

## Apocalyptic codes of the Revelation

From the Introduction: *Revelation as Drama*; by James L Blevins, Broadman Press 1984. P. 12-15.

Apocalyptic codes of the Jewish People were used by John in the Revelation. A coded language created some 200-300 years before the birth of Christ by the Jewish people so that they could speak to one another about their relationship to God.

The apocalyptic Code of Revelation and them name it's self, come from the Greek word *apocalypses*. It has as its basic meaning to decode, uncover, or reveal.

The three-fold codes of the Book of Revelation: Numbers, Colors, and Animals

### **Number Code:**

The number is code with every number in Revelation having a symbolic meaning.

**Twelve:** wholeness, especially in reference to people. (Thus the number of 144,000 in Revelation 7 is based upon 12 and implies the whole people of God.)

**Ten:** Complete number. (Thus, the thousand year reign of Christ in chapter 20 implies a complete reign of Christ.)

**Seven:** Divine number. (in many apocalyptic works the code number is for God is 777; many Jews added up the number of their name according to the Hebrew alphabet and this would be their code number in days of persecution. Revelation makes great use of 7s; seven trumpets, seven churches, seven bowls of wrath.)

**Six:** Imperfection or extreme evil. (In Revelation, 666 is the code number for Caesar

Domitian, who had persecuted and put Christians to death.)

**Five:** Penalty. (All major punishments and penalties are given in series of 5s, the locusts that come up out of the pit torture people for five months.)

**Four:** World. (Angels stand at the four corners of the earth.)

**Two:** Witnessing. (Two witnesses appear in Revelation 11.)

**One:** Unity.

**Fractions:** Incompleteness. (Found in Act III, showing one third of things being destroyed and standing for incompleteness.)

### **Color Code:**

Colors carry symbolic meaning.

**Pale Green:** Death (The fourth horse in my book is a pale green horse and Hades follows behind.)

**Dark Green:** Life. (Around the throne of God in Chapter 4 is a dark green emerald rainbow symbolizing life.)

**White:** Purity or conquering.

**Red:** Warfare.

**Black:** famine. (In chapter 6 four horsemen appear, the white horse of conquering, followed by the red horse of warfare, then

the black horse of famine, and the last the pale green horse of death.)

**Gold:** Worth or value.

John used the color coded because he could not openly speak about Jesus, so he set forth a living sermon in colors. The Son of Man is described with bronze feet, depicting strength, white robes of conquering, white hair of purity, gold band around his chest representing his worth of value, a sharp two-edged sword coming from his mouth, standing for piercing words. All the Christians hearing this would have known immediately the one of whom John was speaking.

### **Animal Code:**

The third code in Revelation is the animal code.

**Frog:** The meanest, vilest animal was considered to be the frog; anytime the frog appears, evil is right behind it. In Revelation 16:13, three frogs appear and then the last battle between good and evil. Watch out for the frog!

**Eagle:** Next to the frog, the eagle always brings bad news. In the midst of the seven trumpets, the eagle appears to announce that the last trumpets will be far worse than the first trumpets. Even when the eagle is not present, John uses the cry of the eagle, *ouai (oo-eh)*, translated as woe. The English translations does not quite capture the original sound of the Greek word which if pronounced quickly, sounds like the screech of an eagle.

**Monster Beasts:** The monster beasts represent monstrous persons or forces. They are constructed from bits and parts of wild animals to represent extremely evil persons.

**Beast from the sea:** A symbol for Caesar Domitian or political power. Composed of the three symbols of the major world powers of John's day: bear's feet—Medea, leopard's

**Bronze:** Strength.

**Scarlet:** Sin

spots—Persia, lion's head—Rome. There was no animal mean enough to represent Caesar, who had put to death o many Christians.

**Sea Serpent:** Satan is depicted by this monster, a red sea serpent with seven heads. My Jewish people feared the ocean and the sea serpents in it, so what could be better to depict Satan than this horrible creature from the sea?

**Locusts:** Monster locusts come up out of the bottomless pit. They have men's faces, women's hair, scorpion tails, and are the size of horses. They represent the sin and decay of the Roman Empire or any society that opposes God.

**Seven-Horned Lamb:** Jesus, himself, is depicted by an animal, a lamb with seven horns (divine power) and seven eyes (divine seeing). John was in prison and could not openly speak of Christ, so he used this coded animal to symbolize the Lord.

**Lion:** Often symbolizes all wild creatures.

**Ox:** often symbolizes all domesticated creatures.

Every animal has meaning. Thake 3 different color pens and underline each of the three codes as you read through Revelation. The Roman people did not have the codes and did not understand them. Because of this, I was able to send Revelation from his prison island to the mainland, where it was read aloud in the churches to give them comfort and hope in their days of persecution.