

# TEN KEYS

FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF

## REVELATION



### ***KEY 1. REVELATION IS APOCALYPTIC STYLE LITERATURE***

**Apocalypse** n. 1. (cap.) REVELATION (def. 4). 2. any of a class of Jewish or Christian writings of c200 B.C. to A.D. 350 that were assumed to make revelations of the ultimate divine purpose. 3. a prophetic revelation, esp. concerning a cataclysm in which the forces of good triumph over the forces of evil. 4. any revelation or prophecy. 5. any universal or widespread destruction or disaster. The overall view of the great struggle between good and evil. In the framework of Christian literature, it is the struggle between Christ and Satan. It is given to the prophet in a supernatural dream or vision.

- A. It depends heavily on allegory. I.e. multi-headed beasts, lamp-stands, stars, etc.
- B. It is a form of prose that develops the prophetic message in a new way.
- C. It deals with the cataclysmic end of this world and the establishment of a new world order. In the Christian framework that new world is heaven and the new order is the end of rebellion.
- D. It makes extensive use of symbolism

Other examples of apocalyptic style literature in the Bible are: Daniel, Ezekiel and Zechariah. Non Biblical examples are: Enoch, The Sibylline Oracles, etc.



### ***KEY 2. MOST PROPHETIC NUMBERS ARE SYMBOLIC AND ARE NOT USED FOR THEIR NUMERICAL VALUE***

**EXAMPLE.** The number 7 symbolizes perfection, 6 equals imperfection, 10 means strength or power, etc. An exception to this is where the prophet himself counts them out as with the seven trumpets, heads. Seals, mountains/hills or ten horns. When the prophet counts them, then they are normal numbers.



### ***KEY 3. REVELATION MUST BE VIEWED THROUGH JOHN'S EYES, CONSIDERING HIS: A) BACKGROUND, B) BIASES AND C) CULTURE.***

The things to be considered would be:

- A. **DATE** – It was written, circa 95 AD (Other dates are suggested, but this seems to be the most accurate.)
- B. **LOCATION** – On the Isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. (Revelation 1:9)
- C. **CIRCUMSTANCES** - John was exiled there for Christ's sake. (Ibid.)
- D. **JOHN'S DESIRES** - He was looking for Christ's soon return and questioning the long delay.
- E. **CULTURAL BACKGROUND.**-John was a Jewish/Christian living in the Greco-Roman society.



### ***KEY 4. REVELATION IS THE BOOK OF DANIEL UNSEALED.***

Some claim that every word found in Revelation is from the Old Testament. Certainly, the ideas seem to all be. However, at least some symbols are given new meanings (see Revelation 17:9) and some prophecies are from a later time. E.g. Revelation 17.



### ***KEY 5. REVELATION HAS A BASIC STRUCTURED LIKE DANIEL***

The structure of Daniel and Revelation follow the same general structural format. The difference is that while Daniel focuses of the events to transpire **following** the time Daniel lived in, with only a little information about the end of the world. Revelation focuses on events only referred to in Daniel and gives more detail on the end time events.



***KEY 6. SYMBOLS MUST BE INTERPRETED BY THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES.***

- A. How the symbol is used in the Bible previously, if used, primarily in the Old Testament which was the Scriptures John was most familiar with and formed the structure of his thinking.
- B. If the symbolic meanings changed since the first usage of that symbol, then those changes should be clearly indicated in the Bible. In every case the context of the symbol must be considered.
- C. If there is no previous usage of the symbol in the Bible, then the symbolic value in John's society and time must be considered in harmony with the other symbols and how they are used.



***KEY 7. BIBLE PROPHECY DEALS ONLY WITH CERTAIN EVENTS.***

- A. Events effecting God's people. (God's people are those who are truly under the New Covenant relationship with Him. Just claiming to be God's people is not included.)
- B. Events effecting those who are opposed to God's people.
- C. Events effecting the powers God used to punish those who are hurting God's people.



***KEY 8. REVELATION DEALS SPECIFICALLY WITH: "WHAT MUST TAKE PLACE" BEFORE CHRIST CAN RETURN AGAIN.***

See Revelation 1:1; 4:1 and 22:6 (NASB).



***KEY 9. PROPHECY IS NOT GIVEN SO WE CAN FORETELL THE FUTURE.***

See John 13:19, 20. Prophecy is only given so that when the things foretold happen, we can:

A) Know God knew the future, B) recognize them for what they are, and C) be prepared for the return of our Lord.

We also must keep an open mind about the exact details of how the prophecy will be fulfilled. If we get fixated on a specific fulfillment, it may be fulfilled in a little different way and we will not recognize it. Always be open to God's leading.



***KEY 10. WHEN IN REVELATION IS SAYS "SOON" OR "QUICKLY" IT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AS MEANING: "AS SOON AS WHAT MUST TAKE PLACE HAS TAKEN PLACE.***

Revelation is dealing with sequential events, not time lines.

1. In time line prophecy, "soon" could have a immediacy in length of time.
2. In sequential prophecy, "soon" takes on the meaning of the next event, or the event immediately following. Whatever intervening time is involved is not of consideration. This is critical to an understanding of some of the prophecies when compared to their fulfillment.