

# Revelation 13:18

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# Revelation 13:18

**Modern King James Version (MKJV)** *Here is wisdom. Let him having reason count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. And its number is six hundred and sixty-six.*

- I like this translation of the Greek.
- There is a huge amount of superstition surrounding this verse which we will unpick.
- We will see how this phrase can be used as a key to understanding the whole book of Revelation.
- Finally, how this new understanding helps us apply Revelation to our time.

# Word Games

- In biblical times there was a common puzzle game played called gematria
- Letters of words were given values and the values were added up to give a number and you had to guess the original word.
- For even more fun. These numbers could then even then be turned back into three letter words. You can tell there was no xbox at the time!!!

# Key

$\alpha$	1	$\iota$	10	$\rho$	100
$\beta$	2	$\kappa$	20	$\sigma$	200
$\gamma$	3	$\lambda$	30	$\tau$	300
$\delta$	4	$\mu$	40	$\upsilon$	400
$\epsilon$	5	$\nu$	50	$\phi$	500
$\varsigma$	6	$\xi$	60	$\chi$	600
$\zeta$	7	$\omicron$	70	$\psi$	700
$\eta$	8	$\pi$	80	$\omega$	800
$\theta$	9		90		900

Table 1: Letter to value puzzle game

# 297 or σοζ

- So Gordon would be written in direct transliteration of the letters *γορδον*
- This would be translated using the key into numbers and these added up  $3 + 70 + 100 + 4 + 70 + 50 = 297$ .
- Fun!
- So I could say either 297 was the number or σοζ (soz) and you would have to guess the word (Gordon).

# Nero Caesar

- John who wrote Revelation was a Jew.
- He thought in Hebrew, his second language was koine Greek
- There were two ways of spelling Nero Caesar in Hebrew.
- One, transliterated, looks like this: NRO QSR (N=50, R=200, O=6, Q=100, S=60, R=200) which added up equals six hundred and sixteen
- The other way looks like this: NRON QSR (N=50, R=200, O=6, N=50, Q=100, S=60, R=200). Similarly adding these letters together you get six hundred and sixty six.
- They would have viewed 666 as six hundred, sixty and six. They would not have thought of three 6s. That is modern view of numbers

# The clincher

- There are **four** readings of the verse: writing out the words of the numbers (six hundred and sixteen or six hundred and sixty six) or using the letters of the alphabet ( $\chi\iota\varsigma$  or  $\chi\xi\varsigma$ ).
- It is likely (due to P115 (discovered 2005)) that the original number was written  $\chi\iota\varsigma$  which is six hundred and sixteen and the variant reading is six hundred and sixty six.

# Variant Reading

- Variant reading practically never change the meaning of the verse just the exact wording.
- On this premise it is highly likely that six hundred and sixty six and six hundred and sixteen have the same meaning to the reader at the time so was an unimportant change.
- It is as if they know the answer so the exact number (six hundred and sixty six or six hundred and sixteen) is not important to them.

# The Beast

Okay, what do we know about the beast from scripture **NOT** Hollywood

- He accepts the worship that **ONLY** Father, Jesus or the Holy Spirit should have. v4
- He persecutes the church v7
- He is demonically empowered v11
- He deceives many v14
- He is a man v18
- His name is spelt two different ways adding up to six hundred and sixty six or six hundred and sixteen. v18
- He was well known to John audience. They were confident that six hundred and sixty six or six hundred and sixteen meant the same thing.

# Revelation 13:18

- So to them the verse would have meant: **Caesar Nero was the beast.**
- Revelation was written in AD 95 ish
- Nero committed suicide in AD 68. So he has been dead for 28 years. Why is John writing about him at this point.
- There was a strong belief that he had staged his own death and would return.
- This is reflected in the verse 3 *And I saw one of its heads as having been slain to death, and its deadly wound was healed. And all the earth marvelled after the beast.*

# So what, how does this impact us?

- Revelation is a book of prophetic imagery and like every prophesy there is immediate out working and an eternal truth.
- This type of understanding of Revelation is called *historistic*.
- For completeness we will mention other 3 types of understanding of Revelation.

# Impact

- *Preteristic* views all the events as having occurred in the first century.

God does not speak like that... He speaks from eternity into our reality

What is it doing in the bible if that is the case?

- *Futuristic* holds that the whole book addresses events sometime in the future.

The book was written to real people really suffering to think that God would ignore all that and write a huge tome that was not addressing any of their issues just is not the way God works.

They clearly understood the imagery and meaning of the verses 616 or 666

- *Idealistic* view the book as symbolic of timeless truths with no simple direct application to any time.

see above

# Impact

- Thus, by examining this one phase in Revelation we can nail our understanding to one type of view of the whole book.
- If six hundred and sixteen simply meant Nero is there a out working in our time.
- This changes the way we are looking for types of Nero (rulers who are against Jesus and the Church)

# Impact

- Rulers who accept the worship that **ONLY** Father, Jesus or the Holy Spirit should have. v4
- Rulers who persecute the church v7
- Rulers who were demonically empowered v11
- Rulers who deceive many v14
- Rulers who are a men v18

# Impact

- I certainly believe Hitler fulfilled these criteria
- Many, Misty Edwards among them, believe there will be a Nero type of ruler who will rise once more, during these last days.
- Actually I have no sense of that myself.
- But it is possible and now we know the attributes of this ruler.

# Summary

- During biblical times folk played gematria for fun!!!
- They were comfortable that 616, 666,  $\chi\iota\varsigma$  and  $\chi\xi\varsigma$  all meant the same thing
- It is a reasonable assumption that this was Nero
- This means that we have a historic view of Revelation
- Types of Nero can be identified through out history like Hitler
- Some hold that another Nero type ruler may yet arise in these last days
- But we have read the end of the book.