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How the First-Century, Asia Minor, Jewish Christians Understood the Book of Revelation

3. Outline – Overview of the 4 Distinct Scenes or Movements

The following scenes are sections of the book of Revelation that are separated by one literary signal – the author’s words “**I was in the Spirit**” said four times. They signal *a new location* and *how John received the material*. They were auditory and oral signals to the hearers and readers that a new scene was beginning.

1:9 – 3:20 **The Island called Patmos** – A vision of the exalted Yeshua in heaven and the 7 messages to the 7 churches in Asia Minor.

“I, John, your brother and fellow partner in the tribulation, kingdom, and perseverance in Yeshua, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Yeshua. **I was in the Spirit** on the LORDS’S day, and I heard behind me a voice like a shofar, saying, ‘Write in a scroll what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.’ And I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me. And having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands and in the middle of the lampstands One like the Son of Man...” (1:10-13a)

4:1-2 – 16:21 **An Open Door into Heaven** – An invitation into heaven’s throne room and John’s vision of 3 series of 7 cycles, each giving a picture of the unseen interplay between heaven and earth, and the human pretense and hostility against the purposes of God.

“After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice I heard was like a shofar speaking with me, saying, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.’ Immediately **I was in the Spirit**; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One was sitting on the throne...” (4:1-2)

17:1-3 – 21:8 **The Wilderness** – A vision of the final and full justice and judgment for those who oppose God’s kingdom, as well as God’s intent for shalom.

“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, ‘Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who sits on many waters with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of sexual immorality, and those who live on the earth became drunk with the wine of her sexual immorality.’ And **he carried me away in the Spirit** into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast...” (17:1-3)

21:9-10 – 22:21 **A High Mountain** – A vision of the New Jerusalem and the final future of the kingdom – the new heaven and the new earth.

“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, ‘Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.’ And **he carried me away in the Spirit** to a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God...” (21:9-10)