed (Carcopino 1940:201-210). In terms of ecological deterioration Chew (2001:92-95), citing Revelation 11:18, explains that the ancient Romans deforested with no scruples for 400 years. They continued the smelting of silver in Iberia to meet the growth of Rome and 500 000 000 trees were cut (Perlin 1989:125). The Roman legions also were constantly deforesting. During the empire period a legion had 6 000 soldiers. They deforested when camping, marching, and seizing cities. When Caesar was fighting the Gauls he sent orders to cut down an immense forest to prevent sneak attacks. Morocco lost 12.5 million acres of forests during the Roman period (Chew 2001:92-93). A similar trend runs in the world today. The world continues to escalate the same *continuum* pattern in terms of environmental destruction. Ross, Coquereaumont and Trott (2008:28-36, 134-171) reports a water crisis which will develop by 2025. According to this report by it is estimated that 1 billion people in 43 countries will live below the water stress threshold of 1 700 cubic meters per person. Wise, Abegg & Cook (2005:462, 463), mentioning to Allison (1986:409-414) say this author has noted the number four as associated to an animate temple. For this writer, the presence of number four in the Gk sentence of Revelation 9:13 ἐκ τῶν [τεσσάρων] κεράτων τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ Is animated in the sense that is connected to a certain Sabbath singing liturgy associated to accompany the sacrifice and the burnt offering. This data was discovered in the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 4Q (Wise, Abegg & Cook 2005: 400-407, 462). Another reference to the τέσσαρες number is by Kittel (1972i:128-129). This author says the word in the Gk sphere is "the gen. meaning of four in religious history has its origin in the orientation to four sides

which, as before, behind and to right and left, are suggested by man's physical constitution. The four corners of heaven or the world embrace the whole of man's horizon." In the Roman mythological literature, Ovidius (1986:1-15) relates the Latin number quattuor with the four Ages of mankind. The Golden Age is of justice and peace, where man did not know the art of navigation. The Silver Age took place when Jupiter introduced the seasons and man consequently learned the art of agriculture and architecture. The Bronze Age indicated when men were prone to warfare but not to impiety. The Iron Age men demarcated nations with boundaries and, warlike, greediness and impiety take place. Man learn the art of navigation, mining.

4.12.5 κρατοῦντας τοὺς τέσσαρας ἀνέμους τῆς γῆς ἵνα μὴ τνέῃ ἄνεμος ἐπὶ τῆς μήτε ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης μήτε ἐπὶ πᾶν δένδρον

The angels in this apocalyptic scenario have control over the wind. This element of symbolism represents warfare and strife. Jeremiah uses the same symbol application when he refers to the unleashing Nebuchadnezzar in destroying the nations (Jr 39:35-37). The prophet Daniel observes this same symbol panorama when he describes the four kingdoms (Dn 7:2).

In the Syriac Apocalypse of Peter, God warns that when he loses the four winds, brimstone will go before the sea wind, a flaming fire before the south wind, and mountains and rocks will be broken into two by the west wind (Gaebelein 1982:417). In the Apocalypse of Pseudo-John 15 God promises that He will permit four great winds to sweep the face of the earth from one end to the other so as to cleanse one from sin (Gaebelein 1982:417). In the book of Bartholomew 4:31-34 four angels are set over the four winds to restrain them, lest they destroy the earth (Gaebelein 1982:417). A similar scene is to be found in 2 Baruch 6:4-8, where four angels are about to set fire to the city of Jerusalem to keep it from falling into the idolatrous hands of Babylonians (i e, Romans) when a fifth angel appeared and tied their hands until the sacred objects of the temple were removed and safely hidden (Gaebelein 1982:417). Henry (1961:1976-1977) adds

another dimension to Revelation 7:1 from the perspective of the Pauline and Johannine eschatological world conditions (2 Tm 3:1-5; 1 Jn 2:18-27), considering these winds as errors. He explains “errors are the wind that cause much trouble to the Church of God. All of those who are unstable are shaken.”

According to Thomas and Barker (1992:466), citing Swete (1907:96) and Beckwith (1979:41), the preposition ἐπί occurs three times in this series of Revelation 7. In the first two instances it governs the genitive case (i e, τῆς γῆς τῆς θάλασσαν), and in the last the accusative (i e, πᾶν δένδρον). The reason for this difference is that the wind is thought of as blowing upon the surface of the earth and sea, against every tree. Robertson (1934: 348, 889-890) and Abott (1906:338, 369) say that the present subjunctive πνέη (blow) focuses on the durative aspect of verbal action. The relative rarity of the present subjunctive indicates that, whenever it is used, to indicate continuity and particularity in John’s writing.

Considering the Apocalypse as cosmic literature that reflects a war between good and evil forces is necessary to view the angelology function here, as Hebrews 1:14 describes the angels’ ministry, which says that they are “sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation.” These angels also represent the restriction of God’s power in order to limit the operation of the evil forces until His providence and wisdom order the angels to let the winds of destruction loose or to unleash them. The evil forces represented in the winds can also experiment with the atmosphere to produce destruction and devastation and as God permits the evil will continue unfolding its rebellion until the climax of the ages with destruction throughout the entire world, morally and physically. He also presents the atmosphere as an engine of destruction (Morris 1983:126-127, 206). According to Vincent (2009:500), the process of keeping back the winds κρατοῦντας means holding fast or firmly.

Γῆς, could indicate a relation with θαλάσσης in the LXX term ἄβυσσος which became the embodiment of the sphere of disaster, since it is connected with it. The sea is the habitat of the dragon (Is 27:1; 51:9; Ps 74:12-14) and predatory beasts rise from it (Dn 7:2-3; Rv 13:1; Böcher 1978:982-985). It is connected to waters, multitudes, nations and tongues where the harlot reigns (Rv 17:15). The roaring of the sea and waves means the tumult and the anguish of nations (Ps 65:7; Lk 21:25). The term δένδρον, in the Bible is used to mean parables of people. Israel is a tree of God's planting (Ezk 17:15; Is 65:22; Hs 14:5-6; Lk 13:6-9; Mt 21:19; Rm 11:16). Egypt was a flourishing tree to be cut down (Ezk 31:2-11), and Nebuchadnezzar was admonished by God with a vision of a tree (Dn 4:4-28). The wicked and righteous both flourish like trees (Ps 1:3; 37:35-36). This element of tree symbolism is also present in the parable of the trees (Jdg 9:7-15; see Embry 1978:865-870). Also, human life is as transient as grass (2 Ki 19:26; Ps 90:5-6; 103:15-16; Mt 6:30; Ja 1:10-11; 1 Pt 1:24). The green grass of Revelation 9:4 refers to those who have the seal of God (Hilleyer 1976:210-211). Maxwell (1989:234-235) describes what he calls an impressionist language for Revelation 9:4, saying Isaiah 7:18-19 for instance was not thinking of literal insects for some prophetic vision narratives. This figurative and highly symbolical usage expressed in Revelation 9:4 expresses punishments, wars and scourge (Maxwell 1989:236). In this way humanity and the world itself will be convulsed with the plagues described in Revelation 16:1-21. The fact that the vision of Revelation 7:1-3 mentions γῆς, θαλάσσης and δένδρον implies also the oncoming suffering of the natural environment. It may also imply the Creationist implications of the conflict between good and evil in terms of, according to Historicists, the Sabbath being a decisive matter in the world's last events. This will be explained when Revelation 7:3 is looked at. The disguised mentioning of the Sabbath creation is described in Revelation 7:2-3 and 14:7 as the connection reference between the Genesis record of Genesis 2:2-3 and Exodus 20:11.

## 4.13 REVELATION 7:2

### 4.13.1 ἄλλον ἄγγελον ἀναβαίνοντα ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου



Among the Jews there was the idea that directions were calculated from the person's viewpoint to which that person was looking. From this direction it was where Ezekiel saw the glory of God that entered the Temple (Ezk 43:2-5). The sign of the Son of Man shall appear from the East (Mt 24:30; Nichol & Cottrell 1990b: 798). The Garden of Eden was in the East (Gn 2:8). It associates Christ with the star (Mt 2:2, 9), and the morning star (Rv 22:16). The text must emphasize the cardinal position where the angel comes, and also that the appearance of the angel is similar to the brightness of the sun (Stefanovic 2002:254-258). The ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου, describes one interesting double insight in John's days. As it was mentioned in Chapter 3, the Sol Invictus was part of the imperial cult of Rome. In the time of John's vision (the first century CE), the process of sun worship was still in the future and it was just beginning to be welcomed by the inhabitants of Rome. This ascending of the sun also reminds John that, besides God's character represented in the angel's sealing with the protection of the real and eternal Κύριος, and the promise of His second advent, there is another power to come.

The concept of multi symbols being used for the same word must be subjected and refrained by the context. This is the case with the term yeast (Mt 13:33; Lk 13:21; Mk 8:15; Lk 12:1; 1 Cor 5:8). The arising and growing of the evil power represented by Rome was announced first in Daniel 7 in the form of the ten-horn beast that, at first, represents the Roman Empire, an earthly power which is imitating and preparing a process of rebellion against God's kingdom. This fourth kingdom, describing Rome (Dn 2:40-43; 7:7), would advance and will cede its place to that hybrid beast of Revelation 13 that will participate in the *continuum* of the controversy against the Creator throughout the 1 260 years and also at the end of the world crisis.

The intensity of the process grows when in Revelation 7:3 the apostle refers to the σφραγίζω concept. An Aramaic inscription, commenting on Revelation 7:3, refers to an inscribed incantation bowl. The painted writing on this incantation



bowl reads that Adam sealed his son to protect him from demons (Isbell incantation, text 1.3, page 54, in Aune 1998a:453, see also Klutz 2004:71).

#### 4.14 REVELATION 7:3

##### 4.14.1 λέγων, Μὴ ἀδικήσητε τὴν γῆν μήτε τὴν θάλασσαν μήτε τὰ δένδρα Ἄχρι σφραγίσωμεν τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν

The clause μὴ ἀδικήσητε, according to Charles (1920:191), is unique in the Apocalypse (Rv 6:6; 9:4, 10, 9; 11:6). Outside Revelation ἀδικεῖν is not found in the New Testament, except for Luke 10:19. There is one analogy in the Jewish Apocalypse of 1 Enoch 66:1-2, where a pause is taking place before the deluge for the preservation of Noah and his family (Charles 1920:192).

The four major approaches of interpretation toward Revelation propose different postures for 7:3. Preterists analyze and conclude that Revelation 7:3 was fulfilled entirely from 66 C.E. to 70 C.E. Upon the Preterist view, when Vespasian and Titus were “informed that Nero was dead (*Jewish Wars* 4.9.2) they did not go with their expedition against Jews (*Jewish Wars* 4.9.2, cf *Jewish Wars* 4.10.2) until after Vespasian became emperor in 69 CE. Then “Vespasian turned his thoughts to what remained unsubdued in Judea (*Jewish Wars* 4.10.15). With this approach the ones that escaped to the city of Pella in the year 66 CE would have been the “sealed ones” before the horrors and destruction of 70 CE took place (Lk 21:20, 21, 22; Mt 24:16). One similar Preterist approach for this particular in Revelation 7:3 is described by Gentry (1989:15-19). For Futurism, instead, the sealing in Apocalypse 7:3 has to deal when the multitudes will turn back to God during the first years of the Tribulation period. Especially this will be true in Israel, where the remarkable deliverance from Gog (Russia) will have had a traumatic effect on the whole nation even before the period of judgment begins. Many Jews will believe in Christ. The 144 000 will promote Christ kingdom (Morris 1983:129-130).<sup>6</sup> Dispensationalists see also a literal Israel at the end of the time with 144

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<sup>6</sup>Futurism (Ice & Gentry 1999:11-165), points the Tribulation period occurring during seven years after the Church's Rapt. These seven years are “detached” from Daniel 9:27. Historicism,

000 Jews sealed in their foreheads (Pate and Grundy 1998:227). These same authors declare that because Idealism does not have any specific historical reference, the application may be limitless (Pate and Grundy 1998:24). In this case Schüssler (1991:24-28) the meaning of Revelation is not to be sought in the first century, nor in the remote future events, but rather in the ongoing struggle between those disadvantaged socio-politically and their oppressors.

For Historicists, the loosing of the winds is preceded by a great false globalization that engulfs religion, politics and socio-economical in the whole planet. Treiyr, uses the Jubilee Old Testament phraseology in describing the longing of humanity for finding peace to the global calamities devastating earth. This author cites the “mega-corporations” as part of this ecumenical movement in promoting this false Jubilee globalization (A Treiyr 2000:188-192). For Treiyr, the true globalization will occur only when Jesus comes (A Treiyr 2000:221-239). Prophetic-Historicism considers μή ἀδικήσετε τὴν γῆν μήτε τὴν θάλασσαν μήτε τὰ δένδρα, ἄχρι in Revelation 7:3 as a crescendo process of calamities in the world that finally will result in the last plagues of 16:1-21 when the winds are finally loose (in Mansell 1998:15-29, 30-80). Therefore, the angel coming the East urges the other four angels to hold the winds until the sealing process is completed.

It is imperative to remember here that God’s children have had His seal throughout history. That was explicit in Paul’s teachings (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:22). Jesus had the seal of God (Jn 6:27). The admonishing is not grieving away the Spirit (Eph 4:30) who is the One that seals the believer (Neall, in Holbrook 1992a:258). The purpose of sealing is not to protect God’s servants from danger of death, since many die under the persecution of the antichrist (Rv 14:13; 17:6).

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commenting Daniel Chapters 8 and 9 situate this last week from Daniel 9:27 as being attached only to the seventy weeks. This approach situates such last week including important events about the Messiah (Christ): his baptism, his ministry and his death that took place “in the middle of the week.” Depending on Prophetic-Historicism this week concludes with Esteban’s stoning. Historicist view this last week within the 2 300 years of Daniel 8:14 context, which got started from the Babylonian Jewish Exile’s return in 457 B.C.E. till the Esteban’s stoning in 34 C.E (Nichol & Cottrell 1985a:876-881).

It is rather to secure them from the destructive force of the seven last plagues (Rv 16:1-2). They are sealed in the sense that they are δούλος τοῦ θεοῦ. They do not want to compromise with the beast of Revelation (13:15-17; 14:1; (Neall, in Holbrook 1992a:261).

In the sign language of the Bible the forehead is the seat of the intellect, the center of reasoning, that power of the brain that makes man akin to the Creator and different from creatures (Hardinge 2005:129). This is confirmed by Marshall (1998:81, 91-93, 106-108, 112-114), when she says that the frontal lobe, which is situated behind the forehead, is associated with reasoning, planning, emotions, problem solving, and also with parts of speech and movement. The concept of μετώπων, and its stubborn rebellious reasoning and planning against the Creator, is observed also in the wicked woman of Revelation 17:1-5 and Jr 3:3. The phrase ἐπὶ των μετώπων is characteristic. John uses ἐπὶ in this phrase with the genitive if the noun is in the plural (Rv 9:4; 14:1; 22:4), but with the accusative if the noun is in the singular (Rv 13:5; 20:4; except in 14:9; Charles 1920:191).

In the analysis of the concept of sealing, Doukhan (2002:68) explains that Revelation 7:1-3 reminds one of events in Egypt when the children of Israel were spared by the sign of the blood sprinkled on their door frames (Ex 12:23). He refers to a chiastic structure (ABA') in the passage of the announcement to the angels, which identifies the protected ones. The first action (A) spares the earth, sea, and trees (Rv 7:1). The second action (B) threatens the earth, and the sea (Rv 7:2), and the third action (A') spares again the earth, sea, and trees (Rv 7:3; (Doukhan 2002:69).

Following is the chiastic structure according to Doukhan (2002:69):

|                       |               |                   |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| A (7:1)               | B (7:2)       | A' (7:3)          |
| spares                | threatens     | spares            |
| the earth, sea, trees | earth and sea | earth, sea, trees |

In the Doukhan concept the center of the previous chiasm reveals the element of nature spared by the winds. The trees are the sole survivors of the disaster. He continues by saying that the syntactic level reflects the importance of the case:

[I]n the first action that introduces the other two, the Greek word for “tree” receives a different declination from the other two words “earth” and “sea,” although each is preceded by the same Greek preposition. “Tree” is in the accusative, whereas the words “earth” and “sea” are in the genitive. This difference suggests that the winds relate differently to the earth and the sea than they do to the tree.

(Doukhan 2002:69)

#### **4.14.2 τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν**

As was previously discussed, the δένδρον are those believers that follow the same pattern of Exodus 12 and Ezekiel 9. Revelation 7:1-3 is a highly symbolic drama. The friends of the Lamb are described by two terms: trees and servants. They accept the blood of the Lamb as their warranty of the benefits of sealing. Because the ἄρνιον was the only one worthy to open the scroll, He is also the only one to assure the sealing blessing (Rv 5:6-13). In this regard, it is necessary to analyze briefly the concept of δούλος in this Apocalypse imagery.

The Hebrew word עֶבֶד (*‘ebhedh*) and δούλος are more properly translated as slave rather than servant (Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2815). Orr explains that the origin of the term can be traced to the Germanic term sklave, meaning a captive of a Slavonic race. This constitutes the first way a person to become a slave. The other two were being born of a slave mother, or through sale (Richards 1985:552). The formula δούλος θεοῦ is not used often in the New Testament, and the same is true of the phrase τῷ θεῷ δοῦλεύειν. Most of the δοῦλεύειν of Christians speak of it in relation to Christ, on the solid basis of New Testament Christology (Kittel 1964f:273).

The use of δοῦλος θεοῦ is almost always in connection with the usage of the righteous of the Old Testament in relation to God, or in quotations, especially in Revelation (Rv 1:1; 2:20; 7:3; 10:7; 19:2, 5; 22:3, 6), where Moses is given the title of δοῦλος τοῦ θεοῦ in Revelation 15:3 (Kittel 1964f:273). Sin establishes slavery (Jn 8:34). It is only through Christ that man is bought from slavery of sin (Jn 8:36). Paul speaks about this when he uses ἐδουλώθητε [δουλεόω] (which is parsed here as second plural aorist passive indicative, i.e., τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ; Rm 6:17-18). According to Richards (1985:554) this is an important New Testament concept. The believer finds freedom, not in recovering an independent will, but in submitting his will freely and joyfully to God (Rm 1:1; 1 Cor 7:19-20, 23; Gl 1:10; 2:20; Phlp 1:1, 21; Tt 1:1; 1 Pt 4:2).

Kittel (1964f:280), referring to Ephesians 6:6 with relation to the term ὀφθαλμοδουλία, says there are no examples of this word outside the New Testament. It is only found in post-Christian literature (Const. Ap IV, 12-13; in Kittel 1964f:280). Ephesians 6:6 refers to a δουλεία of Christian slaves to their masters which is outwardly correct, but which is rendered without dedication and with no sense of inner obligation to the master for the sake of God and of Christ (the deceived ὀφθαλμοί of the master being contrasted with the deceitful ψυχὴ of the slave). In Colossians 3:22 it is used in the plural for all actions, which originate in this dishonest attitude (Kittel 1964h:280). The incredible catastrophes and disasters that will occur in the scenario of Revelation 7:1-3 require a trusting, relational sealing dependence process from the Christian slave to His kind and all knowing Master.

Among the characteristics of the ones that are sealed in Ezekiel is the idea that they react against detestable things (Ezk 9:4). Christians throughout the ages have faced the challenge of fighting against evil through entertainment and the dubious moral standards that come with it. According to Soule (2004:3-4), quoting ancient Latin writers, there are five reasons why Christians confronted

Roman society in the sense of the games, entertainment, and religious practices of the age. These reasons are:

1. They represented idolatry: “For the celebrations of the games are festivals in honor of the gods, inasmuch as they were instituted on account of their birthdays, or the dedication of new temples. Therefore, if anyone is present at the spectacles to which men assemble for the sake of religion, he has departed from the worship of God, and has betaken himself to those deities whose birthdays and festivals he has celebrated” (Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*, 6.20, in Soule 2004:3-4).
2. They taught immoral behavior: “They utter ribaldry in affected tones, and go through indecent movements; your daughters and your sons behold them giving lessons in adultery on the stage” (Tatian, *Address to the Greeks*). The father who carefully protects and guards his virgin daughter’s ears from every polluting word takes her to the theatre himself, exposing her to all its vile words and attitudes (Soule 2004:3-4).
3. They renounced Christ: “He is shameless who in the church exorcises demons while he praises their delights in public shows; and although, once for all renouncing him, he has put away everything in baptism, when he goes to the devil’s exhibition after (receiving) Christ, he renounces Christ the fruits of the sinful nature” (see also Gl 5:19-21). “We are debarred from every kind of spectacle, and especially from the circus, where such excitement presides as in its proper element. See the people coming to it already under strong emotion, already tumultuous, already passion-blind already agitated about their bets. And the result accordingly is, that they fly into rages, and passions, and discords, and all that they who are consecrated to peace ought never to indulge in” (Tertullian, *Apology* 3.16). “The Instructor will not then bring us to public spectacles; nor inappropriately might one call the racecourse and the theatre ‘the seat of plagues.’ These assemblies, indeed, are full of confusion and iniquity; and these pretexts for assembling are the cause of disorder – men and women

assembling promiscuously for the sight of one another. In this respect the assembly has already shown itself bad: for when the eye is lascivious, the desires grow warm; and the eyes that are accustomed to look impudently at one's neighbors during the leisure granted to them, inflame the amatory desires. Let spectacles, therefore, and plays that are full of scurrility and of abundant gossip, be forbidden" (Clement of Alexandria, *The instructor*, in Soule 2004:3-4).

4. They celebrated immorality: "We are forbidden so much as to witness shows of gladiators, lest we become partakers and abettors of murders. But neither may we see the other spectacles (theater), lest our eyes and ears be defiled, participating in the utterances there sung. For if one should speak of cannibalism, in these spectacles the children of Thyestes and Tereus (a popular play) are eaten; and as for adultery, both in the case of men and of gods, whom they celebrate in elegant language for honors and prizes, this is made the subject of their dramas." (Theophilus of Antioch, *To Autolycus*, in Soule 2004:3-4).
5. They represented murder: "You purchase men to supply a cannibal banquet for the soul, nourishing it by the most impious blood shedding. The robber commits murder for the sake of plunder, but the rich man purchases gladiators for the sake of their being killed" (Tatian, *Address to the Greeks*). "For he who reckons it a pleasure, that a man, though justly condemned, should be slain in his sight, pollutes his conscience as much as if he should become a spectator and a sharer of a homicide which is secretly committed" (Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*, 6.20, in Soule 2004:3-4).

The most important reason why Christians objected to the entertainment of the society of the Roman Empire was the Christian spiritual allegiance to Κύριος. This term was also employed on epigrams dedicated to Augustus (Kittel 1965e:1056). He could be a god being κύριος. For Caesar, this term signified majesty and sovereignty, domain and power. He was considered the beneficent god and Roman savior who dominated the whole world. Oaths were given to him



in *genium Caesaris*. The LXX aids in understanding why Christians did not call Caesar κύριος. The Septuagint translates the tetragrammaton יהוה (YHWH) as Κύριος. The term is found in the fourth Gospel (Jn 20:28) as the equivalent of Θεός (Jn 20:28; see Spicq 2008:346-347). As servants of the living God, Christians did not pay an allegiance to Caesar honoring him as κύριος. This was a term strictly employed by the Christians in referring to the real κύριος: Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. This allegiance of faith and loyalty to Christ embraced by ancient Christians during the Roman Empire denotes an incarnation sealing practice in all Christ believers that stood by the principles He lived and died for.

The sealing involves not only a mere verbal assumption of acceptance. Its characteristics of protection, ownership, authenticity, and property illustrate the concept of slave-master in the Biblical concept of friendship, loyalty, and obedience. That is how the Old Testament narratives depict the various dramas in which God's children are protected and sealed from disaster: the flood, the Passover, and the Jerusalem sealing experience in Ezekiel. These episodes find their parallelism in Revelation 7:1-3.

Historicism considers the Sabbath as part of this sealing process. The next section discusses the meaning of the holistic Sabbath and its relationship to sealing.

## **4.15 THE HOLISTIC SABBATH**

### **4.15.1 Creation covenant**

As the Christians in the Roman Empire distinguished between the pervert world and the exemplary life of Christ, the concept of τὴν σφραγίδα of Revelation 7:2 is intimately related to ἀδικία (2 Tm 2:19) and ἀνομία (2 Th 2:3) when it comes to defining the meaning of sealing in Revelation 7. For the Historicist approach of interpretation, sealing in Revelation 7:3 has to deal with the Sabbath as a lordship friendship and obedient response to the restless world which is captive in anxiety and depression. Kline states the following in this regard:

If the Sabbath ordinance serves a creation symbolic sign of God's covenantal lordship in the holy kingdom of Israel, it is surely because the original divine Sabbath represented the Creator's covenant lordship over the world. The meaning of the original Sabbath (Gn 2:2) is mirrored in the Sabbath ordinance (Gn 2:3), the record of which emphasizes that the Sabbath is set apart as sacred to the Creator. Observance of the Sabbath by man is thus a confession that Yahweh is his Lord of all lords. Sabbath keeping expresses man's commitment to the service of the Lord.

(Kline 2006:19, 39, 180)

In Revelation 7:1-3, according to the Historicist concept, the response of Christians to ἀδικία and ἀνομία is not circumscribed only to respect for the Sabbath. This term also gives the connotation of a holistic approach related to the whole Sabbath. White (1958:287) points out that, as the wax receives the seal impression, so the soul must receive the Spirit of God and conserves the image of Christ. It means to recognize God as the owner of everything amounts to acknowledging Him as Creator. His seal alludes to a whole way of thinking and living holistically. To this end Doukhan explains:

To be sealed is to show that we owe everything to God, a theme that permeates the entire Bible. The tithe represents our giving back to God what is already His, a point already understood by Melchizedek, who justified Abram's giving his tithe with the proclamation of God as "Creator of heaven and earth" (Gn 4:19). The book of Leviticus makes the same association. Before they entered the Promise Land, God told the people of Israel that they must remember that the land belonged to Him: "The land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants (Lv 25:23). Because of this fact "a tithe . . . belongs to the Lord" and is "holy to the Lord" (Lv 27:30). It is not coincidence that the Sabbath occupies the central place in the Decalogue, normally reserved for the seal in the ancient documents (Kline 1963:18-10 and 1972:120). The Sabbath celebrates the Creator and His work—it is God's seal on Creation. We distinguish again the seal of God in the dietary choices of Daniel and his companions as they sought to show their dependence on the Creator rather than on the king (Dn 1). The seal on the forehead represents God's mark on the whole person, the sign that we belong to Him. The image of God, if reflected to God, is to live with Him. Through this image the Apocalypse designates those who confess the God of Creation in every facet of their lives. The Sabbath, the tithe, dietary choices, and respect for the law of God—all could indicate the presence of God's seal, but they do not magically produce it. The seal of God is both invisible and visible and alive, just as the Creator God it represents.

(Doukhan 2002:70-1)

The holistic Sabbath was also recognized in adoration (Wise, Abegg & Cook 2005:500-462;463-558). These authors mention that in the Dead Sea Scrolls were found passages from the book of Revelation (1Q 19:6-9; 4Q: 9:13; 12:7; 2:4-6; 21:12-13; 21:9:-27). The scrolls showed evidence on Sabbath songs intended to unite the worshiper with the angels worshipping in Heaven. The context favors the idea that Earth is a pale reflection of Heaven, a reality mystic fashion. One of those Sabbaths song copies was discovered at Masada (designated *Masik*), the site of the last stand made by Jewish freedom against Rome from 66 through 74 C.E (Wise, Martin & Abegg, Cook 2005:463).

#### **4.15.2 The holistic Sabbath and the restlessness of man**

The fourth commandment of the Decalogue intends to restrict the continuity of human restlessness. Bacchiocchi says that

by restricting temporarily our productivity, the Sabbath teaches us not to compete but to commune with one another. It teaches us to view fellow beings not quantitatively but qualitatively, that is, not in terms of their income but in terms of their human values.

(Bacchiocchi 1997:221)

The Sabbath is holistic also in the sense that it was designed to include humanity without any racial prejudice, because it

helps to break down social, racial and cultural barriers. The inability or unwillingness to appreciate and accept another person's skin color, cultural language or social status, is a major cause of much unrest, hate and tension in our contemporary society.

(Bacchiocchi 1997:223)

#### **14.5.3 The Sabbaths and their holistic equality function in Hebrew society**

Another aspect of the Sabbath to consider is the holistic rest of the earth. This includes the seventh day (Lv 23:3; Ezk 20:12, 20), the ceremonial Sabbaths (Lv 23:5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 27, 28, 34, 35), the seven years Sabbaths and the Jubilee Sabbath (Lv 25:11; 25:50; Ezk 46:17). All persons, beasts, and property

were to become free before God. Genuine freedom leads to equality. The uneven divisions of the Hebrew society leveled out as the Sabbath (Bacchiocchi 1997:223). Dresner (1970:43, in Bacchiocchi 1997:223) says that this equalizing function of the Sabbath has seldom been recognized.

Although one Jew may have peddled onions and another may have owned great forests of lumber, on the Sabbath all were equal, all were kings: all welcomed the Sabbath Queen, all chanted the *Kiddush*, all basked in the glory of the seventh day. On the Sabbath there were neither banker nor clerk, neither farmer nor hired-hand, neither rich nor poor. There were only Jews hallowing the Sabbath.

(Dresner 1970:43)

#### **4.15.4 The holistic Sabbath in spiritual Israelites**

The ones that are sealed belong to spiritual Israel, which is the Christian church (Rm 2:28-29; 9:6-7; Gl 3:28-29; 6:16; 1 Pt 2: 9; Nichol & Cottrell 1990b:799). The work of the Spirit is to reproduce the character of Christ in the believer. Israel is absorbed in the cross of Christ (Gl 3:26-29). When Paul enumerates the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit, he also refers to the Decalogue (Gl 5:19-26). The works of the flesh are against the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:2-17), while the fruits of the Spirit promote them (Jn 14:15; Rm 13:10; 1 Cor 13:5-8). In terms of a covenant, the one at Sinai did not overwrite the gospel taught in His previous covenant with Abraham, but incorporated it (Gl 3:17; Heb 9:15-18, 26). Beagley (in Carson 2008:641) indicates that in the context of Revelation, this book must be understood also in the context of Jews versus Gentiles. Antipathy is also a key factor in the book.

The presence of the holistic Sabbath in Revelation 7:1-3 comprises the sealing of Christians throughout history and also, during the last scenes of earth. Sealing includes six quality attributes (see Hoeksema 1969:259):

1. Ownership: According to Revelation  $\delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  indicates ownership to God (Ex 28:36-38; Is 43:1; Rv 3:12).

2. Protection: God promises protection His people not from being harmed, but so they can remain faithful and loyal to Him (Ezk 9:6).
3. Inviolability: The value of the seal remains in its inviolability. As occurred with Joseph, God can preserve the loyal from sin (Gn 41:9). This aspect of the life of Joseph shows how practical is the concept of the presence of God.
4. Genuineness: When the jar or document was unsealed and opened it was expected that one would find the same content that originally was in the sealed deposit. God admonishes His people to preserve His truth (2 Cor 4:2).
5. Property: This fifth attribute is intrinsic and extrinsic. Paul reminds his readers that property shows who the owner is (Rm 12:1-2).
6. Preservation: As Noah's ark floated upon the surface of the galling waters, the capacity of God when He shut the ark's door (Gn 7:18) was the same capacity and power He had to keep the ark's content safe and secured (Rv 7:17). God promises His spiritual preservation upon the sealed fragile human pottery. God promises security to the sealed in their spiritual fight against evil powers (Rv 12:17; 14:12; 17:14).

The holistic Sabbath is viewed also in the sense of Mk 2:27. Τὸν ἄνθρωπον is in the accusative indicating a generic term, where all of humanity is included and not only the Jewish nation. Wuest (1973:59-61) points out that the word for man is not ἀνὴρ but ἄνθρωπος which is a racial, generic term, and, in a sense, mankind. The word ἐγένετο related to the concept of Sabbath is an imperfect and means literally came to existence. In this sense, Wuest (1973:61) says the Sabbath is only a means to an end, the good of man. In connecting the Sabbath with the term κύριος the lordship and the ownership of the Godhead is suggested. The owner is the possessor and disposer of a thing. In this sense the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath. The word is used in the LXX as a translation of the august title of God, which we know as Jehovah and thus it implies deity. The Creator is Lord of creation, and Lord of the Sabbath. He brought these into

being for the sake of mankind (Wuest 1973:60-61). In terms of man and Sabbath, it is good to remember that Sabbath points to a Creator of the world and man (Mk 2:10; Col 1:16; Rv 4:11; 10:6). Τὸ σάββατον διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐγένετο (Mk 2:27) also indicates that Sabbath is a permanent admonishing against xenophobia (Ac 17:26). Referring to the Exodus experience and discussing the Egyptian xenophobic regard, some authors such as Magnusson (citing Habachi 1997:59-61) find it surprising that there is no mention of bondage or the Exodus in the Egyptian records. They continue by saying Hebrews were a minority people, and the Egyptians did not like to record anything that smacked of defeat or humiliation (Magnusson 1977:59-61). The Egyptian version of the story, a piece of counter folklore from the Egyptian side, was ascribed to the Egyptian historian Manetho in the third century BCE, a thousand years after the assumed data of Exodus. It tells of a gang of Asiatic lepers and plague-bearers who had once been expelled from Egypt by force and driven back to Palestine where they founded Jerusalem and became the ancestors of the Jews. Redford (in Magnusson 1977:59-61) sees in this anti-Semitism story an Egyptian plot to expel the hated Hyksos, but which was reinforced by the waves of invasions, which were to break over Egypt in the first millennium BCE. These invaders (the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Persians) were from Asia and they always wrought appalling destruction. Redford (in Magnusson 1977:60-61), concludes by saying this Egyptian conception of the Exodus was a timeless piece of patriotic xenophobia. It is evident also that the sealing concept is present in the Exodus 12:13 of the LXX (καὶ ἔσται τὸ αἷμα ὑμῶν ἐν σημείῳ ἐπὶ τῶν οἰκῶν ἐν αἷς ὑμεῖς ἐστέ), including not only the Israelites but also the Egyptians who wanted to be protected from the plagues announced by Moses (Ex 9: 20, 21).

The holistic Sabbath is a historicism call to remind people that Christ is the center of the earth's Creation as much as spiritual transformation. Against this respect, some ancient Greek Bible versions of the Old Testament, such as Aquila, intended to denigrate prophecy regarding Christ and His participation in the salvation and restoration of humanity. On this point, Danker (1970:68) says that

the Aquila version, aiding in the controversies with the Christians, published an extreme literal Greek version of the Hebrew Bible. His anti-Christian bias is apparent from such renderings as ἡλεμμένος, instead of χριστός in Daniel 9:26 and νεάνις instead of ἡ παρθένος in Isaiah 7:14. On the contrary, historicism considers Christ as the center of the whole prophetic scenario. He is the center of them all. Referring to the work of Bengel, Froom (1948a:710) states that historicism not only values “computations for measuring time, the Bible should be considered as the revelation of God’s plan in which Christ is the supreme, all overshadowing center.”

#### **4.15.5 The holistic Sabbath in contraposition with evolution**

The Bible reminds men by the concept of the Holistic Sabbath that God is ruler of the earth, but not the same as if He was dependent on its existence to be God and King (Is 40:18, 22, 25, 26). Also, the Sabbath evidences that God, because of His Creationist power, is perfect and not an evolving, fallible or non-existent being in controlling all supernatural matters. He is an Almighty Person, autonomous and self-sufficient (Dt 33:27; Ps 50:12; 135:13; Is 40:28). However, human beings have developed six worldviews that not only oppose Christianity and their beliefs, but also because of the content of these teachings, the Sabbath and other Bible teachings are seen as not dependent and important in the sense of Creator ⇒ creation ⇒ human being ⇒ Sabbath ⇒ relationship Creator with human being ⇒ holistic respect relationship between human beings and creation. These six philosophies that are against Biblical principles are atheism, deism, pantheism, panatheism (the view that God is developing along with the world), finite godism (which considers God as limited and/or imperfect) and polytheism (Geisler and Brooks 1990:16-18, 31-32, 35-36, 36-51, 212, 213-219, 221, 222-225, 226-230). The Bible teaches rejection of atheism (Ps 14:1; 53:1; 103:17; 113:2). God rejects deism because God Himself performs miracles (Is 46:10; Lk 1:37). God is perfect and He does not evolve, showing imperfection. He is always the same (Dt 32:4; 2 Sm 22:31, 32; Ps 18:30; Heb 13:8). Scripture also clearly depicts one God and Savior and not a polytheistic vision. God



transcends the world and does not go along with its habits and perverse ways (Ex 20:2-5; Jn 1:10; 17:16; Ja 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15-17).

These six philosophies concerning the perfection of God are also reflected in a certain way, in the concept of earth creation/Creator. It is important to add here that Genesis considers a fiat creation. This special creation, or Young Earth Creation as it is also known, reflects a direct model of Scripture (Roth 1998:340). According to Roth there are, besides the recent Creation, seven other conceptions that are intended to explain world origins and that at the same time influence negatively on the concept of Sabbath. These world origin theories are:

1. The gap theory, which is supported by the Scofield Bible and believes that there was a Creation prior to the one of Genesis in which Satan was involved and after judged for it.
2. The progressive creation, which considers the earth and life formation as a process of long ages.
3. Theistic evolution, that considers that God's creation evolved throughout long ages.
4. Deistic evolution, a position that assumes a naturalistic evolution with long ages of creation processing.
5. Pantheistic evolution which considers an evolving through many ages, including creation.
6. Space ancestry, which advocates that life on earth was possible through an extraterrestrial organism within long ages of an evolving process.
7. Evolution which supports the Darwinian concept with no God and long ages of an evolving process. This sealing research assumes a fiat creation in a week process developed by the Godhead in *ex nihilo*, with no pre-existent material (Ps 33:6, 7, 9).

Baldwin, Brand, Chadwick and Younker (2009: 37) indicate the Sabbath "serves as an unchangeable Saturday memorial of completed Creation in six days, and

as sign of the sanctifying relationship existing between the Creator and the beings created in His image.” Hutchinson Ury (in Baldwin et al 2009:37) says “the alternative world view of theistic evolution and progressive creation produces intractable problems involving the biblical teaching of the loving character of the Creator (1 Jn 4:8).” He also says that “if one would accept theistic evolution as the supposed intentional divine method of creation, one would have to harmonize more than 3.8 billion years of trauma (predation), disease, death, mass extinctions, suffering, countless regional geologic catastrophes of all sorts, and other natural evils with the biblical image of a loving and caring God” (Hutchinson Ury, in Baldwin et al 2009:37). Hull (1991:486) agrees by saying that the God implied by evolutionary theory is neither loving, nor a God to whom one would be inclined to pray, but is nearly diabolical (Baldwin et al 2009: 37). Another interesting statement from Baldwin, Brand, Chadwick and Younker, regarding the theistic evolution or progressive creation is the following:

The millions of years creation worldview necessarily requires the denial of a historical, literal Fall, a global flood, and a historical Adam through whom sin and death passed to all humanity, and ultimately involves the denial of the need to accept Jesus as Saviour through His life and death on the Cross (Gn 2:9, 17; Rm 5:12, 14; 6:23; 8:20, 21; 1 Cor 15:26). In this view death in the animal realm, including proto humans, appears millions of years before sin, thereby undermining the atonement and redemption.

(Baldwin et al 2009: 37)

In the next subdivision there will be a consideration of the three verbs linked to Sabbath in Genesis 2:2, 3 and Exodus 20:9-11.

## **4.16 BIBLICAL TERMS FOR RESTING, BLESSING AND SANCTIFYING IN GENESIS 2:2-3 AND IN EXODUS 20:11**

### **4.16.1 Hebrew and Greek terms**

These three terms, as much in the Old as in the New Testament, show the attributes of the Godhead. These attributes were also part of the Trinity during the work of man’s creation עָשָׂה ( ‘āś āh). In Genesis 1:26 the Hebrew צִלַּם

(*celem*) means image. The French version (FJBV) present such verse in the first plural form – *faisons l' homme à notre image – comme notre ressemblance*.

According to theologians of the primitive church, the term was designated for the three Persons of the Trinity (Nichol & Cottrell 1990a:227). Only in Genesis 1:26 are image and likeness used together (Orr & Nuelsen 1974e:1450). In the figurative sense, when the Sabbath was made, it was designated also to transmit to man the blessing, resting, and sanctifying message that comes from the image of God, and to remind him that humankind came through a divine creation. That likeness can only now be preserved by faith and submission to Christ's message.

The manifestation of the Holy Trinity is only present later in two other New Testament figurative stances: in the baptism of Jesus (Mt 3:16-17) and when Paul resumes the three kenotic attributes of the Trinity within the Christian church (2 Cor 13:13). Due to the oneness, and at the same time Trinity personality within their three divine persons, it is obvious that *εὐλογέω*, *καταπαύω* and *ἀγιάζω*, which are used in the LXX are also interchangeable terms used for the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Lv 21:8; Is 41:14; Mt 14:19:22; Ac 3:14; 1 Th 5:23; Heb 2:11; 13:12; Rv 6:10).

According to Kittel (1964f:754), the word *εὐλογέω* does not take its meaning from the secular Greek but from the fact that it is the rendering of Hebrew words which acquired their religious significance in the Old Testament and in the Jewish writings. This same reasoning could be applied for *ἀγιάζω* and *καταπαύω*, which are intrinsically connected with Old Testament narratives and Jewish tradition in their significance. We now turn to discuss the Hebrew and Greek terms for bless, rest and sanctify.

#### 4.16.2 בִּרְךָ (ברכה)

The term (*b ārah*) implies speaking well either in the sense of speaking finely or speaking well of someone; that blessing, like a cursing, is an object of belief in primitive religion. Some material items come with the blessing. Men and things,

which are blessed are as it were endowed with this power and can transmit, affecting, everything which they come in contact with. The term indicates being filled with blessing, as well as a concrete blessing which ensues, good fortune, power, et cetera (Kittel 1964g:754-775). It is in this context that God's blessing rules creation (Gn 1:22) so man and the Sabbath are blessed. The Hebrew word in Genesis 2:2-3 contrasts notably with the cursing words against God by the little horn in Daniel 7:25 and 8:10-12. Εὐλογέω is an abundant word in the LXX where it appears 400 times. Blessing is one attribute of God the Father that He gave to man (Rv 9:1; 12:2; 17:16; 25; 11; 49:25; Ps 29:11; 45:2; 107:38; Is 65:16).

#### **4.16.3 εὐλογέω (εὐλογία)**

In the New Testament, there is a technical term from the Jewish liturgy for τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας (1 Cor 10:16). This technicality was transferred into the Lord's Supper, and signifies the cup of wine upon which a blessing was pronounced. The suggestion that it carries with it a higher significance, as a cup that brings blessing is not without force. The succeeding words "we bless," are equivalent to "for which we give thanks" (Kittel 1964f:763). This is also a contrasting parallel when we see that the other cup in Revelation 17:4 where the mystic Babylon has a ποτήριον χρυσοῦν...γέμον βδελυγμάτων καὶ τὰ ἀκάθαρτα τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς. The fornications and abominations contrast notably with the original plan of the Creator in having the blessing and passing it unto others. The author of Revelation realizes that the eternal world of the last days includes the praising and glorifying of Him, who sits on the throne and of the Lamb (Rv 5:12, 12; 7:12). The εὐλογία in Revelation is not applied to the beast, the dragon, or Babylon. God is the only one who deserves it. The term is also present in the New Testament as an attribute of God the Father from Himself to mankind (Mt 25:34; Lk 1:68; 12:32; Eph 1:3; 1 Tm 1:11; 1 Pt 1:3). The Creator passes the blessing as thanks from one generation to another.

#### 4.16.4 נוח (מנוחה)

The words נוח (*n ūah*) and מנוחה (*mēn ūh āh*) mean cessation, peace, quiet, and to cease a motion (Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:2561). Kittel (1974e:627), in relating the term to a person, says it means to bring someone to where he breaks off what he is doing. The vocable also means to restrain or to dismiss. It is applied to God in that He ceased from the work of creating on the seventh day (Gn 2:2). The LXX renders: κατέπαυσεν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ (Ex 20:11; Kittel 1974e:627). The resting also included that God was in the midst of His people in His Temple (1 Chr 28:2; Ps 132:8, 14; Zph 3:17; Ex 16:22, 23; 31:15; Is 58:13-14). Sometimes rest is also used in the context of relay (2 Chr 14:11; Ps 37:7). God's ideal for the Sabbath was to communicate a sense of peace and comfort (Is 48:17-22). The term rest also means freedom of oppression by the enemy and peace of the spirit (Crudens 1965:542). Only the Messiah could bring this rest (Is 61:1-11).

#### 4.16.5 καταπαύω (κατάπαυσις, ἀνάπαυσις)

In the New Testament the word has two distinctive applications. One is interrelated with the Old Testament. First, it refers to the rest of God or κατέπαυσεν on the seventh day (Gn 2:3). Kittel (1974e:627-28) says Joshua had the task of bringing the people to rest in the promised land (Heb 4:8). The rest is still in the realm of a promise (Heb 3:15). It is set in a state of rest. The movement from which flowed the life of creation in the first week will lead to the sacred rest of the Creator on the seventh day. The people of God wait for this. The resting blessing of the Sabbath describes a restless experience for all of those that follow the teachings of the beast (Rv 14:11). The concept of rest that was bestowed on the Sabbath is also shown in Jesus. He is the divine Joshua, who will give eternal rest leading the people out from Babylon and introducing His children into the Holy Land (Rv 18:4, Jn 13:1-3). The concept of rest in Jesus is present in the New Testament (Mt 11:28-30; 2 Cor 12:9). According to Isaiah 61:1-11, the message of freedom and rest began being fulfilled in Jesus when He began His ministry on the Sabbath reading the prophecy about Himself in the synagogue

(Lk 4:16-21). The figurative presence of rest is attested also when the Son rested on Sabbath in the grave (Lk 23:56; 24:1).

#### 4.16.6 קרש (קרוש)

The definition of קרש (*k oresh*) is holiness and קרוש (*k adh osh*) means holy, consecrate, hallow (Orr and Nuelsen 1974a:2681). This word denotes a cultic state in different ways. Sanctifying can be achieved by cultic practices (Ex 19:10, 14; Jos 7:13). It is obtained also by celebrating, in this case the Sabbath (Ex 20:8; Dt 5:12; Is 30:29). With a divine subject and object in mind, it can also be a thought of declaration (Gn 2:3; Ex 19:33; Nm 20:12). To sanctify may denote to set apart for a special use (Ex 20:9-11; Kittel 1974e:111). In that case, the Sabbath, within the divine weekly Creation process is different from any other astronomical measurement of time such as the month or the year. In the Old Testament, sanctification is also performed by the Holy Spirit (Ps 51:10-12; Ezk 36:25-27).

#### 4.16.7 ἁγιάζω (ἅγιος, ἁγιασμός ἁγιασμοῦ, ἅγια, ἁγιότης, ἁγιόντος, ἁγιασύνη, ἁγιασύνης)

The term means strictly to sanctify, but also is associated with to set apart for a special use when the term is applied to Christians (1 Pt 2:9; Col 3:12; 1 Cor 1:2, 14; 5:1; Orr & Nuelsen 1974a:1404). Related to the Sabbath, Christ expresses one relation between it and with the expression ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομα σου (Mt 6:9; Lk 11:2). The name of God represents His character, which is written in the forehead of His followers (Rv 22:3). That character is expressed in his Decalogue (Rv 7:3; 22:3). It is in contrast with the name of Babylon (Rv 17:5). According to Smith (1977b:257), the fourth commandment is the only precept that contains the descriptive title by which the true God can be distinguished from the false gods. Wherever this commandment was present there was the name of God. Kittel (1964c:111) also emphasizes that sanctifying power rests exclusively on the holiness of God. The attitude of the beast and Babylon are the opposite of God's purity. They are defined as dispossessed from the book of life (Rv 13:8; 17:3,

14). As it was said regarding the Holy Ghost's work in the Old Testament, the sanctifying is also related to the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament (Rm 8:5; 2 Cor 3:1-5; Gl 4:6; 5:22; 2 Th 2:13; Heb 10:15-17; Ja 4:5; 1 Pt 1:2). These previous figurative conclusions in adjudicating the three verbs of Genesis 2:2-3 to the Trinity and their presence in the Sabbath lead us now to the hypothesis of the evil spiritual triumvirate and their relation with the  $\chi\xi\varsigma$  and ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου concept (Rv 7:3; 13:18; 16:12-14).

#### **4.17 HYPOTHESIS FOR ἐξακόσιοι ἐξήκοντα ἕξ ( $\chi\xi\varsigma$ ) USING ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου AND THE CONTEXT OF REVELATION 7:3, 16:12-14 AND 13:18**

##### **4.17.1 The code number hypothesis**

Another possible approach hypothesis for the number  $\chi\xi\varsigma$  is associated as being a code number for the beast/sea monster, which is blasphemy. It points to a parody of perfection: imperfection upon imperfection, despite the beast's monstrous claims (Johnson, in Holbrook 1992b:31). This possibility is supported by the fact that the number 6 is associated with humanity and therefore imperfection and limitation. Also, there are some references to the number 6 that clearly point to man. He was created on the sixth day (Gn 1:27, 31), and six days were appointed for his labor (Ex 20:9). The serpent was also created on the sixth day (Gn 1:24, 25, 31).

Some author discrepancies have taken place in regard to the usage and certainty of the number 6 as a single digit and its writing procedure in the ancient world. There have been some differences in provincial Roman numismatica as far as the Greek letter stigma is concerned.

Hopkins ([www.parthia.com/fonts/stigma.htm](http://www.parthia.com/fonts/stigma.htm)) argues that Butcher (1988:114) shows a V=sigma for number 6, instead of ζ (stigma = 6). He considers Butcher (1988:114) in error because he confused the final sigma with stigma. While these two letter forms are very similar, lower cases in Greek were not developed until the Middle Ages. Hopkins says that scholars on ancient Roman and Greek coins



refer to this issue and prefer ζ for number 6 (Hill 1964:215; Sear 1979:xxxvii; 1982:xxv; Jones 1986:158; Flegg 1989:88; Menninger 1970:270, in [www.parthia.com/fonts/stigma.htm](http://www.parthia.com/fonts/stigma.htm)).

After this proposition and its solving limitation problem on this particular numeric issue, we turn now to the concept of ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου and its relationship to χξς.

#### **4.17.2 ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου: Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11 and Revelation 16:12-14**

For this coded number approach, the ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου hypothesis is between two periods of time. John, in this genitive phrase of Revelation 7:2, observes the growing, not only of the Roman sun-worship process, but also the gradual power instauration of the sea-beast, Babylon promotion and the enforcing of a Sunday law in the world. Later in the book of Revelation, John shows another related prophetic narrative phrase in Revelation 16:12: τῶν βασιλέων ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου. This double genitive phrase indicates both kings of the East are in the same scenario. This approach considers that the previous genitive phrase is derived from Is 44:28-45:21 where Cyrus the Great is announced, along with his Mede allies, 150 years prior to his birth as a type of Christ. He destroyed Babylon by diverting the Euphrates from its bed into a marshy lake. His armies entered the city over the dry riverbed (Herodotus 1.191, in Konroff 1954:593). Jeremiah also prophesied this fact (Jr 50:38; 51:36, in Wiseman 1979:849). Cyrus was known also for liberating the Jews from Babylonian captivity. He began facilitating other successor Persian kings as they helped the Jews in rebuilding their temple and their city (2 Chr 36:22, 23; Es 1:1-11; 6:2-5 (Horn 1995:233). In large cuneiform inscriptions contained in the famous Cyrus cylinder, it is stated that he also allowed people from many other nations to return to their own lands (Horn 1995:233). In this archaeological and historicist parallelism, we see Christ and His heavenly hosts coming from the East to liberate the captives from all the nations, tribes, and tongues from Babylonian power (Mt 24:27; 2:9; Lk 17:23-24; 13; 29; 2 Pt 1:19; Rv 18:1-4). The drought of the Euphrates River (Rv 16:12), in this context, echoes the way in which Babylon was captured by Cyrus and his allies. In this historicist parallelism, the Euphrates means the lack of human support and ability to detain the world plagues and the sins of Babylon (Maxwell

1989:428-434). According to this hypothesis the three unclean spirits of Revelation 16:13 – δράκοντος, θηρίον, and the ψευδοπροφήτου – would conform to the triple six number of Revelation 13:18. This triple alliance alludes to the ancient Roman custom of *triumvirates*. *Triumvirates* were common in the Roman republic. They were created by political reason, mostly to exert power in the interest of the state, especially for the public welfare. The first one was constituted in 60 BCE. Julius Caesar, Pompey and Crassus were the ones that constituted it (Mellor and McGee 2004:70-75). The second *triumvirate* was formed with Octavian (Augustus), Marc Anthony, and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus in 43 BCE (Mellor and McGee 2004:89-92). The maligned Trinity of Revelation 16:13 are in one united genitive, which demonstrates not only a union but that the three have the same spirit for the original purpose, that being to fight against the Lamb (Rv 17:14). The Holy Trinity in Genesis 2:1-3 spoke about blessing, resting, and sanctifying in the visual cryptogram of Revelation 7:1-3, disguising the Holistic Sabbath presence. These three powers have στόματος which speak against God, His Word, and His kingdom. According to Chaij (1966:98-114), the identity of these three unclean spirits represent religious movements. The dragon indicates spiritualism. According to Chaij, the primarily symbol of the dragon in Revelation 12:9 is Satan, and is depicted in Revelation 16:13 as working through spiritualism which utilizes different channels or manifestations, such as paganism and Christian spiritualism, which is practiced in the form of laboratory investigations, under the name of parapsychology or other modern designations (Chaij 1966:98). In reference to violence and spiritualism in the world and the United States of America, according to Roy Brown (2006:277), “our world is experiencing a similar situation. There is no reverence for life. In cartoons, music and movies, violence is glorified. Witchcraft, the worship of Satan, psychic-phenomena, practicing witches spiritualism and demonology are practiced between our borders.” Because of this Clouzet (2009:10), in citing Lynn (2009:1A, 6A), mentions that the United States of America is turning into a secular nation even though many people still say they are Christian. The nation is going down the path that will lead to becoming a postmodern and a spiritualist nation. Eastern religions have grown 125 percent in this nation since 1990. New religions such as Wiccan, pagans, or spiritualists have increased 50 percent (although all these remain a relatively small percentage of the total US population, i e, about 1.2 percent). As another part of that same evil Trinity

postulated in Revelation 16:13, the beast indicates the Papacy system and, the false prophet is that sector of Christianity which unites with the state to summon support to it against the Sabbath (Chaij 1966:98-9). It is interesting that Revelation 16:13 refers to βατράχοι. The Hebrew term צפררע (*cephard ēā'*) describes the infestation of such amphibians that took place during the second plague that infested Egypt (Ex 8:1-15; Ps 78:45; 105:30). In Revelation this infestation narrative could reflect a worldwide manifestation in favor of such a spiritualist Trinity. Douglas suggests U.S.A as the great enabler for this process (Douglas 2006:67-104). The Hebrew term for such amphibians allows the probability for both frogs and toads (Day, in Orr & Nuelsen 1974c:1147). Horn (1995:974) and Wilkinson (1999:247) say that in ancient Egypt frogs were a symbol of life and origin and an emblem of the goddess Heqet, the benevolent patron of birth and the consort of Khnum, the god that was represented as a potter given form to a man on a pottery wheel (see also Pinch 2002:153-54).

From the British Museum it is possible to observe an Egyptian representation of a woman during the Graeco-Roman period from 332 BCE to 305 CE. The woman is giving birth while kneeling on two bricks. Heket, who was also a personification of the bricks on which the mother knelt, helped the woman deliver the baby:



Heket personified in the bricks in the British Museum (trial piece with a birth scene)

Horn (1995:974) says that in Revelation 16:13 frogs are also a symbol of impurity. The parallel with Revelation 16:13 resides in one antipode of extension. In Egypt they were local, but in Revelation 16:13-14 it says they have a worldwide extension and a demonic power: εἰσὶν γὰρ πνεύματα δαιμονίων ποιοῦντα σημεῖα, ἃ ἐκπορεύεται ἐπὶ τοὺς βασιλεῖς τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς (Rv 16:14). This phraseology suggests a worldwide deception. As in Egyptian polytheism, where the inscriptions presented Heqet and Khnum giving life, so demonic powers through spiritualism at the end of time will pretend to give life (2 Cor 11:14). The transcendence of this world deception is *in pectore* but the Bible depicts that only God is able to create, sustain, concede immortality and give life (Gn 2:7; Job 10:12; 12:40; Jn 5:21, 26; 11:25; 1 Cor 15:53; 1 Th 4:13-17; 1 Tm 1:16-17; 2 Tm 1:10; 1 Jn 5:11). The fact that Lucifer is a created being (Ezk 28:15) enhances the grotesqueness and coarseness of frogs in Revelation 16:13, 14. They can only hop, leaping in their efforts to reproduce life through spiritualism. It is a contraposition with the angels' messages of Revelation 14: 6-13. They do not leap or hop. Those angelic messages, because they come from God, are described as majestic, flying throughout the earth to counterattack the deceiving work of the evil Trinity. Some authors, such as Paulien, see this evil Trinity in the future, uniting the world because of its ecological calamities produced by the plagues predicted in Revelation 16. In this setting the call from Babylon is a mandatory call to allegiance to this evil power.

“[It] will certainly need to wield supernatural power in order to blend Eastern religions with Western mind-sets. Some possibilities are already evident in the development of New Age thinking in the West. New Age thinking, a subcategory of postmodernism, seems as attractive to secular people as it to those of Eastern backgrounds. Since the “flower children” of the sixties, secular people who were formerly uninterested in religion of any kind find the open-ended spirituality of today’s world quite comfortable. In fact, the one spiritual place in which postmoderns do not seem comfortable is anything associated with the three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. They decry the ‘bashing’ of other religions so common in the Christian-Muslim debate, for example, but are much more at home in

the defused spirituality of southern and eastern Asia. It may not require a great deal of supernatural power (Mount Carmel type experiences) to convince the average Westerner of God's presence today. Today, more than ever, the idea that the vast majority of earth's peoples and governments could be persuaded toward a common religious agenda is plausible. Ecological reasons may also compel political powers to choose to join the religion confederacy. If many of the seven last plagues of Revelation 16 are taken literally (particularly the first four and the last), the world may have a total ecological breakdown at some point in the future, requiring drastic measures to maintain law and order. In the context of a revival of religious institutions, people could easily interpret such disasters as a divine judgment (which they will in fact be). In such setting, anyone who bucks the religion confederacy might be seen as the cause of the environmental calamities. In order to save the planet, the call might go out to join Babylon and conform to its wishes."

(Paulien 2008:173-74)

After considering the identity and attempts of the evil Trinity and its anti-Sabbath posture, and in an effort to look for harmony between marriage, Sabbath and Trinity, the next section will explain the interdependency between these three terms as far as creation/Creator/marriage is concerned.

#### **4.17.3 Marriage, holistic Sabbath and Trinity**

The concept of Trinity is attested in Revelation when it is described by the equality in the terminology applied to the Father and the Son (Rv 1:4, 8; 22:1-3, 12, 13). The throne of God is shared in equality with the Son. In this thronic view the Son is no longer depicted as a sacrificial Lamb but in equality with the Father (Whidden, Moon and Reeve 2002:27-28). The purpose of this section is to justify the functionality of this *MST* triad (Marriage, Sabbath, and Trinity) under a parallel of Biblical references.

The institution of marriage forms a triangle of dependency, functionality, and identity (From 1966b:17-41). Because creation came into existence before man, this settled the platform in which humankind moves to execute its purpose and keep balanced its and nature's existence. Sabbath became a moderator and reminder of the sealing designing identity, which is authorship, ownership, and

kingdom. Thus, marriage, Sabbath and creation are opposed to the actual perversion in same sex marriage (Gn 19:1-13; Lv 18:22; 20:13; Rm 1:18-32; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Tm 1:8-11) for instance ([http://www.oneby1.org/same\\_sex\\_partnerships.html](http://www.oneby1.org/same_sex_partnerships.html)) which is prevailing in the modern Babylonian religious realm and that opposes the relationship of man/woman established by God since the creation (Adamson 2000:15-191). In this scenario, Sabbath is a link of authenticity and acceptance of God's principles originally designed for man and woman in the creation marriage scenario (Stott 1998:24, 28, 33-35). The three sides of the Creationist triangle (man, woman and Creator) contains within it the presence of the triple gift for marriage which offers God's principles in a postmodern world of restlessness and wavering morality. These gifts connected in marriage, Sabbath and Trinity are resting, blessing, and sanctification (Gn 2: 2-3). The concept of Sabbath in this stance is a refuge against the anxiety and stress of the hectic society of the present world. In this way, Sabbath gives us a sense of belonging to the Creator (Bacchiocchi 1997:222). The concept of biblical marriage invites one to consider that Sabbath is service to others and to the ecological habitat. Man must act as a curator rather than predator of the earth. Sabbath was designed also to take time to admire the earth rather than to exploit God's creation (Bacchiocchi 1997:225-226). In the same way that the Godhead is united in preserving the balance of the universe and the earth, human beings are invited to reproduce this attitude throughout the holistic Sabbath in their marriage experience. Next, there is a parallel between marriage and Sabbath, and Trinity and Sabbath.

### **Marriage and Sabbath Trinity and Sabbath**

|                                                                                                        |                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ownership to teach human beings their origin and Creator of weekly Sabbath (Gn 2:2-3; 22-24; Ex 12:4). | Ownership to God and preservation through recognition of Trinity gifts (2 Cor 13:13; Rv 14:7). |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



|                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| For preserving the <i>οἰκονομία</i> of the earth (Gn 1:28; 2:15)                                                 | Inviting man to cease from routine of life and renew family. Escapes from the anxiety and restlessness of Babylon (Ex 20:8-11; Rv 14:4)                                                  |
| As a symbol of protection, corporative ownership, authenticity, and preservation of marriage (Gn 1:26-28; 2:1-3) | σφραγίσωμεν of Revelation 7:3 indicates an aorist, subjunctive, first plural indicative which also includes the Godhead working in people, including marriage                            |
| Sabbath respects the creation of family in the only sense of male and female couple (Gn 1:26, 31; 2:1-3).        | Sabbath suggests avoiding the wickedness of Babylon, which destroys the meaning of marriage and the holistic Sabbath relationship with the Creator (Mt 19:4-6; Gn 1:26, 28; Rm 1:23-27). |

## 4.18 A SEALING LESSON FROM EXODUS 12:7

### 4.18.1 The blood, sealing, and the ordinance

Because the holistic Sabbath is not an end in itself, it is appropriate, through the experience of the Exodic blood painting of the lintel and two doorposts of the doors to their houses during the Passover, to discuss the faith and obedience meaning related in keeping some other Bible ordinances, including the Decalogue. Baker (2009:6-7) points out that the Israelites, by the time of the Exodus, were no longer nomadic but were dwelling in houses (Ex 12:22). Four generations in Egypt made the Israelites like the Egyptians, including culturally, and affected by the Egyptian religion. Houses were built of mud. Rich and poor people lived in this home structural setting. Only temples were built of stone to indicate eternity. In citing Allen (2001:79-81), Baker (2009:6-7) says the only stone structures in homes were precisely the lintel and doorposts. Related to



doorposts and lintels, Baker (2009:7) explains that Egyptians considered the human body was divided into five parts:

1. Mummification: The body had to survive death if the person wanted to live in the afterlife.
2. The shadow was the second part that according to Egyptians was a real part of the person.
3. The *Ka* or life force: Christians call it the breath of life (Gn 2:7).
4. The *ba* or the person's character.
5. The name was the last part of humanity. The name was engraved on the stone doorposts and lintels of homes.

According to Habachi (2001:40-43, 53-55, in Baker 2009:7)

Egyptologists excavating the Delta region have found stone doorposts and lintel with the owner's name practically intact ... because the children of Israel had to learn the superiority of Jehovah over the gods of Egypt. Through the plagues, Israelites slowly learn to trust in God.

(Baker 2009:7)

Because of this

when God required the Israelites to paint the blood they collected from the Passover lamb on the door posts and lintels, He was asking them to cover their names with blood of the lamb. By doing this they were taught the rudiments of salvation. Their names on stone did not ensure life in the hereafter; only the blood of the Lamb could do that. In fact, at least one member of their family would not survive the night without it.

(Baker 2009:7)

This archaeological finding helps one understand the fact that sealing is not applied mechanically or as a mere liturgical form. It has to do with the heart and mind of the person, all surrounding the Creator in humble and joyful acceptance.

We conclude this study by pointing out that sealing in Revelation 7:1-3 has a holistic meaning only when the blood of the Lamb through faith in Christ has

been accepted by the believer and the acceptance of His character is then chiseling and carving in the form of a name, which is Christ's character (Gl 4:19, 2 Cor 3:1-5; 2 Tm 1:19; Rv 7:3; 22:4; 1 Pt 2:5). The holistic Sabbath, under this exegetic and historicist approach was designated as the memorial of Creation, to remind man that God's children were deliberated from the idolatry, for worshipping not false gods, but the true God who was distinguished among them because He is the only One who has the power to create (Bunch 1997:23). But Sabbath in itself does not constitute an omen of protection and ownership from God. White says that not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed (White 1948:213). This author also emphasizes that it is through faith that the Christian must become a partaker of the righteousness of Christ (White 1893:3).

Historicists believe God is leading his people in a *continuum* astir throughout history. Wade (2010:13) says "we are not afraid to the future because we look back, to one past led by God who gives us certainty."

#### **4.19 SUMMARY**

Historicism claims a *continuum* of historic events progress that culminates with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This historicist *continuum* is supported by the narrative and prophecies from the Old Testament. Such a prophecy narrative works in historic parallelism through time as a part of a final world drama. In interpreting scriptures, Historicism neglects the postmodern "fusion of horizons" school because it undermines the historical-grammatical approach, which is the core of Historicism hermeneutics and exegesis. Historicism neglects the Idealistic school of interpretation as a whole. It admits, however, within the proper historical-grammatical context, the devotional and spiritual response in each history *continuum*; that is to say, that if Revelation speaks about a great and worldwide Armageddon crisis, it is also possible to think in terms of a personal Armageddon in the personal Christian life when the believer fights against himself, sin, the devil and the world. Certain teachings in Revelation related to

the seven churches, for instance, also have a devotional connection with the lives of Christians in every generation.

Regarding the writing date of Revelation, the Historicist evidence favors the Domitian theory, even though there is no conclusive archaeological evidence or any writings beyond Latin that give evidence of John's banishment to Patmos. Of this issue it must be said that much written information regarding banishment or penal islands lists from the past have been lost, probably forever. However, the possibility of a double word meaning for *metallum* quarry referred to by Victor of Pattau could have shown that John actually worked not within a mine but in a quarry. Besides, the fact that Domitian incorporates the characteristics and anti-Christian behavior of the period, this study favors 96 CE for the composing of Revelation. The Nero theory has some anachronisms, not mentioning the *redivivus* myth and the fact that that does not reflect the whole period of John's life. The position of *relegatio* for John, instead of *deportation*, seems to be suitable for the apostle in the Domitian theory. This study also neglects the composite Babylonian hypotheses and the Papias theory, because they consider the Apocalypse from a Preterist view and a different authorship than John's. Also, the Babylonian and Papias theories detach Revelation from a divine source and neglect the idea that Revelation still has a message for the world today.

In terms of writing style, when the fourth Gospel and Revelation are compared, even though the Greek language style of Revelation does not reflect the same style as the Gospel of John, there is a linguistic parallelism in both works that influences the idea of one writer. Moreover, the fact that the apostle was Hebrew-mind oriented and not Greek can be understood and can justify the Patmos absence possibility of an actuary or scribe on Revelation's writing. Also, the transliterated Hebraisms for Abaddon, Armageddon, for instance, and the grammar of the book explained by Thompson, Mussies, and Smiley are tools that indicate the isolation of John in Patmos exile.

The presence of the cryptic in Babylon related to Rome in the time of John is also present in a Petrine description (1 Pt 5:13). It was a codex language technique to avoid persecution and to distinguish Christian followers amongst each other. This cryptic writing style is also seen in the early fathers of the Church when they used the term Edom in mentioning Rome. The fact that Babylon appears in Revelation 17 as a harlot is accentuated if we consider the many pornographic Latin terms employed in ancient Rome for prostitution. Regarding the beasts symbols of Daniel and Revelation, Historicism considers a *continuum* historical connection when those beasts are described in Daniel 7 and 8, and Revelation 13 and 17. Historicists see a connection between the little horn of Daniel 7 and 8 with the sea monster of Revelation 13 and the harlot of Revelation 17. According to Historicism, when considering this prophetic panorama caution must be taken in the approaches for the Jerusalem-Babylon hypothesis where the prophets were killed. Historicism rejects this position because Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 and 135 CE without fulfilling any of the pretended Jerusalem-Babylon hypothesis. Besides this previous conception, some authors describe Babylon as a multiple manifestation with more than one empire or culture. Others see it as one economic entity, which will oppress men by worldwide financial collapse. However, Historicism considers Babylon and Rome as a part of the *continuum* progress in history that intends to destroy God's people and are against God's principles but are not the prophecy fulfillment itself. The consummation of the Historicist drama will take place when papal Rome will gain world power and the entire religious world called Babylon will fight against Christ's people. It is for that reason that the terms εἰκὼν, σφραγίς, χάραγμα, θηρίον, ἥλιος are used in Historicism in a symbolic way to describe a spiritual battle against God's sealing and man and its religious traditions.

Under such religious traditions, the description of the sun worship evolution within the Roman Empire developed, among other historical circumstances, with the Sunday law promulgated by Constantine the Great. For that purpose, Historicists such as Bacchiocchi and Paulien, among others, believe in a

historical change evolution from Sabbath to Sunday controversy that will culminate in a worldwide political and religious impact. In the time of John the controversy was just rising with the Domitian worship and the uprising of sun worship by subsequent Roman Caesars, but will grow until the historicist drama will reach the whole earth. The ἀριθμός of the beast which is χξς or 666, open a discussion on the identification of this mysterious number. The special theological significance of this number is not an easy task to solve since every number presents a variety of possible meanings. Irenaeus proposed a variety of ghematric names for this number. Preterism applies the number to Nero with some variations. The various ghematric possibilities such as the Hebrew, Latin, and Greek names are not conclusive. Even the Latin *Vicarivs Filii Dei* has an aura of distrust in its usage because it showed up during the French Revolution and was taken from a forgery work entitled *Donation of Constantine*. The Roman Catholic Church refuses to accept the existence of a Tiara with that particular engraved Latin title for the Pope. However, some authors suggest there is recent historical proposed evidence that dates back to the first millennium CE in showing the tiara's mysterious and elusive number-name that the Roman Catholic Church says does not exist.

Since the archaeological findings at Oxyrhynchus, Preterism favors the "evidence" in the papyrus p<sup>115</sup>'s fragment which contains Revelation 13:18 not with ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ [χξς] but χις. However, Irenaeus and other Historicists defend the 666 saying the best evidence proposes 666 with the possibility of a copyist or scribe mistake. The presence of 666 in well trusted codex and documents such as κ, A, the Vulgate, and many other manuscripts, favors the evidence of the 666 number.

Historicists also favor the presence of the Roman Catholic system in the sea monster of Revelation 13 and 17. They deny the little horn as being Antiochus Epiphanes IV in Daniel 7 and 8 because he did not fulfill the cosmic and *continuum* progression of such religious-political power. He was just a local

power that did not last and disappeared without any major repercussion in the historical realm of prophecy. Historicists, instead follow the idea that the first beast or land beast of Revelation 13 is the one that will reconstruct the εἰκὼν of the beast and will unite with the sea monster of Revelation 13. This process took a starting point during the 1 260 years of papal supremacy, which Historicists put from 538 CE to 1798 (Dn 7:25; Rv 12:6; 13:5). Historicism views the land beast of Revelation 13:11 as the United States of America.

In the exegetical approach of Revelation 7:1-3 there are three usage descriptions for the term ἀποκάλυψις which comprises the tension existent in the book: The unveiling of something hidden, which gives light and knowledge to Gentiles that become Christians and give them knowledge in the new covenant and that spiritual truth was made known by revelation and will be totally fulfilled in the occasion of Christ's second coming.

The exegetical study of Revelation 7:1-3 is said to be a parenthesis of grace. It is an interlude between the sixth and seventh seals. The question of 6:17 "who is able to stand?" opens its explanation in Revelation 7:1-3. The holding of the four winds by the four angels indicates a worldwide event that involves the number four, which is the number for total comprehension and world covering according to ancient understanding. The presence of the angel coming from the East implies the evolving process of sun worship but also, the promise of Christ's return, using the East as the pointing signal referred to in the Scripture (Mt 2:9; 8:11; 24:27; Lk 13:29; 16:12).

The hypothetical presence of a code number for 666 as the false Trinity is one approach to consider. There are three powers confirming this triumvirate: Papacy, spiritualism, and the religious system affiliated with papal Rome will form a global tyrant power before the end of time. This Trinity is explained under the code number hypothesis as being the explanation for Revelation 13:18 χξς. Because the number 6 defines man and all that is imperfect so this evil

triumvirate conspires imperfectly, within human traditions against God and His people. This coming of the Lord is anticipated by the sealing. Σφραγίς in Revelation 7:1-3 is not a physical or bodily signet but a relationship based on the attributes of seal, which are ownership, property, authenticity, and protection. According to Historicism, this sealing is the formation of Christ in the life of the believer (Gl 4:18, 19). The ancient Roman society described by Tertullian and others, illustrates the kind of Christian view believers had towards Rome and their moral practices. Sealing is not merely related only to a specific day but to a genuine relationship in faith through Christ that leads the Christian to respect and honor God's Decalogue. On the other hand, χάραγμα is used in Revelation for the adherence to beast worship. Therefore, according to Historicism, the function of sealing as expressed in Revelation 7:1-3 is viewed also within the relationship of respect to the Decalogue, the human body, and world environment.

The description of the holistic Sabbath as the seal is actually a relationship in faith that is procured to remind man that its origin is based on the Godhead. The Trinity is represented in the three verbs of Genesis 2:2-3 and Exodus 20:11. These verbs are rested (Christ the Son), blessed (God the Father) and sanctified (Holy Spirit). These three verbs indicate the creation participation of the divine Trinity in Genesis 1. The Godhead created marriage for perpetuating the creation relationship in the sealing covenant expressed in the οἰκονομία of the world and to remember they rest in the Sabbath because it is a memorial of creation and Christ's salvation. This is why Mk 2:27 uses the word ἄνθρωπος instead of ἀνὴρ. Man is a steward of God's creation, and the Greek generic term described here implies humanity and not only the Jewish population. The parallelism between the Sabbath, marriage and Creator, establishes and indicates that the process of resting, blessing, and sanctifying is against any other marriage intention rather than male/female.

In the Historicism concept of sealing, Christian is the process of being apart from ἀδικία (2 Tm 2:19) that includes respect for God's creation. The description of



protection and property applied to sealing also implies a respect for God's creation, a counterpart of the admonishing to Babylon that destroys the earth (Rv 11:18). The Roman Empire produced a pale description of this pollutant attitude manifested in the copper production, wood deforestation and the killing of livestock for mob circus entertainment. A similar description is viewed in the current earth ecology condition. The holistic Sabbath reminds man that on the seventh day humanity is equal, despising social class, economic power, or even race. They find rest out of the restless Babylonian world. The similarity of Exodus 12 and Revelation 7:1-3 with regard to sealing shows a respect for human life. Sealing is for everyone who follows Jesus Christ. The sealing is against any xenophobic or racism intent as the Egyptian traditions intended to describe the Exodus experience. The holistic Sabbath is also a response against the evolution thought in the modern world that includes theories such as the Gap theory, theistic evolution, progressive creation, pantheistic evolution, and evolution. The holistic Sabbath is against the new kind of sex oriented marriages that neglects and rejects God's creation of a couple formed by one man and a woman (Gn 1:26-28, 31). The fact that Egyptologists have found some stone doorposts and lintels in the Delta region with their homeowners on them, helps one to understand the fact that sealing is not something applied to a mere ordinance or rite. It must be centered and cored in the blood of the apocalyptic Lamb (Rv 5 and 6) which preserves, protects and gives meaning to the Holistic sealing way in which Historicism looks at the Sabbath.

## CHAPTER 5

# CONCLUSION

The study of sealing for this study employed the historicism approach to Revelation as the core tool for the study and interpretation of chapter 7:1-3. The research in this study also explains various sealing usage patterns throughout history. The chosen time line periods for this sealing investigation included the Ancient Near East, the Old Testament, the Graeco-Roman, and the New Testament. The Alexandrian Judaism, Gnosticism and the Apostolic Fathers periods are also part of this sealing discussion. Throughout these periods of history there are various sealing attributes attestation in its functionality in the literal and in the figurative technicality mode. These literal and figurative sealing attributes can be named as authenticity, inviolability, ownership, property, protection, and preservation.

In the ANE these sealing attributes were described mainly in the religious and political realm to indicate the authority and royalty gifts that gods and goddesses bestowed especially upon kings. Those ancient rulers were in a certain way the adoptive sons and regents of gods and goddesses on earth. At first such sealing attributes were engraved in royal cylinder seals, one of the oldest types of seals known. In these particular seals gods and goddesses are shown bestowing their gifts of protection upon Assyrian and Babylonian kings in history as early as the Uruk period in the fourth millennium BCE.

The craftsman dedicated to manufacturing those seals was the seal-cutter. It is very likely that seal-cutters were figuratively covered with an aura of mystic power attributed on such glyptic art that later included also the *intaglio*. In the ANE seal-cutters used their engraving skill to influence the peoples' lives daily. The seal-motifs engraved by them proposed authenticity and property for legal and royal decrees. These seals also offered a traditional protection from demons

and against witchcraft spells and the activity of evil powers. The seal-cutter crafted the seal people needed or requested. His work was performed on metal, stone, or any other hard substance. These engraved sealing attributes appeared in economy, politics and, of course, religion. Sealing an item could also indicate an intellectual possession. One of the oldest forms of seals in Mesopotamia is the cylinder seal (Horn 1995:1072-1073). This particular type of seal was originated, according to Martin (1940:3), during the Uruk period in the fourth millennium BCE.

With regards to the method for studying the message of sealing in Revelation 7:1-3, historicism considers history as the bone marrow of prophecy. Thus, historicism considers Daniel and Revelation as containing a divine lordship and mastery concerning the onward movement of history beyond the prophet's own time. This is attested by Strand (in Holbrook 1992a:11-34) when he remarks that God's sovereignty and constant care for His people are always in the forefront of the Bible's portrayal of the historical *continuum*, whether it is depicted in past events (historical books) or in some apocalyptic prophecy (Strand, in Holbrook 1992a:19).

Because historicism supports the *continuum* pattern through history, this study takes up various examples of sealing episodes in the Old Testament to depict its correspondent symbolic relation found in the New Testament, climaxing in Revelation 7:1-3. These Old Testament sealing occurrences are the Passover (Ex 12:1-21); the case of the servant that wanted to remain in the house of his master (Ex 21:1-6), and the sealing of the faithful in the book of Ezekiel (Ezk 9:1-4). In this Ezekiel passage (Ezk 9:1-4), the presence of the term *טָבַע* (*tav*), "seal," and *מִצְחוֹת* (*mitzchovt*), "forehead," also illustrate an authentic relationship and practical ownership with God. These sealing attributes are also observed in contraposition with the terms *σφραγίδα, ἀποστήτω ἀπὸ ἀδικίας...τὸ ὄνομα κύριος* expressed in 2 Timothy 2:19. This New Testament reference sustains a personal and vital friendship with God that wants to emulate the principles that Christ lived

by when He lived in this world. This message is also well attested by the kind of conduct primitive Christians showed when they reacted against the worldly entertainment of the Roman Empire ([www.peculiarpress.com/etn/archive.htm](http://www.peculiarpress.com/etn/archive.htm) , article #31).

The apocalyptic sealing reference found in Revelation 7:3 (σφραγίσωμεν τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν) depicts an *imitatio Christi* growth process. Paul also recognizes this Christian growing process in his writings (2 Cor 5:17; Gl 4:19). Revelation 7:3 also harmonizes with the statements of Hardinge (2005:129) and Marshall (1998:81, 91-93, 106-108, 112-114) who say that the frontal lobe, situated behind the forehead, is the seat of the intellect, associated with reasoning, planning, the resolving of problems, speech, emotions, and movement.

The historicist approach of interpretation in studying Revelation 7:1-3 understands the Roman Catholic Church as being the religious system that fulfill the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation regarding the little horn and its opposition against God's Holistic Sabbath and producing the gradual changing in the Sabbath to Sunday process (Dn 7:8, 25; 2 Th 2:1-8; Rv 12:1-17; 13:1-18; 17:1-18; see Bacchiocchi 2000:164-221; Knight 2003:165; Maxwell, in Holbrook 1992b:41-67, 92; Nichol & Cottrell 1985a:41-80; Tuberville 2003:58).

The historicist approach concludes that the Papacy will gain worldwide support and dominion, provoking and enforcing a Sunday law, first in the United States of America, which the historicist approach considers the ἄλλο θηρίον mentioned in Revelation 13:11-16 (Lickey 1952:550-551; White 1977:515-551). Depending on prophetic historicism this phenomena will take place in order to reduce a major moral and environmental threat affecting world population.

Historicism points to the holistic Sabbath as being part of the Christ molding process message in the life of the believer as cited in Revelation 7:1-3. The mind

is the engraving place of that spiritual writing process performed by the Holy Spirit (Ex 31:18; 2 Cor 3:1-3; Heb 10:15, 16).

The term holistic Sabbath includes five areas that are in relationship with this particular day. Genesis 2:1-3 and Exodus 20:11 present various important aspects to justify the term holistic. These five areas are the Creation covenant, the anti-xenophobic message, the rest of mankind, the sanctity of marriage as it was created in Eden, and the express *verbi* creation against evolution. The first area (the Creation covenant) describes the Creation covenant between God and man. This covenant is portrayed in terms of ecological respect to the natural environment. This ecologic responsibility is applied to the first couple when God called them to be οἰκόνομος of planet earth (Gn 1:29-30). This ecological rest of the earth was transmitted to generations, particularly to Hebrew society in the various Sabbaths described in the Torah (Lv 23:1-44). The second area states that humanity is equal: all human beings are considered sons and daughters of one and the same God. They all are part of the generic term ἄνθρωπος (Mk 2:27) and are not merely being ἀνήρ. The holistic Sabbath is at the same time against any xenophobic attitude because man was created equal and from one common source: earth (Gn 2:7; Ac 17:26). The third holistic Sabbath attribute is the fact that this day is designed to combat the anxiety and restlessness of humanity, diverting them from the material and present world to the spiritual realm of God's rest. The fact that marriage was created before the Sabbath (Gn 1:26-28) reminded the first couple and humanity about the value of matrimony according to God's standards for a man and a woman. The holistic Sabbath is also a reminder that human beings are not a product of millions of years of capricious evolution but an express *verbi* creation of God's short weekly design according to Genesis (Gn 1:31; 2:1-3; Ps 33:6, 7, 9; see Roth 1998:340).

The holistic Sabbath is a historicism call to remind people that Christ is the center of earth's creation as much as spiritual transformation. He is the center of them all. Referring to the work of Bengel, Fromm (1948a:710) states that historicism

not only values “computations for measuring time, the Bible should be considered as the revelation of God’s plan in which Christ is the supreme, all overshadowing center.”

The code number hypothesis in this study does not follow the traditional ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ nor the χις numerologies for Revelation 13:18 beast number. Instead, this approach interprets the number 666 as a parody of perfection, imperfection upon imperfection, despite the best monstrous claims of the beast (Johnson, in Holbrook 1992b:31). The number six is associated with man (Gn 1:27, 31; Ex 20:9).

According to this code number hypothesis, John observes the growing of the Roman sun worship process and the gradual power instauration of the sea beast and Babylonian promoting and enforcing of a Sunday law in the world. The phrase ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου in Revelation 7:3 is connected with another genitive in Revelation 16:12, namely τῶν βασιλέων. From this perspective, the kings of the East represent Christ and his hosts. This approach considers 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 from the wicked city. In this sense Cyrus is a type of Christ in his second coming (Mt 24:27; 2:9; Lk 17:23-24; 2 Pt 1:19; Rv 18:1-4).

The phrase τὸν μέγαν τὸν Εὐφράτην, καὶ ἐξηράνθη τὸ ὕδωρ αὐτοῦ in Revelation 16:12 (the drowning of the river Euphrates) echoes the way in which Babylon was captured by Cyrus and his allies. In this historical parallelism the Euphrates means the lack of human support and ability to detain the world plagues and the sins of Babylon (Rv 16:1-21; 18:1-24; 19:1-21).

The last explanation on this respect consists in viewing the evil trinity as being composed by the terms δράκοντος, θηρίον and ψευδοπροφήτου (Rv 16:13). The historicist exegesis considers this evil triumvirate as the religious superpower that

will join forces against God's children before Christ's second coming. The code number hypothesis considers these three evil powers as the triple six in Revelation 13:18. The triple alliance alludes to the ancient Roman custom of *triumvirates*. Here the concept is applied to a malignant Trinity. From the perspective of this code number hypothesis, the Holy Trinity is symbolized by the verbs "blessed" (God the Father); "rested" (God the Son), and "sanctified" (God the Holy Spirit; see Gn 2:2-3; Ex 20:11). The presence of the frogs in the prophecy (Rv 16:13) implies a spiritualistic awakening that will control the whole world. Historicists view these worldwide deceptions and their final falling and destruction in Revelation 18:1-4. Babylon is described here as κατοικητήριον δαιμονίων καὶ φυλακή παντὸς ὀρνέου ἀκαθάρτου (Rv 18:2).

Historicists believe God is leading His people in a *continuum* astir throughout history. According to Wade (2010:13), "we are not afraid of the future because we look back, to one past led by God who gives us certainty." The apostle Paul, in Romans 15:4, brings out the *continuum* message of the plan of salvation in its relationship with history and the Scriptures. This Scripture-history relationship is present in both Testaments through prophecy fulfillment (Is 42:9; 46:9, 10-11; Dn 2:20-22; 44, 45; Is 2:17-22; Rv 1:7; 14:14; 17:12-14; 16:1-21; 18:1-24; 19:1-21).

The response against Babylonian delusions and its world religious dominion is anticipated by the work and identity of the Lamb. He is the only One worthy to open and interpret history (Rv 5:1-5). He leads His children throughout the corridors of time (Ac 17:25, 26). For that journey, He has provided his sealing, which is his character mirrored in the Decalogue. Therefore, He selected the holistic Sabbath as a representation of such moral relationship. In fact, this message is in the center of these ten precepts. That centrality could indicate that man shall first find God's rest in order to care for their environment, and then share that rest with their fellow humans. The holistic Sabbath assures humanity a cathedral in time to relieve the stress and the anxiety emanating from Babylon. Through this resting promise, humans may learn to care for Nature and its



delicate ecological system. Also, man is reminded that he is equal to others. There is no xenophobic message in the holistic Sabbath. That is why Christ utilized the term ἄνθρωπος in Mark 2:27. We were created from the same earth in which all humans live.

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## GLOSSARY

### **Aesthetic approach on Revelation**

This approach considers Revelation within the realm of art interpretation, viewing the imagery as symbols that contain depictions of timeless truths and the victory of good over evil. Also, this particular approach is applied to some of the Jewish modern history experience, including World War II, the Holocaust, and Zionism (Braiterman 2007: xvii-xxx, 3, 9, 35, 73-74, 133, 144, 154, 165, , 190-191, 199-206).

### **Astral prophecy approach to Revelation**

This approach considers that “John is an astral prophet. His prophecies were rooted in reading the sky by means of observations, sky visions” (Maier 2002:10). Revelation can be understood only within the astronomy and astrology approach (Malina 1995:12-3).

### **Attributes of sealing**

Authenticity, ownership, property, inviolability and protection are the more frequent attributes given to seals in the ancient world (see Brun, Nissen, Porada and Steinkeller, in Sibson 1977:15, 20, 21, 41-53). These attributes can also be applied in a symbolic or metaphoric way (Ex 12:7; Is 8:16; Ezk 9:4; 2 Tm 2:19; Rv 6:3; 7:3).

### **Babylonian hypothesis theory**

Supported by Higher Criticism, this theory considers Revelation as composed from Babylonian mythology. In this approach number of the beast finds its explanation in the primeval chaos.

### **βάτραχοι**

This term describes the malign Trinity of Revelation 16:13. It alludes to the plague of frogs in Exodus 8:1-15; Psalm 78:45; 105:30). It is also associated with the Egyptian frog goddess named Heqet (Horn 1995:974).

### **Constantine millennial approach**

Augustine developed this concept, extracting it from Revelation 11:15 and applying it to Constantine the Great when this emperor promoted the union of church and state (Napier 1593:2; Klassen 1992:5).

### **Collars**

A form of sealing used to identify slaves. These collars were made of thick metal and inscribed with mottos. Most of the collars found thus far are post-Constantinian. Many of these collars bore Christian iconography written in κοινή, such as Α, Ω and Π (Glancy 2002:88; Shawn 2001:51-78, 167-77). These collars also bore the name and address of the slave's owner, as well as instructions on how to return the slaves if they run away (Ehrman 2007:317, 344-47).

### **Continuum**

Historicist and Recapitulist term used to refer to the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation. These apocalyptic prophecies are understood to meet their fulfillments in historical time between the days of John and the establishment of the eternal kingdom. This approach interprets the various prophecies of Revelation as going over the same ground from the prophet's own day until the end of the end time (Veloso 1998:11-226; Shea 1996:1-171).

### **Cylinder seals**

These seals originated in the Uruk period in the fourth millennium BCE and were used for more than three thousand years by the people of the Near East (Martin 1940:3).

### **Code number hypothesis**

#### **(a) ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἑξ [χξς]=666**

This approach considers the number 666 as a parody of perfection, imperfection upon imperfection, despite the best monstrous claims of the beast (Johnson, in Holbrook 1992b:31). The number six is associated to man (Gn 1:27, 31; Ex 20:9).

#### **(b) ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου in Revelation 7:3 and 16:12-14**

According to this code number hypothesis John observes the growing of the Roman sun worship process and the gradual power instauration of the sea beast and Babylon promoting and enforcing of a Sunday law in the world. The phrase ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου in Revelation 7:3 is connected with another genitive in Revelation 16:12, namely τῶν βασιλέων. From this perspective, the kings of the East represent Christ and his hosts. This approach considers 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 from the wicked city. In this sense Cyrus is a type of Christ in His second coming (Mt 24:27; 2:9; Lk 17:23-24; 2 Pt 1:19; Rv 18:1-4).

#### **(c) τὸν μέγαν τὸν Εὐφράτην, καὶ ἐξηράνθη τὸ ὕδωρ αὐτοῦ**

The drowning of the river Euphrates, in this context, echoes the way in which Babylon was captured by Cyrus and his allies. In this historical parallelism the Euphrates means the lack of human support and ability to detain the world plagues and the sins of Babylon.

#### **(d) δράκοντος, θηρίον, ψευδοπροφήτο**

The code number hypothesis considers these three evil powers as the triple six in Revelation 13:18. The triple alliance alludes to the ancient Roman custom of *Triumvirates*. Here the concept is applied to a malign Trinity. From the perspective of this code number hypothesis the Holy Trinity is symbolized by the

verbs “blessed” (God the Father); “rested” (God the Son) and, “sanctified” (God the Holy Spirit; see Gn 2:2,3; Ex 20:11).

### **Domitian theory**

This postulate argues that John wrote the book of Revelation during his banishment to Patmos in the latter years of Domitian kingdom (90-96 CE).

### **εἰκόν**

“To be similar,” “to be like,” or “to appear.” The εἰκόνα τοῦ Θεοῦ is against the renewal of the image and the likeness of Christ in humankind (Richards 1985:351-2).

### **θηρίον**

In the imagery of Revelation, satanic and demonic powers are consistently represented as beasts (Rv 13:11-12). In Daniel they represent kingdoms (Dn 7:17, 23).

### **ἥρω**

Literally, “shrine for a hero.” The term was associated with the beginning of the Roman Emperor cult in the East provinces of the Empire (Friesen 2006:26-27; Taylor 2009:555).

### **Futurism approach to Revelation**

This school of interpretation considers Revelation through extracted verses like Daniel 9:24 and 27 and transposed in Revelation to support what they believe is the period of the Great Tribulation. According to this approach, sealing will take place during the Great Tribulation, after the rapture (see Morris 1983:128-132).

### **Globalists**

The ones who accept geo-religion (Martin 1992:286-287; Scarone 2000:151).



### **Higher criticism approach to Revelation**

This method is a branch of literary analysis that investigates the origin of the text in terms of chronological answers about when and who wrote the text. This approach postulates that Revelation and its message happened within the first-century CE context with the genre of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature (Burkert and Raffan 1985:1-20; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higher\\_criticism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higher_criticism)).

### **δοῦλος**

The Hebrew word עֶבֶד (ebhedh) is can be translated as slave. In the New Testament the servant finds freedom, not in recovering an independent will, but in submitting his will freely and joyfully to God (Rm 1:1; 1 Cor 7:19-20,23; Gl 1:10; 2:20; Plph 1:1,21; Tt 1:1; 1 Pt 4:2; Rv 1:1;22-23).

### **Historicism as approach to read Revelation**

Prophecy is explained through history, anticipated and previewed by prophecy. It is seen as “largely predictive of actual events to occur throughout the history of Christianity, from the time of John until the return of Jesus Christ” (Elliot 1862:562-63).

### **Holistic Sabbath**

Holistic Sabbath is a term coined in this study to amplify the concept of the Sabbath. The phrase holistic Sabbath is also related to human beings in a holistic way: for emotional, physical and spiritual well-being and for an anti-xenophobic way of thinking in the sense that in the Sabbath all humankind are equal. Likewise, the concept of holistic Sabbath is applied to the balance in creation with the preservation of nature in mind and blessing of creatures. It is also a response against the theory of evolution or theistic evolution postures (Mk 2:27; Ac 17:26; Ps 33:6-7, 9; Kline 2006:19, 39, 180; Doukhan 2002:70-1; Dressner 1970:43; Wuest 1973:60-61; Magnusson 1977:59-61; Roth 1998:340; Baldwin, Brand, Chadwick and Younger 2009:37; Hull 1991:486).

## **Idealism**

The Idealistic approach does not restrict the contents of Revelation to a particular historical period, but rather sees apocalyptic symbols as multivalent in meaning and without specific historical reference (Pate et al 1998:24). The poem “Thanksgiving day” is typical on this approach (Esquivel 1982:79-81).

## **Intaglio**

An image incised into a surface of a cylinder seal.

## **Jerusalem-Babylonian approach to Babylon**

This approach renders the harlot Babylon as representing Jerusalem where the prophets were slain, and not Rome (Mt 23:29-39; Massingberde 1978:3-4).

## **κύριος**

The word expresses sovereignty and majesty and, in connection with the idea of divinity, suggests that Caesar is the beneficent god and Roman savior who dominates the whole world. Oaths were sworn per *genium Caesaris*. The great innovation of the LXX is on the religious level of this term. On the one hand, it uses κύριος to translate not only the Hebrew אֲדֹנָי (‘*Adh ṓn*); אֲרִבִּי (‘*Adh ṓn āy*}, Aramaic *m ār ē*, but specially the divine tetragrammaton יהוה (YHWH), so that the term of the God of Israel is “Lord” (Ex 7:16; 9:13; 10:3; Dt 5:6-9; 1 Ki 11:31; Ps 3:1; 6:1; 9:13; 10:1; 12:7; Is 24:16; Spicq in 2008:346-347). The word Κύριος is also found in the fourth Gospel (Jn 20:28) as the equivalent of Θεός (Jn 20:28). The word κύριος is also attested in the book of Revelation (see Rv 1:8; 4:11; 6:10; 14:13; 15:4; 16:5; 19:6).

## **χάραγμα**

In Revelation 13:11-18 it is used to describe the appearance of the second beast demanding religious recognition of its cultic image. This marking by stigmatization was common in antiquity. The branding on the right hand or the

forehead is an acceptance of the χάραγμα by religious signing with the mark of the beast (in Kittel 1974d:416-417).

### **Legio X Fretensis**

The Roman legion that seized and destroyed Jerusalem in 70 CE (Lk 21:20-22). Fragmented Roman seals stemming from this legion have been found in Jerusalem (Gruhalbo 1973:111).

### **Literalist approach to Babylon**

According to this approach, the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18 does not signify any political or religious power, but is exclusively an economic entity, which oppress all men by international commercial manipulation (Thomas 1982:333-341).

### **Literalist approach to Revelation**

This approach considers the prophecy of Revelation as being literally fulfilled and ignores the concept that languages use many communications techniques such as metaphor (Rv 2:23; 5:5); hypocastasis (Rv 2:17, 22, 24, 25); metonymy (Rv 1:5, 10, 12); synecdoche (Rv 3:1, 4, 10); polysindeton (Rv 21:8, 22-27; 22:1-6,17); and asyndeton (Rv 21:18-20). These literary figures are also associated with the use of symbols which is well attested in Revelation (Mulholland 1959a:183-184,196-197,223; Chevrier 2005: 2-70).

### **Metallum**

This Latin word can be used as an external evidence for John's banishment to Patmos. The term refers to a mine or to a quarry, since Patmos has some quarries but no mines (Ramsay 1904:83).

### **Minimumlists**

The ones that assume an exclusive world and religion (Martin 1992:286-287; Scarone 2000:151).

### **Nero theory**

This theory postulates that Revelation was written in the second half of the year 68 CE.

### **Oxyrhynchus Papyrus**

The Oxyrhynchus papyrus contains p<sup>115</sup>, the earliest manuscript we have of Revelation and attest a different numerical value with regard to Revelation 13:18. The total number written in this papyrus is χζς= 616 ([www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/)).

### **Papias theory**

This theory postulates that Revelation was composed late in the first-century CE by two other authors than John.

### **Preterism approach to Revelation**

This approach understands Revelation as exclusively addressed to real churches that faced problems in the first century CE. The message of Revelation is already fulfilled in the time of the original audience. In this approach sealing is applied exclusively to the ones the escaped the horrors of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE (Gentry 1989:15-19; Thomas 1992:465).

### **Recapitulation approach to Revelation**

According to this approach the prophecies of Revelation is seen as being repeated from the prophet's own day until the end time. Where the Bible and history is concerned, the Recapitulation approach has been the standard interpretation for Seventh-day Adventists. The best known example of a Recapitulation pioneer author is Uriah Smith (1977:10-259).

### **Seal**

“An instrument of stone, metal or other hard substance (sometimes a ring) on which is engraved some device or figure that is used for making an impression on some soft substance such as clay or wax, affixed to a document or other

objects as a token of authenticity” (Edwards, in Orr et al 1974a:2708). In the Bible the term seal is sometimes used figuratively (Is 8:1; Dn 12:4,9) or for political purposes (Es 2:12; 8:8,10).

### **Seal cutter**

There is not much evidence of seal cutter’s workshops in Mesopotamia, except from the tablets of Akalah (1500-1400 BCE). Seal cutting was perhaps the most difficult work to perform (Porada, in Sibson 1977:7-8, 12). Because the seal cutter made seals for many trades, his work was related with magic, religion, politics and socio-economic issues.

### **Seal letters**

In the Roman world letters were authenticated by using a seal (signet) incised in clay, by means of a summary of the letter’s content in the author’s own handwriting at the end of the letter, or by means of a word of farewell in the author’s own handwriting at the end of the letter (Richards 2004:174).

### **ἄλλο θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆ γῆς (the second beast)**

According to Historicism the second beast that comes out of the earth (Rv 13:11-15) represents the rise and power of the United States of America in the sense that this nation will promote and enforce a national Sunday law within its territory and will encourage the nations of the world to obey the first beast that is rising up from the sea (Rv 13:1). According to the Historicist approach the two horns of this earth-beast are representing the separation between church and state (White 1977: 276-285, 515-442).

### **σφραγίς**

It means sealing and is a frequent term in Revelation. It has a distinctive use in Revelation (see Rv 5:1; 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 7:3; 9:4; 20:3 22:10). In Revelation 7:3 it refers to the membership of God’s people or fellowship. Those sealed are God’s property (Kittel 1971b:951).

### **Symbolical-Universal Babylon approach**

This method of interpretation considers Babylon as a timeless and universal reality that embraces more than one empire or culture (Minear 1968:135-158).

### **Tattooing in the Acts of Thomas**

In this work Gunda and his brother Gad, after being converted, asks Thomas to seal them, since God knows his sheep by their seal (Kittel 1971b:952).

### **The little horn**

Preterist and Futurist writers (Walvoord 1989:185, 264, 257-266; Wallace 1973:131-137; Russell 1981:3; Strauss 1969: 244-245) consider the little horn of Daniel 7:25 and 8:10-12 as being fulfilled not in Rome as Historicism teaches, but in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes IV, the Syrian king who conducted military campaigns between 169-163 BCE in Egypt, Syria and Palestine. Historicists believe that this Syrian king which was the octave of the 26 Syrian kings that reigned in succession over that territory, cannot properly describe the *continuum* cosmic fight between the little horn and the Christ the Prince in the book of Daniel. He acted for a very short time and in a reduced geographical world territory. Newton (1922:222) says that, a horn of a beast is never interpreted in the Bible as being one person alone. This prerogative is exclusively attributed to Jesus (Lk 1:69). A horn always point to a new kingdom. Prideaux (1749:106-107) mentions that because of Antiochus Epiphanes IV behavior, he must be called “ἐπίμανες” (crazy) instead of “ἐπίφανες” (illustrious) as he was described in a pejorative manner.

### **Vicarivs Filii Dei**

This Latin ghematric name was used to affirm the 666 connection of Revelation 13:18 with the alleged ghematric presence in the papal mitra. This is a very a complex and dubious issue. The fact that the Vicarivs Filii Dei is extracted from the *Donation of Constantine*, a well-known forgery, attaches incredulity to this ghematric postulate. Another downfall on the Vicarivs Filii Dei theory is that under

the ghematric interpretation rule all the letters for the prospective ghematric name or phrase must have a numerical value. This proposed phrase does not.

### **Vorverständnis**

This term, which means, “previous intelligence or “pre-comprehension,” involves a dialogue in which the interpreter, from his personal emotive situation, asks questions to the text and, at the same time, the text questions the interpreter. This dialogue is also called the “hermeneutic circle” in which the interpreter acquires a new understanding of the text. This understanding of the text is based on the personal emotive and reasoning horizon of the interpreter. This hermeneutic process may lead to anachronistic interpretations of a text (Treier 1996:3-6). This is the hermeneutic core of the Idealism approach.