

KEYS TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION REV. 1:1-3,11,19,20

What are the keys:

I. The spiritual key: written to His servants

Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew **unto his servants (τοις δούλοις αὐτοῦ)** things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel **unto his servant (τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ) John:**

The first things one must ascertain when picking up any piece of mail would be – whose mail is this?

Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew **unto his servants (τοις δούλοις αὐτοῦ)** things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel **unto his servant (τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ) John:**

Revelation 10:7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared **to his servants (τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ)** the prophets.

Revelation 11:18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward **unto thy servants (τοις δούλοις σου)** the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

Revelation 15:3 And they sing the song of **Moses the servant (Μωϋσέως τοῦ δούλου τοῦ θεοῦ) of God**, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

Revelation 19:5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, **all ye his servants (πάντες οἱ δούλοι αὐτοῦ)**, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

Revelation 22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and **his servants (οἱ δούλοι αὐτοῦ)** shall serve (λατρεύσουσιν) him:

Revelation 22:6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew **unto his servants (τοις δούλοις αὐτοῦ)** the things which must shortly be done.

The spiritual key:

Written to his servants

Written for his own

Written for those who obey his teaching

Written for those who follow his teaching

Revelation 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, **and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.**

This book is obviously a circular letter

II. The grammatical key: written in &/ with signs, symbols, similies & metaphors.

Revelation 1:1 The Revelation (Αποκάλυψις) of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and **signified (ἐσήμανεν)** it **by** his angel **unto** his servant John: **Revelation 1:2** Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

To read anything / hear anything one must understand the rules of grammar / syntax → how the language works.

John tells us how his language works!!!

“It’s raining cats and dogs!”

This book was seen & heard! You will be amazed at how often this is stated!

Revelation 1:2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things **that he saw**.

Revelation 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, **and heard** behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

Revelation 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, **What thou seest, write in a book**, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Revelation 1:12 And I turned to **see** the voice that spake with me. And being turned, **I saw** seven golden candlesticks;

Revelation 1:17 **And when I saw him**, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

Revelation 1:19 Write the things **which thou hast seen**, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

Revelation 22:8 And I John **saw** these things, and **heard** them. And when I had **heard** and **seen**, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which **shewed** me these things.

John was not composing a book he spent years researching (see Luke 1:1-4). He was writing down what he saw & heard!!!

Eye: visual

Ear: aural / auditory

We obviously need to see & hear with him!

Revelation 1:1 The **Revelation (Αποκάλυψις)** of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and **signified (ἐσήμανεν)** it **by** his angel **unto** his servant John:

Both Greek and English contain the word signify (σημαίνω, σημειῶν)

John 12:33 This he said, **signifying (σημαίνων)** what death he should die.

John 18:32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, **signifying (σημαίνων)** what death he should die.

John 21:19 This spake he, **signifying (σημαίνων)** by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Is Revelation literal or symbolic?

Well, is that really the right question?

It is certainly filled with symbols:

Revelation 12:1 And there appeared a **great wonder (σημειῶν μέγα)** in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

Revelation 12:3 And there appeared **another wonder (ἄλλο σημειῶν)** in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

Revelation 13:13 And he doeth **great wonders (σημεία μεγάλα)**, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

Revelation 13:14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of **those miracles (τὰ σημεία)** which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

Revelation 15:1 And I saw **another sign (ἄλλο σημειῶν)** in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

Revelation 16:14 For they are the spirits of devils, working **miracles (σημεῖα)**, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Revelation 19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought **miracles (τὰ σημεῖα)** before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Signs have a literal meaning – they don't mean nothing! Signs? Sure – but of what?

Most of these signs are from the Old Testament (since God speaks in similar ways) or are revealed in the text itself.

Revelation 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. **The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.**

Revelation 11:7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. **Revelation 11:8** And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, **which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.**

So, is Satan a dragon? A serpent? A lion?

Physically: no

Serpent: deceitful and subtle

Lion: I Peter 5

Dragon: fierce beyond belief

Then there are the many similes and metaphors.

Simile: an indirect comparison using like or as

Revelation 1:14 His head and his hairs were white **like** wool, as white **as** snow; and his eyes were **as** a flame of fire;

Metaphor: a direct comparison

Revelation 5:6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, **stood a Lamb** as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Remember: we live in a world filled with symbols and signs!

III. The Thematic Key: written about Jesus Christ

What does 666 mean?

Who are the 2 witnesses?

What is the mark of the beast?

Revelation 1:1 **The Revelation of Jesus Christ** (Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ), which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

Revelation 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: **for the testimony of Jesus (ἡ γὰρ μαρτυρία τοῦ Ἰησοῦ) is the spirit of prophecy (ἐστὶν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας).**

Revelation (ἀποκάλυψις, ἀποκαλύπτω) = an uncovering, a disclosure, a revealing

As opposed to (κρύπτω) to conceal, to hide, to cover

God reveals who Jesus really is in this book. This book reveals Jesus in His fullness!

Revelation 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; **Revelation 1:13** And in the midst of the seven candlesticks **one like unto the Son of man**, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. **Revelation 1:14** His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; **Revelation 1:15** And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. **Revelation 1:16** And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

Some difficulties and solutions:

1. Difficulties with an image:

- Always see & hear the image!

See: Revelation 1:10,11,19,22:8

What do you see & hear?

1:12,16 seven golden lampstands / stars

6:2; 19:11-16

13:1

12:9

- Always see & hear within the context

1:12,16 → 1:20

11:7-8

- Always see & hear within a cultural &/ historical context!

- Always check the Old Testament for the image!

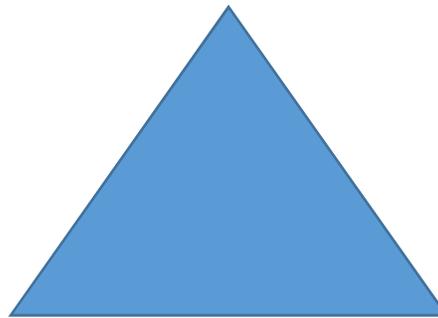
13:1 →

12:1 →

➤ **Always consider how images work!**

White horse = victory, triumph
Horn = power

Universal meaning/concept



Specific image

Specific historical referent

Lion:

1 Peter 5:8 – roaring and seeing to destroy / devour. Image of Satan

Rev. 5:5 – Lion of Judah coming to conquer. Image of Christ
Royalty, kingship

White horse:

Rev. 6:1-2

Rev. 19:11-16

Horns: power (Daniel 7 and 9)

2. Difficulties with structure:

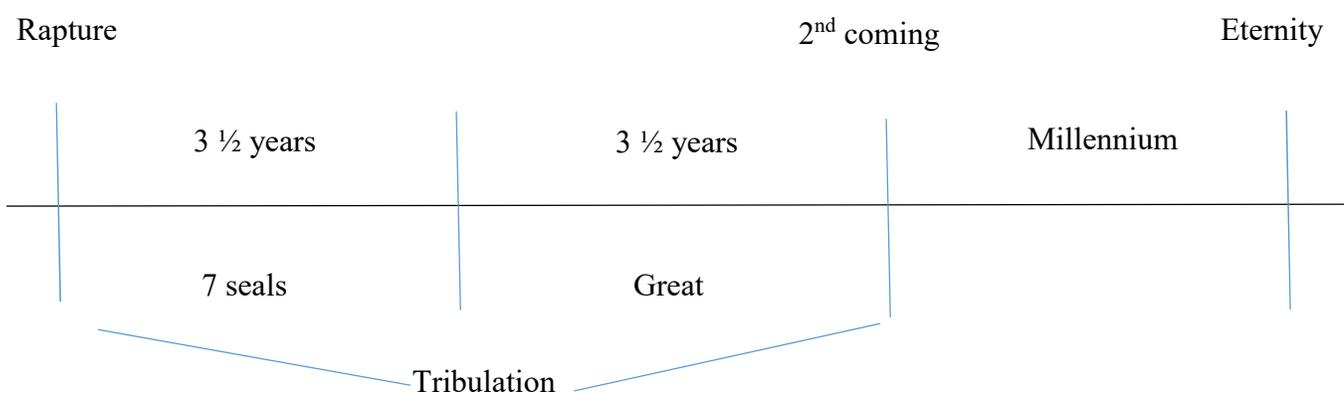
<u>Revelation 1:19</u> Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;	<u>Revelation 1:19</u> Γράψον οὖν ἃ εἶδες, καὶ ἃ εἰσιν, καὶ ἃ μέλλει γίνεσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα.
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1. The things which thou hast seen: Revelation 1
2. The things which are: Revelation 2-3, churches and kinds
3. The things which shall be hereafter: Revelation 4 - consummation

Revelation 4:1 **After this I looked (Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον)**, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be **hereafter (μετὰ ταῦτα)**.

Suggestions:

- Follow the outline the text gives you
- Note the footnotes / explanatory asides



Jeremiah – not chronological
Nehemiah 13:30

3. Difficulties with numbers:

3 choices:

- L
- S
- Some sort of

Revelation 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

Revelation 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

Revelation 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed **a little season**.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Revelation 20:5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Revelation 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

Revelation 20:8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: **the number of whom is as the sand of the sea**.

Revelation 20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. **Revelation 20:10** And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night **for ever and ever**.