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Understanding Revelation: A Crash Course Seminar

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Revelation is a complicated book that cannot be “simplified” the way some promise that other complicated life-level skills (like language or music or some other talent that takes a lifetime to develop). The reasons for its complexity lie in a “layering” of its themes and structures.

The good news is that if we begin with a primer in awareness, we can at least understand what we are dealing with and clarity can begin to break upon us.

Historical Backgrounds

Typically I begin this discussion with a lesson on historical backgrounds. But doing that will not only take an enormous amount of time, it would be like throwing pebbles in the Grand Canyon: there’s just too much to cover to make a meaningful dent in one lesson. On the other hand, most sources out there on Revelation (real ones—not the *Left Behind* series) focus on the historical issues, so this stuff is available to the serious student who really wants to learn. I will simply say this: much of what we must work hard to learn, the simplest of Revelation’s first hearers would have understood as a matter of course, just as you and I understand current headlines. By studying the politics, religion, and conflicts of that time we can get insight into why John writes the way he does.

Genre

In order to understand Revelation, we have to understand what *kind* of book it is. Most books in the NT are what we call *monogeneric*...they are one kind of literature (Gospel, sacred history, letter). Most readers take this for granted, and for very good reasons. Understanding Paul’s letter to the Romans begins with the rather obvious assumption that it is, in fact, a letter—written from one person to a group of people in another place under certain circumstances. We read the Gospel of Matthew differently, and Acts differently still, according to what kind of books they are.

Revelation confuses people right off the bat because it is simultaneously **three kinds** of literature in a single book. It calls itself an *apocalypse* (Revelation 1:1), it calls itself a *prophecy* (Revelation 1:3), and it bears all the marks of other NT *letters*—and in some ways more than certain books we call letters (Revelation 1:4ff).

An *apocalypse* is a work of literature that deliberately communicates its message with strong symbolic imagery, because until modern times, in ancient times strong symbolic imagery was considered weightier than literal language, not less serious. Apocalyptic language and imagery functions a little like political cartoons do today—it uses exaggerated images to communicate a point in a dynamic and memorable way.

A *prophecy* foretells the future but also confronts God’s people in the present. Its goal is edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3), *not* a precise roadmap to the future.

Prophecy always urges God’s people to draw close to Him; it will never reveal secrets so that we know the future ahead of time (so we can kick back and take it easy if we please!).

An *epistle* speaks to God’s people in real time. The value of Revelation has for us as a letter parallels the value of any other NT letter, such as Romans, Hebrews, or 1 Peter (to name a few). We understand how it hit the original recipients then we apply those lessons to ourselves.

Structure

The structure of Revelation—how the episodes are arranged—is generally considered both the great mystery of the book and the key to its interpretation. While many scholars can use other works to interpret its symbols (or get a strong idea about many of them, anyway), Revelation seems to be a law unto itself when it comes to structure. It can be very confusing for people to follow the thread of the book. That combined with its strong and violent imagery can make reading Revelation a frightening experience for many people—even Christian people.

But we can also get a handle on understanding Revelation’s mysteries by seeing that the book has interlocking structures that complement each other. The bulk of what I want to talk about will be this subject.

First, Revelation is a **Progression**, like this....

A...B...C...D...E...F... (etc.)...Z

This means that the book begins like any other book, then moves from theme to theme in sequence until it reaches the end. Most people assume this when they read the book, and they are not mistaken to think that way.

However, they *are* mistaken to think the book is *only* a progression. Because the book is also a **Cycle**, like this...

A, B, C...A, B, C...A, B, C

This is especially true of those passages in Revelation known as Wrath Cycles, known to many as the *Seals* (6:1-8:5), the *Trumpets* (8:6-11:19), and the *Bowls* of God’s Wrath (15:1-16:21). If we make the mistake of reading these series as sequential, independent groupings of events, then not only does interpreting these events in light of the interludes sprinkled throughout and in between them become a dizzying task, but we get the end of the world happening *three times!* (Revelation 6:12-17 with 8:1-5; 11:15-19; 16:17-21.) Put another way, note that in each of these cycles, the finale is marked by the same cataclysmic events: lightning, rumblings, earthquake, and a hail storm—how God appeared on Mount Sinai.

These are great clues that tell us *not* to read the book *only* in sequential fashion. Rather, we are to read Revelation as Joseph interpreted Pharaoh’s dreams in Genesis 41:1-36. Joseph in his God-granted wisdom understood that the two dreams (cows and heads of grain), each with two episodes (fat and healthy followed by skinny and withered) were *not* literal (i.e., *actually* about 14 living cows in various conditions of health, and *actually* about 14 growing sheaves of wheat of differing qualities), and were *not* sequential (7 good cows followed by 7 bad cows, then 7

good sheaves followed by 7 bad, for a total of 28 years), but were rather symbolic and cyclical. He told Pharaoh that there would be 7 years of plenty and 7 years of famine. The result of his interpretation was the salvation of the world (in the natural sense) during his lifetime.

Lastly, Revelation is a ***Chiasm***. Although this structure (named for the Greek letter “chi”—pronounced “kai”—and looking like an “X”) is a common one used throughout the Old Testament and even in New Testament books, most people are not familiar with it and this lack of awareness becomes a serious handicap for studying the books of the Bible, and especially Revelation.

A chiasm is a structure that repeats themes in parallel fashion, not sequentially, but from each extreme of the structure towards the center. A chiasm therefore can be represented something like this...

A...B...C...D...C'...B'...A'

In action, a chiasm (also called a “chiastic structure”) would feature a theme at the beginning that connects in some way to a theme at the end, followed by a theme that connects with another in the penultimate position, and so forth, “marching” from either end towards the middle. The center of a chiasm is called the “crux,” and this crux is the key to understanding the whole in one fashion or another.

Chiasms are found in such passages as Genesis 9:12-17, Exodus 2:11-4:31, Psalm 8, Psalm 103, Ecclesiastes 1:2-11, and the entire Book of Habakkuk, to name a few. The understanding that the chiasm is widely used is generally accepted, and therefore the idea that Revelation uses chiasms is therefore also not new.

In Revelation’s case, the entire Book is a chiasm, and that “macro-chiasm” is made up of lesser chiasms.

What is remarkable is that Revelation is ***Progression***, ***Cycle***, and ***Chiasm*** all at the same time. This makes the book very difficult to unpack, especially since there are differing theories regarding how Revelation’s chiastic structure works.

Gematria and Hebrew Numerology as the Key

It is generally recognized that Hebrew numerology is part and parcel of Revelation’s true meaning. The numbers that occur throughout the book in different forms (or their multiples) are very important clues because for the Hebrew mind they communicate meaning. *Three* is the number of God. *Four* is the number of the created order. *Seven* is spiritual completeness. *Twelve* is the number of the people of God. *One thousand* is a great number beyond comprehension. When these numbers are multiplied together, the concepts are combined (i.e., *three* cycles of *seven* equals God’s fullness being reached, etc.). Revelation is highly dependent upon this mode of communicating meaning, in ways that are obvious and in ways that are less obvious.

Furthermore, Revelation’s structure is dependent on *Hebrew gematria*. In the ancient world (unlike today, with our independent system of symbols for numbers), *letters* were used as numbers (a vestige of this is the Roman numeral system). When letters equal numbers and

numbers can signify letters, ways of communicating a message “multiply” rapidly. This is called *gematria*. Although *gematria* can and has been abused by some to create something when nothing is present, John the Revelator clearly intends for his readers to be on the lookout for *gematria* within his book. Revelation 13:18 tells us, **“This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.”** When one transliterates “Nero Caesar”—the ultimate antichrist persecutor of the first century—into Hebrew, the numerical result is 666 (one variation of this text makes the number 616; but the meaning is the same, because “Nero” in Hebrew may or may not include terminal “n,” as it does in Spanish, for instance). John is revealing that *gematria* is a manner by which he thinks and communicates, and expects his readers to think and receive.

A major key to understanding Revelation’s mysterious structure appears to be seeing the principles of *numerology*, *gematria*, and *chiasm* in tandem with one another. This realization will require a deeper investigation into the specifics of how John employs these devices to communicate his message. Though they will be explained one after the other, the truth is they function *simultaneously*.

Numerology and Word Count: A Primer

As we’ve already explained, numbers are important for John. There are 24 elders. There are 4 living beings. There are 7 lampstands. There are 3 cycles of 7 plagues. This list goes on and on. But John also uses *words* and *numbers* together to communicate spiritual truths. One simple way he does this is through **word count**—certain names or words occur a certain (spiritually significant) number of times to get a point across. Careful study of the text (necessarily in Greek—very often things are lost in English translation) will reveal these numberings.

The scholar Richard Bauckham has pointed out that names and titles for God (including compound titles/names) occur theologically significant numbers of times. For example:

“God”: 96 times (24x4, that is, the number of the elder multiplied by the number of the living beasts)

“Who was, and is, and is to come”: 3 times

“Lord God”: 3 times

“Almighty”: 9 times

“Lord God Almighty”: 7 times

“Jesus”: 14 times

“Christ”: 7 times

“Jesus Christ”: 3 times

“Testimony of Jesus”: 7 times

Note that *concepts* rather than simple words, are the key. For example, the word “Lamb” occurs 29 times, but one occurrence refers to the False Prophet’s appearance (13:11), so the actual use of the title **“Lamb”** for Jesus is 28 times (4x7).

But beyond the names of God, many, many other words with thematic and spiritual importance occur a theologically significant number of times. To name a few...

Salvation: 3 times

Israel: 3 times

Blessing: 7 times

Worthy: 7 times

Glory: 7 times

Amen: 9 times

Kingdom: 9 times

Judgment: 9 times

...and so on. There are literally *dozens* of such examples.

Key Themes by Word Count

It seems that John actually expresses particular themes via word count, and does so in various places and ways throughout the book.

For example, the word “**voice**” (Greek *phonē*) occurs 55 times, as does the word “**seven**” (Greek *hepta*). A bit of study reveals that the Jews at the time of John believed there to be 55 prophets (48 men and 7 women) in Israel’s history. When we search for the words “**prophecy**” and “**prophet/s**” (referring to the community of prophets at the time of John), both of those terms occur 7 times each. When we look closely, in Revelation only God’s servants are given “voice”—the word is never used in reference to the servants of the devil in the book. What is the point? Revelation claims to be the culmination and fulfillment of the entire prophetic witness in the Bible. John accentuates this with a “wheel within a wheel”: the modified phrase “**loud voice**” occurs 21 times in the book—7x3.

Gematria and Word Count

Not only does John use word count to express spiritual ideas and themes, he uses word count in conjunction with *gematria*—the numerology of words and names according to their digital value.

As pointed out, he reveals that the name of the Beast is gematria valued at 666. But what about the name of God? The Hebrew name of God is Yahweh (or more accurately, YHWH, without vowels) has a gematria value of 26. Not coincidentally, the words **fire**, **sea**, and **forever** all occur 26 times, and the word **heaven** occurs 52 times—26 times in each half of the book. The composition of the book in relation to how John uses these words communicates something about who God is, but before we can fully understand this we need to better understand how chiasms work...

Chiasms: A Primer

Revelation 2-3 is a prime example of a structural chiasm, and there are clues throughout this part of Revelation that let us know it:

A & A': Letters 1 & 7 (Ephesus and Laodicea) both focus on the church's imperfect love for their Lord, and mention Christ's own love/hate.

B & B': Letters 2 & 6 (Smyrna and Philadelphia) use in perfect mirror parallel the phrases, "those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan (Smyrna) and "those who are the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not" (Philadelphia).

C & C': Letters 3 & 5 (Pergamum and Sardis) mirror each other in that the first begins with words of praise and ends with the threat of death, while the second begins with words of death and ends with words of praise.

D: The crux of the central letter—and of the entire chiasm which is Revelation 2-3—is 2:23, which states, "Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches minds and hearts and I will reward each of you according to his works."

Chiasms like this occur all throughout the book, and as we will see, Revelation (like Habakkuk) is one huge chiasm. But while some argue exactly where the parameters (or "borders") of given chiasms are actually found (or if we are just imagining them), it is fairly clear when we judge chiasms by numerology and gematria that they are very real.

Example A

For example, the structure found in Revelation 10:5-6 combines words, themes, and gematria word count to create a focal point in the book. This is the passage in the ESV...

And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay...

...but its structure is like this:

- A **sea**
- B **land**
- C **heaven**
- D **forever**
- D' **ever** (same word in Greek the ESV translates as "forever")
- C' **heaven**
- B' **earth** (same word in Greek the ESV translates as "land")
- A' **sea**

This structure is even more stunning when we note that out of 26 occurrences of the word “forever” (Greek *aion*) occurrences 13 and 14 (the central two occurrences) are found at the center of this structure. When we see that the word “heaven” (Greek *ouranos*) occurs 26 times in the first half of the book (as explained shortly) the fact that we also have occurrences 13 and 14 in this passage—framing on either side the two central occurrences of “forever”—it is impossible to conclude this is coincidence.

Example B

Revelation 14:6-20 is a longer passage and a more involved structure (ESV):.

Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. ⁷ And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.” ⁸ Another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.” ⁹ And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.” ¹² Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. ¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!” ¹⁴ Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.” ¹⁶ So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped. ¹⁷ Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, “Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.” ¹⁹ So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰ And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse’s bridle, for 1,600 stadia.

This is a complicated passage, with a great deal going on in it, but it is clarified when we look at the structure:

Angel A

Angel B

Angel C (predicts “fire”)

Call for Endurance

The Voice of the Spirit Blesses the Martyrs

The One Seated on the Cloud

Angel C’

Angel B’

Angel A’ (authority over “fire”)

Once again, a chiasm is used to frame the focal point of the passage, which is the blessing on those who die in the Lord and the harvest of the earth by the One seated on the throne. And once again, word count gematria plays in: As we’ve stated, the word “fire” occurs 26 times (gematria for YHWH), and occurrences 13 and 14 (again, the central occurrences) are found in this passage, describing the fate of those who follow the Beast and the ultimate victory of God and His servants.

When we read Daniel 7:9–11 (ESV), this passage from Revelation comes alive:

“As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire.¹⁰ A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.¹¹ “I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire.”

In other words, just after the number of the Beast’s name is declared at the end of Revelation 13, the number of God’s name answers with fire, declaring the doom of the Beast even as he wages war against the saints.

Revelation, a Chiasm

It is my contention that Revelation is one massive, intricate chiasm. Generally speaking, the larger and more intricate the chiasm, the more significant the crux, or central point. The study of all of the chiasmic parallels throughout Revelation is the stuff of a long book, or a graduate class. But I want to demonstrate how the crux of Revelation works and therefore how the rest of the book unfolds around it.

Revelation 12 is widely seen as the lynchpin of the book. Even scholars who haven't expounded upon numerology and chiasm as I have see it as the thematic and mathematical center of the book, and among those who do see chiasm in the book, there is general agreement that Revelation 12 is, in fact, the center. I agree with this assessment, but believe it is even more remarkable than many have seen.

In Revelation 12:10-12 we find something extraordinary. Virtually every word (and sometimes phrases) that occurs in this passage occurs a theologically significant and/or chiastically relevant number of times. In other words, how many times the word occurs, and how those words are placed throughout the book point to this being the center, numerically.

Here is the passage:

Revelation 12:10–12 (ESV)

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. ¹¹ And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. ¹² Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

But consider the following breakdown:

And I heard a *loud voice* [**loud voice** occurs 21 times, this being the 11th (center) occurrence]

in *heaven* [**heaven** occurs 52 times, this being the 27th occurrence, making it the first of the second gematria sequence for YHWH (the 26th occurrence is found in 12:8)]

saying, "Now the *salvation* [**salvation** occurs 3 times and this being the 2nd (center) occurrence]

and the *power* [**power** occurs 12 times, this being the 7th (just past center) occurrence]

and the *kingdom* [**kingdom** occurs 9 times and this is the 5th (center) occurrence]

of our *God* [**God** is numerically coded with 96 occurrences]

and the *authority* [**authority** occurs 21 times in the book, numerically coding the word; this is the 9th occurrence]

of his *Christ* [**Christ** is numerically coded with 7 occurrences]

have come, for the *accuser* [this is the only occurrence of **accuser** in Revelation]

of our *brothers* [**brothers** occurs 5 times and this is the 3rd (center) occurrence]

has been thrown down, who accuses them *day and night* [**day** is a numerically coded word with 21 occurrences, but the phrase **day and night** occurs 5 times and this is the 3rd (center) occurrence]

before our God [**God** is numerically coded with 96 occurrences]

And they have conquered him by the blood [**blood** in reference of the shed blood of Jesus and his martyrs/saints occurs 10 times (the number of the plagues on Egypt, the model for the plagues of Revelation; the blood of the Passover lamb is what redeems from the 10th plague) in 9 references; this is the 5th occurrence and the 5th (center) reference]

of the Lamb [**Lamb** (in reference to Jesus) is numerically coded with 28 occurrences]

and by the word of their testimony [**word** is numerically coded with 18 occurrences; **testimony** occurs 9 times and this is the 5th (center) occurrence]

for they loved not their lives [**lives** is numerically coded with 7 occurrences]

even unto death.

Therefore, rejoice [**rejoice** occurs 3 times, this being the 2nd (center) occurrence]

O heavens [**heaven** occurs 52 times, 26 times in each half of the book as part of a gematria of YHWH; this is the 2nd occurrence of the second half sequence]

and you who dwell in them!

But woe [**woe** occurs 14 times in the book, and this being the 8th occurrence (just past center)]

to you, O earth and sea [**sea** occurs 26 times as part of a gematria sequence for YHWH, this being the 13th occurrence (just before center)]

for the devil [**devil** occurs 5 times, this being the 3rd (center) occurrence]

has come down to you in great wrath [**wrath** occurs 10 times in Revelation; 7 times it refers to God's wrath, 2 times it refers to the passion of the Harlot's adulteries; once (here) it refers to the devil's wrath]

because he knows his time [**time** is numerically coded with 7 occurrences. But by artful composition, it also actually comes at 5 places, since 3 occurrences are found at 12:14. This makes the 12:12 occurrence the center of 5 like several other words in this passage]

is short.

In summary, careful examination of Revelation 12:10-12 reveals a confluence of themes—not just theologically, but also mathematically. By examining how many times these words occur and where they occur we can see that John intends us to see this passage as the nexus of the entire book. Not counting conjunctions and (most verbs), nearly every noun or exclamation in the passage is numerically keyed, and fully 14 words or phrases (namely, “loud voice,” “heaven,” “salvation,” “power,” “kingdom,” “brother,” “day and night,” “blood,” “testimony,” “rejoice,” “woe,” “sea,” “devil,” and “time”) find their center occurrence in Revelation 12:10-12. Can this be mere coincidence? Or is Revelation more cunningly crafted than anyone confused by it ever imagined?

When we further consider that Revelation 12:10-12 has precisely 98 words in it (in the Greek text), things become even more intriguing. Counting the words (again, in the Greek manuscript, removing all chapter and verse markers) we find precisely 4,878 words on either side (i.e., Revelation 1:1-12:9=4,878 words, and Revelation 12:13-22:21=4,878 words, for a total of 9,756 words outside the crux). Again, this can hardly be coincidence. Revelation 12:10-12 again seems confirmed as the “center” (crux) of the book, but what do these numbers mean, if anything?

They do mean something. The number 98 is 49×2 . When we consult Zechariah 4:2 we find the original OT source for the 7 lampstands we find in Revelation 2-3. We also discover that each of the 7 lamps in Zechariah have 7 lips (wicks) on them. When we multiply 7 lamps by 7 wicks, we have 49. The church is represented equally in both sides of the book.

But what is 4,878 from either side of the crux (or rather, $4,878 + 4,878 = 9,756$ total from both sides)?

Consider this:

The gematria of *I Am that I Am* (Exodus 3:14) is 543. John’s version of this name is found 3 times in Revelation (1:4, 1:8, 4:8).

The gematria of *Israel* is 541. **Israel** is also found 3 times (2:14, 7:4, 21:12).

If one multiplies the number of times *I Am that I Am* occurs in Revelation by the number of times *Israel* occurs (i.e., 3×3), then multiply the gematria for *each of those names* by that number (i.e., 9×543 , then 9×541), you get 4,887 and 4,869, respectively. Add these to *each other* and you get **9,756**—the exact total of words outside the crux. Now, perhaps, we understand the seriousness of the final warning not to add or remove words from Revelation (22:18-19); to add or subtract a *single word* quite literally ruins the meaning of the book!

It is far, far easier to rationally believe that this is by design than to believe this is coincidental, especially when the ultimate point of Revelation is God “tabernacling” with His people at the end of the book—the Great I AM of the Exodus mixing with Israel—in Revelation 21.

The Scroll

One more significant insight comes from this study. The word *scroll* (Greek words *biblios*, *biblos*, and *bibliardion*, often translated as “book”) occurs 28 times—14 times in each side of the book. *The Scroll* of Revelation 5:1 is described as being written on both sides. In this respect the scroll in the hand of the One seated on the throne, taken by the Lamb, resembles the scroll of Ezekiel 2:9-10. Such a scroll is called an *opisthograph*.

Revelation’s symmetry, along with the word count arrangements described above, reveal that in its original form (now lost) Revelation was also an opisthograph—a scroll, with its text written on both sides. The question is, at what point does Side One end, and Side Two begin? When do we “flip the scroll over”? Can this be known, and by knowing it can we better understand the flow of the book?

If we are to be true to the gematria of YHWH as revealed in the two sequences using the word *heaven*, Side One extends at least to the end of 12:8, where occurrence #26 of the word appears.

Similarly, if the next sequence of 26 occurrences of *heaven* are found on Side Two, the scroll must flip by the end of 12:9 because #27 of 52 (which is simultaneously #1 of the second sequence of 26) is found at the beginning of 12:10. This is confirmed by key words occurring an even number of times whose first occurrence past the middle point of their sequence is found after 12:10 (*power, woe*). We can conclude, then, that Revelation was delivered as a scroll, that Side One ends at the end of 12:9, and that Side Two begins with 12:10. Side One speaks of the rise of persecution against the Church and ends with the fall of Satan from heaven (a reference to the Christ event that broke his power); Side Two speaks of the aftermath of the fall of Satan and his self-destructive raging, which ends with the Coming of the Lord. Put another way, Revelation IS the scroll we read about in the book.

Obviously, this study merely scratches the surface of deep and untold riches. There is layer upon layer of depth and insight to be found. But even the small amount covered here reveals a Divine Mind behind the text—a text written with a reed pen, homemade ink, and hand-stretched parchment rather than a computer.