

HOW DID JESUS SIGNIFY HIS REVELATION?

E. Methods Used in this Study

E3. Perspective: Treasure Hunt

Revelation is often considered a difficult book to comprehend. Much of the imagery is hard to picture, even in the mind's eye. The idioms are unfamiliar to most New Testament readers. With so many heads and horns of various beastsⁱ, how can we know what these mean? Where can we find information to help alleviate our confusion? First, we must consider why these things are written in this manner. Why has Jesus given us his Revelation in this way? He gives us a clue in the first line, Revelation 1:1-2,

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants - things which must shortly take place. And He sent and *signified it* by His angel to His servant John,² who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.”

What does it mean that Jesus *signified* his Revelation? Did he put into words those things which we have no languageⁱⁱ to describe? That is one possible explanation. However, we find a more plausible answer in John 12:32-33,

“I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.”³³ *This He said, signifying by what death He would die.*”

Likewise, the words used in Revelation are meant to represent, to symbolize, or to signify what is being revealed.

Thankfully, some of the imagery, or symbolism, found in Revelation is defined for us within the book itself. This self-referencing quality is a good

ⁱ REV 17:7, the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

ⁱⁱ 2COR 12:4, he was caught up into Paradise and heard *inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

indication of how we should approach searching out the rest of the mysterious symbols. Instead of referencing Revelation, the others are found elsewhere in God's word. So, bringing clarity to Revelation's mysteries, requires us to go on a treasure hunt throughout the entire Bible. As we read in Proverbs 25:2,

“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But *the glory of kings is to search out a matter.*”

There is no need to search outside of God's word for our understanding of Revelation's symbolism. Since His word is truth, to find the truth we only need to search His word. Further, God rewards those who diligent seek out the truth, as we read in Hebrews 11:6,

“without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that *He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*”

As Jesus stated that He is the Truthⁱⁱⁱ, then the more we learn of Him the more truth we know. Conversely, the more we learn of the Truth the more we know Him.

Sometimes, however, we are not meant to know^{iv} the revealed truth until the time is right. At the Lord's predestined time^v, the meaning behind His words^{vi} becomes obvious. Just as, it was not until after the death and resurrection of Jesus that John the apostle understood the significance of Jesus' words. John was then able to make the connection^{vii} that he wrote in his gospel, remembering all that Jesus had said^{viii}. Likewise, some prophecies are sealed until the proper time. We find this in Daniel 12:4,

“you, Daniel, shut up the words, and *seal the book until the time of the end*; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

ⁱⁱⁱ JOHN 14:6, Jesus said to him, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

^{iv} ACTS 1:7, He said to them, "*It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.*

^v DAN 8:26, the vision of the evenings and mornings Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, *For it refers to many days in the future.*

^{vi} ACTS 3:19-21, Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,²¹ whom heaven must receive until *the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*

^{vii} JOHN 12:32-33, I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." ³³*This He said, signifying by what death He would die.*

^{viii} JOHN 14:26, the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and *bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

It would be sensible for us to consider that some things will not be known until the *'time of the end'*. From the context in Daniel chapter 12, we learn that this time refers to the three-and-one-half years^{ix}, or 1,260 days^x, of the Great Tribulation^{xi}.

The prophecy of Revelation, by contrast, is not sealed^{xii}. Consequently, we are blessed to read and to hear the words, and to keep the things written in the prophecy^{xiii}. For surely knowledge will increase and the wise will understand, as was foretold in Daniel 12:9-10,

“he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. ¹⁰"Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but *the wise shall understand.*”

Further, we should recognize that the blessing of studying Revelation should result in peaceful wisdom, as is defined for us in James 3:17,

“the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”

Therefore, our understanding should never lead to boastfulness or to pride in our knowledge, but should lead us to hope. The hope in our Lord, and in his assured return.

Increasing in the knowledge and wisdom of God requires us to investigate the entirety of His word. Our study will indeed look at God’s word as one book, seen through the lens of Revelation. Therefore, this study of Revelation will take us to every other book in the Bible. For, some topics mentioned in Revelation are more

^{ix} DAN 12:7-9, one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?" ⁷Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that *it shall be for a time, times, and half a time*; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished. ⁸Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?" ⁹And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

^x REV 12:6, the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there *one thousand two hundred and sixty days*.

^{xi} MATH 24:21-22, then there will be *great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.* ²²And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

^{xii} REV 22:10, he said to me, "*Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.*"

^{xiii} REV 1:3, *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*

thoroughly described elsewhere in the Bible. One such topic is the reign of Christ on earth for 1,000 years, known collectively as the 'millennial reign'. We learn in Revelation 20:4-6,

"I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and *reigned with Christ for a thousand years*.⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

We learn more about where this will take place, reading in Micah 4:1-3,

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. ²Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For *out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*. ³He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war any more."

We learn more of the conditions during this time, in Isaiah 65:19-22,

"I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. ²⁰"No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For *the child shall die one hundred years old*, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. ²¹They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²²They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

In addition, all the promises of the Messiah will be fulfilled during this time. As we find in Luke 1:30-33,

“the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. ³²"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and *the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.* ³³"And *He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.*”

To get the complete picture from Revelation, we must search the treasures of God’s word. To comprehend the imagery of Revelation, we must become familiar with the other uses of those same images, found in other parts of Scripture.

Though we may spend a lifetime discovering God’s treasures from His word, we can still feel that we are just beginning to search^{xiv}. Hopefully, our study will bring us closer to the truth revealed in Revelation, that we may have a better understanding of God’s overall plan. For, all that was begun in Genesis will conclude in Revelation. We will benefit from all the blessings^{xv} that God has in store for us, as He leads us by His Holy Spirit to know all truth, to know Him. The treasure hunt we will embark upon through the Bible promises to bless us, to grow us in knowledge and wisdom, and to be a wonder-filled adventure getting to know our Lord^{xvi}, our God.

^{xiv} ACTS 17:11, These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and *searched the Scriptures daily* to find out whether these things were so.

^{xv} PSM 65:4, *Blessed is the man You choose, And cause to approach You, That he may dwell in Your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Of Your holy temple.*

^{xvi} JOHN 5:39, You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and *these are they which testify of Me.*