

# Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,  
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

January 1, 2007

Volume 6 Number 1

## Count the Number of the “Beast”

Readers of the Book of Revelation have speculated for almost two thousand years over the identity of the “Beast,” which is revealed by “counting” the “number of his name:”

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that has understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six. -Revelation 13

As we try to “come to understanding,” it is useful to examine this verse more carefully. The *Textus Receptus* Greek text represents the number by using three Greek letters: χ (chi) ξ (xi) Ϛ (stigma). Each of these letters has a numerical value: χ is 600, ξ is 60, and Ϛ is 6. The assignment of such values to letters, especially using Greek or Hebrew letters, and then the use of those values to learn something that may otherwise be hidden from observation is called “gematria.”

The word “count” as used in this verse is based on a Greek word which means to “compute, calculate, or reckon.” If we compute by adding, then we arrive at the number 666. If we calculate by multiplying, then the result of our calculation is 216,000. This value was a very common number in ancient Babylon, which had a numbering system based on 60. The dimensions of structures built by the kings of Babylon were often specified in units of 60, or multiples or divisions of 60. For example, when King Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden image for worship, he made it to be 60 cubits high and 6 cubits at its base. Assuming a square base, the image was 60 x 6 x 6 cubits, or 2,160 cubic cubits.

1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. -Daniel 3

After Israel and Judah disobeyed Yahweh, He used this same King of Babylon to destroy the temple that He had told Israel to build unto His name:

12 But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven to wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon. -Ezra 5

Babylon was then conquered by the Medes and the Persians. Afterward, the Persian King Cyrus assumed the title of the “King of Babylon” and proclaimed that the destroyed temple was to be rebuilt:

13 But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God. -Ezra 5

The dimensions of the first temple were specified by Yahweh to be 60 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high, giving a volume of 36,000 cubic cubits:

2 And the house which king Solomon built for Yahweh, the length thereof was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits. -1 Kings 6

Instead of rebuilding the temple according to its original dimensions, the new King of Babylon, Cyrus, gave his own specifications:

3 In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be built, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; - Ezra 6

Cyrus specified that the new temple must be 60 cubits high and 60 cubits wide. Since the length was not specified, it is likely that the base was square. Therefore, the dimensions of the temple specified by the King of Babylon was likely 60 cubits x 60 cubits x 60 cubits, or 216,000 cubic cubits. This is the same number as the calculated number of the “Beast.”

The temple specified by the King of Babylon (216,000 cubic cubits) was six times larger than the temple specified by Yahweh (36,000 cubic cubits). When the builders laid the foundation to the rebuilt temple, there was great excitement. There were trumpets and singing as the people praised Yahweh in anticipation of the new temple:

10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Yahweh, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise Yahweh, after the ordinance of David king of Israel.

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,  
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

## Come to Understanding

11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto Yahweh; because *he is* good, for his mercy *endures* forever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised Yahweh, because the foundation of the house of Yahweh was laid. -Ezra 3

However, those priests and Levites who were old enough to have seen the first temple knew that this second temple was not laid according to the specifications of Yahweh. As they looked at the foundation, it was clear that it was the work of the King of Babylon:

12 But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, *who were* ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: -Ezra 3

The weeping of those who knew that this second temple was the work of the King of Babylon was drowned out by the joyful shouting of those who thought they were rebuilding the temple as Yahweh had commanded.

Whoever became the King of Babylon inherited an ancient numbering, measuring, and religious system that was largely based upon the study of the sun, moon, stars, and planets. The numbering system was based upon the number 60. Therefore, measurements of time and space employing this system use multiples or divisions of 60, such as 6, 12, 18, 36, 72, and so forth.

The Babylonian priests, known as the Chaldeans, placed major religious significance upon the number derived from multiplying 6 x 6 x 6, which is 216. It can easily be associated with the moon, whose diameter is 2,160 miles. Ur of ancient Babylon was the center of ancient moon worship. Known as "Ur of the Chaldeans," it was the place from which Yahweh removed Abraham (Abram):

31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran, and dwelt there. -Genesis 11

*Come to Understanding* is sent out twice per month free of charge. To add someone to our growing list of readers, please contact us at:

Institute for Biblical and Historical Studies  
Kerby F. Fannin, Ph.D., Director  
P.O. Box 260, 114 East Main Street  
Addison, Michigan 49220 U.S.A.  
biblical@ibiblical.org  
517-547-7494

You may view this and past editions online at: [www.ibiblical.org](http://www.ibiblical.org)  
Scriptures are from the:  
Proper Name Version of the King James Bible. 

©2007 Institute for Biblical and Historical Studies. All rights reserved.  
You may freely copy this publication, provided you acknowledge its source and inform us of your use.

The moon was worshipped in Ur through Nanna, the moon god, who was also known as "Sin." Eventually, the daughter of the moon god assumed the position of moon goddess. Claiming to have power over the moon and, sometimes even being equated with the moon itself, she became known as the "Queen of Heaven."

Since the moon controls the tides, the moon goddess was also said to have power over the sea. Believing that all life comes from the sea, the goddess was thought to have power over life and was, therefore, worshipped with fertility rituals. She has appeared in different cultures under many names, such as Ishtar of the Babylonians, Isis of the Egyptians, Ashtoreth of the Zidonians, Artemis of the Greeks, and Diana of the Romans.

The number 216 is also seen in the Babylonian zodiac. Each age of 2,160 years is 1/12th of a 25,290 year cycle through which the earth moves through the astrological constellations. According to astrologers, the earth is moving from the age of Pisces (the Fishes) into the age of Aquarius (the Water Bearer). While the precise date of the beginning of the age of Pisces is disputed, many astrologers believe that it began in 149 B. C. and that the "dawning of the Age of Aquarius" is eminent.

The harlot woman may *appear* to be the "Water Bearer." However, her cup is actually a bitter drink, which she offers while bearing and revealing the name of the "Beast:"

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:  
5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. -Revelation 17

Ironically, just after Miriam, whose name in Hebrew (מִרְיָם Miryam) means "bitter or rebellious" "water or sea," sang of Yahweh's victory as He cast the Egyptian army into the sea, Moses brought the thirsty people of Israel to a place of bitter water:

23 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. -Exodus 15

After Moses and Israel rejected the bitter water, Yahweh then showed them a tree that made the water sweet.

If the new age "Water Bearer" offers us a drink from the bitter cup, will we accept it? Or will we wait by faith for the water of Yahshua (Jesus), who offers us more of His living water to drink than we can even hold?

37 In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Yahshua stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink.

38 He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. -John 7