

# REVELATION UNCLOAKED


## The Apocalypse of Yahshua Messiah, Chapter 1

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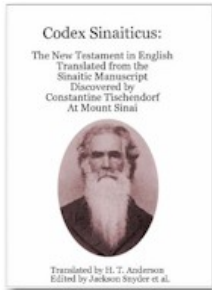
    
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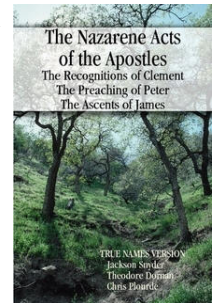


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Ever wonder why PAUL and not PETER received the mission to the lost tribes? Wasn't Peter the stone upon which the "church" was to be built? In this new translation of the Nazarene Acts, we follow Kefa (Peter) as he itinerates from Jerusalem and up the Mediterranean coast up to Tripoli, as recorded in the journals of his successor, Clement of Rome (Phi 4:3). Every message Kefa preached, the company he kept, and the great works of faith the the Almighty accomplished through him are herein recorded. This 300 page volume has been 'hidden' in the back of an obscure volume of the "Church Fathers" all this time. Could it be that, in establishing the Gentile 'church' by pushing away from Judaism, this history was purposely hidden?



### 01.01.01 The Title: Revelation 1:1

Rev 1: {1} The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John ...

The formal title of the scroll is *Apokalypsis Iesou Xristou*: "An Apocalypse (Revelation) of Jesus Christ." "Apocalypse" is from the original Greek of the scroll. "Revelation" is from the Latin. The two together signify that the purpose of the scroll is to reveal something that has been hidden from plain sight. But the Vision and its interpreting angel only reveal enough that the reader hungers for more -- thus the modern-day obsession with the scroll's interpretation. That these words number *three* indicate

that the Vision is the *complete testament of all salvation history* as revealed by the one who arose from the dead to fulfill it.

The feel of the text is that the Vision will be fulfilled immediately. Thus the Revelation is as indispensable today in encouraging those of us undergoing persecution as it was for the former-day saints.

## **01.01.02 Two Witnesses: Word / Testimony Rev 1:2**

Rev 1:{2} who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

The "Word of God" is paired with "the testimony of Jesus" over and over again (see Is 8:20). The pairing takes on great significance *in identifying the overcomers*. The "Word of God" consists of the divine commandments as recorded in the law and the prophets -- the Hebrew Bible. The "testimony of Jesus" is the proclamation of Jesus' full identity, which is unveiled throughout the Vision. The "and" that joins the two persons is inclusive: not necessarily "this and that," as we are used to understanding, but "this, even that." Although the Word (or Commandment) and the Testimony are two different entities, they overlap each other and are equated.

We find later that God "seals" first a finite number of Jews to inhabit the heavenly temple, then an infinite number of Gentiles (7:1-17). The Word of God represents the Jews; the Gentiles are represented by the Testimony of Jesus. Likewise, these *two witnesses* (or lampstands or olive trees) (11:3-19) are *ekklesias* (churches or, better, *assemblies*) of dynamic, end-time Jews and Gentiles, separated by tradition but united in Word and Testimony. John thus identifies himself with the *duality of witness that characterizes the Messianic Movement* of his time -- of our time -- and of all time.

## **01.01.03 Beatitude One (and the Seven) Rev 1:3**

Rev 1:{3} Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near.

This is the first of seven beatitudes. Beatitude is a *blessing* in literary form. The most famous beatitudes are found in Matthew 5 ("Blessed are the meek"). Sometimes, as in Deuteronomy 28, Luke and 1 Enoch, beatitudes are coupled with woes or curses.

Nobody really knows the exact meaning of the Greek word *makarios*, translated "blessed." Translators use words like "happy," "fortunate," even "lucky," instead of "blessed." One translation even uses "congratulations!"

Congratulations goes out to those like me who teach the Vision, and to you who hear my teaching. Unfortunately, many teachers of the Vision have their own apocalyptic agenda -- a doctrine to defend, a point of view to prove, a tradition to uphold. The elect are being deceived, and deceptive teaching of the Vision ultimately blesses nobody. I hope I am not also guilty.

Perhaps the greatest current deception is the doctrine of a rapture: the seizure of believers out of this world before the Great Tribulation. But the Tribulation has been in full swing for years, yet no one to our knowledge has ascended to escape it. On the contrary, literally millions of Christians and Jews have been martyred through the Ordeal. Many are led astray but such false teaching.

The Seven Beatitudes and where they are found:

- (1) Blessed the reader, 1:3;
- (2) Blessed the dead, 14:13;
- (3) Blessed the watchful, 16:15;
- (4) Blessed the invited, 19:9;
- (5) Blessed the resurrected, 20:6;
- (6) Blessed the keeper of prophecy, 22:7; and
- (7) Blessed the clean, 22:14.

These Beatitudes form a complete summary of the pilgrims' progress toward eternity.

#### **01.01.04 John, the Author Rev 1:4a**

Rev 1:4a John to the seven churches that are in Asia.

The Revelation is an apocalypse in the form of "nested letters" to 7 churches in "Asia" (modern Turkey) and the description of a vision. The visionary / revelator / writer is John.

But who is John? The name is a common. Church historian Eusebius Pamphilius (circa 324) reports that three Johns were possible authors, all of whom were domiciled at one time or another around Ephesus and had dealing with the seven churches. (Ecclesiastical History, 101, 125).

Greek experts tell us that our John could not be the writer of the Gospel of John or the three Epistles; the writer's style is completely different in Revelation. Whereas the Greek of the Gospel and Epistles is polished, the Greek of the Revelation is crude. But isn't John Zebedee's authorship taken for granted? No, it is not! Many respected critical exegetes tell us Zebedee can't be the author, and make sound cases for this observation.

Here is the main internal evidence for determining authorship of The Revelation:

- (1) John identifies himself as a Messianic Jew in verse 9.
- (2) He is just "John," as though we should know him already.
- (3) His use of loan words (i.e. maranatha) indicate that he spoke Aramaic (a Syrian / Hebrew dialect), the language of Jesus.

(4) Greek was the lingua franca of the first century as English is today. To get "media attention" in the Roman Empire, Greek was required. The crudity of the John's writing indicates that Greek is his second language (or that our Revelation is a Greek translation from Aramaic).

(5) The date of the writing is almost universally accepted to be during the reign of Emperor Domitian in the 90s. (Although John tells us in the text exactly when he had the Vision, and it was much earlier than 90!) If so, John must have been mighty old. There is evidence in John 21:21-23 that John would live long and prosper (in faith, anyway). Life expectancy in first century Palestine was about 30 years (according to a survey of gravesites). If John was able to live into the 90s, he must have been quite young when he started following John the Baptist then Jesus.

(6) Tradition informs us that Jesus, when on the cross, commended his mother to John's care. The traditional site of the tomb of Mary is near ancient Ephesus, where one of the seven churches was located.

Although this really is not much evidence (i.e. John's Vision never refers to the historical Jesus), it is enough to affirm the notion that this John is John Zebedee, a disciple of Jesus and an eye-witness to his redemptive power.

#### **01.01.05 He Who Is, Was, Is To Come Rev 1:4b**

Rev 1:4b Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne . . .

This greeting exposes the primitive, sectarian foundation of John's theology; apocalyptic in the tradition of Daniel and [1 Enoch](#); Revelation has close affinities with both these works.

Grace and shalom is extended from the sacred, unspeakable name YHWH, the I AM: who is, was, and will be: translating the name from Hebrew in all it's tenses and for all time, revealing the timelessness of Yahweh's enthronement and power.

The holy Spirit as such is never mentioned in the text.

But the seven spirits (sevenfold spirit maybe) are mentioned, second to Yahweh. These spirits may symbolize the seven great attributes of God (Isaiah 11) or refer to the seven angels, which we encounter in later sets.

Behold, the Seven Spirits (or the Seven-fold Spirit); the spirit of

(1) YHWH,

(2) wisdom,

(3) understanding,

(4) counsel,

(5) might,

(6) knowledge, and

(7) fear. (Isaiah 11:2)

### **01.01.06 Jesus Christ and his Titles Rev 1:5,6**

Rev 1:{5} and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, {6} and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

John gives Jesus the four-fold title first as Messiah (Christos), then as faithful witness, identifying Jesus with those who are his witnesses. He is One with us: the fruit of resurrection, the eventual ruler of all the kings of the earth. This tells us where Jesus will ultimately rule -- on earth -- as YHWH rules in Heaven. Jesus loves us, sanctified us, and we are his kingdom (subjects and co-rulers) here on earth in the now, and on a restored earth in the future.

Jesus plays the central role and a host of parts in the Apocalypse. He is the victorious Lamb that was slain who is returning as the righteous judge; his blood signifies that he was killed, like a sheep to the slaughter (Is 53:7); yet he has "overcome" even slaughter. His blood provides the "washing" of protection for the saints just as the washing of the Egyptian door with lamb's blood signaled the death angel to "pass over" (Exo 12:21-23).

The notion of Jesus as sheep to slaughter is recognized by John the Baptist (John 1:29,36), Paul (1 Cor 5:7) and Peter (1 Pete 1:19). John sees the Lamb as a Lion (Rev 5:5ff) and the Lamb as Shepherd of the sheep (Rev 7:17).

As Christ, Jesus is the Messiah who has come to save. Christos is Greek for Messiah – "Savior"; Christ is not a name, but a title. Iesus Christos literally means "Jesus Messiah." "Christ" became a name by popular use only through Bible translations and swearing. Besides the Christos, Revelation renders other titles to Jesus, including:

- (1) The Lion of Judah - Gen 49:9,
- (2) The Son of Man - Rev 1:13, 14:14, 1 En 36ff,
- (3) Morning Star - Rev 22:16,
- (4) many titles in Rev chapters 2-3.

### **01.01.07 Clouds of Witnesses Rev 1:7**

Rev 1:{7} Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen.

Look! Idou! Behold! -- a challenge to look into the future! The "clouds" he descends among are not to be understood as water vapor; these clouds are "witnesses," or, more literally, "martyrs" (Rev 19:11-16). Will the Son of Man find faith on earth when he descends from the right hand of the Father? No. All ethnoi (nations, tribes) will eventually recognize his presence / coming (parousia) and cry out in anguish -- their armies doomed to total defeat and their deeds judged. With his "amen," John means to say, "And this we must accept!"

### **01.01.08 The Alpha and the Ω Rev 1:8**

Rev 1:{8} "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

The Divinity proclaims his unity in defiance of contemporaneous Gnostic teachings of God's plurality -- God (Elohim) is one with the LORD (who is... = Yahweh) and the Almighty (Elyon). God was earlier identified with the Father (Pater). This is John's spin on the Shema, "the Lord God is One." As "the Alpha and the O," John identifies God with the state of timelessness, endlessness, or an eternal circadian rhythm, or a spiritual dimensionality, or a "kairotic" time, a "rightness of time," based on events rather than chronology.

Yahweh Elohim (God) is the originator of the Word (Logos), and the very fullness of the substance of words. God consists in all the letters here, as in Is 44:6. Alpha is the first letter of the alphabet, Omega is the last. We might say he exists from A to Z.

(Textual note: In the Greek, "Alpha" is spelled out, but "Omega" is represented simply by the letter "Ω," an indication that may mean John's Greek was less than perfect. Unless this is not merely the shorthand of a Greek student, but another first century puzzle to solve in the 21st.)

### **01.01.09 Patmos, John's Domicile Rev 1:9**

Rev 1:{9} I, John, your brother who share with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

John identifies himself as a brother. Considering his religious background and the time and place of his writing, we might understand his brotherhood to be with the Jews of the "churches" to which he writes. This filial identification is secondary to that which he shares with the

(1) persecuted

(2) members of the Jesus' kingdom who have

(3) awaited martyrdom with patience. (A cloud of witnesses!)

Therefore we imagine that John was exiled to Patmos by the Roman authorities for his endeavors to further the kingdom he preached – because of the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus.

Patmos Island is small, only 49 sq. mi. (7 x 7!). Locate it on the map. It is just off the coast of "Asia" / "Anatolia" / Turkey, 50 miles southwest of Ephesus. On Patmos was a temple to the Mystery of Artemis / Diana / Hekate (the "Diana of the Ephesians" in Acts), formally the goddess of the hunt, but who doubled as the most notorious witch of all time. The Ephesian Diana, the patron saint of Patmos, was the notorious witch immortalized by both St. Luke and Shakespeare.

Patmos was a natural repository for copper; slaves and criminals dug copper ore. We assume John was there to dig, which gives us another reason for believing he was somewhat less than 90+ years old.

### **01.01.10 The Day of the Lord 1:10a**

Rev 1:{10a} I was in the spirit on the Lord's day,

Some sources identify this day with Sunday, citing that the Apostles changed the Sabbath to Sunday in commemoration of Jesus' resurrection. Considering John's Jewishness, the dating of Revelation, and biblical evidence, the "day" John was so spiritual (dwelling in the fourth dimension) was not Sunday. The Lord's Day is the Day of Judgment -- the "Day of the Lord" (a.k.a. "The Day of Jesus Christ" or "The Day of Sadness" or "The Day of Gladness," or, in this case, the kuriakei hemerei, the "imperial," or "lordly," day).

THE DAY OF THE LORD is the Day (or time) of the Wrath of God," specifically described in Rev 14:6-20 as the day wrath descends earthward. This "day" is described in the following passages: Isa 2:12-17, 13:6ff, 34:8; Ezek 30:1-3; 2 Pet 3:10; Acts 2:20; 1 Th 5:2; 1 Cor 8, 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; 2 Th 2:2, and a variety of others. It is the day the powers that be are toppled, earth is set afire and sinners are judged.

Moreover, our text insists that the day of wrath is also the day of salvation for those who overcome by the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus.

### **01.01.11 Send To Seven Churches Rev 1:10b**

Rev 1:{10b} and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet {11} saying, "Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

Church tradition dictates that John was the Bishop of Ephesus for a time. John hears the trumpet-voice of the Son of Man -- he is to address the "book" to the seven

churches of his bishopric. John may have been the first Wesleyan "circuit-rider" for all we know. These towns formed a circle, situated perhaps 30 - 40 miles apart.

The Revelation is essentially an allegory about three competing cities (or political principalities), Jerusalem, Rome, and the New Jerusalem, with these seven church towns caught in the supernatural conflict between them. Curiously, lining up the seven towns with Patmos forms an arrow which, if the curvature of the earth is taken into account, points to ROME.

### **01.01.12 The Son of Man Uncloaked Rev 1:12**

Rev 1:12 Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest. 14 His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters.

The Son of Man is the only of several Messiah figures in Jewish lore that promises to redeem and restore all of creation for all of time. In Daniel 7:13, he is the heavenly figure that comes to judge all things. The judge is among the lampstands / churches, golden in their value; found there because he has been intimately involved in the affairs of these churches, commending goodness and exposing evil. He is judging the churches now through the fire of persecution.

The Son of Man is later identified with Jesus, the New Moses, transfigured here in the spiritual dimension. He is arrayed like the High Priest in robe and sash, the priest of priests. His countenance is like that of the angel described in Daniel 10:5-6. His eyes and face are aflame with the "ineffable light of God" (as he is described in so many contemporaneous non-canonical texts). His trumpet-voice is like the powerful voice of the ocean (Ezek 43:2).

THE SON OF MAN: (This section is a little technical.) In order to properly define the important title "Son of Man," we must have a short survey of contemporaneous Jewish messianic / eschatological expectations. Scripture is replete with references to an anointed King of the Davidic line - "a shoot from the stump of Jesse" - who would be born in Bethlehem, live to overcome all temporal powers, re-establish eretz Israel, and bring harmony to creation. A later tradition evident in Isaiah (53) is the idea of Israel as the suffering servant of God who would bring good news to the poor, then, "through vicarious suffering, restore all people to God" (note on Is 53:1, The New Oxford Annotated Bible).

The Qumran Covenanters (the Dead Sea Scrolls community) may well have understood these earlier strains of messianism as one trinity of Messiahs:

"The Community ... shall be ruled by the primitive precepts ... until there shall come the Prophet (1) and the Messiah of Aaron ('priest') (2) and Israel ('king') (3)." (Vermes 1QS IX:11)

In addition, one recent translation of the Dead Sea Scrolls may have uncovered the expectation of a "pierced Messiah" perhaps similar to the Suffering Servant.



Throughout the history of Israel, as one conqueror followed another, expectations of messiahs faded. Arising from the ashes was the hope of one cosmic, angelic figure that would descend from Heaven to judge evil and deliver the elect from persecution.

The "Son of Man" of the intertestamental apocalyptic and wisdom literature, and especially of the [Enochan](#) literature, personifies this new, universal, angelic messiah.

He is divine wisdom incarnate and the agent in creation, sent from the throne of the "Lord of Spirits" in response to creation's complaint against the atrocities committed by the Nephilim (fallen angels and their progeny). The Son of Man would take the form of a man, descend to earth to glorify the "elect ones," punish the Nephilim and sinners, then renew creation to Eden's likeness.

For early Christian thinkers, the person of Jesus (especially as the Logos) brought together diverse messianic expectations, and, through his unusual birth and ministry, his promise of oneness with God, his immortality, and his pledge to return, fulfilled them all.

Of all Jesus' messianic identities in Revelation, one is particularly relevant today -- Jesus' as the "Son of Man." The Anointed King, the Suffering Servant, the Aaronic Priest, were all promised in order to secure redemption for Israel; only the Son of Man would come to redeem all of creation.

In the meantime, the "elect" of God -- those who believe in the Son of Man and do his will -- are simultaneously on earth and in Heaven with him, ruling the universe. Jesus calls the elect "Sons of God" and ranks them with angels. As the elect act in the physical realm, they are acting simultaneously in the spiritual realm.

Such a primitive (though relevant) understanding of the nature of God's people as Sons of God is profoundly important yet neglected today in the community of faith.

When a follower of Jesus willfully understands then stubbornly believes that his/her actions have cosmic, universal consequences (beyond those which can be sensed physically), then circumstances are ripe for radical individual conversion into the likeness of the Kingdom.

### **01.01.13 The Two-edged Sword Rev 1:16**

Rev 1:{16} In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force.

The two-edged sword of the Son's mouth is explained in Heb 4:12 as "the Word of God." The second edge for our purposes is "the Testimony of Jesus," together "powerful enough to divide between soul and spirit, joints and marrow." The two-edged sword is effective in both the physical and spiritual realms -- it will conquer both the devilish armies and the devils that command them.

His face shines like the full sun because he was birthed out of divine Wisdom, the great lady of truth that was clothed with the sun (righteousness and purity). Being born of this woman, his genetic inheritance included the brightness of his mother, and more so.

### **01.01.14 The Keys of Death and Hades Rev 1:17,18**

Rev 1:{17} When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he placed his right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, {18} and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.

John beholds the bright countenance of the Son of Man and he is immediately "slain in the spirit." Throughout scripture, when the benevolent supernatural personage encounters the mortal, the appearance is accompanied by the phrase, "Do not be afraid." Jesus often used this introductory formula in the Gospels (Matthew 10:31, 14:27, 17:7, 28:10). The Son means no harm; only good. The Son's servant need not be afraid, for though the Son returns to judge the lukewarm, the evil, the apostate, his judgment is veiled in mercy.

Having overcome both death and the devil, he "holds the keys" that open and close the portals of Death and Hades (i.e. he has power over sin and death). "Hades" is the Greek version of the Hebrew Sheol, the mythical abode of the dead.

### **01.01.15 Past, Present, Future Rev 1:19**

Rev 1:{19} Now write what you have seen, what is, and what is to take place after this.

The book consists of the past, the present and the future. The dispute between conservative and liberal scholars consists (among other things) of how far into the future John means to predict through the Son of Man. Does he predict the fall of Jerusalem, the fall of Rome and the end of the world for the next generation, or are his prediction for the far-flung future – our present?

Here is another veiled reference to the habitation of Yahweh in timelessness: Yahweh (or Yahu) – is, was, will be.

### **01.01.16 Seven Stars and Lampstands Interpreted Rev 1:20**

Rev 1:{20} As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Identification of churches ("assemblies" is better) with lampstands is important later on in interpreting who the "two witnesses" are. The lamps, varying in brightness according to the churches' love and works, would rest on top of the stands, illuminating their respective territories with the gospel light.

Stars are angels (aggellos), with each angel responsible for one church. Philo defines a "star" as an intelligent heavenly luminary similar to an angel, but of a somewhat higher nature. Stars can also mean leaders, as they do (figuratively) in Jesus' prediction of the stars falling. Considering the spiritual nature of the Son of Man, "stars" are the leaders of these assemblies, who, like their Master, have a duality of nature, seen as men on earth, but as something greater from a higher perspective.

The nature of the messages to the churches signifies that the letters are written to humans about human behavior – but to humans who have been exalted through spiritual transformation. (They have ears to hear.)

