

## Revelation 1:4-6

### Grace and Peace from the Triune God

#### The End Times

In my last post, we began our verse-by-verse study of **The Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah to Yochanan**. In this post, we continue to unpack **Chapter 1 of Revelation**.

**<sup>14</sup> From: Yochanan**

**To: The seven Messianic communities in the province of Asia:**

**Grace and shalom to you from the One who is, who was and who is coming; from the sevenfold Spirit before His throne; <sup>5</sup> and from Yeshua the Messiah, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the earth's kings. To Him, the One who loves us, who has freed us from our sins at the cost of His blood, <sup>6</sup> who has caused us to be a kingdom, that is, cohanim for God, His Father — to Him be the glory and the rulership forever and ever. Amen.** ~ Revelation 1:4-6 (CJB).

**Seven** ~ In Hebrew, *seven* is שבע (*shevah*). It is from the root שבע (*savah*), **to be full** or **satisfied, have enough of**. Hence the meaning of the word **seven** is dominated by this root, for on the **seventh** day God rested from the work of Creation. It was **full** and **complete**, and **good** and perfect. Nothing could be added to it or taken from it without marring it. Hence the word שבת (*Shavath*), **to cease, desist, rest**, and שבת *Shabbath, Sabbath*, or **day of rest**.<sup>1</sup>

We will run into the number **seven** many times in our examination of the book of Revelation: **seven** angels, beatitudes, churches, crowns, doxologies, eyes, heads, hills, horns, kings, lamps, last plaques, letters, spirits of God, thunders, and **seven** years.

Yochanan writes to **seven Messianic communities** and **the sevenfold Spirit**. Most commentators acknowledge that there were more than **seven Messianic communities in the province of Asia** (present-day Turkey), but those named in verse 11 ~ Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea ~ are representative of them all. Don Jones disagrees in writing:

*"However, there were at least ten churches in Asia Minor at that time. So, it appears that the Holy Spirit specifically chose these seven churches, otherwise it would be addressed to all of the churches of the region."*<sup>2</sup>

**Asia** was a Roman province in what is now western Turkey. Ephesus was its main city, Pergamum its political capital.

**The One who is, who was and who is coming.** In the salutation, we find a clear reference to the Trinity, beginning with God the Father. This is based on God's self-identification in Exodus 3:14, **"I am who I am,"** or, **"I will be who I will be."** Compare this with: **"Yeshua the Messiah is the same yesterday, today and forever"** ~ Hebrews 13:8 (CJB). The substitution of **is coming** for **will be** seems to allude to Yeshua's return.

**The sevenfold Spirit.** Stern's believes the reference is to the **Ruach HaKodesh**, for reasons given in the next paragraph, but, the literal translation, **"the seven spirits"** (here and at 3:1, 4:5, 5:6), has strong arguments in its favor. The spirits could be seven angels attending God **before his throne** [Judaism recognized seven archangels—*Mikha'el, Gavri'el, Rafa'el, Uri'el, Suri'el, Fanu'el and Yechi'el*]. In Hebrews 1:14, angels are called **"spirits who serve,"** which is consistent with describing the Lamb's seven eyes (Revelation

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<sup>1</sup> Number in Scripture: Its Supernatural Design and Spiritual Significance by E.E. Bullinger.

<sup>2</sup> A Layman's Commentary on Revelation by Don Jones.

5:6) as ***"the seven spirits sent out into all the earth."*** ***Sevenfold Spirit*** could also reference Isaiah's prophesy: ***"The Spirit of Adonai will rest on him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and power, the Spirit of knowledge and fearing Adonai."*** ~ Isaiah 11:2 (CJB)

However, the above understanding presents a major difficulty in that it means Yochanan, who opposes angel-worship (see Revelation 19:10, 22:8-9), has sandwiched into his divine greeting, between God and Yeshua, a reference to seven created beings. Moreover, two passages from the ***Tanakh*** suggest a special relationship between the ***Ruach*** and the number seven ~ Isaiah 11:2, which gives seven attributes of ***The Spirit***, and Zechariah 4:2-10, in which some of the ***seven***-imagery of Revelation is associated with ***The Spirit***.

The original readers of verses 5-6 would be greatly encouraged in their struggle against persecution by these three aspects of ***Yeshua the Messiah***:

1. He is ***the faithful witness***. He witnessed unto the point of His own death, and especially *through* His own death, that God is in control of history. Compare this with:

***"No one has ever seen God; but the only and unique Son, who is identical with God and is at the Father's side — he has made him known."*** ~ John 1:18 (CJB) and,

***"Open your ears, and come to me; listen well, and you will live - I will make an everlasting covenant with you, the grace I assured David. I have given him as a witness to the peoples, a leader and lawgiver for the peoples."*** ~ Isaiah 55:3-4 (CJB).

2. He is ***the firstborn*** of those who get raised ***from the dead***. This means that faithful believers too can look forward to being resurrected and having eternal fellowship with God, even if in this world they receive no reward and die ignominiously. Compare this with: ***"For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we will also be united with Him in a resurrection like His."*** ~ Romans 6:5 (CJB) and ***"But the fact is that the Messiah has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died ... But each in his own order: the Messiah is the firstfruits; then those who belong to the Messiah, at the time of His coming."*** ~ 1 Corinthians 15:20,23 (CJB)
3. He is ***the ruler of the earth's kings***, the ***King of Kings*** (see Revelation 17:14 and 19:16) who will one day subject to Himself even the most unbridled and oppressive governments. Sha'ul records: ***"then the culmination, when He hands over the Kingdom to God the Father, after having put an end to every rulership, yes, to every authority and power. For He has to rule until He puts all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be done away with will be death."*** 1 Corinthians 15:24-25 (CJB)

Moreover, ***Yeshua ... loves us; has freed us from our sins at the cost of His blood; has caused us to be a kingdom***, [a community of Believers subject to Him]; ***has caused us to be cohanim*** (priests), ***for God, His Father***. For all these reasons, ***to him be the glory and the rulership forever and ever***. On hearing this read, the congregation is to respond by saying, ***"Amen."***

### **Special Comparative Note on Revelation 1:4-6**

As we will occasionally find, there is no diversity of views between the Historicists, Preterist, Futurist or Idealist on this passage.

In my next post, we continue on the verse-by-verse study of this fascinating prophesy. As we go through the letter, I'll continue to present the different views as we come to passages that are interpreted differently by the adherents to those views of interpretation presented in Part 1 of the Glossary.