

## “SIGNIFIED”

### *The Manner in Which the Book of Revelation Is Structured*

“The Revelation 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 it by his angel unto his servant John” (Rev. 1:1).

The word “signified” in the preceding, opening verse is a translation of the Greek word *semaino*, which is the verb form of the word for “sign” (*semeion*).

The Apostle John introduced, opened up, and developed matters in his gospel account through *signs*. And in the Book of Revelation, matters are introduced, opened up, and developed *in a similar manner*.

God, throughout His revelation to man, shows an affinity for the use of *types*, *numbers*, *signs*, and *metaphors* to make Himself, His plans, and His purposes known.

And this *MUST* be recognized, else man will find himself failing to go beyond the simple letter of Scripture (*cf.* II Cor. 3:6-4:6).

Man, for example, will find himself understanding *Biblical history* but failing to understand the God-designed *typical significance* of that history.

Or if *numbers*, *signs*, or *metaphors* are used — which they often are — he will fail to understand the God-designed significance of these as well.

At the very outset, God makes it clear that the Book of Revelation has been structured *in a particular manner*, closely related to the manner in which John was led by the Spirit to structure his gospel.

The Gospel of John was built around eight signs which Jesus had previously performed during His earthly ministry, and these signs were recorded and directed to the Jewish people during the time of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel during the Acts period (John 20:30, 31).

And the Book of Revelation — dealing largely with the Jewish people once again (*exclusively*, along with God dealing with the nations through Israel, in chs. 6-19 [save 19:7-10], covering time and events during and immediately following Daniel’s Seventieth Week) — uses the verb form of the word for “sign” at the very outset in order *to reveal the manner in which this book has been structured*.

To understand how the word *semaino*, translated “signified,” is used introducing the Book of Revelation, note how John used this same word three times in his gospel (12:33; 18:32; 21:19). The context leading into each verse provides an illustrative statement which allows that stated in the verse to be understood.

Note the first of these three usages, within context:

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

This he said, signifying [from *semaino*] what death he should die” (vv. 32, 33).

Aside from Rev. 1:1 and the three verses in John’s gospel, the only other usages of the word *semaino* in the New Testament are in Acts 11:28; 25:27. And the same thought is set forth through the use of the word in these two passages, though the illustrative statement is inferred in the first usage.

Thus, “signified,” a translation of *semaino*, has to do with making something known through a manner which carries the reader *from a somewhat indirect means to a direct means, using an illustrative statement as a means of explaining a matter*.

And this is seen accomplished in the Book of Revelation different ways.

The numerous *numbers* and *metaphors* would be two main ways.

The structure and contextual setting of the seven short epistles to the seven Churches in Rev, 2, 3 would be another way.

And all illustrative means of this nature in the book are, they would have to be, in line with the meaning of the word *semaino* and the manner in which this word is used elsewhere in the New Testament.

