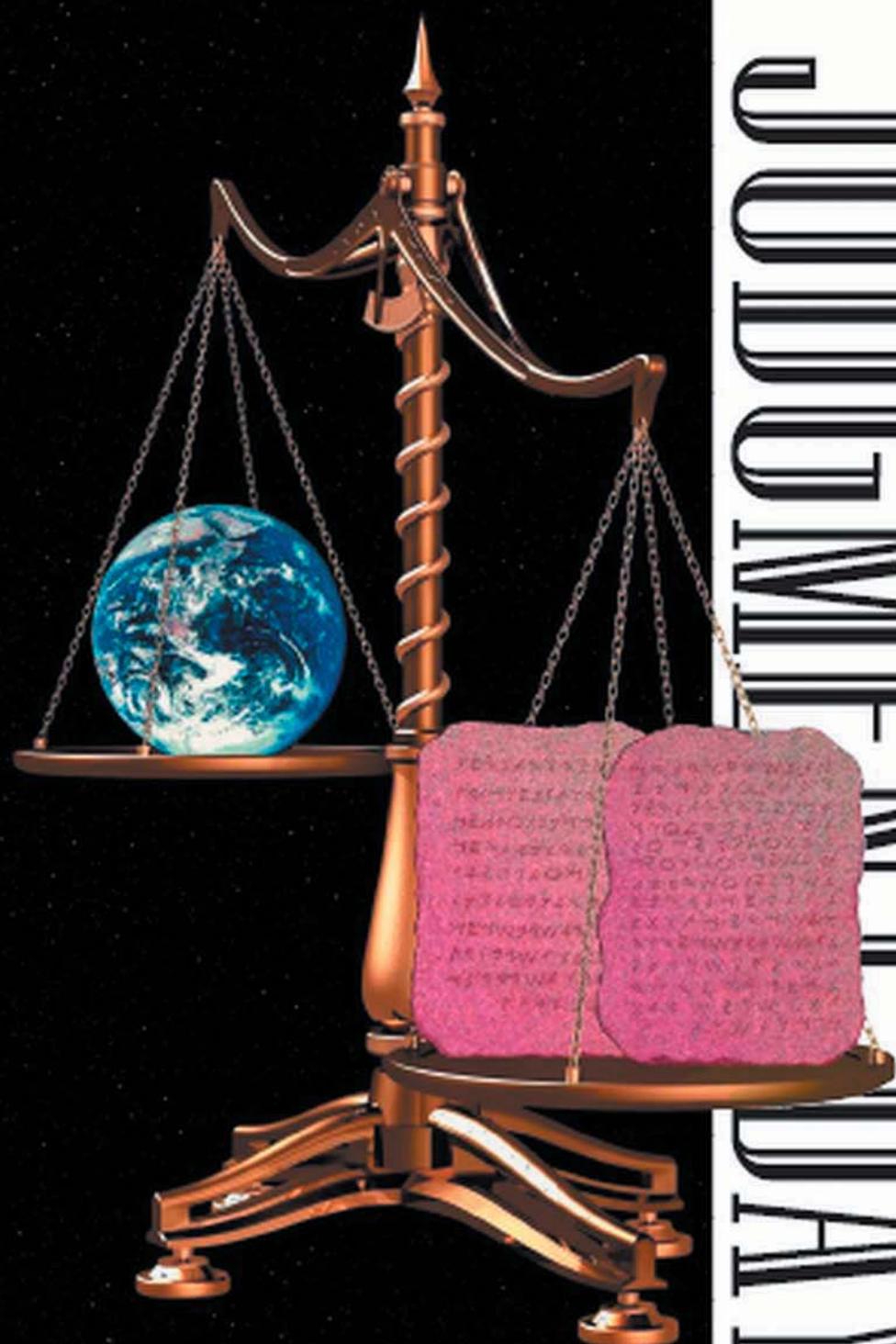


The  
**Messianic Revelation Series**



**ANNOUNCING:**

**JUDGMENT DAY**

**Eliyahu ben David**

## **UNSOLICITED COMMENTS ABOUT THIS REVELATION MESSAGE:**

*The Messianic Revelation Series* offers an entirely different perspective on Revelation than any books on Revelation you may have read before. The reason is simple. *The Messianic Revelation Series* takes into account the Hebraic background and mindset of the Jewish writer of Revelation. This approach brings startling new clarity to the prophetic message of Revelation for our day. Following are unsolicited comments about this message left by Tsiyon Radio listeners at the [www.tsiyon.org](http://www.tsiyon.org) web site:

“Teaching from a Hebraic perspective/understanding gives the Book of Revelation a new “life.””

“This was a really good teaching. So much that has been missing from the traditional message.”

“This grand vision sheds new light on some very “old” things.”

“The strength of Brother Eliyahu’s teachings for me is in his ability to show us things that we’ve seen many times before in an entirely new and compelling way.”

“Very good, I like how U gave the foundational background about Revelations and about the writer too.”

“There is much to be learned here and perhaps a few challenges to old beliefs to be faced, but overall, this is a “walk” worth taking.”

“It gave a better understanding of what the book of Revelation is all about, a better view of it, & I want to hear more.”

“Wow, that was very good. I hardly had room to put all my notes.”

“Thank you Eliyahu. Can’t wait for the rest of the series. Shalom.”

“Once again, very clear historical facts presented by Eliyahu, and tied into every area of past, present and future events.”

“The positives far outweigh the negatives in the reality of Y’shua’s judgments.”

“I liked the description about the throne room.”

“I am amazed that Eliyahu got to see into the throne room.”

“Shalom Eliyahu! Thank you for yet another exciting connection of YHWH’s divine purpose in the world economic crisis.”

“This message gave me a completely different perspective on what it means to be an “overcomer.””

“That was very good, excellent. I can’t wait to hear more about the white horse.”

“Don’t waste another day - we’re running out of time!”

“This message is a shake-up/wake-up call to all of those who profess belief in our Messiah Y’shua.”

“We look with anticipation to YHWH for righteous judgment, as HE alone is worthy to be Judge, having the perfect solution, dealing with the rebellion that has turned HIS creation up-side down!”

“I found myself walking alongside Yochanan into the Throne room of Heaven.”

“This message will challenge many to consider the Four Horsemen of Revelation in a new way.”

“I love the emphasis on having right relationship with YAHWEH, Who alone can and will protect those who are righteous.”

“This message “paints” being an overcomer in a much more positive and encouraging light.”

“I encourage those that have a heart to be “overcomers” to come and hear and then to “be doers of the WORD.”

“Compromise for the sake of unity, mixture for the sake of compromise and conformity for the so-called “good” don’t fit HIS definition of the “narrow path.””

“[This] Revelation message has given me new information to consider, points of contention to meditate on and broken down barriers to new ways of looking at things.”

“Patience is key to receiving the fullness of all that HE is bringing here to HIS people. Stay the course and reap the benefits of walking this out with HIM.”

The Messianic Revelation Series  
Volume 1

Announcing:  
**Judgment  
Day**

Eliyahu ben David

Zarach

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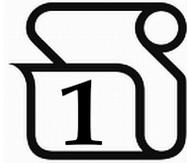
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## **MESSIANIC REVELATION**

### **Why the Tsiyon Interpretation of Revelation is SO Different!**

**T**here is little wonder why books on the Revelation prophecies abound today. Banks are failing, global markets are crashing, and global unemployment is rising; the harbingers of an ever-deepening global economic crisis. Volatile food and oil prices, food shortages, even food riots, underscore the crisis of survival now being faced by billions of the world's poor. War, rumors of war and an ever-increasing political and social divide ratchet up tensions. Disaster continues to brew in the Middle East. Enemies of Israel continue to menace her very existence from inside and out; while threatening to turn the whole world into a massive fireball. The seemingly endless man-made crises are also punctuated by a string of natural disasters and environmental anxieties. All these troubles and more, taken together, form an intractable tangle that has been termed “the world macro-problem.”

Confronted with these escalating waves of global chaos Bible readers can't help but notice that this world situation fits the general pattern foretold in the Scriptures for the last days. We are witnessing the so called “signs of the times.” As we see these signs, we're also seeing multiple predictions of the end of the world. It is not unusual to hear claims that the end is coming next month, next year, three years from now, five years from now. Multiple early dates are being predicted—each based on the same verses of Revelation.

In this climate of global anxiety, end-time speculation seems to be of interest to Bible believers and non-believers alike. Multiple doomsday theories abound from extra-Biblical sources: Peak oil, Planet X, the Mayan calendar, prophecies of Nostradamus, and of the Hopi Indians, to name a few. As one surveys the apocalyptic events of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, while also

being confronted with horrific predictions of our modern world sliced and diced a dozen different ways, it can all start to feel quite overwhelming.

### **THE BOOK OF REVELATION REVEALS OUR FUTURE**

Knowledge is power. We have all heard that, because it's true. Imagine the advantage it would give you if you could know in advance what is really going on and why. Imagine the peace you would feel if you knew with certainty what is driving world events and where it is all headed. Then, you could be prepared in advance.

You really can know. YHWH (God's Name in Scripture) wants you to know. Everything having to do with this final generation that we are living in is foretold in the Scriptures. The best place to find the information you need to prevail through these last days is in the Book of Revelation.

Here, your response may be: "There are a million different interpretations of the Book of Revelation." True enough. Of course, that only adds to the confusion many people are experiencing regarding these chaotic days. Why am I adding yet another book on Revelation? Frankly, if I had no more to offer than all the others I would not have bothered to write this book.

### **A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE ON REVELATION**

What I'm offering here is a unique perspective on the Book of Revelation that is so fresh and so obviously true that it is nothing short of life-changing. This is what many of my radio listeners from over 65 countries have told me about this message after hearing it taught on my weekly radio series, *On the Road to Tsiyon*, in recent months. That series of radio programs predicted in advance the very changes that have now only recently started coming upon the world. Listeners who observed this happening saw this fulfillment as confirmation of the Revelation message they heard on the program. Based on the experience of so many of the listeners who have already heard this message, I can tell you what you can expect from this study. As we examine the Book of Revelation together, Revelation will be simplified for you. The approach we are taking to the Book of Revelation will help you to have a sense of certainty about it. You will know what it means.

It is really much simpler than the mountain of books and commentaries you may have studied in the past might have led you to believe. It is not that hard to understand the Book of Revelation—if only you start from the right frame of reference.

You see, most every other book on Revelation is written from a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christian perspective, whether Dispensationalist, Supersessionist, Premillennialist, Amillennialist, Postmillennialist, or some variant or hybrid thereof. What is the problem with that? There were no 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christians when Revelation was written and neither were there any of the various theological constructs that drive Biblical interpretation today. Christian culture and theology of today was entirely unknown to the writer of Revelation. Not only because such did not exist then, but because, as you will learn in greater detail, the writer of Revelation was not “a Christian” in the sense that term is commonly understood today. There never was any such person as “Saint John the Divine” (Who is “Divine” besides the Almighty?). In fact, the writer of Revelation was a Messianic Jew who would have been horrified by such an idolatrous title. For that very reason Revelation would not be in your “New Testament” today, if some of its earliest enemies had their way.

Here is the truth of it. From about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century forward Gentile Christians became evermore skeptical of all things Jewish, reflecting the anti-Semitic attitude of the Roman world generally. Thus abandoning the Hebrew roots of the faith, Greco-Roman believers developed a new religion which borrowed significantly from the ancient mystery religions and from Greek philosophy, the main influences from which Gentile converts sprang. This re-worked Gentile Christianity became so agreeable to the Roman mindset that in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century it was adopted as the State Religion. This produced the institution known from then forward as The Roman Catholic Church, the true mother of all Christian churches and denominations in the world today. Roman Christianity found it difficult to admit Revelation (the Apocalypse) as part of the “New Testament” precisely because it is so “Jewish.” In the end, they had to include Revelation simply because it was already so fully established as authentic that they could not credibly do otherwise. As one scholar explained: “The only serious objection that can be urged against the authenticity of the Apocalypse, lies in the difference which is observable between its style, and that of the fourth Gospel. The

latter is free from Aramaic expressions, the former is saturated with them.” Further, “The Apocalypse bears, from one end of it to the other, the character of a Hebrew prophecy.” (*Studies on the New Testament*, F.L. Godet)

Another Christian scholar comments on Revelation: “Though the language is Greek, the thoughts and idioms are Hebrew; and this links it on, not to the Pauline epistles, but to the Old Testament, and shows that its great subject is God’s final dealings with the Jew and the Gentile; and not the Church of God.” If we take “Church of God” to mean Gentile Christianity as explained above, and we take “Jew” as synonymous with Israel, as most Christian writers mean it, then it becomes self-evident that this statement is true. This scholar adds this remarkable comment: “It is undoubtedly written about the people of the Old Testament who are the subjects of its history. These will understand it as Gentile Christians can never hope to do.” (*The Apocalypse*, E.W. Bullinger)

Given the utterly Hebrew character of the book, only a Messianic Jewish writer could have written the Book of Revelation. Having a Messianic Jewish writer, the Book of Revelation is itself a Messianic Jewish book. Unless you come to terms with the full implications of that fact you will never grasp the real meaning of the Book of Revelation.

Given this profound fact, your biggest challenge is sure to be setting aside mistaken theories you’ve heard about Revelation. All I ask is that you promise yourself to prayerfully consider this entire book you are reading before making your final decision about it, since one of its strongest proofs is the full, cohesive, picture it presents, building from the authentic foundation of Revelation that has been virtually ignored until now.

## **DIGGING IN TO REVELATION**

Now let’s dig right into the first chapter of Revelation. Revelation begins:

This is the Revelation of Y’shua the Messiah, which God gave Him to show to His servants the things which must happen soon, which He sent and made known by His angel to His servant, Yochanan, who testified to God’s word and of the testimony of Y’shua the Messiah, about everything that he saw. (Rev 1:1-2)

We are here using the *Hebrew Names Version* of the Bible. Using the original Hebrew names, though possibly sounding a little strange at first, will help you to see Revelation in its correct Hebraic historical and cultural context.

In the passage above we find paraphrased the title of the book we are studying: “The Revelation to Yochanan.” Many people call the book “Revelations” with a plural “s” on the end. That’s not correct. It is the Revelation (no “s”) to Yochanan, who is more commonly known in English as John. The first verse says, *This is the revelation of Y’shua the Messiah.* Y’shua, not Jesus, is the actual Hebrew name by which Messiah was called by fellow Israelites with whom He lived all His earthly life. So it is the Revelation **to** Yochanan, but it is **of** Y’shua the Messiah. Where did Y’shua the Messiah get it?

The Revelation is that *which God gave Him.* As we continue on in the Book of Revelation, this order is evident over and over again. Father YHWH is the ultimate **Source** of all things. Things come to us from Him through Y’shua the Messiah. This chain of transmission moves forward from Messiah. Y’shua the Messiah transmitted His revelation through His angel to Yochanan. Then Yochanan wrote it all down so that eventually we could receive His revelation too. That Yochanan is informed by an angel, who in turn received this from Y’shua, Who received this from the Father, is all part of the revelation given to us.

## **THE PURPOSE OF REVELATION**

Notice the purpose of Revelation. He gave it to *show His servants the things that must happen soon.* Are you one of His servants? Then Revelation was written for you. Some people say: “I don’t read the Book of Revelation because it is too confusing for me.” Father God gave this revelation to His servants so they would know the things that *must happen.* Since He wants you to know the things that *must happen* He can and will give you an understanding of His message by advancing the chain of transmission still further. I believe that’s exactly what this book is about.

Here it says *the things which must happen.* Notice that word, **must.** None of this is going to be changed. It must happen! He wants you to know

what must happen in advance. Why does He want you to know? He is a good Father who loves us. He wants us to be ready for the things that must happen.

In this Bible version it says, *things which must happen soon*. Some Bibles translate that as *things which must happen quickly*. The Greek word (G5034 *tachos*) translated as **soon** or **quickly** can mean “this is going to happen soon,” as in the near future. It can’t mean that here since we are now nearly two millennia since this revelation was given. That’s not *soon* by any reckoning. The Greek word also has another meaning. It can mean **quickly** in the sense that, when something happens, it happens speedily as a rapid progression of events. This latter meaning is the correct meaning here. This overturns interpreters who tell you that the Book of Revelation is about the past two thousand years of “church history.” It’s not. It’s about things that are foretold to happen in rapid progression, with *the Lord’s Day* as the focal point, at the end of the age.

### IS “THE LORD’S DAY” SUNDAY?

I refer here to verse ten in which Yochanan states: *I was in the Spirit on **the Lord’s Day***. What day is that? Many Christians writing on Revelation, and many more reading it, have assumed *the Lord’s Day*, here referred to, is Sunday. It is natural for them to assume so, since it is the tradition of many generations of Christians to call Sunday “the Lord’s Day.” In this view, they think, John was worshiping on Sunday when he received the Revelation. However, they are quite mistaken regarding Yochanan’s use of the phrase. The NT uses the phrase “first day of the week” but never uses “the Lord’s day” in the same sense and “Sunday” not at all. As E. W. Bullinger, noted Anglican theologian, admitted: “There is no evidence of any kind that “the first day of the week” was ever called “the Lord’s Day” before the Apocalypse was written. That it should be so called afterwards is easily understood, and there can be little doubt that the practice arose from the misinterpretation of these words.” In other words, generations of Christians at sometime after Revelation was written lifted the phrase *the Lord’s day* from the book of Revelation to apply it to their worship day, Sunday, though that was never the original meaning of the phrase. Bullinger further states: “It is passing strange that if John called the first

day of the week ‘the Lord’s Day,’ we find no trace of the use of such a title until a hundred years later which is the earliest date.” (Mat 28:1, Mar 26:2,9, Luk 24:1, Joh 20:1,19, Act 20:7, 1Co 26:2, *The Apocalypse* by E.W. Bullinger)

All of that is to say: *the Lord’s Day* of Revelation is the same as *the Day of the Lord* as spoken of through the mouth of the Hebrew prophets. Some may object here, supposing there is some difference in the two phrases, *the Lord’s Day*, and *the Day of the Lord*, because we have *Lord’s* used as an adjective in Revelation instead of as a noun in *of the Lord*, as in the Hebrew. However, there is no adjective for “Lord’s” in Biblical Hebrew. In Hebrew to say “the Lord’s Day” one must use the two nouns saying, “the Day of the Lord,” making these two equivalent phrases. *The Lord’s Day* in Greek is thus a perfectly acceptable translation of *the Day of the Lord* in Hebrew.

My point is this: when Yochanan said *I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day* we can be sure he was not using that phrase to refer to Sunday—since that phrase would not be used to refer to Sunday until generations later. Rather, he was using the language of the Hebrew prophets. He was saying he was enraptured by the Holy Spirit in a prophetic vision of *the Day of the Lord* in a similar manner to the Hebrew prophets before him who had previously seen *the Day of the Lord* in the Spirit. It is a simple statement which informs us of the time period Revelation primarily treats. Revelation is about *the Day of the Lord* and its related events at the end of the age. (Isa 2:12, 13:6,9, Jer 46:10, Eze 13:5, 30:3, Joe 1:15, 2:1, 11, 31, 14, 3:14, Amo 5:18, 20, Oba 1:15, Zep 1:7,14, Zec 14:1, Mal 4:5)

## YOCHANAN—AN EXHAUSTIVE WITNESS

Returning now to verse one and two, it mentions Yochanan, *who testified to God’s Word and of the testimony of Y’shua the Messiah about everything that he saw*. He reported everything that he received in the Revelation. It’s all included so there’s nothing left out. That helps us to understand Revelation since we know there are no missing pieces. That is not to say that everything needed to interpret Revelation is included in Revelation. That’s because Revelation often makes reference to other material outside of Revelation which it assumes readers already know. Revelation is written in something we could call “prophetic shorthand” whereby, if you know

and understand the Prophets, just a couple of words in Revelation can draw multiple pages of that material into the Revelation message. In Yochanan's time all believers were well grounded in the prophetic Scriptures. Today most believers know very little about them, having relegated them to what they call "the Old Testament that was done away." Big mistake! We will be rectifying some of that for you with this book. Now, let's focus on the writer, Yochanan.

### **ESTABLISHING THE WRITER OF REVELATION**

Who is this Yochanan? Some Bible critics say this was not the Yochanan known today as "Apostle John." They are wrong. The evidence against them is overwhelming. We have numerous witnesses from the time of living memory who testify to the fact that it was "John the apostle" that wrote the Book of Revelation.

**Justin**, who was a teacher in Ephesus, one of the assemblies that received the Revelation sent from Yochanan, is quoted very early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, saying; "A certain man among us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, prophesied in a revelation made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would spend a thousand years in Jerusalem." (*Introduction to the New Testament*, Everett F. Harrison, page 455)

From those earliest days it was apparently common knowledge among believers that Yochanan, whom Greek speakers called *Ioannes apostolos*, i.e., *John the apostle*, prophesied the Revelation that reveals believers "will spend a thousand years in Jerusalem." Justin, an actual acquaintance of Yochanan, is thus our first witness. I would be persuaded by this witness alone, but there are more.

**Irenaeus** was a 2<sup>nd</sup> Century bishop who lived in the next generation after Revelation was written. That is very close to the actual writing of Revelation. He stated that men who saw John face-to-face personally certified the text of Revelation. In his own writings, Irenaeus repeatedly quotes from Revelation himself and accepts it as Scripture that was written by John the apostle.

***Tertullian***, a 2<sup>nd</sup> Century writer, agrees. He also quotes Revelation as Scripture and he too, holds John the apostle as the writer, and again, within the very next generation after Revelation was written.

***Hippolytus*** was an early 3<sup>rd</sup> Century Christian writer. He also accepted Revelation as Scripture and he also accepted John the apostle as its writer.

With multiple witnesses who lived back then claiming John the apostle as the writer of Revelation, any critic speculating that the writer was not John the apostle must mightily prove his case. None of the critics can overcome these multiple witnesses. Yochanan, i.e., John the apostle, was the writer of Revelation.

### **RECEIVE THE BLESSING OF REVELATION!**

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written in it, for the time is at hand. (Rev 1:3)

Revelation includes a blessing for reading it, hearing it, and keeping it. Here is another very good reason to read, hear, and keep the Book of Revelation. While Revelation concerns things which must happen, it also contains a lot of important instruction that has blessed believers of every age as they read and kept its instruction in their daily lives. Realize that, in one sense, the time is at hand for every believer. In other words, a thousand years ago the time was at hand because every single believer who is faithful to the end is going to be a part of these end-time events at the return of Y'shua. Thus, the time has always been at hand for all the believers who belong to Messiah and they will all be included in these end-time events.

### **FROM WHOM, TO WHOM, HEBRAIC GREETING**

Yochanan, to the seven assemblies that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from God, Who is and Who was and Who is to come; and from the seven Spirits who are before His Throne. (Rev 1:4)

The Book of Revelation is written as a letter (an epistle) like many of the other books included in the NT and it has a specific, immediate audience in mind, which in this case are the seven assemblies that are in Asia; more about them in the next chapter. We notice this letter has a greeting, *Grace to you and peace*. As with all of the epistles, Revelation has a greeting and an ending commensurate with a letter. The greeting further mentions, *God, Who is, Who was and Who is to come*. This last phrase is more correctly, *Who is to be*. This relates to the Hebrew Name of God, YHWH, which derives from the Hebrew verb that means “to be.” It refers to Him as eternally to be; He was, He is, and He is to be. This is a reference to His eternal Name and Person as revealed to Israel. In other words, this is a classic Hebraic greeting.

Next, it mentions the seven Spirits who are before His Throne. Some people think that’s seven angels because it mentions they’re before the Throne. Others say it couldn’t be angels because Yochanan wouldn’t wish grace and peace to you from angels. That is true. In the prophetic Scriptures, we find the Spirit spoken of in terms of seven, speaking about the manifold presence of the Spirit. The Spirit is present everywhere, all the time. More about that later.

### **Y’SHUA THE MESSIAH, THE FAITHFUL WITNESS**

And from Y’shua the Messiah, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us, and washed us from our sins by His blood. (Rev 1:5)

Here is a good example of a prophetic book teaching doctrinal truth. We need to keep the Book of Revelation because it tells us who Y’shua the Messiah is. He’s the *faithful Witness*. He faithfully witnesses to His Father, *Who is, Who was and Who is to be*. He faithfully witnessed unto death to His Father’s Name. He’s the firstborn from the dead. He went ahead for all of the rest of us that will follow Him. *He is the ruler of the kings of the earth* as He said, *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me*. That’s the position our Messiah is in, right now. He has all authority. *To Him Who loves us* reminds us what it means to be His. He gave His life for us and *He washed us from our sins by His blood*. We need to remember and keep that. (Mat 28:18)

## **A TORAH COVENANT PROMISE FULFILLED**

And he made us to be a Kingdom, priests to His God and Father;  
to him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

(Rev 1:6)

*He made us to be a Kingdom.* That is past tense. We are made to be a Kingdom already. That's a point that's easily missed, because some make the mistake of thinking only of the Millennial Kingdom as the Kingdom. In the Millennial Kingdom, all persons will then be brought under the Kingdom. However, during this interim time since Messiah first came and set up the Kingdom, it's only those who accept Him as their Messiah and as their Savior that are transferred into the Kingdom, to function in His Kingdom in the earth today. This is why it says, *He made us to be a Kingdom, priests to His God.*"

This language originates in the Torah ("the Pentateuch") where it is applied to Israel. In the Book of Malachi and then later in Peter, this is applied to the faithful remnant of Israel. This Kingdom phrase is from the Torah Covenant with faithful, believing Israel, and it's included right here at the beginning of Revelation. Here's another indication within these opening verses that Israel is a primary theme of Revelation. (Col 1:13, Exo 19:6, Mal 3:17, 1Pe 2:9; *Messiah Establishes His Kingdom*, On the Road to Tsiyon, Program #41, 10/06/2006)

## **THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH OF THE HEBREW PROPHETS**

Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him,  
including those who pierced Him. All the tribes of the earth will  
mourn over Him. Even so, Amen. (Rev 1:7)

As we read this verse my mind is flooded with Scriptures from the Prophets referenced here as well as a number of verses in the NT. This includes prophecies from all through the Scriptures that talk about Him coming in the clouds, most notably, from the Book of Daniel. In the Book of Acts He ascended into heaven and was caught out of the vision of onlookers by a cloud. An angel said He will return in the same manner as He was seen ascending. (Dan 7:13, Act 1)

*Every eye will see Him.* He, Himself said as much. *For as the lightning flashes from the east, and is seen even to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.* When He returns, all who are alive at the time will see Him. There is nothing in Scripture about an invisible return of Messiah to effectuate an invisible “rapture.” Because the invisible “pre-trib rapture” doctrine is so prevalent today I hope to examine it in detail in a future volume. However, Revelation clearly does not teach such an invisible Return, since, when He comes back, *every eye will see Him*, including *those who pierced Him*. In saying *those who pierced Him*, this verse is specifically referring to those Israelites as mentioned in the Book of Zechariah, who upon seeing Him, will mourn with all the tribes of the earth that had rejected Him. (Mat 24:27, Zec 12:10)

### **THE GOD OF ISRAEL**

“I am the Alef and the Tav,” says the Lord God, “Who is and Who was and Who will be, the Almighty.” (Rev 1:8)

Here we’re used to reading *I am the Alpha and the Omega*. In the Hebrew, it would be *the Alef and the Tav*, the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It’s talking about the One Who is the Beginning and the End, the Eternal One, *the One Who is and Who was and Who will be*, once again referring to that revealed Name of YHWH, the Eternal: the God of Israel.

### **YOCHANAN, YOUR BROTHER IN TRIBULATION**

I, Yochanan, your brother and partner with you in tribulation, Kingdom, and perseverance in Messiah Y’shua, was on the isle that is called Patmos because of God’s Word and the testimony of Y’shua the Messiah. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, like a shofar saying, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven assemblies: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and to Laodicea. (Rev 1:9-11)

Yochanan is explaining how he was directed to pass this revelation along to the seven assemblies named. He calls himself, *your brother and partner*

*with you.* He's putting himself on the same level with them. That word (G2347 *thlipsis*) sometimes translated as *oppression* is better translated as *tribulation*, as we have restored it here. He's a partner with his intended hearers in *tribulation*. He's already mentioned that he and his intended hearers are made to be a Kingdom, so once again we have this same sense of the term. He, also, is persevering through troubles in Messiah Y'shua with them. Some Bible teachers today say believers should always be in "prosperity" and never have *tribulation*. Such have no need for *perseverance*. If they are right, how come we have this favored writer of the Book of Revelation who is *a partner...in tribulation*? Teachings that would spare modern day believers from tribulation tickle the ears of some, but they don't fit with Scripture or with real life. Neither do they fit with the history of what other faithful believers have gone through or are going through right now.

### **THE HEART OF YOCHANAN REVEALED**

Notice that Yochanan wrote the Revelation on *the Isle of Patmos*. The Isle of Patmos still exists today. It's in the Aegean Sea. Patmos is not a very big island. It's about thirteen square miles. Today it has a population of about three thousand souls. In the 1<sup>st</sup> Century it was quite isolated. The Romans used Patmos as a penal island to banish undesirable persons; people that they thought weren't getting with the Roman program. Yochanan said he was sent there *because of God's Word and the testimony of Y'shua the Messiah*. The Romans were thinking they could shut him up by banishing him to Patmos. When is the last time you heard anything from them? That's right, never. By contrast, the Revelation written on Patmos has been read by countless millions, and continues to be read. God laughs at fools who think they can block His will.

Yochanan was calling Y'shua "Lord" rather than calling the Emperor "Lord." That was not well received in those days; hence, banishment to Patmos. Yet he did not whine about his troubles, as many of us might be given to do if removed from our homes and banished to some desolate island. Instead, he lived in blessed fellowship serving his Father in Heaven. He received the Revelation and wrote all of it down because he literally functioned as a bondsman of Messiah. Whatever happened in his life was accepted as part of his mission. He worked within his given circumstances to do the will of

his Lord. That made him very useful and effective, even to you and I today. This is the unstoppable mindset of the overcomer.

Where did Yochanan get such tenacity? Certainly, having lived and walked in fellowship with Y'shua Messiah as one of His closest talmidim/disciples was unparalleled training—but there is more. This is a tenacity born of pure love. In fact, Yochanan was Y'shua's cousin and as such was His fast friend and “brother” since childhood. No doubt the two Jewish boys attended synagogue together on occasion and often shared together in the feasts and ceremonies of their rich Jewish culture as their respective families came together. As cousins and boys growing up together in Judea they knew each other in the way that only such boys can, having built a relationship to last a lifetime, and in this case, far beyond a lifetime. They were two Jewish boys who each did well for themselves. One became the rightful Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world. The other knew it and believed it with all his heart and spent his entire life bearing witness to that truth. Yochanan was true to what he saw. He became a Messianic witness who has compelled millions to believe what he saw and experienced first hand. This is truth you can trust. (See *Y'shua's Family Album 3*, On the Road to Tsiyon, Program #6 02/11/06)

Messiah indicated that Yochanan would outlive the other apostles. This, in fact, he did. At the time of the Revelation he was of advanced years. With all he had done in his life for his One Great Cause, we might think that would have been enough. Yet, our Scriptures certainly would not be complete without the Book of Revelation. Way to go, Yochanan!

Yochanan says: *I was on the isle that is called Patmos*, and he says, *because of God's Word and the testimony of Y'shua the Messiah*. Then he explains, *while there, on Patmos, I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.*” That is, he was in the Spirit prophetically entering into the foretold *Day of the Lord* at the end of the age. Then he heard a voice behind him. *I heard a voice behind me* is an OT reference; *You'll hear a voice behind you saying, "This is the Way, walk in it."* This is very Hebraic, as was Yochanan. The voice *is like a shofar* he said. A shofar, which is a trumpet fashioned from an animal horn, is sounded as an alarm. It means something important is about to happen. Again, this is a Hebraic connection. Then that voice said to him, *Write in a book and send to the seven assemblies* and it names those seven assemblies. (Joh 21:22, Isa 30:21)

## WHEN REVELATION WAS WRITTEN AND WHY THAT MATTERS

There are two principle theories regarding when Revelation was written. Sometimes, you'll read that it was written shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., placing the writing in the 60s A.D. You'll also hear that it was written in the late 90s, about 95 or 96 A.D. The reason why you hear these two vastly different dates is because of the claims of pretorism, the theory that all of the prophecies of Scripture were finally fulfilled with the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D. Pretorism requires that the prophecies of Revelation must have been written before 70 A.D. because Revelation talks about the *great tribulation* and other prophetic events as still future. Hence, Revelation fits the pretorist scheme only if written before 70 A.D. On the other hand, if the prophecies of Revelation were written in the 90s, long after 70, then pretorism is proven false. Pretorists just can't have Revelation still predicting a future *great tribulation* and other prophetic events long after all that is supposed to have been concluded! (Mat 24:21, Rev 7:14)

Unfortunately for the pretorists, it's well established in history when the Book of Revelation was written. Irenaeus, whom we mentioned earlier, from the next generation after the Book of Revelation was written, stated that it was written at the close of the reign of Emperor Domitian. This was also reiterated by a number of other early Christian writers. One of them is Victorinus. He was also a 2<sup>nd</sup> Century writer who lived close to the Domitian era, and he supports this same timing. We have this quote from him; "When John said these things, he was in the Isle of Patmos, condemned to the mines by Caesar Domitian. There he saw the Apocalypse; and when at length grown old, he thought that he should receive his release by suffering; but Domitian being killed, he was liberated." (*Introduction to the New Testament*, Everett F. Harrison, page 473)

It's very clear that Victorinus knew exactly what happened with John the apostle and knew details that we wouldn't know otherwise, including how it had all ended. Domitian was killed while Yochanan was still on the Isle of Patmos. Domitian reigned from 80/81 A.D. to 96 A.D. Jerusalem had already been destroyed for a decade by the time Domitian began his reign. By any account, Revelation could not have been written before the year 81 A.D., which is very bad news for the pretorists. Yochanan was still there after Domitian's death in 96 A.D. Therefore, it's well established

that Yochanan actually wrote the Book of Revelation around 96. The Book of Revelation therefore points forward to the *great tribulation* and other prophetic events, most of which are still future. Many of these foretold events will be fleshed out in this book.

### **THE REVELATION IS “THOROUGHLY JEWISH”**

Now that we have these fundamental facts laid out we return to the literary origin of the Book of Revelation. This is going to help unseal the Book of Revelation for you. While most Christian writers ignore the Hebraic origins of Revelation, I have quoted above from Christian scholars who are well aware of its Hebrew character. Now, let’s read a quote from, of all things, the *Jewish Encyclopedia* to get the Jewish perspective. These are excerpts compiled from a lengthy article in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* on the Book of Revelation. This is especially interesting because, of course, the Rabbinic Jewish point of view does not accept the NT.

“Obviously, the writer of these visionary letters to the seven churches of Asia was in his own estimation a Jew, while believing in Jesus as the risen Messiah. He beheld him in his vision to be “the faithful witness” (martyr) who is next to God, “who is, was, and will be“... [Revelation]...contains several Jewish apocalypses worked into one...The whole apocalypse...is... in every part and feature...except where altered by the Christian compiler ...thoroughly Jewish in spirit and conception... It presents the development of the whole eschatological drama according to the Jewish view. It is Hebrew in composition and style, and bears traces of having originally been written in Hebrew.” (Excerpts from *Jewish Encyclopedia-Revelation, Book Of*)

This is a fairly amazing quote. Most of us have always thought of the Book of Revelation as a “Christian” book. Perhaps surprisingly, Jewish scholars consider it a Jewish book. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* also says something else you may find amazing. It as much as states that the writer of Revelation was a Jew who believed in “Jesus” as the Messiah. If the book is “thoroughly Jewish” as this quote asserts, then it naturally follows that the writer of the book was “thoroughly Jewish” as well. Today it is considered a truism among Rabbinic Judaism that anyone who believes in “Jesus” as the Messiah cannot be a Jew. However, the *Jewish Encyclopedia*

here indicates there has been at least one Jewish believer in Messiah and that was the writer of the Book of Revelation. Another very relevant fact from this quote is that the Book of Revelation contains “several Jewish apocalypses worked into one.” We are told that “every part and feature is thoroughly Jewish in spirit and conception.” How is this lightning bolt going to affect how we understand the Book of Revelation?

### **A HEBRAIC VIEW OF REVELATION**

We need to understand Revelation in the context of its Hebraic roots. If we don't look at the Book of Revelation from a Hebraic standpoint, we will never understand it. If even unbelieving Jews recognize the Book of Revelation as a Jewish book, then certainly we should accept that as true. I'm not saying we must accept all of the claims made by the *Jewish Encyclopedia*. I reject the implications of the statement that the whole Apocalypse is Jewish “except for where it's been altered by the Christians.”

There's no evidence that this claim of alteration is significantly true, though small translation differences did creep in over time. However, these are easy enough to ferret out by simple comparison with the earlier manuscripts. Such comparisons will inform our study later in this book. Even so, these tiny translation differences are normal and do not qualify as a significant alteration of the text. We've already considered the evidence as to who wrote it, when and where. Since the writer was an apostle of Messiah certainly everything that he wrote about Messiah was and is legitimately a part of the book. But, nevertheless, saying that Revelation is a “Jewish eschatological drama” and that “everything in it is Jewish in spirit and conception...its Hebrew in composition and style” is just amazingly telling.

The article says Revelation seems to have originally been written in Hebrew. How can this be known? It is really quite simple. Not only does Revelation reflect a Hebraic mindset in the ways already mentioned, but also it contains what are called ‘Hebraisms.’ In other words, it uses certain Hebrew phrases and expressions which are awkward when translated into Greek. These suggest that the book was originally written in Hebrew then translated into Greek. Yochanan likely wrote the Revelation in Hebrew, his mother tongue. He was also fluent in Greek as a secondary language,

so likely did the translating into Greek himself. Since Greek was widely known throughout the Roman Empire, it is the Greek version that was widely distributed with multiple Greek manuscripts of Revelation surviving till now.

### **REVELATION—A JEWISH APOCALYPSE**

In the very first verse of Revelation, it uses the word *revelation*. This is where the Book of Revelation gets its name. In Greek this is the word *apocalupsus*. In English that's *apocalypse*. In Greek this means “a disclosure or a revelation causing something to appear.” This term, *apocalypse*, is also used to describe a certain type of Hebrew literature. You find this Hebrew literature, for example, in the OT. Books like Daniel and Ezekiel are examples of apocalyptic literature, in which you find visions and symbolism revealing future events. (Strong's Dictionary)

Most of us are much less familiar with other apocryphal Jewish writings that were transmitted in what's called *the intertestamental period*. In other words, after the OT was closed. These include books such as *The Book of Enoch*, *Jubilees*, *Esdras*, *The Assumption of Moses*, and so on. These books are part of the Hebraic heritage that influences the Book of Revelation. Most Christian interpreters have little to no knowledge of these books. Few Christians read these books, fewer still understand them. Many Christians either don't know or don't care that there are allusions to these books within the actual text of Revelation itself. This amounts to a huge blind spot so far as interpretation is concerned. Yochanan, being a Jew by birth, was familiar with all these books as part of his traditional Jewish education. Thus, allusions to all of these Jewish writings are included in the Book of Revelation. Even though they're not included in the Bible, they all share a connection with apocalyptic writings of the Prophets that are in the Scriptures.

### **JEWISH APOCALYPTIC GENRE IS PREDICTIVE OF THE FUTURE!**

Something that is common to apocalyptic literature is that it all seeks to reveal hidden things about the future, usually about the end of this age and

about the age to come. That's the standard for an apocalypse. Some people today talk about the Book of Revelation and say, "It's just talking about events that were going on back then. It's allegorical about events that go on in every age." Not taking a Hebraic view, they fail to realize that mere allegory is not the nature of apocalyptic literature, of which Revelation is a part. Jewish apocalyptic literature is predictive of the future! Revelation is no exception. It is the very pinnacle and capstone of all apocalyptic literature.

Certainly much that is true is always true, but that's not what apocalyptic literature is primarily about. It's about specific historical events that will happen. It's history in advance. The Book of Revelation, though containing truth that is relevant in every age, nevertheless, primarily reveals specific events, then future when written, having to do with the end of the age and the age to come. It is part of a certain genre of literature all of which has the same purpose and prophetic style. You can't arbitrarily break Revelation off and say it's something totally different than all the rest of the Jewish apocalyptic literature that it's part of, draws from and relates to. Yet, Christian interpreters routinely do that and we all let them get away with it. No more!

### **WHY EVERY INTERPRETATION YOU HAVE EVER HEARD OF REVELATION IS WRONG**

Jewish apocalyptic literature, including that which is not in the formal canon, all descends or relates to the Prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures. That applies to Revelation even more than all of the other apocalyptic literature. In fact, the Book of Revelation refers back to apocalyptic symbols and references and phrases, from the OT Prophets, as well as from other apocalyptic literature and Hebraic sources, literally hundreds of times throughout the Book of Revelation. No less than 285 references to the OT have been identified by Christian scholars, who are clearly not seeing many more, while not seeing references to other apocalyptic literature at all. Typically, interpreters of the Book of Revelation ignore most or all of those Hebraic connections. Leaving all that out, it naturally follows that they arrive at a defective or deficient interpretation.

You really do have to take those Hebraic references into account in order to understand what Revelation is actually saying. In other words, you must come at the Book of Revelation from the same mindset as the writer of Revelation. That is a Hebraic-Messianic mindset. The Book of Revelation is not a Christian book. It's a Messianic Jewish apocalyptic book written by a Messianic Jew. Adopting that same mindset is a vital key to correctly interpreting the Book of Revelation.

Scary? Maybe.

Never fear. The book you are reading will help you deal with that daunting challenge.

### **THE TSIYON EXEGETIC APPROACH**

This brings us to our final consideration of this first chapter, that is, our approach to the Book of Revelation. Ours is a literal, Hebraic, Messianic approach that is Ruach-led. This is the Tsiyon Interpretation.

**Literal** means that even though Revelation speaks in Hebraic apocalyptic symbols, the symbols point to real events that *must happen*. We must grasp the Hebraic symbolism while also recognizing that the symbolism refers to real facts and events. Our confirmation of this approach is found in the NT Scriptures themselves, because we have hundreds of prophecies from the Hebrew Prophets that the NT interprets as fulfilled by real facts and events in the life of Y'shua the Messiah. In the case of all those hundreds of prophecies, every single one of them was fulfilled by some real fact or real event. This is true of all of the prophecies of Scripture.

**Hebraic** means you can't divorce the Book of Revelation from the context of historic and actual Israel. This is something common to Jewish apocalyptic literature. Apocalyptic literature concerns itself with the plans and purposes of YHWH relative to Israel and the outworking of those plans and purposes for Israel at the end of the age and in the age to come. Israel is the axis around which all Hebraic prophecy revolves, so you can't throw Israel out of the picture or minimize Israel into a secondary or minor player. Think like a Hebrew.

**Messianic** means Revelation is written from the position that Y'shua the Nazarean is the Jewish Messiah from the House of David who was foretold by the Hebrew Prophets. Beyond that, Revelation sees Messiah as the principle Actor of the entire prophetic drama, having direct and intimate relationship with all who claim Him as their Lord. He is revealed as immediately available to all of the righteous, yet exercising absolute authority over both the world and the universal community of believers. Even more than being about Israel, Revelation is about Israel's Messiah to Whom Israel is forever inseparably linked. This is personal for me. I am blessed to be a bondslave of Messiah as was the writer of Revelation. It is therefore Messiah who commands my focus in the unfolding of this book you are reading, as in all aspects of my life. He alone is worthy!

**The Ruach** is the Hebrew term for the Spirit of YHWH. Revelation was inspired by the Spirit and can therefore only be understood with the aid of the Spirit. Let us acknowledge that we can never decipher Revelation like some sort of secret code that originates in the carnal mind of man. The Revelation has its source in YHWH! Only His Spirit can open our minds and hearts to its full and real meaning. Let us humbly seek the guidance of the Spirit of YHWH as we press on into the treasures of Revelation.