

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 *טב* (*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 , 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 maligned 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 ὄρνέου 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.