

# 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, From (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 Δανιήλ 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. Ἰδητε (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 βδέλυκ- 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 [עדניא – idanaiya] from עדן [iddan]; καιρούς [LXX]), and epochs [וזמניא- vezimnaiya] from זמן [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*); דמוט [*demut*]; אות [*'oth*]; מטרה [*mattara*]; מופת [*mopheth*] אקאק [*ka'aka*]; סלם [*Tslem*] and תו [*taw*]. For the Greek terms in the study of sealing, the following words have been chosen for the discussion of sealing: εἰκόν, μῶλωψ, σημεῖον, σκοπός, στίγμα, σφραγίς, χαρακτήρ and χάραγμα. The last four words (εἰκόν, 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 δούλος 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 Ἰεζεκιηλ (*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 = ברך [*b ār āk*]; rest = נוח [*nuah*] and sanctify = קרש

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

The meaning of δούλος, μετώπων and σφραγίς in Revelation 7:1-3 and ἀδικία (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-

historicist 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 ἕξ (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 תִּפְתַּחְתָּ (*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 παρυσία. 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 συνβολή. 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 the 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 (εἰκῶν, 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 of 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 ἀρνίον θηρίον (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 ὡς. There is also a brief discussion on the word εἶδον related also with the terms ὄραματα and ὄφθη (ὄραω ; 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 ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα 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 δωῶλος 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 Younker 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); נוּחַ (*nuah*) and καταπαύω (= rest) and קָהַשׁ (*kohesh*) and ἀγιάζω (= 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).