The Old Testament Shaping the Book of Revelation

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Dedication

To my wife Lucie

and our children: Nathan, Pistée, Honoré, and Bénie

I dedicate this thesis.
Abstract

“THE OLD TESTAMENT SHAPING THE BOOK OF REVELATION”

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Thesis under the direction of Professor Collin Cornell

It would be inadequate to read the book of Revelation without considering the Old Testament traditions that influenced its content. As Revelation contains more Old Testament allusions than the rest of New Testament books, this work is a contribution to indicating that the author of Revelation used the Old Testament texts to shape this book. The present work begins with some generalities that should orient the reader to discover the relationship between the perspective of Revelation and that of Old Testament texts to which the author of Revelation alluded. The work proceeds by indicating that the author of Revelation intentionally used the Old Testament materials by recontextualizing them for his audience through thematic, analogical, universalization, indirect fulfillment, and solecisms uses, in a way that proves the author’s sense of creativity. To end, this work analyzes Rev. 21:1-8 and its use of Second Isaiah, which shows that the language and the perspective of this pericope relate to the traditions of Second Isaiah in multiple ways. In short, as this work demonstrates, the general setting of Revelation, the specific uses of Old Testament allusions, and the comparison of Rev. 21:1-8 with Second Isaiah should lead the reader of Revelation to recognize that the composition of Revelation was shaped by various Old Testament traditions.

Approved [Signature] Date 4.9.21
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Abbreviations

BCE: Before Common Era

CE: Common Era

Did.: Didache

Gos. Pet.: Gospel of Peter

NT: New Testament

OT: Old Testament
THESIS PROSPECTUS

Introduction

“And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing, ‘Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.’” This hymn found in Revelation 4:8 has a parallel in Isaiah: “Seraphs (...) each had six wings (...) And one called to another and said: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory (Isa. 6:2-3).”

This particular hymn, well-known to Episcopalians from their communion liturgy, comes from both Isaiah and the book of Revelation. It appears as one of the clearest examples demonstrating that the author of the book of Revelation grounded his message in the Old Testament Scriptures. In fact, there is a close similarity between the two hymns in which the designation “holy, holy, holy” features. In both Isaiah and Revelation, the hymn “holy, holy, holy…” is spoken or sung by heavenly creatures in the vision of a man who was taken to the throne of God: first by the prophet Isaiah and then by the apostle John.

Having said that, it is important to note that the Old Testament can be found in the New Testament in multiple ways, from the Gospels to the book of Revelation. The New Testament authors used the Old Testament either in the form of fulfillment formula as we find in Matt. 4:14 about the beginning of Jesus’ ministry; or as references to support their theological arguments as we find in Romans 4, where Paul refers to the case of Abraham to make his argument about the justification by faith. So, it would be difficult to some degree to understand the language of the New Testament if one does not know that of the Old Testament.

A close reading of the book of Revelation reveals that this book contains in its entire structure numerous references that are grounded in the Old Testament. Thus, for better understanding the book of Revelation, the reader of this particular book must seek the answers to the following questions that might help to clarify its link with the Old Testament texts. What
should the readers know in general about the book of Revelation? How does the book as a whole relate to the Old Testament Scripture? Which books of the Old Testament are most influential for Revelation? To what degree does Revelation use allusions that are found in the Old Testament? Does Revelation follow the contexts of the Old Testament texts that it uses? What are the specific uses of the Old Testament Scripture that shape the book of Revelation? Those questions among others will guide my analysis focusing on how the Old Testament influenced the shape of the book of Revelation.

**Thesis Statement**

There is an important volume of Old Testament materials in the book of Revelation. Through analyzing the various ways by which this last book of the Bible uses the Old Testament texts in general, with an exegesis of Revelation 21:1-8 that will focus on allusions to Second Isaiah in particular, my present work aims to explore how Old Testament contributed to shaping the book of Revelation.

In fact, though the book of Revelation is different from the Old Testament texts in various aspects, for the perspective of Revelation is entirely Christocentric, an informed New Testament scholar dare not downplay the important role of the Old Testament Scripture in this book. Rather he/she should recognize that the Old Testament lays a solid foundation for John’s ideas that are found in Revelation. Thus, I assume that this work will contribute to bring a clearer understanding of the book of Revelation by providing insights on the incorporation of materials found in the Old Testament texts and other traditions that the author of Revelation knew by the time he was composing the book.
Content Outline

The structure of my work is organized in three main chapters. First of all, it has an introductory section that is also known as the general introduction or the prospectus of the work. In this part, I will indicate the general perspective of the work, starting from the clarification of the topic that leads to the thesis statement and the methodology which I will follow to make my argument. It is in the same part that I am incorporating this outline of content of the whole work.

The first chapter will treat the generalities that are necessary for any reader to understand the roadmap of the book of Revelation. Thus, I will talk about the author, the place, the date of composition, context and the issues that are addressed, purpose and message, the general structure, and genre and main features of the book of Revelation such as visionary experience, resistance, mysticism, and use of existing texts.

The second chapter will indicate the ways that John uses Old Testament texts. I will first discuss the general setting of Old Testament allusions that can be found in Revelation, a discussion that will culminate in indicating the data of those allusions in the books that are most present in the book of Revelation, such as Exodus, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Psalms. Then I will discuss the Old Testament traditions that the author of Revelation drew upon to shape this book. Finally, I will analyze some specific uses of the Old Testament in Revelation which include allusions, prototypes, themes, analogies, universalization, fulfillment, and the stylistic use of the Old Testament language.

The third chapter of this work will make a detailed examination of Revelation 21:1-8 and its use of Second Isaiah. I will begin with the analysis of the Greek text of Rev. 21:1-8 based on the apparatus critics, and I will suggest a translation. I will proceed by comparing the Greek version of Rev. 21:1-8 with the allusions that are in Second Isaiah from the Septuagint to indicate how Rev. 21:1-8 depended on this Old Testament Scripture. Also, I will briefly
trace the use of Rev. 21:1-8 in other sources that are contemporary with the book of Revelation like the Apocalypse of Peter just to indicate its reception in the early church. Finally, I will draw on the terms and data mentioned in the preceding chapter, thereby indicating how they apply to this pericope of the book of Revelation.

The final part of this work will be the general conclusion. This part will consist of recapitulating the results of my research in a manner that guides the reader of the book of Revelation to discover that the book can only be comprehended by recognizing the predominance of several texts of the Old Testament in the book.

**Methodology**

With respect to the methodology, my research which is biblical by nature will mainly refer to biblical references, for which I will do my best to respect their particular contexts while establishing their link with the book of Revelation. Thus, I will consult biblical commentaries and other books that I find helpful to understand the use of those texts in both the Old Testament and the book of Revelation. By doing so, I will also try to compare how different biblical scholars understand and highlight the common features with respect either to the Old Testament or to the book of Revelation, which will lead me to make a balanced argument on my topic. In the comparative exegesis of Rev. 21:1-8, I will refer to Greek texts of Old Testament references to find out how they relate to Revelation.
I. GENERALITIES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Introduction

Like any biblical scholarship, it would be inadequate to conduct a study on a particular book of the Bible without some introduction. This compels me to indicate some key elements of the book that lead to a general understanding of its content. The present chapter presents a roadmap of sorts for the book of Revelation. In fact, the author, the place, the date of composition, the context, the purpose of the writer and the message, the general structure, the genre, and the main features of the book of Revelation are the frameworks of this chapter. With respect to the main topic of this work, each section will attempt to indicate how Revelation relates to the Old Testament materials where it is applicable.

Author

As the internal evidence shows, the book of Revelation is not an anonymous work due to the self-identification of the author. In 1: 9, the author introduces himself as John who shares the suffering with the addressees, and he is on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony for Christ. The revelation he writes came to him while he was in the Spirit (1: 10), which indicates that the book is about a visionary experience.

John who is the author of Revelation according to Rev. 1:1, 4, 9, and 22:8 seems to have been a recognized teacher and leader of the West Asia Minor churches, for he tells his audience that he shares persecution with the addressees (Rev. 1:9) because of his kerygma - and the testimony for Christ.\(^1\) John considers that he is inspired (Rev. 22:6), and received the Spirit’s message that he communicates (Rev. 2:7, 11), a language which, as Gorman says,

indicates a self-described prophet. In the same perspective Gorman notes that John does not call himself an apostle or an eyewitness of the earthly Jesus.\textsuperscript{2}

According to Elaine Pagels, John was a Jewish prophet who wrote visions he claimed to have received on Patmos island, a work that is perceived as a “wartime literature” given the context of persecution it was produced and its content related to war.\textsuperscript{3} Pagels adds that John might have been horrified by the slaughter of so many of his people by Roman empire which led him to put his own expression of cry into the mouths of the souls he says he saw in heaven, pleading for God’s justice.\textsuperscript{4}

Pagels states that John of Patmos belongs to the second generation of Jesus followers who had an expectation of Jesus’ return from heaven as the Messiah who would lead Israel to victory over Romans, to establish God’s kingdom in Jerusalem and by extension over the whole world. Thus, as Pagels pursues, John in his work might have wanted to express his belief in Jesus’ imminent reign as a sovereign King and Lord (Rev. 19:16).\textsuperscript{5}

John felt disappointed, however, when he realized that the powerful kingdom he expected did not prevail in his time. Instead of the kingdom of God, John saw the powerful kingdom of Rome that Elaine Pagels describes as follows:

\begin{quote}
“At the great Asian port of Ephesus, John could have seen the temples, the theaters, the monumental municipal buildings, crowded with statues of pagan gods, and the central street dominated by a colossal statue of Titus, commander of the Roman forces that had burned the Jerusalem Temple. Everywhere he looked, John would have found inscriptions, statues, and temples depicting the triumphs of the Roman gods. The greatest of these was built by Titus’ brother, Domitian, the current emperor, who ruled what Romans called ‘the whole world,’ from Britain to what is now France, Germany, Spain, and Italy, extending to Croatia and Serbia, Turkey and Greece, and then to Egypt, Africa, Syria, Israel, and as far east as Iraq. Near Ephesus, in the city of Pergamum, John would have seen what he called ‘Satan’s throne’ but what local citizens regarded as the pride of their city—the great temple of Zeus, which stood at the top of the city, near the first temple that wealthy city leaders had built to demonstrate their patriotism, and had dedicated to the divine emperor Augustus and to the goddess Roma. And in the nearby city of Aphrodisias, John might have marveled at the huge and lavish temple, three stories high, called the Sebasteion, ‘temple of the holy ones. Most travelers
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{2} Gorman, Michael J., \textit{Reading Revelation Responsibly}, 27.
\textsuperscript{4} Pagels, Elaine H., \textit{Revelations}, 8.
\textsuperscript{5} Pagels, Elaine H., \textit{Revelations}, 8-9.
who walked through these grand colonnades would have admired the great panels of sculptured reliefs that celebrated Roman victories over nations under imperial rule.”

From this description of the Roman might by Elaine Pagels, we learn that the situation John experienced might have disgusted him and led him to write Revelation as an anti-roman propaganda that drew upon Israel’s prophetic traditions.

The question remains on the identity of John who is self-described as the author of Revelation. One of the positions stands for John the Apostle. This is supported by Justin Martyr who lived in Ephesus that is one of the seven cities that had a church, around 135 CE. Justin states that Revelation was written by John who was one of the apostles of Christ. Another figure supporting this position is Irenaeus. He spent his youth in Smyrna also one of the seven cities mentioned in Revelation, and he visited Rome; he had earlier attributed both the book of Revelation and the fourth Gospel to John the son of Zebedee. In the same perspective, other prominent figures of the early church such as Hippolytus, Tertullian, and Origen followed the position of Irenaeus. According to Adela Yarbro Collins, their testimony influenced the majority opinion until the rise of biblical historical criticism.

Adela Yarbro Collins highlights this viewpoint as he mentions the reasons for trusting the judgements of Justin and Irenaeus in favor of John the apostle, on one hand. For Justin, John was living in Ephesus only about forty years after the traditional date of composition of the book. As for Irenaeus, he affirms that he personally heard Polycarp talk about the conversations he had with John and other eyewitnesses of the Lord. Irenaeus adds that he had

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7 Pagels, Elaine H., *Revelations*, 12, 16.
traditions from the presbyters who met John the disciple of the Lord in Asia.¹⁰ All these testimonies support the traditional position that attributes the book to John the apostle.

On the other hand, Adela Yarbro Collins evokes other reasons that might raise doubt on attributing the book of Revelation to John the apostle. As Collins argues, ‘John’ was a common name for Jews, and the author does not reveal that he is the son of Zebedee or an apostle or a disciple of the Lord. Moreover, the list of the twelve names of the twelve apostles found in the vision of the new Jerusalem in Rev. 21:14 reflects a situation that took place later after the time of the apostles, which implies that a living apostle would not speak in such a manner.¹¹ Sweet argues in the same perspective by bringing in a possibility of another John who was confused with the apostle in later tradition, an argument that is based on the existence of two tombs of John in Ephesus, according to the traveler’s report.¹² Sweet notes that John was a Jew who got his formation within the Hebraic orbit, and states that John had a great grasp of the Jewish scriptures that he used with creative freedom as he wrote the book of Revelation.¹³

We should recognize that there is no clear indication of another author called John that would be more influential than John the apostle by the time Revelation was written, which is why the traditional position is likely to be reliable. Besides, the link of “John” to Jewish names and his knowledge of the Hebraic tradition justifies his use of the Old Testament traditions as he wrote Revelation.

**Place and Date**

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Revelation contains an indication that helps the reader to have an idea of the place of the book’s composition: the island called Patmos (Rev. 1:9). Patmos is about 50 km due west of Didyma; its long narrow north/south axis measures about 12 km; the widest part is approximately 7 km and is located in the north.\textsuperscript{14} According to Friesen, Patmos was sparsely populated in the first century and it was under the administration of the Roman province of Asia. To the text’s mention that John received the visions on this island, Friesen adds that scholars assume John also composed and sent them from there.\textsuperscript{15}

The way John went to the island is not clear although 1:9 implies that his ministry of the word and his testimony for Christ compelled him to live there. He might have gone there either by running away from the persecutors or by imprisonment. For scholars like Steven J. Friesen, John’s statement indicates that he was probably in exile because of his disruptive message that provoked severe resistance. Furthermore, Friesen asserts that the context of using the term “testimony” fits in the same perspective.\textsuperscript{16}

Whereas the place of reception of the visions is clearly indicated in Revelation, the date of composition is subject to the debate among scholars; the only mention of time of the reception of the revelation concerns the day of the Lord (1:10), which remains ambiguous about the book’s date. The early Christian writings explain that the Lord’s Day was known as “the time when Mary Magdalene found an empty tomb where she and others went to weep and lament over Jesus’ death (Gos. Pet. 12:50) and it was the day that Christians came together to


\textsuperscript{15} Friesen, Steven J., \textit{Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John}, 136.

\textsuperscript{16} Friesen, Steven J., \textit{Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John}, 136.
hold Eucharist and to worship (Did. 14).” For Barr, that John set his visions in ritual time was more important than setting them in calendar time.

The debate on the date of composition of the book of Revelation is mostly based on Roman emperors and how the book of Revelation refers their cruelty or portrays their pride over Christianity. Thus, some scholars place the composition of this book about the end of the reign of emperor Domitian in 80s CE while others date the book at the reign of Nero in 60s CE. Achtemeier and his cowriters justify the traditional position that dates the book in the time of emperor Domitian that is 81-96 CE based on the statements of the earliest witnesses including Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Eusebius. These authors also note that Domitian was known as a second Nero, a self-glorifying tyrant who demanded to be addressed as ‘our Lord and God’, which was viewed as an offense for Christians. This echoed to the emperors Caligula and Nero who were seen as the enemies of God’s people by their self-glorification, which led John to portray the Roman Empire as “the blasphemous beast, the great harlot, and the city doomed for destruction” in general regardless the reigning emperor.

Another key element that leads scholars to date the book Of Revelation is the use of “Babylon” to name the city. For Michael J. Gorman who stands for the traditional dating of the book, the main reason for scholars to hold the date between 81-96 CE is that Jews first and Christian second began calling Rome “Babylon” only after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE, which suggests a date after Nero’s reign. Adela Yarbro Collins also explains that most of commentators agree that the city “Babylon” which was about to be destroyed in Revelation

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(14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21) is a symbolic name that stands for Rome. She also notes that names like “Egypt,” “Kittim,” and “Edom” appear along with Babylon as symbolic names for Rome in Jewish literature.\(^\text{22}\)

Raymond E. Brown bases his support to the traditional dating of Revelation on the symbolic elements found in the book. He points the reference to the five deceased kings as mentioned in 17:11 which some scholars drew upon to date the book or part of it in Nero’s time -54-68 CE. He also finds that Nero is referred to in the use of the number 666 in 13:18, but he considers that Nero was referred to as dead. However, he gives some references that are mentioned by the supporters of the date of Nero’s lifetime which seem irreconcilable with this period. These include the destruction of the Temple by the Gentiles specifically Rome, the emperor worship, and the persecution in Asia Minor which Brown refutes by arguing that Nero reigned before the destruction of the Second Temple, did not allow a temple to his divinity, and did not persecute Christians outside Rome.\(^\text{23}\) Adela Yarbro Collins also recognizes that the reference to Nero is present in 13:3 as the one who had a mortal wound, which indicates Nero’s violent death. She stresses that one of the seven heads that can be interpreted as the seven kings in 17 is the historical Nero while the beast to return as the eighth refers to Nero’s return from death to life in the form of Antichrist. Adela Yarbro Collins concludes by dating Revelation after the death of Nero in 68 CE because of the parallel that is made between Nero and Jesus.\(^\text{24}\) In sum, the arguments that are mentioned above are sufficient to confirm the accuracy of the traditional position of dating the book of Revelation in 90s CE, under Domitian’s reign over the Roman Empire.

\(^{22}\) Collins, Adela Yarbro, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 57.


**Audience and Context**

It is important to identify the audience of John to better understand the communication the author of Revelation made. According to C. Freeman Sleeper, John’s work was produced for Christian communities of his time though the Greek term “ekklesia” is found only in Revelation 1-3 and in 22:16. Sleeper goes on to depict the church living in different levels of conflict, which John intended to resolve by writing Revelation. He first mentions that the church had a conflict of leadership and authority, which is evidenced by the fact that the Ephesian church was praised for its rejection of false apostles (2:3) and was commended for hating the Nicolaitans (2:6). This implies, in the terms of Sleeper, that “we have to feel that he (John) shares the same opinion” though he speaks the words of Christ. Sleeper goes further to explain that Nicolaitans in Ephesus (2:6) and in Pergamum (2:14) and Jezebel in Thyatira (2:20) can be understood as church leaders, among whom the female prophet Jezebel would have represented a challenge to John’s prophetic authority. Therefore, John would have written Revelation to warn the churches to reject those other leaders.

As Sleeper states, another level of disagreement concerns two issues: food sacrificed to idols and fornication. The terms to “eat food sacrificed to idols” and to “practice fornication” that are applied to Balaam (2:14) and to Jezebel (20:20) are drawn by John from the Hebrew Bible where the two figures are associated with these issues (Num. 25:1-2; 31:16 for Balaam, and 1 Kings 16:31-33; 18:4, 13 for Jezebel). Like in other cities of Asia Minor, Christian were repeatedly confronted with the worship of gods and goddesses, and the meat found in the

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26 Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 38.
27 Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 38.
28 Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 39.
marketplace was mainly from an animal sacrificed to one of the deities. Thus, eating such meals dedicated to idols was a test case for Jews and Christians, which is why John wrote to warn Christians to avoid such food, for there should not be any compromise with idolatry.  

Beside that was the issue of fornication that expressed in the Greek term of *porneuein*, for which Sleeper gives three interpretations. The first interpretation is literal, which has no evidence, would have related the term to the symbolic sacred marriage in some local temples through a ritual of sexual intercourse. The second interpretation oriented the term to a broader sense of sexual license and assumes that sexuality might have been practiced in some later Gnostic sects whereby Christians claimed to be freed from the bondage of flesh inasmuch as to do whatever they wanted. The third interpretation is to consider fornication as a metaphor for idolatry which suggests a meaning of unfaithfulness to God just as it was used in the Hebrew Bible. To Sleeper, this third interpretation, the most plausible for Revelation is abounded by symbolism. Christians would have been facing the temptation of participating in worship in the local temples.

Another level of conflict that John dealt with was the religious loyalties whereby “John wanted to encourage Christians to deal with outside attacks by remaining steadfast at any cost.” This is highlighted by Sleeper in three sides. Firstly, it can be explained by the fact that Christians had to defend their faith in Jesus Christ against the attack of Jews who did not recognize that Jesus was the Messiah, which is evidenced by the appellation of “synagogue of Satan” in the letter to Smyrna (2:9) where Christians were slandered by “false” Jews and in the letter to Philadelphia (3:9). Then this is explained by the fact that early Christians had to defend their faith before polytheism that was widespread in the Roman Empire. Since most of

29 Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 39.
30 Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 40.
31 Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 41.
Christians had a Gentile background, the warning that John made against eating food dedicated to idols, and sexual immorality taken in the perspective of idolatry was a real struggle of Christian communities. Finally, Christians faced the challenge of imperial cult which is evidenced by the reference to “Satan’s throne” and “the place where Satan lives” as found in John’s letter to Pergamum. As Sleeper asserts, Roman emperors were increasingly venerated like divine figures which put Christians to the dilemma of whether to participate or not in the imperial cult. Christians’ refusal would without doubt face persecution, and John who was aware of that wrote a message of encouragement to perseverance.  

A third level evoked by Sleeper is the conflict between church and empire. He displays that Christianity emerged from the protected status of Judaism and became a recognized religion, which led to the church’s persecution by the empire. Thus, Sleeper indicates that the two beasts that are announced in Revelation 13 together with the fall of Babylon in Revelation 17-18 suggest an existence of this conflict that opposed Christianity and the Roman empire.33 In fact, the image of a beast that makes the earth and its inhabitants to worship the first beast in 13:12 seems to be John’s reference to the priesthood of the imperial cult. As Sleeper continues to highlight, the image of the beast that could speak (see 13:15) reflects the huge statue of the Greek god Zeus that was at Ephesus into which the priest could climb and become its voice.34 In the same way, Sleeper finds that the prostitute found in 17-18 is an antitype, both to the woman threatened by the dragon (12) and the bride of Christ (19:9; 21:9), which allows to deduce that John pointed to what happens to those who deny their allegiance to the true God.35 Also, Sleeper adds that the woman got drunk of the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus.

32 Sleeper, C. Freeman, The Victorious Christ, 41-42.
33 Sleeper, C. Freeman, The Victorious Christ, 42-43.
34 Sleeper, C. Freeman, The Victorious Christ, 43.
35 Sleeper, C. Freeman, The Victorious Christ, 43.
(17:6; cf. 18:24) echoes to Nero’s cruel treatment of Christians. By extension, Babylon by its idolatry which is expressed through the language of “fornication” represents the worldly powers that ignore God and engage in conflict with the church as Revelation 13, 17, and 18 demonstrate.

It is important to trace the historical context upon which John drew his message that he conveyed to the church that was facing different levels of conflict as we demonstrated above. Highlighting this point requires that we indicate the military power, the economic power, and the imperial cult as Achtemeier and his cowriters demonstrate, which will lead us to describe the situation of the churches that led John to frame his theme purposely.

In the perspective of military might, Achtemeier and his friends consider that John was more than wary in the way he wrote Revelation. They note that the book contains the most sustained critique of Roman power in the NT. As the portrayal of the Roman Empire shows, Rome as the dominant military power, of its time resembled a grotesque and formidable beast that was standby to devour and kill (see Revelation 3). The writers go on to highlight that the military victories brought wealth, power, and influence to Rome. Thus, through its military might Rome asserted political and economic dominance.

As for Roman Economic Power, Rome is depicted as exercising ‘dominion over the kings of the earth’ in Rev. 17:18. This power naturally extended to the economic realm. Specifically, provinces were required to supply food for the population of Rome and to pay taxes to run big projects namely constructing buildings, roads, and fleets of ships to facilitate trade and travel and for Roman armies. Along with the basic necessities, Rome imported vast quantities of luxury goods. Achtemeier and his cowriters deduce from this situation that Roman obsession

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36 Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 43.
37 Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 44.
for luxury goods was one of the causes of her condemnation in Rev. 18:3; the luxury goods imported included gold, silver, bronze, and others (Rev. 18:11-13).\textsuperscript{39}

Another important aspect of exercising power by Roman Emperors can be explained by the imperial cults. As Achtemeier and his cowriters explain, the phenomenon of emperor veneration or paying homage began with Augustus and continued into the second century, thus encompassing the time of composition of the New Testament documents. As they pursue by saying, this is a time when the imperial cult was actively promoted by the local elites of Asia Minor.\textsuperscript{40} J. Nelson Kraybill also notes that the existence of imperial cult temples at Pergamum, Smyrna and Miletus that served the province of Asia in addition to the municipal temples which were dedicated to the emperors.\textsuperscript{41} The coins that emperor Domitian struck also demonstrate the importance of imperial veneration. For example, in 88 CE, Domitian struck the coins to celebrate the games and the advent of the golden century that is the Flavian era. The coins he struck shows Domitian standing beside a temple, with three figures kneeling and stretching out their arms before him while the emperor himself seems to dictate prayers.\textsuperscript{42} J. Nelson Kraybill explains that the seven stars that were on some of Domitian led John to answer with his own perception of Jesus as the world conqueror who holds seven stars in his right hand (Rev. 13:13-15). As to underscore the influence of the coins in the religious life of the Roman Empire, Nelson indicates that Roman coins circulated in all provinces where people demonstrated further signs of excessive veneration. In the same perspective, it is most likely that the huge statue of Domitian found at Ephesus is the “image of the beast” that is condemned in Reve. 13:13-13.\textsuperscript{43} In such a situation it was easy for Christians who could not venerate the image to

\textsuperscript{39} Achtemeier, Paul J., Joel B. Green, and Marianne Meye Thompson, \textit{Introducing the New Testament}, 566.
\textsuperscript{40} Achtemeier, Paul J., Joel B. Green, and Marianne Meye Thompson, \textit{Introducing the New Testament}, 566-567.
\textsuperscript{42} Kraybill, J. Nelson, \textit{Imperial Cult and Commerce in John’s Apocalypse}, 62.
\textsuperscript{43} Kraybill, J. Nelson, \textit{Imperial Cult and Commerce in John’s Apocalypse}, 63-64.
face persecution by their fellow citizens who were felt enthusiastic to the veneration of Emperor Domitian.\textsuperscript{44}

Revelation might encompass the idea of the present and the yet to happen persecution. As G. K Beale notices, Rev. 6:6-11 could refer to both past outbreaks of persecution and the future oppression that would reach its consummation according to 6:11. Beale goes on to indicate that 11:3-6 allude to random persecution in the past while he also notes that 12:6, 14-17; 13:1-18; 17:6 and 20:4 suggest either an inaugurated persecution or the one that is yet to happen.\textsuperscript{45} In any case, John wanted Christians to be aware that persecution was without doubt set before them, so the book was made to prepare them to adopt a positive conduct to keep their faith in the risen Christ at any price, like Daniel and his three friends, who by refusing to worship king Nebuchadnezzar’s statue, endured persecution through the furnace of blazing fire (Daniel 3). As John Collins clearly states, Revelation addressed a crisis that was primarily an ideological conflict that arose from the author’s utter rejection of the claims of the Roman Empire to detain power and authority.\textsuperscript{46} Thus, Revelation was composed as a response to the situation of conflict as a form of resistance for the sake of preserving faith and unity that are Christ centered.

\textbf{Purpose and Message}

Revelation, like any book of the New Testament was written to convey a message that could match the context of the recipients. As we indicated above, the church of John’s time had to deal with internal conflicts along with persecution from imperial authority or its allies. So, the message of Revelation is grounded in these two perspectives. For the motivation based

\textsuperscript{44} Kraybill, J. Nelson, \textit{Imperial Cult and Commerce in John’s Apocalypse}, 64.
on the internal situation of the church, Arthur W. Wainwright affirms that the letters to seven congregations in Asia constitute the evidence that one of the reasons for writing the book was for John to deal with disputes between Christians. Wainwright asserts that John’s intention for writing was to maintain unity in the churches and to condemn false teachers who were misleading believers.\(^\text{47}\)

Concerning the imperial harmful attitude against Christians, Wainwright states that the persecutions Christians faced are part of both political and church history inasmuch as most of interpreters used the book of Revelation to condemn Roman oppression perpetrated against Christians, as well as to prophesy the Empire’s ultimate doom until the time of Constantine who granted Christians religious freedom.\(^\text{48}\) In this perspective, John would have produced the book of Revelation to challenge the imperial oppressive authority.

It is also important to recall that Christians were harassed for their refusal to participate in social activities that had pagan religious character based on their basic confession that “Jesus is Lord (Rom. 10:9).”\(^\text{49}\) Thus persecution came out of Christians’ attitude before that socio-religious context. According to Gorman who quotes Richard Bauckham, it was not simply because Rome persecuted Christians that Christians had to oppose Rome. Gorman points out that the chief reason for the persecution of Christians was that they had to dissociate themselves from the evil of the Roman system, which John decided to emphasize in Revelation. Thus, for Gorman, John wrote Revelation to avail “a powerful wake up call to those who have taken for granted beliefs, commitments, and practices that should be unthinkable.”\(^\text{50}\) Gorman finds also Revelation to be a visionary challenge whereby John describes the clash of religious and


\(^{49}\) Gorman, Michael J., *Reading Revelation Responsibly*, 32.

\(^{50}\) Gorman, Michael J., *Reading Revelation Responsibly*, 33.
political powers in extraordinary form in order to indicate “the kind of faith and resistance needed to follow the Lamb in ordinary life.”\textsuperscript{51} Again the implied message of Revelation is to demonstrate Christian steadfast as a way to deal with persecution.

Apart from being a visionary book, the book of Revelation has other components that serve to convey the message of Christian attitude to demonstrate the aforesaid steadfast. From the analysis that Gorman draws upon the content of the book itself, Revelation reflects the character of a liturgical text that has the components of worship, and doxology and acclamations. We learn from Gorman that Revelation makes the prophetic summons to worship the true God and to forsake the false deities. Gorman affirms that John was aware that worship is a political act. Quoting Reddish, Gorman highlights this perspective by saying that “through worship one declares one’s allegiance, one’s loyalty,” and he adds on that “public worship is a statement to the world that the church will bow to no other gods.”\textsuperscript{52} Thus, passages like 4:8b, 11; 5:9-10, 12; 5:13b; 7:12; 11:17-18; and 15:3b-4 appear as hymnic texts that can be used for worship, while texts like 1:5b-6; 1:7; 7:10; 11:15; 12:10-12; 16:5b-7; 19:1b-8a; and 22:20b can be considered as spoken doxological texts and acclamations in the context of worship.\textsuperscript{53} The hymn of Rev. 4:8 that echoes to Isa. 9:3 is an irrefutable example of John’s use of Old Testament materials in this perspective.

From what is said above, we can realize with Gorman that Revelation conveys the message about Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God sharing God’s throne, and the message about the “uncompromising faithfulness to undying hope, even in the midst of unrelenting evil and

\textsuperscript{51} Gorman, Michael J., \textit{Reading Revelation Responsibly}, 33.
\textsuperscript{52} Gorman, Michael J., \textit{Reading Revelation Responsibly}, 34.
\textsuperscript{53} Gorman, Michael J., \textit{Reading Revelation Responsibly}, 35-36.
Thus John’s purpose in writing the book of Revelation was to build steadfast and hope in Jesus Christ despite the challenges that Christians were facing.

**Structure of Revelation**

I chose to adopt the abbreviated structure of Gorman that provides the framework for four of the main chapters of Revelation that are 5, 6, 8, and 9, to give a picture of the roadmap for reading the book of Revelation. Below is the structure:

I. Revelation 1-3: Opening Vision of the Risen Lord and His Seven Pastoral-Prophetic Messages  
II. Revelation 4-5: Central and Centering Vision of God and the Lamb  
III. Revelation 6-20: Visions of the Judgement of God, with Interludes  
IV. Revelation 21-22: Final Vision of the New Creation

From this structure, we also realize that the book can be divided into two main parts. After the prologue, part one might start from Rev. 1:9 to 3. This part is presented as the direct address to seven specific churches whereby each church gets a message that matches with its own context. Then part two that begins from Revelation 4 to 22 follows a set of visions that are written in different forms. They depict the heavenly scenes that appear in might to put an end to the pride of the wicked powers of the world.

**Genre**

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54 Gorman, Michael J., *Reading Revelation Responsibly*, 12.  
55 Gorman, Michael J., *Reading Revelation Responsibly*, 57.
Exploring the genre of the biblical books is helpful to understand the way the various authors shaped the message they intended to convey to their audience. In this perspective, it is important to analyze Revelation in its genre(s) so as to direct the readers to a better understanding of its content as related to the author’s personality and his concern for the audience. As scholarships on Revelation suggest, there is more than one genre that John used to convey the message in this book. In fact, three main genres are commonly accepted by scholars for Revelation. The book encompasses the main genres of a letter, a prophecy, and an apocalypse as we are going to highlight below.

Revelation as a Letter

According to Achtemeier and the cowriters, has some characteristics of a letter that are similar those found in other letters of the New Testament. These include a prescript naming its author and addressees, an opening greeting (1:4-6), and a postscript (22:21).\(^{56}\) In addition to those main characteristics, these scholars also explain that Revelation deals with the concerns of historical circumstances of the addressees which the author of Revelation knew and aimed to address by writing the book. The recipients who are the seven churches of Asia Minor according to Rev. 1:4 received each a specific message from the author (see Revelation 2-3).\(^{57}\) Achtemeier and his cowriters go farther by suggesting that Revelation was likely intended also for other Christian congregations of Asia Minor that were facing the same issues; thus, the seven churches that are mentioned in the book are representatives of large Christian community of John’s time.\(^{58}\)

While Gorman finds that John wrote like other authors of various letters such as Paul, he also argues that John did not maintain the pure epistolary form by moving to the spheres of


worship whereby he composed successively a doxology (1: 5b-6), an acclamation (1:7), and a divine self-identification (1:1-8) as the prelude to the heavenly worship of God in Revelation 4. Gorman notes that Revelation is not an ordinary letter for he finds it to be a liturgical one; he asserts that even the final epistolary benediction (22:21) that can be found in other letters is liturgical.59 However, even the liturgical aspect is meant to inspire the addressees on the way of worshiping God; it does not contradict the epistolary form of the book.

Revelation as a Prophecy

The author of Revelation describes his words as words of prophecy, a character that he extends to the whole book (1:3; 22:6-7, 18-19). This prophetic character leads scholars like Achtemeier and others to classify the book within the prophetic tradition of the Old and New Testaments.60 The analysis of the benediction of 1:3, “blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it” brings in two elements according to Achtemeier and his coauthors. As they stress, the first element that resides in the command to “read” and the reference to “hearers” indicate a context of Christian gatherings for worship where Scriptures and letters from apostles were read and prophecies uttered as it was the case for Corinthian and Johannine communities (see Corinthians 12-14; 1 John 4:1-7). The second element is the author’s warning to keep “what is written” like the writings and the words of all prophets, a call that intends to admonish, correct, and encourage the readers. Thus, Achtemeier and his coauthors find this exhortation matching the prophetic perspective, for it brings in the calls for repentance, obedience, faithfulness, and perseverance.61

59 Gorman, Michael J., Reading Revelation Responsibly, 26.
While Gorman recognizes that some people take Revelation as a prophetic book in the sense of predicting explicitly the way the world will end, he links the ministry of a prophet as related to the condition of the audience, which he applies to John and his communities as follows:

“Prophets comfort God’s people in crisis because they need assurance that, despite all signs to the contrary, God is God and will one day bring an end to all evil and oppression. On the other hand, prophets warn the people about the coming judgement because the people may be participating in, or be tempted to participate in, the very evil for which the oppressive system and its perpetrators will be judged. (…) John believes some in the churches to which he writes were engaging in forms of idolatry and immorality, the general categories for sins against God and sins against neighbor, that the human forces of evil were practicing, (…) the fundamental and perpetual message of both OT and NT prophets: Flee idolatry! (Exodus 32) Flee immorality (1 Cor 6:18; 10:14)! Or, in Revelation’s version of this message, ‘Come out’ (18:4).”

In the context of Revelation, the prophetic nature of John was to pull Christians out of wickedness of their age so as to live a distinctive way that is in conformity with their confession of Jesus lordship.

Gorman notes also that contemporary scholars believe that the prophetic aspect of Revelation can be understood in the book’s words of challenge just as it is in words of comfort. In the same way, Gorman considers Revelation as “anti-assimilationist, or anti-accommodationist literature,” a “resistance literature” that presents a vigorous prophetic critique of the system of Roman power. This is to say that Revelation serves to raise awareness among believers who undergo the Roman oppression to resist faithfully as well as he calls the Roman system to bow before the Almighty risen Lord Jesus-Christ.

It is also important that we understand whether John was conscious or not of the prophetic nature of his message in Revelation. The book presents some indications of John’s prophetic consciousness as Jan Fekkes mentions. One of the indications is the use of the word προφητεία seven times in Revelation (1:3; 11:6; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18, 19); five of the seven occasions serve to identify the content of the book. Therefore, Fekkes whom I agree with

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62 Gorman, Michael J., Reading Revelation Responsibly, 24.
63 Gorman, Michael J., Reading Revelation Responsibly, 25.
rightly deduces that “the product of John’s visionary experience is understood to be a prophecy.”  

Another indication can be perceived through the significance of John’s prophetic commission as evidenced by the scenes of Rev. 1:10-20 and 10:8-8. As Fekkes rightly says, the first scene underscores the authority of the book as a whole whereas the second is a reaffirmation of the author’s prophetic call.  

Jan Fekkes stresses also the fact that the scene of Rev. 1:10-20 shares with Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1-3 in common some aspects that demonstrate John’s literary dependence on the two books. These aspects include the divine voice and its intensity (Rev. 1:10; Isa. 6:4,8; Ezek. 1:24-25, 28; 2:2), the apocalyptic description of the divine glory (Rev. 1:13-16; Isa. 6:1-3; Ezek. 1:4-28), the physical or emotional distress before the divine presence followed by divine reassurance and restoration (Rev. 1:17; Isa. 6:5-7; Ezek. 1:28-2:1), and a statement of the commission (Rev. 1:10, 19; Isa. 6:9-13; Ezek. 2:3-7).

The two indications of Fekkes that are said above among others, together with the insights of other scholars like Achtemeier, and Gorman as we also showed above, are helpful to support the idea that John was conscious of the prophetic nature of his mission and his message to his audience, in line with the Old Testament prophetic tradition, when he addressed the audience of his time.

Revelation as an Apocalypse

The book of Revelation is part of the apocalyptic literature that was widespread in Judaism from 200 BCE and was adopted by Christian writers in the first and second centuries. Paul D. Hanson notes that the adjective “apocalyptic” comes from the narrow use of the term in the

65 Fekkes, Jan, Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation, 51.
66 Fekkes, Jan, Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation, 51-52.
early church, as the title of literary compositions that resemble to the book of Revelation, which had as content the secret disclosures about the end of the world and the heavenly state. Thus, Hanson like other scholars indicates that the word “apocalypse” became the usual designation of this type of book. However, as Hanson adds, the ancient church treated the apocalyptic literature with reserves to the extent that many of the apocalyptic books were excluded from the canon such as the Apocalypses of Peter and Paul and Christian Apocalypses attributed to Old Testament figures like 5 and 6 Ezra.67

Nowadays, “apocalyptic” is known as a collective term that characterizes “a certain kind of religious speculation about the future of man and the world.”68 Achtemeier and his coauthors describe the worldview of the apocalyptic literature as follows:

“These works have in common a similar worldview, known as apocalypticism, which generally views the world in a radically dualistic framework that is often embodied in the conflict between God and his angels, on the one hand, and the devil and demons on the other. Because apocalypticism assumes conflict of cosmic dimensions, it also hopes for imminent divine intervention to deliver the faithful. Such divine intervention, it is typically depicted, will produce a drastic change in the situation of the world and inaugurate the resurrection of the dead and the final judgement, which will determine the destinies of all persons. In spite, then, of the suffering and ills of the present life, apocalypticism expects that God will vindicate his faithful saints, punish the disobedient and apostate, and triumph over all powers of evil.”69

From this worldview of the apocalyptic works, we deduce that the dualistic framework serves to indicate that the suffering of the faithful is not to last forever, it is not a godly fate for God is in control. In the same perspective, Raymond E. Brown asserts that the secrets revealed in the revelatory vision of the apocalyptic involve “a cosmic transformation that will result in a transition from this world to a world or era to come and a divine judgement on all.”70 Brown makes the difference between Jewish apocalyptic and Christian apocalyptic of the same period

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68 Hanson, Paul D., Visionaries and Their Apocalypses, 18.
by pointing that Christian apocalyptic served to indicate that a new era had already begun by the coming of Christ who would change the painful circumstances of the believers.\textsuperscript{71}

Apocalyptic is important to bring hope to the community of faith especially in time of crisis. According to Gorman who highlights the function of apocalyptic, the basic function of apocalyptic is to sustain the people of God who face the crisis of evil and oppression. Gorman asserts that “apocalyptic literature expresses and creates hope by offering scathing critique of the oppressors, passionate exhortations to defiance, and unfailing confidence in God’s ultimate defeat of the present evil.”\textsuperscript{72} This hope that leads to resistance in the apocalyptic literature is built “by revealing the truth about unseen realities, such as God, heaven, and hell, and about future realities, such as judgement and salvation.”\textsuperscript{73} Given the turmoil early Christians were undergoing, John through Revelation aimed to demonstrate that God was neither inactive nor powerless. Rather God by means of the risen Christ was preparing to intervene and put to an end the evil powers and deliver the faithful, so as to turn the hardships into a new state of relief and peace in a new world (see Revelation 20 and 21).

The analysis of the genre of Revelation thus reveals a combination of three main genres: apocalyptic, epistolary, and prophetic. Michael Gilbertson clearly justifies that this combination is an author’s concern to indicate a transformation of the apocalyptic view of history. To Gilbertson, the apocalyptic nature gives to a text the universal scope of history and ultimate temporal and spatial perspectives, while the prophetic and epistolary nature of the text emphasizes on the live situation of the communities the author addresses.\textsuperscript{74} Thus we find in Revelation both a future projection that Gilbertson calls the “expanded outward,” and the

\textsuperscript{71} Brown, Raymond Edward, \textit{An Introduction to the New Testament}, 775.
\textsuperscript{72} Gorman, Michael J., \textit{Reading Revelation Responsibly}, 15.
\textsuperscript{73} Gorman, Michael J., \textit{Reading Revelation Responsibly}, 15.
present reality that he calls “a heavy inward concentration on the meaning of the text for the present.”

It is important to note that the apocalyptic genre that is grounded in the historical context emanates from Old Testament tradition of responding to the tragedy in a literary form. Kraybill argues that the Jewish literary response to the harsh history they were facing took the form of laments (Psalms 44; 74; 79; Lamentations; 4 Ezra 3: 28-36; 7:55-59), taunt-songs (Isa. 14:3-23), hymns of grief (Ps. 137:1-6), and prayers for divine retribution (Ps. 68:1-2; 137:7-9). In the same perspective, Kraybill adds that “Jewish historians documented the crimes of foreign powers (1Macc. 1-2), and storytellers recounted tales of heroic resistance (Daniel 1-6, Esther, Judith).” In Jewish tradition, Babylon had a symbolic status of being an archenemy. Babylon was responsible for the fate of Jerusalem and that of Jews thus it was portrayed as the symbol of world power that behaves against God, and its king represented the world ruler that was equally hostile to God. Jewish traditional laments in the time of the Old Testament also shaped the composition of Jewish writings such as 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch as a response to the destruction of the second temple in 70 CE by Rome; books that appeared about the same time as Revelation, as an expression of the outrage of first-century Jews that sought the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. According to Kraybill whom I agree with, the same milieu that shaped these Jewish works like 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch influenced John and the book of Revelation, for “references to wealth, trade and idolatry in other apocalyptic works gives us clues to the social and theological setting of the polemic in Revelation.” In this way we can affirm that the historical context of the Old Testament apocalyptic works shaped the apocalyptic view that is

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75 Gilbertson, Michael, God and History in the Book of Revelation, 79.
76 Kraybill, J. Nelson, Imperial Cult and Commerce in John’s Apocalypse, 143.
77 Kraybill, J. Nelson, Imperial Cult and Commerce in John’s Apocalypse, 143.
79 Kraybill, J. Nelson, Imperial Cult and Commerce in John’s Apocalypse, 143-144.
80 Kraybill, J. Nelson, Imperial Cult and Commerce in John’s Apocalypse, 144.
in Revelation as a response to the Roman oppression that John and his audience were facing. However, we need to recognize, as Williams rightly notes, that “the purely future orientation of Jewish apocalyptic is modified in the book of Revelation by the conviction that eschatological fulfillment has already begun in the historical event of Jesus Christ,” whereby believers live between the reality of the ‘already’ and the “not yet.”  

The book of Revelation is exceptional in terms of pseudonymity compared with other later Jewish and Christian apocalyptic works. These writers produced their works without revealing their own names, rather they positively hid themselves behind the renown biblical figures such as Enoch who ascended without experiencing physical death, Ezra and Daniel the men of exile, Peter or Paul the apostles known for founding early Christian communities, and others. The pseudonymous works allowed unknown or less known authors “to claim the authority of a revered religious figure for their work and so to gain a hearing for it.”  

By contrast, Revelation does not follow this literary type that was not a rule for all apocalyptic writers. Rather the author of Revelation preferred to name himself John, who clarifies to have shared the hard time of persecution with his audience as we noted above. According to Achtemeier and his cowriters, the authority of John’s writing depends to some extend on the relationship he has with the recipients of his book as evidenced by his self-portrait in 1:9, as John personally also chose to keep the sense of prophetic commission and authority as in 1:1, 4, 9-11, 19; 10: 8-11; 22:9. John’s choice to reveal himself shows clearly his claim to be an authoritative figure like the Old Testament prophets.

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82 Hanson, Paul D., Visionaries and Their Apocalypses, 23.
Features

The book of Revelation has essential features that we need to mention and highlight below in order to give a real picture of the book’s perspective. The main features that we are going to focus on include the visionary experience, resistance, mysticism, and use of Old Testament Scriptures.

Visionary Experience

Klaus Koch describes well the visionary experience as rooted in the Old Testament writings. This experience encompasses discourses in the form of visions that expand to several chapters in a long dialogue between the apocalyptic seer and a heavenly counterpart. In some cases, the vision can be replaced by just a voice like Daniel 9.\textsuperscript{85} As Klaus Koch highlights, the visions reveal something about human destiny that has been kept secret or mystery in heaven but will soon come to pass on earth and will affect those involved in particular circumstances. Koch indicates that the seer has a partner who is a representative of the heavenly hierarchy in the visionary scene.\textsuperscript{86} With respect to the Old Testament first step to apocalyptic discourse cycles, Koch mentions that prophetic books were of primary stage way back in the eighth century BCE with Amos 7 where the dialogue took place between the prophet and God, and in the post-exilic period with Zachariah’s visions whereby the dialogue was limited to the prophet and an angel.\textsuperscript{87} Just to indicate how Revelation’s visionary experience is similar to that of the existing visionary tradition, Koch takes us to recognize that Revelation in the beginning of its first great vision, “After this I looked, and lo, in heaven an open door (4:1)” looks like Amos

\textsuperscript{85} Hanson, Paul D., Visionaries and Their Apocalypses, 21.
\textsuperscript{86} Hanson, Paul D., Visionaries and Their Apocalypses, 21.
\textsuperscript{87} Hanson, Paul D., Visionaries and Their Apocalypses, 21.
the introduction of Amos’ vision in 7:1, “Thus the Lord God showed me: behold, he was forming locusts.” For Koch, the two visions are introduced by a key verb that is “see.”

Another point of similarity between John’s visionary experience and that of the Old Testament tradition is the tormenting situation that leads the seer to be in a supernatural state of affairs that looks a bodily change. An example of this is John’s persecution because of the word of God and found himself “in the Spirit on the Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10) that is similar to 4 Ezra who states that Ezra’s “spirit was stirred profoundly.” But Koch like other scholars recognizes also that the seer’s spiritual turmoil sometimes result from the unexpected experience of vision and audition leading to fear and dismay that take the seer beside himself as he falls to the ground, or has his trance being heightened to unconsciousness (see Rev. 1:7; 1 Enoch 17:1; Apocalypse of Abraham 15).

Whether apocalypses reflect actual visions of the visionary or are just a literary form that derives from the writer’s purpose is not easy to determine. Koch rightly asserts that it is hard to ascertain how far the visionary experience is an actual seer’s experience and how far what is told is a literary fashion that constitutes an “over-refinement of the prophet’s account of his reception of the Word (see Ezek. 2:1; 3:12-15),” while he recognizes the presence of signs of a literary relationship. In this analysis, Koch goes on by explaining that the seer does not just describe his own state nor just mentions the secrets and revolutions of the future, rather he draws conclusions for his readers in the form of paraenetic discourses addressed to his community, in order to call the faithful for endurance of the persecution that is about to be at an end. This perspective finds support in the letters to the churches that are in Revelation, and the content of some Jewish apocalypses such as the final discourse and letter in 2 Baruch, Ezra

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88 Hanson, Paul D., Visionaries and Their Apocalypses, 21-22.
89 Hanson, Paul D., Visionaries and Their Apocalypses, 22.
90 Hanson, Paul D., Visionaries and Their Apocalypses, 22.
91 Hanson, Paul D., Visionaries and Their Apocalypses, 22.
14:27-36, and the paraenetic book in 1 Enoch.\textsuperscript{92} For the case of Revelation, Beale affirms that John seems to have had genuine visions that he recorded in a literary form, whereby his awareness of the Old Testament tradition led him to associate some of his visions and auditions with similar passages of the Old Testament and to employ the language of the latter.\textsuperscript{93}

Resistance

The concept of “resistance” that plays an important role in the framing the book of Revelation is defined depending on the context it is used. According to the Oxford dictionaries, the term “resistance” can be defined as “the refusal to accept or comply with something; the attempt to prevent something by action or by argument.”\textsuperscript{94} The Cambridge English defines “resistance” as “the act of fighting against something that is attacking you, or refusing to accept something; resistance to disease.”\textsuperscript{95} These two definitions that we took among many others indicate that resistance implies an act of opposing a certain power that is harmful, whereby a subject takes action to work for freedom in a context of oppression. Portier-Young argues in the same perspective by stating that “resistance emerges within and responds to domination and hegemony,” and deduces that “literature that aims to limit, oppose, or reject hegemonic institutions and cosmologies and systems, strategies, and acts of domination can be called resistance literature.”\textsuperscript{96} As we explained above, early Christians were facing violent persecution of the Roman power for their faith, and John in Revelation intended to inspire Christians on various forms of resistance that he thought was an imperative.

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\textsuperscript{92} Hanson, Paul D., Visionaries and Their Apocalypses, 22.
\textsuperscript{93} Beale, G. K., The Book of Revelation, 80-81.
\textsuperscript{94} \url{www.lexico.com/definition/resistance}
\textsuperscript{95} \url{dictionary.cambridge.org/.../english/resistance}
\end{flushleft}
According to Sleeper, John suggested that Christians could fight by conquering, by bearing witness, and enduring tribulations. As far as conquering is concerned, Sleeper notes the promise made to “everyone who conquers” which is found in all the letters to the seven churches, with the fulfilment vision of the new heaven and the new earth whereby promises are made to “those to those who conquer” by the figure on the throne, just near the end of Revelation (21:7). Sleeper understands John’s language of conquering in the messianic image of Jesus who was portrayed as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David” who conquered so as to open the scrolls (5:5), although Sleeper mentions that Jesus conquest is over the cosmic forces of evil, not over the Romans, for the reign of Christ and God on earth is projected by Revelation at the final battle if 17:14 and 19:11-20: 10 are read literally. As for Christians, some of them have conquered Satan by confronting martyrdom for their testimony (12:11) inasmuch as the visionary finds them standing in heaven (15:2), which implies that they conquered by losing their lives as Sleeper asserts.

A second way of resistance for Christians is to bear witness as expressed by the Greek word μαρτυρία that means either testimony or witness. John depicts Jesus as the model of a faithful witness (1:5; 3:14) that Christians should imitate. Besides, John self-describes as one who bore testimony (1:2, 9) thus he becomes a model as well. In the same perspective, as Sleeper mentions, John gives a long list of faithful witnesses that the churches should follow. In fact, Antipas is one of them who gave his life (2:13) for Jesus’ sake, and John’s visions suggest that many others were or willing to be killed for testifying for Christ (6:9; 11:7; 12:11; 17:6; 20:4). Thus testifying for Christ even before death was promoted as an ideal for resisting to collaborate with the evil system.

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97 Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 118.
98 Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 118.
99 Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 119.
100 Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 119-120.
This leads to a third element of resistance that is ὑπομονή, “endurance.” This is used in the letters to the churches of Ephesus (2:2, 3), Thyatira (2:19), and Philadelphia (3:10) where believers were praised for their perseverance. In Rev. 13:10 and 14:12, John states the call for endurance of the saints. Sleeper rightly deduces from Christian endurance of persecution an evidence of nonviolent resistance, a way of Christian refusal to cooperate with the corrupt power.\(^\text{101}\) In the terms of G.K Beale who argues in the same perspective, part of the main point of Revelation was “to motivate the readers not to compromise with the world but to align their thoughts and behavior with the God-centered standards of the new creation.”\(^\text{102}\)

Streett raises another component of Resistance in Revelation that is the hope for the imminent liberation by God. He argues that the overwhelming violence found throughout the book of Revelation ends up functioning as pure punishment for deeds of the wicked. In this perspective, as Streett asserts, this punishment liberates the faithful by neutralizing or eliminating “local, global, and cosmic threats against God’s people.”\(^\text{103}\) Thus Christian hope became an arm for resistance in Revelation.

In sum, John wrote Revelation as a resistance literature that presents conquering in the spiritual sense, bearing testimony, enduring persecution, and standing on the hope of divine imminent liberation as tools of Christian resistance against Roman tyranny just as the book of Daniel aimed to resist against the Babylonian oppressive power.

Mysticism

\(^{101}\) Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 120-121.


\(^{103}\) Streett, Matthew J., *Here Comes the Judge: Violent Pacifism in the Book of Revelation* (London: T & T Clark, 2012), 221.
Most of the apocalyptic writings contain elements of mysticism. De Conick considers that the apocalypse was internalized in the time of early Christianity, a time when the cosmic had collapsed into the personal.\textsuperscript{104} As De Conick explains, the period-literature indicates that some Jews and Christians hoped to achieve in their present the eschatological dream, which implies the restoration of God’s image within themselves.\textsuperscript{105} Therefore mysticism became the way those Jews and Christians chose to live in the present that eschatological dream. Various means that include visionary flights to heaven, enjoying divine food and divine drink, immersion in water, anointing their bodies with sacred oil, intoning God’s names, among other practices were characteristics of mysticism.\textsuperscript{106} The book of Revelation encompasses numerous elements of mysticism that reflect the author’s experience which also shaped the worship tradition of Christian communities in course of time. According to Wainwright, Rev. 2:17 suggests that conquering implies the believer’s spiritual ascent, Rev. 3:20 that is about knocking on the soul’s door indicates the believer’s own sweetness, and Rev. 21:6 that is about the waters from the fountain of life which implies an “inmost love of God”. Thus, he relates the three passages to the experience of the believer in terms of inner life and the worship.\textsuperscript{107}

Mysticism in Revelation has components of both private meditation and public worship that work together. In the viewpoint of Wainwright, Revelation has hymns and prayers that are designed for public worship and function as means of private devotion.\textsuperscript{108} The following examples demonstrate how Revelation plays an important role in availing the components of mysticism for Christianity. Rev.1:3 suggests that the book was read aloud to the assemblies in

\textsuperscript{105} De Conick, April D., \textit{Paradise Now}, 24.
\textsuperscript{106} De Conick, April D., \textit{Paradise Now}, 24.
\textsuperscript{107} Wainwright, Arthur William, \textit{Mysterious Apocalypse}, 203.
\textsuperscript{108} Wainwright, Arthur William, \textit{Mysterious Apocalypse}, 212.
the atmosphere of worship as the words “to read” and to “hear” indicate. Revelation 4: 8 (with reference in Isa. 6:1-3 and Dan. 7:10) that is used in many Christian traditions as a Eucharistic hymn emphasizes on angel’s perpetual praise. Together with Rev. 7:9-17 which is a heavenly choir, they appear to be accounts of worship in heaven, and Wainwright notes that “the heavenly city was a popular theme.” Other passages like 1:5-6; 11:15; 12:10, 19:6, 16; and the final “amen” of 22:21 that is influenced by the vision of 5:14 reflect Christian mood of doxology and acclamations that would characterize devotion. With these liturgical texts that are in Revelation, the words, music, and visual arts that are found in this book are important to shape both public and private devotion. Thus Revelation is an expression of early Christianity mysticism that is grounded in the Old Testament texts as well as other Jewish tradition.

Old Testament Scriptures

Since the use of Old Testament by John remains the main focus of this work as it will be developed in the next chapters, this section is made for giving a brief indication of how the Old Testament Scripture is present as part of the main features of Revelation. It is important to note that in many ways, Revelation like other apocalypses draws most of its language upon existing scriptures particularly the Old Testament. The pseudonymity that we explained above is an example of an evidence of this apocalyptic practice though Revelation did not follow such a habit of pseudonymity.

Old Testament as a feature of Revelation can be perceived through elements like scenes of heavenly worship which is described in line with the worship in the temple where altars,

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censers, incense, songs and prayers found in 5:8; 8:3 are essential. Another aspect that clearly links Revelation to Old Testament is the image of salvation grounded in the exodus event from Egypt which is launched by the plagues of hair, water turned into blood, darkness, and locusts as in Rev. 8:7-12; 9:2 that are similar to those in Ex. 7:17; 9:18; 10:4,21. Furthermore, as Achtemeier and his collaborators also argue, the description of God’s throne in Revelation recalls the theophany of Mount Sinai that comprised lightning and thunder as in Exod. 19:16-18, even in Ezek. 1:13. These writers also add that Revelation draws upon Daniel to describe the kingdoms of the earth in the form of bizarre beasts, to portray Jesus as the Son of man, and to present God as seated on the heavenly throne. We also need to recognize that Revelation’s presentation of the winged creatures that surround the throne is drawn from the cherubim of both Ezekiel 1 and Isaiah 6, and the hymn “holy, holy, holy” repeats that of Isaiah’s vision.

Finally, John’s description of the fall of Babylon applies to the prophetic condemnation of the ancient Babylon as found in Isaiah, and Jeremiah (51) and the downfall of Tyre that is in Ezekiel. In the same perspective, John used the image of a known historical “Babylon” to denounce and condemn Rome of his time just as the Old Testament prophets did for the actual Babylon. As to the way John used the Old Testament Scriptures, Sweet highlights that John used the Jewish Scripture with creative wisdom. Instead of quoting, he rather paraphrased, alluded and weaved together motifs in a way that brings further dimensions of meaning upon each allusion. Even if John avoided to formally appeal to the authority of the Old Testament,
scholarship indicates that intertexture remains a primary resource for him in establishing the credibility of the book of Revelation.\textsuperscript{118}

**Conclusion**

The name of the author of the book of Revelation is known as John who wrote from the island of Patmos where he was because of persecution of the Roman power against Christians. Tradition identifies John as one of Jesus’ disciples, the son of Zebedee according to the testimony of early Christian writers such Irenaeus and Justin Martyr and their followers. However, we saw that contemporary scholars raise doubt on this specific identification, arguing that John did not claim to be either the apostle nor the son of Zebedee. As the book indicates, the author shares the situation of oppression with his addressees.

The evidence of the book of Revelation indicates that the book was composed for the audience that was living in Asia Minor where the seven churches mentioned in it were established. The historical interpretation of the events described including the mention of Babylon and the succession of kings in the book suggests a date of composition that goes to later years of the reign of Emperor Domitian, that is around 90 CE whereas the name “Babylon” echoes to the Old Testament context of domination over Jews by the Babylonian empire.

As for the context of the author’s audience, scholarship indicates that the book was written to Christians who were facing both internal and external conflicts. They had issues of authority in the church while the external concern was grounded in idolatry whereby Christian opposite stand led to persecution of Christ followers. At a higher level, Christians dealt with imperial cults and their refusal cost persecution to them to the extent that some believers like

Antipas were murdered. Also, we must recognize that Revelation was written to an audience that had the knowledge of the Old Testament tradition due to the use of the prophetic language and other Old Testament allusions that feature this book.

The general structure of Revelation begins with the specific messages to seven churches of Asia Minor, next appear the central and centering visions of God and the Lamb, then follow the visions of judgement of God, and finally comes the final vision of the new creation. At some point of the elements mentioned above are various interludes that complement the content. On the genre of Revelation, the book is a composite of three literary forms: the epistolary, the prophetic, and the apocalyptic. The three are put together to indicate a transformation of the apocalyptic view of history whereby the present finds its meaning in a futuristic salvation.

As for the features, scholarship reveals that Revelations is an expression of the author’s visionary experience which is quasi-similar to other Jewish and Christian apocalypses in both form and worldview, except the aspect of pseudonymity. Revelation is also characterized by resistance which the author sought to underscore for Christians who were facing the pressure of an evil power. Thus, he emphasized on being a faithful witness of Christ and enduring tribulations, all of this for Christian hope in divine mighty intervention. Through various expressions of devotion that are in Revelation, mysticism becomes another important feature of the book. It gives insights on worship, which served to shape the tradition of Christian worship in the course of church history. Finally, a close study of the book of Revelation reflects in various ways the use of Old Testament materials, to which the author gave a new meaning to convey a Christian message in a new context. The following chapter will show in detail how John drew upon the Old Testament materials to shape Revelation.
II. USES OF OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS IN REVELATION

Introduction

The preceding chapter led us into the general comprehension of the book of Revelation whereby we saw that some of the aspects of its context derive from the framework of the Old Testament. As a continuation of this perspective, the present chapter aims to indicate the ways John used the Old Testament tradition to address his audience in the book of Revelation. Thus, we are going to discuss three main points that are helpful to understand John’s use of the Old Testament materials.
Firstly, we will analyze the general setting of Old Testament allusions that can be found in Revelation. The discussion will include the identification of allusions, and the way allusions are incorporated in Revelation, matters like the author’s consciousness in their use, his faithfulness to the perspective of Old Testament, their contextual use. The discussion will culminate in indicating the data of those allusions in the books of the Old Testament. Secondly, we will see the main Old Testament traditions that guided the author of Revelation to shape the message of the book, including the terms that are used, the notion of myths, the literary model, and the Old Testament great tradition to which John was faithful. Finally, we will discuss the specific uses of Old Testament materials in Revelation such as literary prototypes, thematic use, analogical use, universalization, prophetic fulfillment, and stylistic use of solecisms; for these are helpful to highlight the application of the preceding points, and thus to support the main topic of this work.

**General Setting of Revelation and Allusion to Old Testament**

First of all, it is important to know how to identify allusions in order to understand their use in Revelation. In this perspective, Beale defines three criteria that can be followed to identify the presence of allusions, which also apply to the book of Revelation. Two of them are based upon the wording of the text. Thus, Beale indicates first that there is a clear allusion whereby the wording is identical to Old Testament source. This allusion also shares the common meaning and might not have come from another source rather than the Old Testament. The second case is a probable allusion whereby the wording is not very close. The allusion contains an idea or wording that can be traced only in the Old Testament texts. The third element concerns the possible allusion that is defined in terms of language that suggests a mere
general similarity to a purported source. This allusion is linked to Old Testament passages just by echoing their wording or their concept.\textsuperscript{119}

In the same perspective, Fekkes has attempted to indicate how an allusion can generally be distinguished from an informal quotation, a distinction that is based upon the authorial motive and other factors that he evokes. He asserts that “the boundaries between an informal quotation and an allusion depend on the level of consciousness or visibility attached to an Old Testament text by an author, and consequently, on the degree of recognition which that author expects of the reader.”\textsuperscript{120} He goes on saying that the more an Old Testament reference is broken up and woven into a passage, the less it will be a quotation, thus it might be considered as an allusion.\textsuperscript{121} He goes on giving other factors that contribute to determine the distinction. These factors include the prominence of Old Testament Scriptures generally within the social and liturgical environment, plus the fact that “a text may belong to local or conventional testimonia.”\textsuperscript{122} Fekkes’ perspective in this case takes in account the audience’s tradition of interpretation for a passage, whether this tradition is Jewish or Christian.\textsuperscript{123}

The way John incorporated the Old Testament allusions in Revelation merits a close attention to better understand how Old Testament materials shaped the composition of this apocalyptic work. As most scholars affirm, the book of Revelation alludes to Old Testament texts without using direct citations. DeSilva notes that “John incorporates hundreds of phrases and even essentially complete verses from Jewish Scriptures;” while he “never once actually quotes material from those Scriptures.”\textsuperscript{124} Fekkes argues in the same viewpoint by giving

\textsuperscript{120} Fekkes, Jan., \textit{Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation}, 65.
\textsuperscript{121} Fekkes, Jan. \textit{Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation}, 65.
\textsuperscript{122} Fekkes, Jan. \textit{Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation}, 65.
\textsuperscript{123} Fekkes, Jan. \textit{Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation}, 65.
\textsuperscript{124} DeSilva, David Arthur, \textit{Seeing Things John's Way}, 147.
examples whereby John allows his passage to refrain high visibility and close correspondence to the original text. The first example is Rev. 2:26b-27 and Ps 2:8a-9. In this case, Fekkes asserts that the Psalm on which this messianic promise is based is probably a part of early Christian testimonia. The second example can be found in Rev. 3:7c and Isa. 22:22 that matches the Philadelphian context which serves as a proof text - an apologetic testimony, for the church was facing hostility of local Jews who reject the messiahship of Jesus. Fekkes considers the third example that is Rev. 7:16,17 and Isa. 49:10/25:8 to be a short catena that describes the inheritance of the faithful who endured the great tribulation, which seems to be a paraenetic preview that anticipates the glories of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21, where Isa. 25:8 is reused and expanded (21:4a). Fekkes rightly explains that John highlights these specific Old Testament texts of consolations with the aim that his readers will appreciate the prophetic foundation of his statements.\footnote{Fekkes, Jan, \textit{Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation}, 68-69.}

There is a common explanation that apocalyptic genre of Revelation would exclude the book’s use of any quotations due to its pseudonymous character but Fekkes refutes this idea by mentioning Daniel who makes an explicit reference to Jeremiah (Dan. 9:2), and Baruch who formally quotes Isa. 4:2. Thus he argues that Revelation is not a pseudonymous work, which implies that Revelation’s lack of interest of making direct quotations should be grounded in other motives like John’s consciousness.\footnote{Fekkes, Jan, \textit{Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation}, 65-66.}

Some scholars question John’s conscious use of allusions. Therefore, demonstrating his intentional allusion to Old Testament texts in Revelation is essential to frame the specific uses that we are treating in the author’s freedom of creativity. In fact, Beale finds problematic to say whether an allusion was made consciously or unconsciously due to the non-formal character of Old Testament references in Revelation, particularly in the use of combined allusions, which
poses the issue of literary consciousness as Beale recognizes. He explains that “this problem is compounded since many, indeed most, of the OT reminiscences are combined in groups. Sometimes four, five, or more different OT references are merged into one picture,” and he gives the examples of the descriptions of Christ (1:12-20), God on the throne and the surrounding heavenly host (4:1-11), and the diabolic beast (13:1-8). Beale points out that some scholars explain that the combination of allusions is “less intentional and more the result of a memory saturated with Old Testament language and ideas that they are unconsciously organized in the author’s visions.” This viewpoint implies the lack of interest to study the contextual meaning of Old Testament passages that are referred to for they did not influence the author's intention. Beale also mentions that other scholars like Caird argue that the conscious effort of the author of Revelation is motivated by “expressing evocative and emotive power,” which might downplay the effort to seek the meaning of each reference in its OT and NT context. 

As Beale goes on by saying, Vos notes that Rev. 4:2-9 is an illustration of unconscious mixture of Old Testament allusions. However, Beale argues that all Old Testament allusions come from descriptions of theophanies that introduce the sections of announcements of judgement on Israel or the nations. To highlight the point, Beale mentions the parallelisms that go in this perspective as Vos indicates them: Rev. 4:2=Isa. 6:1 and /or 1 Kgs. 22:19; Rev. 4:3f=Ezek. 1:28; Rev. 4:5a=Ezek. 1:13 and /or Exod. 19: 16; Rev. 4:6a=Ezek. 1:22; Rev. 46b=Ezek. 1:5 and 1:18; Rev. 4:7=Ezek. 1:10; Rev. 4:8a=Isa. 6:2; Rev. 4:8b=Isa 6:3; and Rev. 4:9=Isa.6:1. He does not mention Rev. 4:5b = Ezek. 1:13 and Zech. 4:4:2,6. Furthermore, Beale argues that “this common denominator of a theophany-judgement theme is enhanced

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128 Beale, G. K., John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation, 64.
129 Beale, G. K., John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation, 64.
130 Beale, G. K., The Book of Revelation, 80.
when one also notes the dominant influence of Dan. 7:9-13 throughout Revelation 4-5, which leads him to conclude that “this clearly common motif points toward a more intentional thematic formation of texts to describe a similar theophany in Revelation.”

Although Beale recognizes the possibility of unconscious activity in the less clear or non-clustered allusions, he suggests this to be determined through an exegetical analysis of each case. By contrast, Beale makes clear that John’s self-identification with the line of OT visionaries also demonstrates his concern for developing the ideas of the earlier prophets that might be considered as his forerunners, which indicates that the clearer Old Testament references in Revelation such as 1:1-3,10,10; 4:1-2; 17:3 and 21:10 are the result of John’s intentional activity. Thus, even though the views vary depending on how one understands a particular passage that contain allusions, we should notice that there are arguments in Revelation, such as the common motif and the concern for perpetuating the prophetic tradition, and others that prove John’s conscious use of allusions even in the case of combined allusions.

Another question that arises from John’s non-formal reference to Old Testament materials is whether, or not he used these texts faithfully. We find in DeSilva’s work two distinct viewpoints that exist among scholars. On the one hand, John is said to use the Old Testament texts in an “anthological” manner. DeSilva refers to Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza’s statement that John did not interpret the Old Testament but used the words, images, phrases, and patterns from it as “a language arsenal” that enabled him to elaborate his own theological statement. On the other hand, John is said to have remained highly grounded in the original meaning and purpose of the texts Old Testament texts he weaved into his new text, which

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implies that this original meaning and purpose informed his use of existing Scriptures throughout the book of Revelation. While DeSilva does not deny the veracity of the two viewpoints, he is careful to take an extreme position of any of them. Thus, he indicates that claiming that Scripture is just a language may apply to some passages in Revelation but not to others where Old Testament is not just a “thesaurus of imagery, but a collection whose interpretation shaped John’s perception of the challenges that prevailed around him and his Christian communities which consequently “provided the basis for his expectations of God’s forthcoming interventions.” In that way, we can state that John was generally faithful to the perspective of the Old Testament texts that he alluded to in writing Revelation, for he found them applying to the context of his time just as they applied to the ancient context.

Having said that, it is also important to analyze whether John’s use of the Hebrew Bible is contextual or non-contextual in order to know to what degree the Old Testament context supported Revelation’s context. From Beale’s work, we find that scholars agree that John used Old Testament texts with a high degree of liberty and creativity, leading some to argue that John handled many Old Testament passages without consideration of their original contextual meanings. Thus, Beale whom I agree with mentions some of the arguments that are developed in that perspective, and he clearly refutes them. In fact, the first argument that originates from Fiorenza is that John does not use quotation formulas in introducing Old Testament references but only cites an informal anthological style which suggests that he uses words only as a cloak for his own new thoughts that are unrelated to the original Old Testament contexts. Beale argues that informal citation does not logically entail non-contextual use of Old Testament since we find that the majority of Old Testament references elsewhere in the New Testament

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are also informal or allusive. He asserts that it would be unduly presumptive to think all those Old Testament references to be without the Old Testament context in the writer’s mind. 137

The second argument also from Fiorenza is that John’s apocalyptic is dependent on his prophetic spirit, which creates in order to proclaim for his own purposes and does not consciously quote from other authorities in order to teach or argue. Beale argues that John does not view himself as a prophet that would be independent of his O.T tradition or heritage; rather he applies to himself the language of O.T prophetic commissions. 138

To the third argument that John’s readers were illiterate, from pagan backgrounds and would not have been able to understand the interpretative use of OT literature, Beale objects with the following facts:

- the churches in Asia Minor were composed of Jewish believers and Gentile godfearers who associated with the synagogues as of Acts;
- Christians in Smyrna and Phyladelphia had some relationship with the synagogue though its antagonistic, which suggests a link to OT tradition (2:9; 3:9);
- specific reference to a false “prophet” with an OT name “Jezebel” in Thyatira suggests a teaching in that church distorted both OT and NT tradition (2:20);
- linguistic evidence: if John knew these congregations these congregations and had a pastoral relationship with them, he would not have employed so many OT references if he knew they would not benefit his audience. The ex. of terms like “manna,” “Jezebel,” “Balaam,” “temple,” and “new Jerusalem” imply a prevalence of basic knowledge of OT on the readers’ part;

-if it is true that John communicated his revelation to a circle of prophets who would pass it to the churches as of 22:16a, these must also be part of the audience;

- John self-understanding as a prophet (1:1,10; 4:1-2; 17:3; 21:10; 19:10; 22:9) that seems to be accepted in the seven churches implies that he had taught with prophetic authority among them;

-we know that Acts and elsewhere in the NT Jewish and Gentile believers were trained in their new faith on the basis of OT, the Bible of the early church (Acts 17:10-12; 18:24-28; 2Tim. 2:2, 15; 3:16-17);

-since letters were read repeatedly in the early church as of Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; and Rev.1:3, the audience would be able to discern the presence of more of the allusions -it is generally acknowledged that the majority of both pagan Greeks and Jews in the Greco-Roman world learned to read in childhood (Latin plus Greek or Hebrew). 139

The last argument is that John’s work referred to Old Testament in the form of warning to those who see him working contextually. This implies that John was just influenced by an O.T text literarily independently on the interpretative of OT meaning. By contrast, Beale argues by saying that “the greater number of references an author makes to the OT, the more they point to familiarity with the meaning of the OT.” 140

With respect to all those arguments that are used to downplay the contextual use of allusions in Revelation, we find that Beale’s explanation is helpful to understand that John did not ignore the original meaning of the OT texts that he used. Rather his conscious use of them led him to consider their original context as the basis for shaping the meaning of his revelation that applied to his audience’s context.

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The analysis of the use of allusions would be inadequate if it were not supported by the data of references that are fetched from OT books. As biblical scholarship generally admits, Revelation contains hundreds of Old Testament references more than any other NT book. The actual statistics remain approximative and subject to diverse variations for they depend on the scholars’ criteria to determine the validity of references.\textsuperscript{141} On the basis of the data that are found in Fekkes’s work, we see that the book of Revelation drew upon the materials that are found in 35 books out of 39 that form the canon of the Old Testament. Specifically, Revelation alludes to OT traditions in terms of figures as follows:\textsuperscript{142}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Testament book</th>
<th>Number of Allusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genesis</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deuteronomy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Samuel</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Samuel</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kings</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Kings</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Chronicles</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Chronicles</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{141} Beale, G. K., \textit{John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation}, 60.

\textsuperscript{142} The figures indicated in the table reflect the approximative sum of the references that are found in the index of references of Fekkes, 304-310.
As of those data, we find a total of about 683 OT references that are found in the book of Revelation. With Isaiah coming on top, the main books referenced to are Isaiah (247),

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>References</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ezra</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nehemiah</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Esther</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Song of Songs</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamentations</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezekiel</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hosea</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amos</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obadiah</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jonah</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Micah</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Nahum</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zephaniah</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Haggai</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zechariah</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malachi</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Ezekiel (94), Psalm (71), Jeremiah (49), Daniel (40), and Exodus (26) where we find more than twenty references.

**Revelation and Old Testament Traditions**

To better know how Old Testament shaped the book of Revelation, it is important to indicate the key terms that form the Old Testament tradition which came to be reused by the author of Revelation while composing this apocalyptic work. Richard Bauckham justifies John’s use of traditional materials as a customary of the apocalypses. As he underlines, Jewish and Christian writers of the apocalypses customarily incorporated preexisting items or blocks of traditional material in their works.¹⁴³ To Bauckham, the existing traditional materials upon which John drew to compose the book of Revelation may have circulated within a circle of Christian prophets of the seven churches that are mentioned at the beginning of the book, where John is assumed to have been an eminent member or even the leader.¹⁴⁴

As of Fekkes’s list, the Old Testament elements that are mentioned below reappear in Revelation. They are also grouped into four categories. Firstly, Revelation drew upon the category of dramatis personae that includes Balaam, Balak, Jezebel, David, the Prophets, Moses, Elijah, Michael, the Lamb, the Serpent, the Beast, the Harlot, God and Magog, the four living creatures, and Abaddon. Secondly, John drew upon the divine institutions’ elements such as the temple and its cultic accessories like priesthood, altar of sacrifice, golden altar of incense, horns of the altar, ark of the covenant, outer court; the tabernacle of testimony; the twelve tribes, the tribe of Judah. Thirdly, the same holy and mythic geography elements shaped Revelation. These are Paradise, Mount Zion, the abyss, Babylon, Jerusalem, Sodom, Egypt,

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the Euphrates, river of life, and the tree of life. Finally, the main Old Testament religious vocabulary and concepts are found in Revelation namely the sons of Israel, song of Moses, manner, Day of the Lord, book of life, OT numerology, shekinah glory of God, cosmic manifestations of theophany, holy war. As we can realize, those elements are part of the language that John borrowed from the Old Testament in order to shape the text of his vision.

It is also important to note that Revelation refers to Old Testament traditions of myths. As Barr asserts, Revelation “is built on a different literary type or model (theophany, throne scene, and holy war)” that he perceives as foundational stories and paradigms that served to support the author’s perceptions. We find from the viewpoint of Barr that John was influenced by the traditional view that “God would intervene in Israel’s history to purify the people and establish justice was combined with creation myths, producing the notion of the end of history and the birth of a new creation,” along with a variety of other mythic traditions. Barr specifies these traditions as follows:

“the traditions of the Danielic Son of Man (Rev. 1:13ff); the myth of correspondence , with a heavenly world corresponding to the earthly world (Rev. 1:20); myths connected to Jewish festivals (Rev. 7:1-17); the myth of Israel reconstituted (Rev. 7:5ff); the myth of the eschatological prophet (Rev. 11:3ff); the myth of the great mother (12:1ff); war in heaven (12:7ff.); the two primal beasts (13:1ff.); myths from the wilderness, exodus, and temptation (17:3ff.); and a whole sequence connected with the archaic creation myths of the ancient Near East -chaos, war, order, marriage, and rule (Rev. 19-21). (…) John uses important archetypes including the temple, the plagues, Egypt, Babylon, the dragon, righteous violence, virginity, and wilderness.”

The explanation of this use of mythic traditions that are essentially rooted in the Old Testament that Barr rightly gives is that they allow Revelation’s audience to feel that the stories hang together and are true for they are grounded in authentic traditions.

David A. DeSilva also argues that John was faithful to a great tradition in alluding to the Old Testament texts. It is that Old Testament tradition that influenced the shape of Revelation.

145 Fekkes, Jan, Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation, 69-70.
146 Barr, David L., Reading the Book of Revelation, 21.
147 Barr, David L., Reading the Book of Revelation, 21-22.
148 Barr, David L., Reading the Book of Revelation, 22.
149 Barr, David L., Reading the Book of Revelation, 22.
while John adapted its concepts in the situational context of his time. DeSilva gives seven elements of Old Testament traditions from which John drew upon. Firstly, John built on the traditional belief of “the God who is alone worthy of worship” which has the Shema as the starting point for the rule of faith of the Jews as found in Deut. 6:4. For DeSilva, the Shema is the faith claim that is followed by the behavioral prescriptions in Deut. 6:5-6, a claim that is also rooted in the Jewish patriarchs like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob which implies a historic loyal obedience to God by God’s people.\textsuperscript{150} Several OT texts go in this direction of preventing God’s people from falling into idolatry as Deut. 5:6-9 indicates. As DeSilva writes, the worship God alone is a theme that is found in historical books (2Kgs. 17:9-18), wisdom and liturgical texts (Pss. 96:1-9; 97:6-7; 115:3-11; 135:13-21; Wis. 13:1-15:17), and prophetic literature such as Isa. 44:6-24; Jer. 10:1-11. Therefore, John might have been motivated by the concern of keeping God’s commandments (Rev. 12:17; 14:12) whereby the first and the second dominated his mind as he urges the churches to stay away from \textgreek{t}=\textgreek{a} \varepsilon\iota\delta\omega\lambda\omicron\acute{\theta}\omicron\nu\tau\alpha\ (2:14, 20) and away from any compromise with idolatry (9:20-21), especially the imperial cult (13:1-18) that prevailed in John’s time.\textsuperscript{151}

Secondly John was influenced by the tradition of “the God who indicts the dominion systems.” As DeSilva explains, John’s indictment of Rome in Rev. 17-18 keeps the strain within the prophetic tradition of critiquing the dominions that disregard the misery of the powerless and oppress the poor. Examples of the major prophets that shaped John’s thoughts are Isa. 23; 47; Jer. 51; Ezek. 26-27, plus the exodus event that demonstrates God taking the side for the liberation\textsuperscript{152} of the oppressed and enslaved people who were inhumanly used to construct the Egyptian cities. The same tradition also consisted in indicting Israel in the case

\textsuperscript{150} DeSilva, David Arthur, \textit{Seeing Things John’s Way}, 159.

\textsuperscript{151} DeSilva, David Arthur, \textit{Seeing Things John’s Way}, 160.

\textsuperscript{152} DeSilva, David Arthur, \textit{Seeing Things John’s Way}, 160-161.
of enjoyment in luxury by the few ahead of the majority that were economically struggling, and in the case of establishing “alliances with other powers that allowed the elites to achieve greater economic growth or political influence.”\(^{153}\)

Thirdly, the tradition of “the God of the exodus” is central in the book of Revelation. This tradition originates from the opening expressions of the Decalogue in Exod. 20:2-3, also found in Deut. 5:6-7 where God recalls the mighty liberation of Israel out of the slavery of Egypt. DeSilva highlights that the exodus story became a revelation of the character of God and God’s interventions was held continually before the worshipping community in its Psalms as we can see in Pss. 78, 105, 106 and in the Song of Moses that is in Exod. 15:1-18. DeSilva goes on by indicating that the exodus event became the basis for the prophets’ message to ground the audience in the obligations of the covenant (Ezek. 20: 3-26), and the paradigm and precedent for the hope of liberation from the Babylonian captivity just as Isa. 40:3-5; 43:16-19; and 52:1-6 suggest.\(^{154}\) In the same perspective, John proclaimed the One seated on the throne as the God of the exodus who brings “the final deliverance of God’s people in a new exodus that is the eschatological exodus,” whereby the plagues that appear in the seven trumpets and seven bowls recall the plagues on Egypt found in Exodus 7:14-11:10.\(^{155}\) Thus the protection of God’s faithful found in Rev. 7:1-8; 9:4; 16:2 recalls the protection of the Israelites with their land and their livestock in Goshen when they resided as the plagues were poured upon Egyptians (see Exod. 8:22-23; 9:6-7, 25-26; 10:22-23).\(^{156}\)

A close analysis of the aforesaid similarity in terms of language of plagues might lead the readers of Revelation to recognize that John tried to recuperate the exodus event that had a background of liberation of God’s people, even though the story is retold in different instances.


\(^{154}\) DeSilva, David Arthur, *Seeing Things John’s Way*, 162.


\(^{156}\) DeSilva, David Arthur, *Seeing Things John’s Way*, 163.
Rossing helps us to root the two books in their respective historical contexts that would also help us make a hermeneutical reading of the plagues in both Revelation and Exodus. As he asserts, “God threatened Egypt with ten plagues designed both to show God’s power and to persuade Pharaoh to let the people go free. Similarly, in the book of Revelation, God hears the people’s cries and threatens new plagues against Rome’s oppression as part of the overall goal of liberation from injustice.” In the same perspective, Rossing adds that “The plagues serve for the conversion of the oppressors and for the liberation of God’s people. Like the plagues brought against Pharaoh in Exodus, the violence of the plagues threatened against Rome in Revelation is the violence of release and liberation, not vengeance or cruelty.”

There is another insight that comes out of reading the prediction of suffering of Revelation: the awaking up. As Rossing rightly highlights this idea, “The purpose of Revelation’s terrifying description of suffering is to wake up the world to God’s vision for life and repentance, to wake us up so the threatened events will not come to pass. God is not a cosmic destroyer.” Thus, we are bold to affirm that the exodus plagues influenced the composition of Revelation in the perspective of correcting the abuse of power in the world, pointing to show the liberating power of God through God’s might.

Furthermore, we can perceive this exodus tradition through the Song of Moses that is associated with the song of the Lamb beside the sea (Rev. 15:3ff.) as in Exodus 15. As DeSilva points out, there is in Revelation a new exodus paradigm whereby the faithful are brought out of Babylon (Rev. 18:4-8) to a new land of promise (Rev. 21:1-22:5); this new exodus of

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Revelation “becomes the conceptual framework within which to speak of a much grander deliverance.”

The fourth tradition John built on is of the God who vindicates the faithful. This tradition is rooted in the psalmists who expressed their confidence in God’s commitment to deliver the faithful even from the individual distress as found in Ps. 34:19, which was the result of protection that was ensured to those who would obey God’s prescriptions, and the protection promises were passed along through the wisdom tradition (see Prov. 3:1-11) and in the liturgical tradition as we can see in Ps. 1. To DeSilva associates Revelation stands in this Old Testament tradition in depicting the souls of the righteous slain for the sake of word of God as crying out for vindication (Rev. 6:9-11) which implies the confession of the justice of God hope for God’s intervention in the favor of the faithful.

Fifthly, Revelation recalls a tradition of God as the sovereign ruler of the cosmos. The Παντοκράτωρ that describes the greatness of God as we find in Rev. 15:3 is the basis for affirming the presence of this tradition in Revelation. This is preluded by the depiction of God as One sitting on the throne (4:2, 9, 10; 5:1, 7, 13; 6:16) that implies God’s reign over the cosmos. In the Old Testament, this sovereignty of God was part of the worshipers’ consciousness as we can find in Ps. 93:1-2, 97:1; 99:1; 103:20-21; 148:2. Thus the Lord who is great is worthy of worship. In psalms like 96:10,13; 98:9; 99:1,4 we find a depiction of God as God of justice as God rules over the cosmos. In the same perspective, John gives the portrayal of God who manifests God’s justice in the human sphere as the praises of Rev. 11:

The resurrection of the martyrs and their millennium reign with Christ can also be considered as part of the same perspective.

The sixth element of tradition John grounded his work is that of God who promises peace in God’s presence. The book of Revelation is characterized by God’s reign that restores justice, as we saw above. According to DeSilva, this reign “moves toward establishing the order in the natural and human spheres that reflects God’s just character and God’s designs for human community in relationship with the divine,” and he pursues to state that “this finds its full expression in the vision of the new Jerusalem” that considered as the culmination of fulfilment of God’s promises to God’s people. In the Old Testament, we find this tradition of a peaceful state in the presence of God through the image of wedding of God and God’s people (Hosea 2:14-20), the recreation of heavens and earth and Jerusalem (Isa. 65:17-18), the affirmation of God dwelling in the midst of God’s people and strengthening the mutual relationship (Lev. 26:12; Ezek. 11:20; 37:27; Zech. 2:11), restoring God’s afflicted faithful (Isa. 25:8), and promising eradication of distress (Isa. 65:19). In Revelation, we find that all these Old Testament texts are reused by John especially in Rev. 21:1-5 as an expression of their consummation in the vision of John. DeSilva notes that John uses these traditional materials by standing under and for that traditional vision of intimate vision with God and the perspective of a healing community this intimacy entails.

The last traditional element that DeSilva evokes is that of “God whose patience has an end.” The Old Testament texts that constitute the basis for John’s perspective can be found in Isaiah 35:8 and 52:1 that exclude defiled groups of people from the divine salvific benefits. In Revelation “the eschatological threats” of 2:22-23; 3:5; 3:9; and 3:16 as Royalty names

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embrace this perspective of exclusiveness found in Old Testament. This tradition is particularly obvious in the vision of the Holy City whereby groups of polluted people that disqualify to enter there are even listed (see Rev. 21:8, 27; 22:15) for the favor of those whose names are in the Lamb’s book of life. DeSilva notes that the pollution of the people to be excluded is not ritual but consists in their moral failure, particularly the failure to stand on the side of God and God’s Christ. I personally find this moral misbehavior appears to be the consequence of a life that is not led by faith in Christ, which is, in John’s perspective, subject to divine judgement.

Specific Uses of Old Testament Allusions in Revelation

By literary prototypes, we understand that a technique by which John takes over Old Testament contexts or sequences as models to pattern his creative composition. Beale explains that such modeling appears in the thematic structure that is traceable to only OT context or in the clear allusions, and he gives an example of the broad patterns from Daniel 2 and 7 that are said to have been followed in Rev. 1, 1-4, 13, and 17.

Beale adds that broad portions of Ezekiel have been dominant influence on at least twelve major sections of the Apocalypse (Rev. 4; 5; 6:12-7:1; 7:2-8; 8:1-5; 14:6-12; 17:1-6; 18:9-24; 20:7-10; 21:22). As Goulder who is referred to by Beale observes, these uses of Ezekiel are dominant influence on the structure of Revelation since they are placed to a marked extent in the same order as they are found in Ezekiel. However, Goulder suggests that a

168 DeSilva, David Arthur, Seeing Things John’s Way, 173.
169 Beale, G. K., The Book of Revelation, 86.
liturgical rather than a literary explanation accounts better for the parallel order of Ezekiel and Revelation.\textsuperscript{170}

The plague model also falls in the literary prototype use. To Beale, the plagues of the trumpets in Rev. 8:6-12 and those of the bowls in 16:1-9 follow the paradigm of the Exodus plagues (Exod. 8:12), though they are creatively reworked and applied.\textsuperscript{171} In the perspective of interpretative expansion of an OT prototype, Beale gives us two uses. The first is the use of OT patterns as forms through which future or imminent eschatological fulfillment is understood and predicted as this is the case for Rev.13 and 17, while the second use of prototypes provides the lenses through which past and present eschatological fulfillment is understood as of Rev.1 and 4-5).\textsuperscript{172}

**Thematic Uses**

We need to understand that the author of Revelation develops important OT themes in his composition as Beale mentions scholars that highlight this in different ways. Beale notes that Fekkes indicates that John develops extensively OT themes such as end-time judgement and salvation in their subcategories as we will see below. He also notes that Ford traces Daniel’s “abomination of desolation” theme, Longman studies the OT divine warrior concept, Bauckham stresses on the OT earthquake idea and John’s reinterpretation of the OT “holy war” theme plus the concept of the “day of the Lord.”\textsuperscript{173}

Important is also the reuse of Isaiah’s songs, Beale refers to Carnegie’s idea that “the various songs in Isaiah 40-55 come at the ends of subsections and round them off, not only by offering a concluding thanksgiving, but also by giving an interpretative summary of the theme

\textsuperscript{170} Beale, G. K., *The Book of Revelation*, 87.
\textsuperscript{172} Beale, G. K., *The Book of Revelation*, 88.
of the whole previous section (cf. Isa. 48:20ff.; 52:9, etc.). Thus the series of hymns in Revelation are seen to have the same function under the inspiration of the Isaiah’s songs (Rev. 4:11; 5:13ff.; 7:9-12; 11:15-18; 19: 1-8).\textsuperscript{174}

Steve Moyise contributes to this thematic use of Old Testament in Revelation by evoking John’s reinterpretation of the language of the Davidic Messiah that can apply to the return of Christ. As Moyise states with the reference to Isaiah and Psalm, Christ at his return will ‘smite the nations’ (Isa. 11:4) and ‘rule them with a rod of iron’ (Ps. 2:9); which appears in Revelation through the self-declaration as ‘I am the root and the descendent of David, the bright morning star’ (22:16) that suggests a messianic image of Isaiah 11.\textsuperscript{175}

As for Fekkes, he gives details of patterns of Old Testament thematic analogues that are present in the book of Revelation such as the visionary experience and language, Christological titles and descriptions, eschatological judgement and eschatological salvation. As Fekkes highlights, the visionary experience and language include the prophetic commission scenes, the throne-room theophanies and the general revelatory language. Christological titles and descriptions include the Old Testament messianic titles and descriptions applied to Jesus, the divine titles or descriptions transferred to Jesus, Christological application of non-titular phases, and Christological descriptions using Old Testament language. As for the eschatological judgement, Fekkes mentions the Old Testament language of Holy war and the Day of the Lord, the motifs of serial judgement, Old Testament traditions describing the eschatological enemies of God and God’s people, and the Old Testament oracles against the nations. The eschatological salvation includes the Old Testament oracles in anticipation, the

\textsuperscript{174} Beale, G. K., \textit{The Book of Revelation}, 89.

\textsuperscript{175} Moyise, Steve, \textit{The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation} (Shefield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 133.
oracles of renewal and presence, and the new Jerusalem oracles that comprise the architectural traditions and the Temple-city.\textsuperscript{176}

Analogical Uses

To explain the analogical technique of John with respect to allusion to Old Testament, Beale explains that “the very act of referring to an OT text is to place it in some comparative relationship to something in the NT.”\textsuperscript{177} In Revelation, particular attention is paid to specific well-known persons, places, and events though the pictures are applied to different historical situations. Nevertheless, the main idea in the OT context remains a characteristic of the NT situation. This indicates that John, in his creativity, broadly retains an essential OT association and preserves the continuity between OT and NT.\textsuperscript{178}

As of Beale’s work, below are the samples of analogies John makes with the Old Testament content along with the point of continuity:\textsuperscript{179}

a) The analogy of Judgement:
- theophanies introducing judgement (Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1, Daniel 7 / Revelation 4-5)
- book of judgement (Ezekiel 2, Daniel 7, Daniel 12 / Rev. 5: 1-5 and Ezekiel 2/Rev. 10)
- the lion from Juda exercising judgement (Gen. 4:9/Rev. 5:5),
- “the Lord of lords and King of kings” exercising judgement (Dan. 4:37 [LXX]/Rev. 17:14; 19:16)
- horsemen as divine agents of judgement (Zechariah 1 and 6/Rev. 6:1-8),
- Exodus plagues inflicting judgement (Exodus 8-12/Rev. 8:6-12; 16:1-14),
- locusts as agents of judgement (Joel 1-2/Rev. 9: 7-10)
- prophets giving testimony through judgement (Exod. 7:17; 1Kings 17:1/Rev. 11:6)
- “Babylon” judged by God in “one hour” (Dan. 4:17a[LXX]/Rev. 18:10, 17, 19

\textsuperscript{176} Fekkes, Jan, \textit{Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation}, 70-71.

\textsuperscript{177} Beale, G. K., \textit{The Book of Revelation}, 89.

\textsuperscript{178} Beale, G. K., \textit{The Book of Revelation}, 89.

\textsuperscript{179} Beale, G. K., \textit{The Book of Revelation}, 90-91.
b) The analogy of tribulation and persecution of God’s people:
- ten days of tribulation (Dan. 1:12/Rev. 2:10)
- three-and-half years of tribulation (Dan. 7:25; 12:7/Rev. 11:2; 12:1; 13:5)
- Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem as infamous places where persecution occurs (Rev. 11:8)
- persecuting rulers symbolized as beasts (Dan. 7/Revelation 11-13, 17)
- “Babylon the Great” (Dan. 4:30, etc./Rev. 14: 18; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2

c) The analogy of seductive, idolatrous teaching:
- Balaam (Numbers 15; 31:16/Rev. 2:14
- Jezebel (1Kgs. 16:31; 2Kgs 9: 22/Rev. 2: 20-23

d) The analogy of divine Protection:
- the tree of life (Gen. 2:9/Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19)
- the “sealed” Israelites (Ezekiel 9/Rev. 7:2-8)
- the wings of the eagle (Exod. 19:4; Deut. 32:11/Rev. 12:14

e) The analogy of the victorious battle of God’s people over the enemy:

f) The analogy of apostasy:
- the harlot (Ezek. 16:15, etc./Rev.17

g) The analogy of the divine Spirit as the power for God’s people:

It is important to note that some analogies are used to make an argument against the opponents of the authentic teaching that are in the church. This is highlighted by Barr who writes that John’s focus on the analogies of Jezebel as a symbolic name for historical person and Babylon the great as a symbolic name of the ultimate evil Rome implies that “negative
figures at times seem to ‘parody’ positive characters, providing a kind of ironic subtext.”

Thus some analogies are used in revelation for apologetic purpose.

We need to consider the use of the exodus plagues as a part of the analogical model. In this perspective, Adela Yarbro Collins focuses on the visions of the seven trumpets and the seven bowls to underline their similarity with the exodus plagues and what this similarity entails, particularly the allusions of water turning to blood (Rev. 8:9; 16:4; Exodus 7: 14-24) and the plague of locusts (Rev. 9:1-11; Exodus 10:1-20). Collins considers the use of traditional symbol of plagues in Revelation as an indication that John’s hearers understood their own hardship by analogy with the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt.

Universalization

This is a technique by which Revelation tends to apply to the world what the Old Testament applied only to Israel or to other entities. Multiple examples illustrate the universalization technique as we can see below.

a) The title that Yahweh gave Israel in Exod. 19:6 (“kingdom of priests”) is applied in Rev. 1:6 and 5:10 to the church, which is composed of kingly priests “from every tribe, people, and nation” (Rev. 5:9)…this phrase of universality in Rev. 5:9 is most likely taken from Daniel 7:14, where it refers to the nations of the world by Israel’s rule, which is now extended to the rule by all these very nations (cf. Rev. 5:10).

180 Barr, David L., Reading the Book of Revelation, 7.
181 Collins, Adela Yarbro, Crisis and Catharsis, 147.
183 The examples that are mentioned are taken from Beale, G. K., The Book of Revelation, 91-92.
b) In Rev. 1:7, “and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the tribes of earth will mourn over him,” refers to peoples throughout the earth, although in Zech. 12:10 it is limited to Israelite tribes.

c) There is a tendency of the extending of the exodus plague imagery from the land of Egypt to the whole “earth” in Rev. 8:6-12 and 16:1-14. In Rev. 8:8 a third of the sea is affected instead of just a river of Exodus. Also, the “ten days of tribulation” of Daniel and his friends (Dan. 1:12) and the three and-a-half years of Israel’s tribulation (Dan. 7:25; 12:7) are both extended to the tribulation of the church -the eschatological, true Israel in the world. Furthermore, Dan. 4:30, “Babylon the Great” persecutes Israel believers while Rev. 17:5-8; 18:24 suggest a persecution that includes the saints throughout the earth, and harmfully affects “nations,” “kings of the earth,” and the world’s economy (18: 1-23).

d) The conclusion of Revelation has references from the predicted end-time temple reserved for Israel, although now its cultic benefits are extended to the Gentiles (Cf. Ezek. 37:27; 44:9; and 48:35 in Rev. 21:3). In Rev. 22:2 the “leaves of healing” foretold in Ezek. 47:12 as an aid to the Israelites become “leaves... for the healing of the nations.”

By using universalization, John keeps the interpretative framework of OT references, which Beale highlights as follows:

“...although John creatively reworks the OT and changes its application, his pictures retain significant points of correspondence with the OT context and express salvation-historical principles of continuity. All the examples of universalization that we have cited appear to be harmonious developments of these principles, as for example, is the case with the OT texts pertaining to ethnic Israel’s redemption and applied in Revelation to the world’s redemption on the basis of defining the true people of God according to their faith in Christ and their corporate representation in Christ, the one who sums up true Israel in himself. Thus, the church comes to be viewed as true Israel.”184

184 Beale, G. K., The Book of Revelation, 92.
This implies John’s intention to indicate that through Christ was inaugurated the era of the universal salvation, provided that humanity responds to the coming of Christ by faith. We can also perceive this perspective in the images or titles that are put side by side, where there is an obvious move to the openness of salvation. For instance, the vision of Rev. 7 contains the number 144,000 of people to be sealed that is made up of 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, then followed by a vision of the multitude from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages as we find in Rev. 7:9.\textsuperscript{185}

Possible Indirect Fulfillment Uses

In Revelation, some of OT texts are alluded to designate present or future fulfillment of the ancient verbal prophecy. We find several examples that illustrate the fulfilment of the content of Daniel’s prophecies. In fact, the introduction of Revelation in 1:1 alludes to Daniel 2:28-29, 45 in terms of “things that must take place”. Also Dan. 12:4, 9 is used in the same way in 22:10: whereas Daniel is ordered to ‘conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time’ (Dan. 12:4), John is given the consummatory command not to ‘seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.’ Thus, the use of Daniel in Rev. 22:10 intensifies that of 1:1-3. Another example is the reference to the Son of man (1:13-14) which suggests John’s belief that Jesus had begun to fulfill the Dan. 7:13 prophecy of the Son of man’s exaltation, although the similar reference in 1:7 may also refer to a further phase of the same prophecy that still awaits consummation.\textsuperscript{186} Elsewhere, we can find evidence of expectations of exclusive future fulfillment, of which Ps. 2:1/Rev. 11:18; Ps.2:8/Rev. 12:5 and 19:15; Isa. 25:8/Rev. 21:14; Isa. 65:17 and 66:22/Rev. 21:1; Ezek.47:1, 12/Rev. 22:1-2 are good examples.\textsuperscript{187}

\textsuperscript{185} Moyise, Steve, \textit{The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation}, 133.
\textsuperscript{186} Beale, G. K., \textit{The Book of Revelation}, 93.
\textsuperscript{187} Beale, G. K., \textit{The Book of Revelation}, 93.
As an explanation of the use of indirect fulfillment, Beale’s work is helpful to indicate the “background of John’s and the NT’s awareness that the ‘latter days’ had been inaugurated, that the church was the latter-day Israel, and that the whole OT pointed toward this climax of salvation history.” In the same perspective, Adela Yarbro Collins calls the prophetic use a “reinterpretation of prophecy and other texts in the Jewish Bible read as prophecy.” By using this technique, John may have built on the continuing belief in the authority and the reliability of the Old Testament prophets, with the assumption that they prophesied not about their own times but about the end of the age. This conception can be perceived in the statement about Christ’s imminent return as of Rev. 1:7, which suggests that Dan 7:13 and Zech. 12:10-14 might be regarded as unfulfilled prophecies.

Stylistic Use of OT Language

Scholars agree that Revelation contains a several solecisms. According to Charles quoted by Beale, “while [John] writes in Greek, he thinks in Hebrew, and the thought has naturally affected the vehicle of expression.” Beale notes John’s deliberate attempt to express Semitisms and Septuagintalisms in his Greek. He asserts that the fact that John does not keep the rules indicates that the solecisms are intentional. The assumption of writing in this way is that John’s purpose was to create a “biblical” effect in the hearer and thus to demonstrate the solidarity of his work with that of the divinely inspired OT Scriptures.

Steve Moyise also affirms the intentional solecisms of Revelation by saying that “the abnormal Greek of the Apocalypse was intended to put conscious difficulties in front of the

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188 Beale, G. K., The Book of Revelation, 94.
189 Collins, Adela Yarbro, Crisis and Catharsis, 145.
190 Collins, Adela Yarbro, Crisis and Catharsis, 145.
191 Collins, Adela Yarbro, Crisis and Catharsis, 146.
reader so as to confound an ordinary reading of the text,” an argument that he supports by the
call for wisdom found in Rev. 13:18 and 17:9, which suggests that the author of Revelation
would have wanted his readers to “stop and think.” Moyise whom I agree with rightly
deduces that the use of Old Testament may have been done for the same purpose.

Conclusion

The analysis of Old Testament texts that are alluded to in Revelation gives insights on how
the Old Testament materials abound in Revelation and how the Old Testament tradition
influenced the composition of this New Testament book. As the data that we saw indicate,
Revelation took elements of its context from almost all the books of the Old Testament. The
data show that most of references are found in the major prophets with Isaiah being the most
used, then Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Daniel, plus Psalms, and Exodus. These five books lent about
77% of the Old Testament allusions to Revelation.

As far as the identification of allusions that are in Revelation is concerned, scholarship
indicates the presence of clear, probable, and possible allusions based on the way the author of
Revelation used them. In any case, none of those allusions appear as a formal quotation of an
Old Testament text, although the reader can easily trace their source in the Old Testament.
Thus, the way John incorporated allusions in Revelation suggests that he was conscious of his
technique while he also followed to some degree the perspective of the Old Testament texts
that he used, as he gave them a new meaning that applies to the context of his audience.

With respect to various Old Testament traditions upon which Revelation depended, we
found that scholarship mentions the dramatis personae, the divine institutions elements, the

same holy and mythic geography elements that Revelation borrowed from the Old Testament. Details of those elements, as listed above, populate the content of Revelation. Also, Revelation used the tradition of myths of the Old Testament such as creation myths such as the myth Son of Man as of Daniel, the myth of correspondence (heavenly world and earthly world), and others that we mentioned. This dependency on the tradition of myths imply that the stories of Revelation are grounded in authentic traditions as we saw. Also, we saw that scholarship reveals that the composition of Revelation built on a great Old Testament tradition that is related to God’s character and might, specifically the tradition of God that is alone worthy of worship, judges the dominions systems, sides with the faithful to vindicate him/her, governs the cosmos, promises peace in God’s presence, and the tradition of God whose patience has an end.

As for the specific uses of Old Testament allusions, we must recognize that Revelation contains Old Testament segments as literary prototypes; broad portions of Ezekiel that abound in the major sections of Revelation, and the plague model that follows the paradigm of the Exodus plagues are the examples of this use. The thematic use in Revelation includes the end time judgement and salvation, the Daniel’s abomination of desolation, the Isaiah’s songs that can be paired with the Revelation’s series of hymns, the reinterpretation of the Davidic Messiah that is implied in the self-declaration of Christ as the descendent of David, and others. There is also an analogical use that can be perceived through the expressions that reveal the analogy of judgement, the analogy of tribulation and persecution of God’s people, the analogy of seductive and idolatrous teaching, the analogy of divine protection, the analogy of victorious battle of God’s people over the enemy, the analogy of apostasy, and the analogy of divine Spirit as the power for God’s people. The use of the exodus plagues in Revelation is also part of the analogical model, for they suggest that John’s audience considered its own hardship by analogy with the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt. Universalization is another use of Old Testament in
Revelation. As we see in Revelation, John applied to the world what was applied to only Israel or to other entities as evidenced by passages like Ex. 19:6 that applies to Rev. 1:6 and 5:10, Daniel 7:14 that applies to Rev. 5:10, and Zech. 12: 10 are applies to Rev. 1:7, and others. By using universalization, John showed that the era of universal salvation was inaugurated through Christ, for Rev. 7 indicates the number of 144,000 people to be sealed from the tribes of Israel, followed by the multitude from every nation, all tribes, all peoples and languages. Another use that we need to know is the indirect fulfillment, whereby some Old Testament texts are alluded to in order to designate present or future fulfillment of the ancient prophecy. Examples of indirect fulfillment include Daniel 2: 28-29, 45 and Rev. 1:1 about the things that must take place, Daniel 12:4, 9 and Rev. 22:10 about sealing up the words of the prophecy, and Daniel 7:13 and Rev. 1:13-14 about the Son of man. In John’s understanding, the Old Testament prophets prophesied about the end of age. Thus, we learn from indirect fulfillment use that John considered the church of his time as the latter-day Israel. The last type of use we have to note is the stylistic use Old Testament language that consists of intentional solecisms. The idea of such a use is that John wrote down in Greek his Hebraic thinking where he did not care about the language patterns. As a literary technique, it can be justified by the internal statement of Revelation (13:18 and 17:9) that calls the wisdom, which implies that John wanted the reader take time for thinking on the message; this may also apply to the use of Old Testament.

In sum, all the uses that we have mentioned support the idea of John’s conscious use of the Old Testament traditions in Revelation. His sense of creativity is fascinating; it is helpful for the reader who is willing to read Revelation in the light of Old Testament setting. To be more specific, the following chapter will lead us to know how Second Isaiah populates the pericope of Rev. 21:1-8.
III. REVELATION 21:1-8 AND ITS USE OF SECOND ISAIAH

Introduction

A close reading of Rev. 21:1-8 reveals the use of several concepts that are found in Second Isaiah more than in any other Old Testament book, which is why I chose to do a comparative analysis of Second Isaiah and Rev. 21:1-8. In the present chapter, I will attempt to find out how the visionary of Revelation 21:1-8 draws upon the language of Second Isaiah to shape the content of this vision.

To do that, I will begin with the analysis of the Greek text of Rev. 21:1-8 that will include the textual critics that is based on the apparatus, and my translation. Then I will find out how the Septuagint reads the texts of Second Isaiah that Rev. 21:1-8 drew upon. Besides, I will indicate the references of the Apocalypse of Peter that relate to Rev. 21:1-8 just to illustrate the reception of this pericope among the early Christian communities. I will continue by describing the context of Revelation 21:1-8 along with that of Second Isaiah. The main part of this chapter that will follow will consist of explaining the specific uses of Second Isaiah that are in Rev. 21:1-8. Throughout this work, I will certainly refer to other scriptural parallels whenever I find the necessity to highlight the context by an appropriate reference. This chapter is meant to demonstrate that Second Isaiah influenced the shape of Revelation 21:1-8 just as other Old Testament traditions influenced other parts of Revelation.

Greek Text, Textual Critics, And Translation of Rev. 21:1-8

V.1 Καὶ εἶδον οὐρανὸν καινὸν καὶ γῆν καινὴν. ὁ γὰρ πρῶτος οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ πρώτη γῆ ἀπῆλθαν καὶ ἡ θάλασσα οὐκ ἔστιν ἔτι.
a) Instead of using the aorist plural ἀπῆλθαν, some witnesses like P 1854.230 lat have the singular form that is ἀπῆλθεν as well as 051 Byz that has the aorist singular ἀπῆλθεν; both have the same meaning: it disappeared. Smalley explains these variations to be a result of change of vocalization of the second aorist from -α towards -ο or -ε. The two subjects of the verb that are πρῶτος οὐρανὸς καὶ ή πρώτη γῆ suggest that the aorist plural is the correct form, most likely the original one.

b) Instead of καὶ ή θάλασσα οὐκ ἐστίν ἔτι (and the sea no longer exists) that matches the disappearance of πρῶτος οὐρανὸς καὶ ή πρώτη γῆ, the Alexandrinus manuscripts read καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν οὐκ εἶδον ἔτι (and I did not see the sea anymore) that focuses on the experience of the seer. This does not affect the perspective of disappearance, and the use of aorist is more grammatically correct than the present οὐκ ἐστίν ἔτι.

Translation

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth disappeared and the sea did no longer exist.

V.2 καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἰερουσαλήμ καινὴν εἶδον καταβαίνουσαν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡτοιμασμένης ὡς νύφην κεκοσμημένην τῷ ἀνδρὶ αὐτῆς

Textual Critics

The order of the words, ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ is changed in the secondary variants like 051 that has ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. However, the wording, ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ that implies the heaven of God remains the same in the textually secure readings at 3.12; 21:10 thus it is likely the original order.197

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197 Smalley, Stephen S., The Revelation to John, 327.
Translation

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem descending out of the heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Textual Critics

a) Most of the witnesses both Alexandrinus, Sinaiticus, and Byzantine read οὐρανοῦ instead of θρόνου as the origin of φωνῆς μεγάλης. Though οὐρανοῦ is the dwelling place of God and other heavenly beings, θρόνου is more specific for it represents God’s seat, and the message comes from God.

b) For σκηνώσει, the Sinaiticus 1611 and other witnesses read its aorist form ἔσκηνώσεν. The rest of the verbs such as ἔσονται and ἦσται indicate a simultaneous action that is to take place in the future.

c) The text has the plural λαοὶ while several witnesses read the singular λαὸς. According to Smalley, the variant that has the singular form “reflects the Old Testament covenantal formula, ‘I will be their God, and they shall be my people’” (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 37:27; Zech. 8:8). The verb ἔσονται and the genitive plural αὐτῶν lead the reader to recognize that the plural form is grammatically correct though it changes the grammar of Old Testament formula. By virtue of the lectio difficilior, the plural version is likely original.

Translation

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199 Smalley, Stephen S., The Revelation to John, 528.
And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold the dwelling place of God with the humans, and God will dwell with them, and they will be his peoples, and God Godself will be with them [their God],

V.4 καὶ ἔξαλείψει πᾶν δάκρυον ἐκ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ ὁ θάνατος οὐκ ἔσται ἕτη οὔτε πένθος οὔτε κραυγή οὔτε πόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἕτη, [ὅτι] τὰ πρῶτα ἀπῆλθαν.

Textual Critics

a) Some witnesses including the Alexandrinus manuscript (A1006) adds the specific subject ὁ θεὸς to the verb ἔξαλείψει. This addition emphasizes the idea that God is the agent of the salvific action.

b) Some witnesses like the original manuscript of Sinaiticus have τὰ πρὸτα (the sheep) which is completely different from τὰ πρῶτα (the first things). Thus, τὰ πρῶτα is a correction of the original version to make the sentence meaningful.

c) Some witnesses including the Sinaiticus 046 have the singular form that is ἀπῆλθεν instead of ἀπῆλθαν. Since the subject is τὰ πρῶτα, the aorist plural form ἀπῆλθαν makes sense.

Translation

And God will wipe away every tear out of their eyes, and death will be no more; neither sorrow nor crying nor pain will be, [because] the first things have disappeared.

V.5 Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ· ἰδοὺ καὶ πάντα καὶ λέγει· γράψον, διὸ οὖν οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοί εἰσιν.

Textual Critics
a) Most of the ancient manuscripts like 051.2030.2377 read \(\text{kainopoi}_{\text{o}}\) that is not grammatically correct instead of \(\text{kain}_{\text{a}} \text{ poio}_{\text{d}}\) but this mistake does not affect the meaning of the text, it may be just a broken Greek.

b) Most of ancient k manuscripts like 046.1854.2329 add \(\text{to}_\text{o} \text{ theo}_{\text{o}}\) after \(\text{o}_\text{utoi} \text{ o}_{\text{i}} \text{ l}_{\text{o}}\text{goi} \text{ pi}_{\text{sto}_{\text{i}}} \text{ ka}_{\text{i}} \text{ al}{\text{o}}_{\text{thi}_{\text{noi}}}\) to indicate that the \(\text{o}_{\text{i}} \text{ l}_{\text{o}}\text{goi}\) originate from \(\text{theo}_{\text{o}}\) which gives more weight to their authority.

\[\text{Translation}\]

And the one sitting on the throne said, “Behold I make all things new,” and he said, “Write, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

\[\text{V.6} \text{ kai} \text{ e}{\text{i}}_{\text{p}}_{\text{e}n} \text{ mou} \text{ g}_{\text{e}g}_{\text{onan}.} \text{ e}_{\text{g}_{\text{w}} {\text{[e}{\text{i}m}_{\text{i}}]} \text{ t}_{\text{o}} \text{ a}_{\text{l}b}_{\text{a}_\text{a}} \text{ kai} \text{ t}_{\text{o}} \text{ o}{\text{i}}, \text{ \eta} \text{ a}_{\text{r}x}_{\text{i}h} \text{ ka}_{\text{i}} \text{ t}_{\text{o}} \text{ t}_{\text{u}_{\text{lo}_\text{s}}}_. \text{ e}_{\text{g}_{\text{w}} \text{ t}_{\text{o}} \text{ di}_{\text{mu}_{\text{o}}_{\text{n}}_{\text{t}}_{\text{i}}} \text{ do}_{\text{o}_\text{s}} \text{ o} \text{ e}_{\text{k} \text{ t}_{\text{h}_{\text{i}} \text{p}_{\text{r}_{\text{i}}_{\text{h}_{\text{i}}}}} \text{ t}_{\text{o}} \text{ o}{\text{i}} \text{ d}_{\text{o}a}_{\text{t}_{\text{o}}_{\text{s}}} \text{ t}_{\text{h}_{\text{i}} \text{z}_{\text{o}_{\text{h}_{\text{i}}}}} \text{ d}_{\text{o}r_{\text{e}_{\text{a}}_{\text{n}}}}.\]

\[\text{Textual Critics}\]

Instead of the aorist \(\text{e}_{\text{i}}_{\text{p}}_{\text{e}n}\), the Sinaiticus read the present form that is \(\text{l}_{\text{e}g}_{\text{e}_{\text{i}}}\). It seems the author did not care about the correct use of the tenses. For example, we have both \(\text{e}_{\text{i}}_{\text{p}}_{\text{e}n}\) and \(\text{l}_{\text{e}g}_{\text{e}_{\text{i}}}\) that are attributed to the same subject that is \(\text{o} \text{ k}_{\text{a}_{\text{b}_{\text{h}_{\text{e}_{\text{m}e_{\text{n}}_{\text{v}_{\text{o}}}}}}} \text{ e}_{\text{p}_{\text{i}} \text{ t}_{\text{o}} \text{ t}_{\text{h}_{\text{r}_{\text{o}_{\text{n}}_{\text{o}}}}}}\) in verse 5.

\[\text{Translation}\]

And he said to me, “they have happened. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of water of life without cost.”
V.7 ὁ νικῶν κληρονομήσει ταῦτα καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ θεὸς καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι νιός.

Textual Critics

a) Instead of κληρονομήσει ταῦτα (he will receive these things), some witnesses read δωσω αὐτῳ... (I will give him...) as attested by the 046 of the k ancient manuscript and the and syhmg. The correct form should be κληρονομήσει because of the nominative form of ὁ νικῶν.

b) Instead of reading ἔσομαι αὐτῷ θεὸς that the present text has, witnesses like the Alexandrinus codices 1854.2030 read the genitive plural αὐτῶν, which does not match the subject ὁ νικῶν that is singular. The same use applies to the change of αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι νιός into αὐτοι ἐσονται μοι νιοι as the manuscripts 051s.1854.2030.2377 read.

Translation

The conquer will receive these things and I will be God for him, and he will be a son for me.

V.8 τοῖς δὲ δειλοῖς καὶ ἀπίστοις καὶ ἐβδελυγμένοις καὶ φονεύσιν καὶ πόρνοις καὶ φαρμάκοις καὶ εἰδωλολάτραις καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς πεινάσιν τὸ μέρος αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ τῇ καιομένῃ πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ, ὁ ἄνατος ὁ δεύτερος.

Textual Critics

a) Some manuscripts such as 046.1854.2329 add καὶ ἁμαρτωλοῖς (and for sinners) after the category of ἀπίστοις. Perhaps the scribe removed this category just to maintain those that are specific, to avoid digression. Thus, it should be a part of the original version.

b) As for the expression ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερος, manuscripts like 051s.1854.2030.2377 have just ὁ θάνατος thus signaling that ὁ θάνατος occurs just once. However, the author of Revelation may have had an idea of conceptualizing the levels of ὁ θάνατος. For instance, Rev. 3:1 calls dead those who are still physically alive which implies their spiritual death. Thus, in
the context of Rev. 21:8, ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερος signals that kind of violent death that comes out of God as chastisement against sinners. In that way, ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερος is likely to be original.

Translation

But for the cowardly, and the unfaithful, and the detested, and the murderers, and the fornicators, and the sorcerers, and the idolaters, and all the liars, their part will be in the lake burning with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

Greek Text of Rev. 21:1-8 And References to Second Isaiah, the Septuagint

The study of the use of Second Isaiah in Rev. 21:1-8 would be incomplete if it were not supported by the Greek sources that might have inspired John in writing Rev. 21:1-8. Thus, this part of the work aims to demonstrate how Rev. 21:1-8 is read by the Septuagint, Second Isaiah.

V.1 Καὶ εἶδον οὐρανὸν καινὸν καὶ γῆν καινὴν· ὁ γὰρ πρῶτος οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ πρώτη γῆ ἀπῆλθαν, καὶ ἡ θάλασσα οὐκ ἔστιν ἔτι.

Revelation has εἶδον οὐρανὸν καινὸν καὶ γῆν καινὴν while Isaiah 65:17 reads ἔσται γὰρ ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινὴ. The same nouns and their adjectives appear in the two books though their places vary. In Revelation the nouns are the objects of the vision which is why they are used in the accusative form, while in Isaiah they constitute the subjects of existence which is why they are in the nominative form. Also, the verbs that accompany the nouns differ. Revelation evokes a vision (εἶδον) of ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινὴ that exist already whereas Isaiah talks about ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινὴ that is yet to exist (ἔσται).
The same allusion is found in Isaiah 66: 22 as ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινή ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ. The allusion is used in the same way as in 65:17, same names and adjectives but different verbs and tenses, for Isaiah 66: 22 signals a future creation of new heaven and the new earth as evidenced by the subordinate clause ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ. Thus, we have to notice that Revelation has ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινὴ as the object of a part of the visionary experience while Second Isaiah reads ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινή in the perspective of a future existence.

Also, Revelation has ὁ γὰρ πρῶτος οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ πρώτη γῆ ἀπῆλθαν which can be read as οὐ μὴ μνησθῶσιν τῶν προτέρων οὖδ’ οὐ μὴ ἐπέλθη αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν in Isaiah 65:17. In this case, both Second Isaiah and Revelation evoke the idea of disappearance of ὁ γὰρ πρῶτος οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ πρώτη γῆ but differently. Revelation has the verb ἀπῆλθαν which can be read as οὐ μὴ μνησθῶσιν and οὐ μὴ ἐπέλθη .... ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν in Isaiah. The same idea of disappearance of the universe is implied in Isaiah 66:22 as evidenced by μένει that applies to ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινή. In sum, Revelation alludes to Second Isaiah in the perspective of experiencing a transformed universe.

V.2 καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἰερουσαλήμ καινὴν εἶδον καταβαίνουσαν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἡτοιμασμένην ὡς νύμφην κεκοσμημένην τῷ ἀνδρὶ αὐτῆς.

Revelation has τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἰερουσαλήμ καινὴν as a part of John’s vision; it alludes to Isaiah 52:1 whereby the Septuagint reads, Ἰερουσαλήμ πόλις ἡ ἁγία. Both have the same noun with the same adjective except καινὴ that is found in Revelation. Second Isaiah focuses on the exaltation of Jerusalem while Revelation includes Jerusalem in the vision by building on Old Testament tradition of exalting the city.

In Revelation, τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἰερουσαλήμ καινὴν is said to descend out of the heaven from God (καταβαίνουσαν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ); which is implied in the
reading of Isaiah 60:14, πόλις κουριοῦ σιων ἁγίου (the city of the Lord, Zion of the holy one). We know that Zion also stands for Jerusalem in the Old Testament.

Also, both Revelation and Second Isaiah contain the imagery of the bride and the bridegroom. Revelation has … ὡς νύμφην κεκοσμημένην τῷ ἀνδρὶ αὐτῆς that Isaiah 61:10 reads as … ὡς νυμφὶον περιέθηκέν μοι μίτραν καὶ ὡς νύμφην κατεκόσμησέν με κόσμῳ though the words apply to different subjects that are Jerusalem for Revelation, and the poet for Isaiah. Anyway, the two books have the same nouns such as the bride (νύμφην), the bridegroom (ἀνδρὶ αὐτῆς or νυμφὶον), and the same verb, to adorn (κοσμεῖν).

V.3 καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς μεγάλης ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου λεγούσης Ιδοὺ ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ σκηνώσει μετ’ αὐτῶν, καὶ αὐτοὶ λαοὶ αὐτοῦ ἔσονται, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Θεὸς μετ’ αὐτῶν ἔσται,

This verse has no clear reading in Second Isaiah.

V.4 καὶ ἐξαλείψει πᾶν δάκρυον ἐκ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ ὁ θάνατος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι, οὐτε πένθος οὐτε κραυγὴ οὐτε πόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι· ὅτι τὰ πρῶτα ἀπῆλθαν.

The idea of the passing away of the former things (τὰ πρῶτα ἀπῆλθαν) also has allusions in Isaiah 43:18 (μὴ μνημονεύετε τὰ πρῶτα καὶ τὰ ἀρχαία μὴ συλλογίζεσθε (do not remember the former things and do not discuss the old things)), and 65: 17 (οὐ μὴ μνησθῶσιν τῶν προτέρων οὐδ’ οὐ μὴ ἐπέλθη αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν (the former things shall not be remembered or come to their mind)). The main idea is that the former things have disappeared.

V.5 καὶ εἶπεν ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ Ιδοὺ καὶνὰ ποιῶ πάντα. καὶ ἔγει Γράψον, ὅτι οὕτωι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ὄληθινοι εἰσιν.
The Ἰδοὺ καινὰ ποιῶ πάντα that is in Revelation 1:5 has almost the same use that is Ἰδοὺ ποιῶ καινὰ ἂ in Second Isaiah (43:19); the two books use the same verbs (ἰδοὺ, ποιῶ) and the same objects (πάντα or ἂ) with the same adjective (καινὰ). Again, this newness underscores the theme of transformation that is found in the two books.

V.6 καὶ εἶπέν μοι Γέγοναν. ἐγὼ τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὡ, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος. ἐγὼ τῷ διψῶντι δώσω ἐκ τῆς πηγῆς τοῦ ὕδατος τῆς ζωῆς δωρεάν.

For ἐγὼ τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὡ, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος, Isaiah 41: 4 reads, ἀρχῆς ἐγὼ θεός πρῶτος καὶ εἰς τὰ ἐπερχόμενα ἐγὼ εἰμι with the same meaning as Revelation (I am the beginning and the end). Isaiah 44:6 reads, ἐγὼ πρῶτος καὶ ἐγὼ μετὰ ταῦτα (I am the first and I am after these things). The same designation is found in Isaiah 48:12 as ἐγὼ εἰμι πρῶτος καὶ ἐγὼ εἰμι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (I am the first and I am towards the eternity). In sum, the words like ἀρχῆ, and πρῶτος that are found in Isaiah stand for τὸ Ἄλφα, and ἡ ἀρχὴ in Revelation while the terms like εἰς τὰ ἐπερχόμενα, μετὰ ταῦτα, and εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα found in Isaiah should stand for τὸ Ὡ, and τὸ τέλος in Revelation.

The idea of giving water to the thirsty, ἐγὼ τῷ διψῶντι δώσω ἐκ τῆς πηγῆς τοῦ ὄδατος τῆς ζωῆς δωρεάν is also known in Second Isaiah. Isaiah 44:3 has, ἐγὼ δώσω ὄδωρ ἐν δίψει τοῖς πορευομένοις ἐν ἀνύδρῳ (I will give water to the thirsty that may travel in the dry land). The two verses have the same verb, δίδωμι, the same offer of ὄδατος/ ὄδωρ, and the same concept of διψα that characterizes the recipient. Also, Isaiah 55:1 reads, οἱ διψῶντες πορεύεσθε ἐρ᾽ ὄδωρ καὶ ὅσοι μὴ ἔχετε ἄργυριον… (the ones who are thirsty, come to water, and you that have no money…) as an invitation to those who are thirsty. As in Revelation this reference has the same offer that is ὄδωρ, the similar recipient that are οἱ διψῶντες. In addition to that, the δωρεάν (free gift) of Revelation is configured as ὅσοι μὴ ἔχετε ἄργυριον in Isaiah 55:1 in the same perspective.
V.7 ὁ νικῶν κληρονομήσει ταῦτα, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ θεὸς καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι νιός.

The ἔσομαι αὐτῷ θεὸς can be found in Isaiah 41:10 that is read, γάρ εἰμι ὁ θεός σου (for I am your God) as an assurance of God’s presence to Israel like the promise of God’s presence to the conquer (ὁ νικῶν) in Rev. 21:7.

V.8 τοῖς δὲ δειλοῖς καὶ ἀπίστοις καὶ ἐβδελυγμένοις καὶ φονεῦσιν καὶ πόρνοις καὶ φαρμάκοις καὶ εἰδωλολάτραις καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ψευδέσιν τὸ μέρος αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ τῇ καιομένῃ πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ, ὅ ἐστιν ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερος.

This verse has no direct reading in Second Isaiah. However, Second Isaiah contains the judgement theme that is referred to in Revelation as we will discuss later in this chapter. By the way, the Apocalypse of Peter has several references that can be linked to the content of this verse in the same perspective, which implies the influence of the book of Revelation among the early Christian communities. We can perceive the link particularly in the mention of groups that are said to face the divine chastisement, and the nature of this chastisement that is torment of fire. As Peter also indicates, the river of fire is the final punishment to the nations (6, 7, 10,11, 12, 13).200 Among those that will be punished in this way are the murderers (7, 8, 13), the idolaters (10), the fornicators (10) the liars (12), the sorcerers/sorceresses (12), and the unfaithful (13).201 All those categories are on the list of Rev. 21:8, which suggests that Revelation 21:8 was known by the writer of the Apocalypse of Peter, and thus had an influence on the spiritual life of the early church.

Back to the comparison of Rev.21:1-8 with Second Isaiah, the analysis above shows that various terms are read almost in the same way by Second Isaiah, which allows the reader

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to deduce that the author of Rev. 21:1-8 depended on the Septuagint’s text of Second Isaiah. In the following sections, we will find more about the interrelationship that allows us to link the two writings.

**Context of Rev. 21:1-8 And Second Isaiah**

The passage of Rev 21:1-8 is found almost at the end of the book of Revelation. According to the outline that we find in the *Jewish Annotated New Testament*, the text fits in the range of the visions of John about the heavenly Jerusalem which we find in Rev 21:1-22:5.\(^{202}\) The passage comes as the culmination of the ongoing visions of battle to overcome the devil that repeatedly threatens the believers as we can find in the preceding chapters of Revelation. Thus, after the fall of Babylon which is a pseudonym representing the dominant empire, and the defeat of the beast and its armies, John’s vision points out the radical change of the situation which is to occur as a sign of the restored peace that follows the divine victory. The present passage shows the radical change of the universe which consists in the appearance of the new heaven and a new earth, with the holy city that is the new Jerusalem in this new universe. The vision demonstrates that the believer’s struggle is not eternal but temporary, that deliverance is imminent, and John predicted a new order of the world in his time. The author of the book of Revelation aims to build hope of the believers by anticipating the coming of a peaceful world. Thus Rev. 21:1-8 is grounded in the theme of transformation of a troublesome situation for the favor of the faithful’s better life.

In the same perspective, Second Isaiah can be viewed as the book of proclamation of a state of hope for the favor of God’s people that were struggling in the Babylonian exile. Charles

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L. Holman rightly notes that Isaiah 40-55 heightens a near expectation for fulfillment of the prophetic hope, and the proclamation of the nearness of God to deliver God’s people (40:9-11, cf. 44:26; 46:13) and the fact that Babylonian bars are about to be broken down (43:13) indicate that the time for restoration from captivity is at hand through Cyrus (44:28, cf. 46:11). Hence, Holman indicates that the themes of Isaiah 55-66 turn around the eschatological hope whereby Israel enjoys peace and is no longer threatened but honored by the surrounding peoples. In the same way, we come to understand that Isaiah’s way of viewing his audience’s restoration by Yahweh influenced the manner John had to address his community of the faithful to build their hope in imminent divine deliverance from Roman oppression. Therefore, although the historical contexts of the two books differ, they both proclaim restoration of the faithful who are facing oppression. Thus, it is not surprising that John borrowed the language of Second Isaiah to shape this passage.

It is important to note that the visionary experience which is the nature of the present passage consists in the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, and the New Jerusalem that is the holy city coming down from heaven. The “then I saw” in verse 1 indicates that this vision follows a series of visions just as they are introduced by the same words in 18:1; 19:11, 17 and 20:1, 7, 11. John is commanded to write the words of the one who was seated on the throne in verse 5, just as he was asked to write the content of the vision in 1:19. Thus, John is an active participant of the present vision, just as it is in other places of the book (1:12, 17; 5:4; 7:13; 10:9-11; 11:1; 17:3; 21:10). As Rowland rightly notes, John’s vision draws on the images that are familiar to us from elsewhere and in the history of interpretation have fairly well-

204 Holman, Charles L., Till Jesus Comes, 34.
205 Rowland C., Gibbons P., and Dobroruka V., “Visionary experience in ancient Judaism and Christianity”, in De Conick, April D., Paradise Now, 43.
established meaning. In this perspective, we realize that the terms “new heaven and new earth”, “the holy city” which is the “new Jerusalem”, and “the throne” around which the passage is shaped were all used by the Jewish literature in general and Second Isaiah in particular as we are going to highlight below. The following section indicates how Rev. 21:1-8 is rooted in the Old Testament tradition, with an emphasis on Second Isaiah.

Specific Uses of Second Isaiah in Rev. 21:1-8

Thematic Use of Second Isaiah in Rev. 21:1-8 Through Transformation

We can perceive that the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, which reveals the passing away of the former heaven and the former earth, and the disappearance of the sea allude to Isa. 65:17 whereby the Lord states to be about to create new heavens and a new earth, and in Isa. 66:22 where the prophet indicates that the Lord is about to make new heavens and a new earth which will remain with the Lord. To highlight this connection of Rev. 21:1 to Isaiah, Smalley argues that the thought and the language of Rev. 21:1 that replace the first heaven and earth by the new order derive from Isa. 65:17 in the Septuagint (see also 66:22), where the Yahweh’s promise of salvation of the elect community of God’s people will be fulfilled in a new creation. In this vision that is about transformation of the cosmos, John built on the Old Testament belief that links the cosmos to the creator. Malina and Pilch support this argument by saying that the realities of “new sky” and “new earth” are tied to God by virtue of God’s creation act that is rooted in Genesis 1 as of the perspective of Israel.

206 Rowland C., Gibbons P., and Dobroruka V., “Visionary experience in ancient Judaism and Christianity”, in De Conick, April D., Paradise Now, 43.


208 Malina, Bruce J., and John J. Pilch, Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Revelation (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 244.
It is important to recognize that heaven denotes God’s dwelling according to the Old Testament tradition. While Donald E. Gowan notes that “heaven” can be considered as just the sky, he also affirms that the term is theologically applied to God’s dwelling. Gowan clarifies this argument by evoking the title “God of heaven” that became very common in the post-exilic period (Gen. 24:7; 2 Chron. 36:23; Ezra 1:2; Neh. 1:4,5; 2:4, 20; Jonah 1:9). He goes on saying that God is said to sit in the heavens and look down from heaven as of the poetry literature that includes Second Isaiah (Pss. 2:4; 11:4; 14:2; 33:13; 53:2; Isa. 66:1; cf. Exod. 20:22). \(^{209}\)

The difference between the languages of the two books is that Isaiah talks about “creation” which is still in the Lord’s plan while the book of Revelation talks about a vision of a new world that is already set up in the eschatological perspective. With respect to the reasoning of Second Isaiah, Donald E. Gowan mentions that the idea of creating new heavens and a new earth occurs first in the Old Testament in Isa. 65:17; 66:22 but he also rightly notes that this occurrence does not indicate an “appearance of an intense interest in cosmology in the Old Testament period”. \(^{210}\) As Gowan explains, the changes in the natural world which is indicated in Second Isaiah was subordinated to other interests such as “the appropriate accompaniment to the announcement of a triumphant return of exiles to their homeland and to the glorification of Zion” when Isaiah talks about the transformation of wilderness. \(^{211}\) Thus, the promise of creating new heaven and new earth found in Isa. 65:17 and 66:22 should be considered in its historical context of restoration of the exiles rather than being an eschatological recreation of the cosmos. \(^{212}\) The nature was considered as a factor in the return of the exiles as the multiple natural descriptions of Second Isaiah seem to indicate (Isa. 40:3-


\(^{211}\) Gowan, Donald E., *Eschatology in the Old Testament*, 113.

\(^{212}\) Gowan, Donald E., *Eschatology in the Old Testament*, 113.
4; 41:18-19; 55:13), which lead Gowan to deduce that “redemption brings life to places of death, even when they are not explicitly described as places for future habitation”.

By borrowing the concept of new creation from the tradition of Second Isaiah, John uses them in the perspective of eschatological transformation of the cosmos in Rev. 21:1, since his vision denotes an already established new world where God dwells among God’s people, with the statements of bringing eschatological salvation to the faithful and eschatological judgement of the defiled people (Rev. 21:4, 8). Therefore, we should deduce that eschatological salvation and eschatological judgement constitute the aspects of transformation, which is a thematic use of Second Isaiah in Revelation 21:1-8.

The vision of the “holy city” that is the new Jerusalem in v. 2 that also underscores the theme of transformation alludes to the existing Jewish tradition of considering Jerusalem as the holy city for the elect people, as we find in Neh. 11:1,18; Isa. 48:2; 52:1, and Dan. 9:24. The perspective of 1 Baruch also consists in building the hope of salvation for Israel, by stating that Jerusalem will be a glorious city after some time of struggle (1 Baruch 4:30-5:9). In Isa. 40:1, the prophet is called to comfort Jerusalem who is afflicted. As Shalom Paul indicates, Second Isaiah portrays the city of Jerusalem as desolated and disconsolate to the extent of calling her the bereaved and barren widow (cf. 49:14, 17, 19-21; 54:1, 11; 62:4, 64:9-10). In the context of restoration of the city which is called either Jerusalem or Zion, the prophet proclaims that the days of her mourning are now over (60:20), for she is going to be rebuilt and resettled just as she was before (44:26; 58:12; 60:10; 65:21), and her splendor will shine brightly (52:1, 60: 18-19).

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The use of a language that magnifies the city of Jerusalem was the pattern of the Old Testament tradition as well as other Jewish literature. Like Revelation, Book 2 of the Christian Sibyllines also draws an eschatological perspective of the city by suggesting a triumphal entry into the heavenly city where Christ shall give rewards to the just and crown the victors.\textsuperscript{217} As J. Massyngberde Ford indicates, the idea of the city of Jerusalem as a bride, which is found in Revelation 21:2, also occurs in the Targum to Ps 48.\textsuperscript{218} Second Isaiah indicates the ties between Jerusalem and the Lord, which we can relate to the metaphor of bride and bridegroom in Revelation 21:2. As Shalom Paul highlights, “Jerusalem shall be engraved on the Lord’s hands, and her walls shall always be present before him (49:16) … She shall be renamed ‘I Delight in Her’ (62:4) and ‘City of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel (60:14)’.\textsuperscript{219} Thus, affliction turns into celebration of the city’s restoration which is seen as the Lord’s comfort towards the city (Isaiah 52:9). It is plausible that Isaiah 54:1 embraces the same perspective of celebrating the restoration of Jerusalem with the Israelites who faced exile being the inhabitants of the city. Thus, the return from exile can be paralleled with the restoration of the holy city’s magnificence.

The same language of bride and bridegroom was used by Second Isaiah 62:5 in the prophet’s glorification of Jerusalem, sometimes also called Zion. As we can notice, the prophet portrays Jerusalem the city which is to be restored as the Lord’s bride in whom the bridegroom (the Lord) will rejoice. Just as the prophet was predicting the celebration over the restoration of Israel into their ancestral land and their holy city, so John in his vision envisioned the heavenly celebration of the final victory over the enemies of those who kept faith in Christ. As we mentioned above, the wedding symbolism that is predominantly found in Revelation was

\textsuperscript{217} Ford, J. Massyngberde, \textit{Revelation} (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), 11.
\textsuperscript{218} Ford, J. Massyngberde, \textit{Revelation}, 361.
known to the Old Testament tradition which the New Testament came to embrace. Below are the expressions related to that wedding symbolism of Revelation that are linked to other references of both Old and New Testaments as Fekkes mentions them:

1. Rev. 19:7b is about the eschatological wedding where Messiah is bridegroom: Mt. 22:1-13; 25:1-13 (cf. Mk 2:19-20 par.; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:22-23; Jn 3:29)
2. Rev. 19:7b; 21:2,9; 22:17 the people of God as the bride: Isa 61:10 (cf. 62:4-5; Hos.2; 2 Cor.11:2; Eph. 5:22-23).
4. Rev. 19:8a, 14. The bride divinely granted a wedding garment: Isa 61:10
5. Rev. 19:9a the wedding meal: Mt. 22:1-13 (cf. Mt 26:9; 4 Ezra 9:47

As Fekkes whom I agree with explains, the use of marriage imagery to depict the relationship between God and God’s people is generally found in the Old Testament prophetic writers and might have been popular in Second Isaiah where more than half of the OT passages come from as evidenced by the following terminologies: “engagement” found in Hos. 2:21; Jer. 2:2, “bride” in Isa. 49:18; 61:10; 62:5, “wife” in Ezek. 16:32; Isa. 54:6, “Yahweh” as bridegroom in Isa 62:54:6, “Yahweh” as husband in Hos. 2:18; Isa. 54:5; Jer.3:14; 31:32, and “to marry/be married” in Isa. 62:4-5.221

The explanation of the choice of Isaiah as the key reference for John is determined by three factors as Fekkes clarifies. Firstly, Isaiah is the most represented in the use of marriage terms. Secondly, Fekkes rightly notes that “only Isaiah employs marriage imagery in a constantly positive manner to the future relationship between Yahweh and the faithful remnant as

220 Fekkes, Jan, Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation, 233.
221 Fekkes, Jan, Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation, 235.
symbolized by the personified Zion -Jerusalem.”

Thirdly and more importantly, “the eschatological perspective and collective symbol system help to explain Isaiah’s particular suitability as a model for John’s evocation of the Bride-New Jerusalem.”

It is essential to note that the language of Jerusalem or Zion is sometimes used to designate God’s people and their state. However, the distinction between the city and Israel might not be clear in some parts of Second Isaiah. For example, both Isaiah 44:26; 58:12; 60:10; 65:21 that is about the city’s reconstruction and resettlement and 49:22; 60:9; 66:20 concerning repatriation seem to refer to Jerusalem as a city while 60:1-3 on Jerusalem being the light to the nations might suggest the city’s inhabitants. This is the same case for the use of Jerusalem we find in Revelation 21, especially in the metaphor of the bride. Sleeper C. Freeman clarifies by stating that the bride who appears in Revelation.21, has been transformed into a city, the new Jerusalem (21:2). He rightly deduces that such a transition makes clear that “the Apocalypse does not make any sharp distinction between people and places.”

Sleeper asserts that “Revelation describes events in the fluid kind of language we usually associate with the cartoons.” Therefore, interpreting the longing for the restoration of Jerusalem in both Second Isaiah and Revelation requires that you pay attention so as to take into account the state and the expectation of the audience and the manner each author portrays or personifies the city.

We should keep in mind that Jerusalem may represent God’s people. As Gowan suggests for the case of Isaiah which also applies to Revelation, Jerusalem as the holy city and its multiple uses may become more than spatial but interpretation of the message that relates to that city should refer to its original significance of being a real city that has a history.

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223 Fekkes, Jan, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation*, 236.
224 Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 32.
225 Sleeper, C. Freeman, *The Victorious Christ*, 32.
Whether Jerusalem refers to the real city as this is the case for some passages of Second Isaiah or to people, we still find the predominant theme of transformation of the troublesome state of the Israelites who were longing to see their restoration in Jerusalem, a theme that influenced the composition of Rev. 21:1-8 with John’s focus on eschatological Jerusalem. In Revelation, the tendency is to consider Jerusalem as a place where God has decided to dwell with God’s people in the new world.

Eschatological judgement that is characterized by the care for the faithful and punishment of the defiled also fits in the thematic use of Second Isaiah in Rev. 21:1-8. In Revelation 21:3,7 the promise is a reward that will be offered to those who conquer. In fact, the presence of the Lord in the present passage is paired with the removal of the pain which is expressed in terms of wiping tears from eyes, defeating death, and the absence of mourning and crying which is followed by the making of the things new (see also vv. 4-5). This perspective of radical change of the situation is also found in Isaiah’s prophecy which depicts the context of putting an end to the Babylonian exile, for exile was a time of disgrace for Israel (cf. Isaiah 43:18-19; 65:7). Furthermore, Isaiah 51:11 and 65:19-20 indicate an end to the concern of mourning, for the people were set to live quietly and longer in the restored Jerusalem where there would be no more sorrow. The author of the book of Revelation takes this language of Isaiah’s prophecy which he applies to express the future comfort of the believers who were facing persecution. The eschatological perspective is in play for the book of Revelation, for the holy city is now that of a new earth and new heavens (21:1-2) where the factors of weeping such as death and pain are removed by God who sides with the citizens of the new world (21: 3-4).
Analogical Use of Second Isaiah in Rev. 21:1-8

Contrasting Jerusalem to Babylon

Jerusalem is the ideal city for hope of the desperate people where they will live quietly at their restoration in the case of Second Isaiah, in opposition to Babylon that is the city of oppression of the faithful. In the same schema, as Rev. 21:1-8 identifies the new Jerusalem with the Lamb’s bride that implies the faithful, an image that was used by Second Isaiah (61:10) though the language comes out of the mouth of the faithful. Thus, I agree with Gorman that the city stands in stark contrast to the oppressive city Babylon (see Revelation 17-18) that is fallen and judged,” which makes the new Jerusalem “God’s alternative to Rome’s empire.”227 While Babylon is portrayed as “the great harlot, a beast” with all kinds of evil, John gives a picture of Jerusalem being “the bride of the Lamb, full of the presence of God,” and providing healing to the afflicted.228 Michael Gilbertson shares the perspective of contrasting the new Jerusalem to Babylon in Revelation by recalling the portrayal of Babylon as the great whore (17:1) and the dwelling place of demons and unclean spirits (18:2), while the new Jerusalem is the bride of the Lamb (21:2, 9), the dwelling place of God (21:3, 22), a city that is full of life as the reference to the water of life indicates.229 Thus, the faithful of Revelation are taken from the Roman oppression to restoration in the new Jerusalem, which implies an analogical use of Second Isaiah by Revelation 21:1-8 through the contrast between Jerusalem and Babylon.

227 Gorman, Michael J., Reading Revelation Responsibly, 162.
228 Gorman, Michael J., Reading Revelation Responsibly, 164-165.
The Alpha And the Omega in Rev. 21:1-8 And Second Isaiah

The terms “the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end” to depict the greatness of the Lord in verse 6 are used earlier in this book (cf. Revelation 1:8; 2: 8) to indicate that the universe owes its origin and its fate to the Lord, which brings another aspect of analogical use in our reflection as the same perspective can be found in Second Isaiah. Isaiah applied such understanding though obviously not the same language to the situation of the Israelites to raise people’s trust in the Lord; in opposition to the idols which are powerless. Thus, the designation is found in Isaiah 41: 4; 44:6, 8; 48: 12 mainly as “first and last”. The same designation is implied in Isaiah 57:15 with the idea of God’s eternity. Both Isaiah and Revelation aim to demonstrate that the fate of the believers resides in the hands of the Lord who is sovereign but not in the oppressor’s will. Thus, Christ being the Alpha and the Omega in Revelation is presented as an analogy of Yahweh being the first and the last in Second Isaiah.

The Analogy of Life-Giving Water

In the same perspective that underlines care for the faithful, Rev. 21:6 indicates that God has prepared a fountain of water of life for the thirsty at free of charge. This offer can be echoed to the invitation which is in Isa. 55:1ff whereby the prophet invites Israel to consider the Lord’s alternatives. Among the Babylonian offers which were set before the Israelites in exile, Isaiah calls them to consider the Lord’s offer. He points out that Yahweh’s alternatives are made to bring people to the fulness of life. Claus Westermann notes that the thing to which
people are here called is not primarily the saving event, but the new condition of salvation. Westermann relates the banquet to the fulfilment of the early promise of entry into the “good land”, a land that “flows with milk and honey” (Ex. 3:7). In addition to that, the invitation can be linked with the characteristic public invitation of Wisdom, to the hungry and the thirsty to come and partake of food and wine at Wisdom’s table, at no cost (Prov. 9:5), which culminates in a promise of life. The prophet Isaiah extends the expression to the land by showing the Lord’s commitment to “pour water on the thirsty land ….and the dry ground” (Isa. 44:3). We find here the Lord’s intention to water all the paths of his people as a symbol of giving them life. The imagery of water as the symbol of fullness of life is also implied by Isaiah 48:18.

In any case, Isaiah uses the metaphor to emphasize the Lord’s kindness. He built on this kindness of Yahweh to proclaim God’s plan for God’s people so as to give hope to Israel as a nation who is to be brought out of the distress of the Babylonian exile, which reinforces the Lord’s greatness portrayal. In the same perspective, the book of Revelation is urging the believers to trust the Lord as the sole giver of full life. The dominant empire could promise or give earthly things which do not last, but the ultimate promise of the Lord is life, and life abundantly just as the Gospel of John describes the mission of Jesus (10:10). Thus, both Isaiah and the book of Revelation present to God’s people some sort of assurance of getting life by trusting the Lord and coming to him rather than relying on the oppressors’ offers which could not meet their actual need that is full life. Yahweh was the source of life-giving water for Israel, so was Christ for the faithful Christians in the perspective of John as of Rev. 21:6.

Indirect Fulfillment Use Through Prophetic and Covenantal Language

There is no direct fulfillment formula used in Revelation, but the reader of this book might discover the indirect fulfillment with respect to the Old Testament promises. Firstly, since our focus is the references that are found in Second Isaiah, we now need to recognize that the “holy city” of Rev. 21:2 can be linked to that of Isa. 52:1 in a way that suggests a prophetic fulfillment. Although John uses the same language of the holy city just as Isaiah does, he does not refer to the earthly city but to the heavenly Jerusalem that Fekkes calls “the ideal city of prophecy and promise.” This implies that John’s “holy city” that is “the new Jerusalem” is the fulfillment of that of Isaiah. John’s use of the cultic motif that he takes from Isaiah 52 and applies to his “new Jerusalem” suggests that John understood Isaiah’s prophecy as concerning the eschatological Jerusalem, although Isaiah’s context was purely historical and real geographical Jerusalem that was idealized. So, there is an indirect prophetic fulfillment in Rev. 21:1-8 with respect to the reference to Second Isaiah that is noted above.

Secondly, we find the indirect fulfillment use through the covenantal divine presence that is told in Rev. 21:3. In fact, several instances indicate that John refers to other Old Testament traditions to implicitly evoke the fulfillment of God’s promises in his time. This can be perceived in the strengthening of relationship between God and God’s people that is rooted in the Old Testament texts. In that perspective, Rev. 21:3 encompasses God’s dwelling among people and the mutual relationship between God and God’s people as it is also in verse 7. This feature alludes to Exodus 29:45 with the statement of God’s promise to dwell among the Israelites. In many places of the Old Testament, we find God’s emphasis on the covenant to remain the God of people, as we find in Exod. 6:7; Lev. 26:11-16, Jer. 30:22; 31:1, 33; 32:38 and Ezek. 37:27-28. It is important to mention that this covenant goes back to Gen. 17:8 that is about the Lord’s promise to be the God of Abraham’s descendants. According to Malina and

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Pilch, the new Jerusalem that becomes the dwelling place echoes to the tradition of Israel’s Mosaic wilderness sanctuary (Exod. 33:7; 40:34). In the same perspective, Malina and Pilch go on explaining that “Israel’s sanctuary or holy place was the locus of God’s presence (Gen. 28:16), where God dwells among Israelites (Exod. 25:8; 29:45-46; Lev. 26:11-12; 1 Kings 8:13; Ps. 132:14).”

This theme of God’s presence among God’s people and the close interrelationship that characterizes this presence is also found implicitly in Second Isaiah where God states to dwell with people who are of contrite and humble spirit to revive them (Isa. 57:15). Earlier in Isaiah 41:10, the prophet mentions the Lord’s comfort for Israel, the chosen one, by affirming God’s presence on his side to strengthen, to help and to uphold God’s people who were desperate. Isaiah evokes God taking the side of believers, for God is their Redeemer (41:14), which is also the perspective of the book of Revelation. God’s dwelling among the people indicates that God will defeat their enemies so as to live under God’s protection. The place of the action is in the new heaven and the new earth with the new Jerusalem being the holy city according to the book of Revelation which indicates an eschatological view. As for Isaiah, the exilic context of the Israelites leads us to relate God’s presence with God’s people within the restored city of Jerusalem and its temple. Gowan rightly depicts the biblical theme of God’s presence as taking an eschatological form with the promise of God’s immediate and continuing presence with God’s people.

The covenantal fulfillment that is present in Second Isaiah is reused by Revelation in the perspective of transformation. This transformation is characterized by the absence of threats and suffering in the dwelling place of God such as sea, death, tears, mourning, unclean things/people (Rev. 21:1; 4; cf. Isa. 65:25). As Gorman rightly indicates, these omissions that

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are mentioned in Revelation accord with the prophetic visions. Thus, it is worthy saying that the visionary perspective of Rev. 21:3 implies an indirect prophetic fulfillment use of Old Testament tradition in general, and Second Isaiah in particular.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of the materials of Rev. 21:1-8 that are found in Second Isaiah brought in insights of how John alluded to this Old Testament book to shape the pericope of Rev. 21:1-8 in his context when he wrote to Christian communities. On the aspect of language, the Greek of Rev. 21:1-8 contains some mistakes, which implies that the author did not care enough about the strict use of the language patterns as evidenced by the mixture of the past and the present tenses in the description of the vision such as εἶδον, ἀπῆλθαν, and οὐκ ἔστιν ἑτε in the first verse. As for the text transmission, Rev. 21:1-8 has had various changes including omissions, additions, and changes but these did not affect the main perspective of the passage that is a part of the author’s visionary experience. Moreover, the Greek text of Rev. 21:1-8 is closer to the allusions that are found in the text of Second Isaiah from the Septuagint in many words as attested by the words like ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινή that are in Rev. 21:1 and Isaiah 65:17; 66:22, τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἰερουσαλήμ that is in Rev.21:2 and Isaiah 52:1, among others as we demonstrated in the comparative analysis. Therefore, such an analysis is helpful to say that John depended on the Septuagint’s text especially that of Second Isaiah to write Rev. 21:1-8.

Also, the contexts of Rev. 21:1-8 and Second Isaiah have in common a similar perspective that is modeled around the theme of transformation of a threatening situation. Hence, the study of the specific uses of Second Isaiah by Rev. 21:1-8 such as the thematic use,

\footnote{Gorman, Michael J., \textit{Reading Revelation Responsibly}, 163.}
the analogical use, and the indirect fulfillment is helpful to notice the various ways of indicating
the similarities between Rev. 21:1-8 and the tradition of Second Isaiah. The thematic use points
to the theme of transformation through the newness of the order (new heaven, new earth, holy
city), and the transformation of people’s living conditions. The analogical use is characterized
by the contrast of the idealized Jerusalem and the condemned Babylon, by the greatness of the
Lord as indicated by the language of the Alpha and the Omega in Revelation that is closer to
the language of “first and last” in Second Isaiah, and by the life-giving water as the Lord’s
offer to the thirsty that is found in the two books. Finally, the indirect fulfillment is shaped
around the prophetic language whereby Rev. 21:1-8 contains a component of fulfillment of the
prophecy of Second Isaiah such as the appearance of the new world with the holy city
Jerusalem. Also, the absence of threats in the new order indicates a pattern of the prophetic
fulfillment, signaling that John sought the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises to God’s
people towards the believers of his time.

In sum, all the uses of Second Isaiah by Rev. 21:1-8 that we highlighted above are
essential to indicate that John used the tradition of Second Isaiah in writing Rev. 21:1-8. Thus,
this chapter supports the idea that Revelation was shaped by the materials of the Old Testament
tradition. The following general conclusion is meant to highlight this perspective.
GENERAL CONCLUSION

The present work focused how the Old Testament shaped the book of Revelation. By analyzing the ways by which Revelation used the OT texts in general, and the use of Second Isaiah in Rev. 21:1-8 in particular, this work aimed to demonstrate that OT traditions played an important role in the composition of Revelation. We discussed the topic of the work in three main chapters: the generalities on the book of Revelation, the uses of Old Testament texts in Revelation, and Rev. 21:1-8 and its use of Second Isaiah. As we conclude the work, it is important that we note the key insights that help us to better understand the subject.

The first chapter that discussed the generalities on the book of Revelation pointed to a general understanding of the setting of Revelation before the reader gets into the entire book. In fact, we realized that John, the author of Revelation, was a Christian whose background was rooted in in the Old Testament tradition, as a Jew. The author of Revelation shares the situation of persecution with his audience just as the authors of the Old Testament apocalyptic writings were enduring the hardship of their time. The internal evidence of Revelation indicates an audience that lived in Asia Minor where the seven churches John wrote to were established. The events that are described in this book include the mention of Babylon and the succession of kings, which led scholars to date the composition of Revelation about 90 CE under Emperor Domitian. As we saw, the use of “Babylon” that stands for Rome, dates between 81 and 96 CE after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. It echoes to the Babylonian domination over Jews in the sixth century BCE, which suggests an influence of the OT context in depicting the Roman oppression over Christians as Revelation indicates. Furthermore, the addressees of Revelation dealt with Roman imperial cults where their refusal cost them persecution just as Jews like Daniel and his three friends faced persecution for their faith under the Babylonian domination.
In this perspective, the message of Revelation was to build steadfast and hope in Jesus Christ despite suffering they were inflicted.

As we saw, Revelation is a composite of three literary forms. It contains the aspects of a letter, a prophecy, and an apocalypse. Thus, we can perceive that the prophetic and the apocalyptic forms reflect the Old Testament traditions. Besides, the book of Revelation is featured by the visionary experience that is generally similar to Jewish and other Christian apocalypses both in form and worldview except in pseudonymity as we highlighted. It is also featured with resistance that underscores Christian steadfast in the middle of oppression by an evil power. In addition to that, the book is populated by various expressions of mysticism to indicate the way true God is worthy of worship, and by the abundance of Old Testament texts. All those features that are in Revelation are grounded in the Jewish tradition, which supports the idea that Old Testament shaped the composition of Revelation.

In the second chapter, we analyzed the uses of Old Testament texts in Revelation by discussing the general setting of Old Testament allusions, the OT traditions, and the specific uses of OT allusions. In the general setting, our research revealed that Revelation used OT texts in the form of allusions instead of direct citations, in the way that a reader who is aware of OT content can easily trace their source in that part of the Bible. Also, we demonstrated that John used the OT allusions intentionally as he recontextualized them in line with the situation of his audience. At the same time, he remained faithful to the OT general perspective. As the data reveal, Revelation contains multiple OT references; most of them are found in the prophetic books such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Daniel, plus the books of Psalms and Exodus; with Isaiah being the most used.

We found that Revelation depended on various OT traditions including the tradition of dramatis personae, that of divine institutions’ elements, that of the same holy and mythic geography elements, and the tradition of myths. Furthermore, there is evidence of a great OT
tradition that reflects God’s character and might upon which Revelation was built. This includes the tradition of the God that alone deserves worship, God that indict the oppressive systems, vindicates the faith, controls the cosmos, promises peace, and God whose patience has an end. These traditions constitute the foundation of the message of Revelation.

Among the specific uses of OT by Revelation is the literary prototypes as evidenced by the plague model that follows the paradigm of the Exodus plagues. The thematic use includes the end time judgement and salvation, the Daniel’s abomination of desolation, the Isaiah’s songs that can be paired with the Revelation’s series of hymns, the reinterpretation of the Davidic Messiah, and others. We can see the analogical in the analogy of judgement, the analogy of tribulation and persecution of God’s people, the analogy of seductive and idolatrous teaching, the analogy of divine protection, the analogy of victorious battle of God’s people over the enemy, the analogy of apostasy, and the analogy of divine Spirit as the power for God’s people, plus the analogy of the exodus plagues. We saw that universalization is evidenced by passages like Ex. 19:6 that applies to Rev. 1:6 and 5:10, Dan. 7:14 that applies to Rev. 5:10, and Zech. 12: 10 are applies to Rev. 1:7, and others. By means of universalization, John showed that the era of universal salvation was inaugurated through Christ as the multitude of Rev. 7 reflects. John used also indirect fulfillment that reflects the present or the future fulfillment of the ancient prophecy. Its examples include Dan. 2:28-29, 45 and Rev. 1:1 about the things that must take place, Dan. 12:4, 9 and Rev. 22:10 about sealing up the words of the prophecy, and Dan. 7:13 and Rev. 1:13-14 about the Son of man. Through this use, John considered the church of his time as the latter-day Israel. The last use we noted is the stylistic use Old Testament language that consists of intentional solecisms. The idea of such a use is that John wrote down in Greek his Hebraic thinking where he did not care about the Greek patterns. The intentional use of solecisms can be justified, as scholarship suggests, by the author’s statement found in Rev. 13:18 and 17:9 that calls for wisdom, which suggests that
John wanted the readers to stop and think as they read the book, an idea that may apply to the use of Old Testament.

The last chapter consisted of analyzing the use of Second Isaiah in Rev. 21:1-8, a comparative analysis that we did to specify the application of the preceding insights. To achieve this, we analyzed the Greek language of Rev. 21:1-8 that led us to notice that various textual changes like omissions, additions, and changes that occurred during the text transmission did not affect the vision’s perspective of Revelation. Then we compared the Greek text of Rev. 21:1-8 to some allusions that are found in Second Isaiah, from the Septuagint which led us to notice that those two Greek texts are closer in various expressions like ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινῆ that are in Rev. 21:1 and Isaiah 65:17; 66:22, τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἱερουσαλήμ that is in Rev.21:2 and Isa. 52:1, and others. This comparison shows that the Septuagint form of Second Isaiah shaped the composition of Rev. 21:1-8. Besides, the contexts of Rev. 21:1-8 and Second Isaiah that we described reveals a similarity of the perspectives that point to the common theme of transformation of the threatening situation in the two writings.

The specific uses of Second Isaiah by Rev. 21:1-8 include firstly the thematic use that focuses on transformation of the cosmic order and human living conditions towards the absence of threats; secondly the analogical use that we can find through the contrast of the idealized Jerusalem and the condemned Babylon, and the greatness of the Lord depicted as the Alpha and the Omega in Revelation, the first and the last in Isaiah. There is lastly the indirect fulfillment that we perceive in the language of the appearance of the new world with the holy city Jerusalem, and the absence of threats in the new order as projected by Second Isaiah. Like other elements we saw above, those uses justify Second Isaiah’s influence on the composition of Rev. 21:1-8.
In sum, the generalities on the book of Revelation suggest that the author, the audience and their context, the message, the genre, and the features of Revelation relates to the context of the Jewish tradition that is mainly rooted in the Old Testament. The specific uses of Old Testament allusions in Revelation highlight the creativity of John, which proves that he intentionally depended on the Old Testament traditions to shape his work. Specifically, the abundance of Second Isaiah’s elements in such a short passage of Rev. 21:1-8 is an evidence that the composition of Revelation in general cannot be separated from the perspective of Old Testament. Thus, we dare to state that Old Testament scriptures played a key role in shaping the book of Revelation. In the same perspective, further research would analyze in depth other passages of Revelation where Old Testament allusions abound, to gain more insights on this statement.
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