THE MYSTERY OF REVELATION 17: 5 & 7
A Typological Entrance

Paul W. Cheung

Alliance Bible Seminary
22 Peak Road, Cheung Chau

Introduction

Revelation 17 is one of those passages in the Bible which fascinates both readers and commentators alike. The concentration of such fantastic symbolism in such a short span of text within the most interpreted book in human history means that generations of commentators have used it to test their interpretive acuity. The ultimate understanding of the symbols and imageries involved, however, seems to continue to have eluded the interpreters.[1] This paper will not pretend to be able to sort out the various

---

[1] A case in point is the referent of Babylon in these two chapters. While it is now generally agreed that the Babylon of ch. 17 and that of ch. 18 refer to the same entity (in contrast with earlier interpretations which took ch. 17 to refer to an ecclesiastical Babylon and ch. 18 to refer to a political Babylon. See J.D. Pentecost, *Things to Come* [Findlay: Dunham, 1958], 368; and J.F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* [Chicago: Moody, 1966], 243-67. Cf. also K.W. Allen, "The Rebuilding and Destruction of Babylon," *BSac* 133 [1976]: 25), what it actually refers to remains disputed. The majority scholarly opinion takes Babylon to refer to Rome (a thoroughgoing example is ch. 10 of R. Bauckham's *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993]). But there are significant opinions which take Babylon in these chapters to refer to Jerusalem

exegetical options proposed for the various expressions in this chapter and settle all the issues in a single stroke.[2] The goal of this paper is more modest. Its purpose is to investigate the use and the meaning of the two instances of μυστήριον in 17:5 and 17:7 and to explore how the term is tied in with vision of the harlot named "Babylon" and the beast with seven heads and ten horns.

First, a hermeneutical remark is in order. Over the last two decades or so, major advances have taken place in our knowledge and understanding of Jewish and Christian apocalypses and fresh insights have been gained by careful study of the parallels between these apocalyptic works and the Book of Revelation.[3] We will attempt to take advantage of these gains in the hope of arriving at an understanding that is less conditioned by a preconceived hermeneutical framework (whether it be preterist, historicist, idealist, futurist-historicist, or futurist-dispensational) and more controlled by the overall structure and force of the apocalyptic work and the nature and substance of the symbols and imageries that give the work its force. Our approach will be an eclectic one,[4] with the main assumption being that John has written the

---

(as by J.M. Ford, 282-93 [note: from this point on, major commentaries listed at the end of the paper will be referred to by author's name only, where there is no confusion]; and Corsini, 319-30), or the historic city of Babylon itself (as by R.L. Thomas, 2.307. Cf. also C.H. Dyer, "The Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17-18," 2 parts, *BSac* 144 (1987): 305-16, 433-49). A. Strobol's remark is to the point. Commenting on Rev 17:9-12, he wrote: "Viele Ausleger haben an diesem Text ihren Scharfsinn erprobt. Trotzdem ist man über plausible und vorzuziehende Lösungen nicht hinausgekommen." ("Abfassung und Geschichts-Theologie der Apokalypse nach Kap. XVII. 9-12," *NTS* 10 [1964]: 433.)

[2] Even the nominal forms alone require tremendous labor in interpretation: φιάλη, κρίμα, ἡ πόρνη ἡ μεγάλη, ὕδατα πολλά, πορνεία, οἶνος, οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν γῆν, πνεῦμα, ἔρημος, θηρίον, ὀνόματα βλασφημίας, ἑπτὰ κεφαλαί, δέκα κέρατα, χρυσίον καὶ λίθος τιμός, βδελύγματα καὶ ἀκάθαρτα, μέτωπον, μυστήριον, Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη, ἡ μήτηρ τῶν πορνῶν καὶ τῶν βδελυγμάτων τῆς γῆς, ἄβυσσος, ἀπώλεια, καταβολὴ κόσμου, βιβλίον τῆς ζωῆς, σοφία, ἑπτὰ ὄρη, ἑπτὰ βασιλεῖς, ἀρνίον, κύριος κυρίων καὶ βασιλεὺς βασιλέων, etc., a number of which occur for the first time in this passage.

[3] An indispensable work in this respect is J.J. Collins' *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). A recent major work dedicated solely to the Book of Revelation but cognizant of and employing the full range of knowledge gained by the study of contemporary apocalyptic traditions, the socio-political realities of the period faced by John and the Asian churches, and the historical reminiscences alluded to in the Book is R. Bauckham's *The Climax of Prophecy*. See also D.E. Aune (WBC), G.K. Beale (NIGTC), and P. Prigent (Mohr Siebeck).

[4] Cf. D.A. Carson et al., eds., *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 483, although the writer there believes the balance tips in favor of a futurist stance both for the nature and the purposes of the book.

Apocalypse to be understood by the Asian churches.[5]

On this basis, then, it would have been only a feeble hope that John could offer if his writing only addressed the future of the suffering Christians without elucidating the ground of their hope through their *present* experience.[6] On the other hand, it would have been little comfort to the struggling Christians if all they saw was an accurate analysis of their present situation with no inkling whatsoever of how their struggles could be a part of the victory that God is bringing about in the *future*. All apocalypses address some underlying problem in reality.[7] Invariably a preterist dimension may be recovered.[8] But the Apocalypse also views its underlying problem, whatever type it may be, from a distinctive apocalyptic perspective that is framed spatially by the supernatural world and temporally by the eschatological judgment. The problem is not primarily viewed in terms of the historical factors available to any observer, but in terms of a transcendent reality disclosed by the apocalypse that points towards a course of future action. In some cases, the transcendent perspective is cast in terms of well-known myths that describe not so much what took place in the past or will in the future, but how things are throughout history, in other words, providing a *modus operandus* of history.[9] Without rejecting entirely the insights from the

---

[5] Following the oldest tradition, Revelation is dated in the last years of Domitian (i.e., late 80's to early 90's). See the rather comprehensive argument for a Domitian date by A. Yarbro Collins in *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 54-83; and C. J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (JSNTSS 11; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 2-5.

[6] In fact, judging from the amount and ways in which the Old Testament is used in the Apocalypse, one must insist that John looks at the present experience of the Asian Christians in turn through the lens of the entire OT, whether literarily or salvation-historically. For a table of OT usage and a statistics of such usage, see Swete, cxl-cxlv. The use of the OT in Revelation is given comprehensive treatment in the works of G.K. Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* (JSNTSS 166; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) and S. Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation* (JSNTSS 115; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995). The Apocalypse is read through the lens of the OT in Beale's own recent commentary.

[7] Cf. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 41.

[8] The degree of confidence with which we can specify concerning the underlying distress or experience is of course variable. For example, we are rather certain that 4 Ezra and 2 and 3 Baruch reflect the aftermath of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem after some interval, but the experience behind the Book of the Watchers cannot be described with any certainty. See *OTP*, 1.520; 616f; 658f, and Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 59.

[9] For example, the combat myths that were internationally known and detected in Rev 12, 19, and 20, may be considered to serve as the rationale behind the on-going pattern of struggle experienced by the people of God in history. See A. Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book*

idealist and historicist perspectives, it would appear that a preterist-futurist framework of interpretation best suits the aim of the text. Contemporary relevance to the readers must be accounted for, but the force of the Apocalypse is also to move the sight of the readers beyond the immediate plight into an arena where the intensified struggle of Satan (in its various manifestations) against God in the post-incarnation era will ultimately end in God's final, sovereign victory over evil and the restoration of creation.[10]

In what follows, we will first locate Rev 17:1-18 in the larger scheme of things in the Book of Revelation. This is done not simply in order that we may locate the present passage within the structure of the Book. The "highly self-referential and contextual character of Revelation"[11] implies that the meaning of details of a particular passage cannot be entirely grasped apart from the rest of the Book where some of the details also occur. After looking at 17:1-18 contextually we will proceed to examine 17:5, 7 in detail both syntactically and in terms of their images, symbolisms and their message.

Contextual/Structural Issues

Commentators generally consider 17:1-19:10 as a single unit.[12] It is furthermore arguable that it belongs to the bowl visions in ch. 16,

---

of Revelation (HDR 9; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976). This is commonly called the idealist approach to understanding the apocalyptic, often tied to an instructional purpose for the writing of the apocalyptic. But to elevate this approach above all others is simply to misunderstand the historical and eschatological dimensions present in all apocalypses.

[10] For a hint at an encouragement to look beyond the immediate plight, see 6:9-11.

[11] J.W. Mealy, *After the Thousand Years: Resurrection and Judgment in Revelation 20* (JSNTSS 70; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 13.

[12] See Aune, 2.915; Prigent, 101; Thomas, 2.279; Beasley-Murray, 248; Roloff, 193. Others, however, only extend the section to 19:5, e.g., Mounce, 306; Hughes, 181. See also C.H. Talbert, *The Apocalypse: A Reading of the Revelation of John* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 77; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 170-75; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Vision of a Just World*, Proclamation Commentaries (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 35-37; D. Hellholm, "The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John," *Semeia* 36 (1986), 13-64; Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation*, 8-15; C.H. Giblin, "Structural and Thematic correlations in the Theology of Revelation 16-22," *Bib* 55 (1974): 487-504; and Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 2-22. Beale gives a rather full account of the debate on the literary structure of chs. 17-22 in his commentary, 109-51. His own division of the section ends on 19:21, the rationale being that the judgment of Babylon is not considered complete without the defeat of her earthly allies (Beale, 149).

since Babylon's doom is proclaimed as early as 14:8 and in 16:19 its judgment has already taken place. Moreover, it is one of the angels who had the seven bowls who shows John the judgment of the great harlot (17:1). This section does not add a further development of the bowl visions. Instead, it is related to them as a close-up picture is to a portion of the whole scenery. The seven bowls in ch. 16 depict the essence of God's judgment on heaven and earth against the earth-dwellers, those who have shed the blood of the saints (16:6), worshipped the beast (16:2), and on the great Babylon, the center of evil resistance (16:19). 17:1 to 19:10 then focuses on 16:19 and greatly expands and explains what the judgment of Babylon is all about.

Furthermore, ch. 17 is diametrically connected with ch. 12: the woman clothed with the sun (12:1) is the antitype of the great harlot (17:1); the same woman in the desert (12:13, 14) is the antitype of the harlot in the desert (17:3).[13] The emphasis of both chapters falls on the persecution of the saints (12:11, 17; 17:6) and the victory of the Lamb over his enemies (12:11; 17:14). It also stands in contrast to the bride of ch. 21: again one of the angels with the seven bowls introduced the bride to John (21:9); the wording of 17:1, 2 and 21:9 are almost identical, but refer to different objects.[14] In fact one may even be able to say that the Babylon visions are part of an ABA' pattern in 17:1 to 22:5,[15] because John intercalates the parousia and judgment section 19:11 to 21:8 (B) between the Babylon visions 17:1 to 19:10 (A) and the New Jerusalem visions 21:9 to 22:5 (A'). By linking Babylon with the New Jerusalem and the harlot with the bride of the Lamb, John has effectively linked also the destructive judgments of the seven bowls with the salvific renewal of heaven and earth that takes place at the end of history. Thus the word of judgment is never without a word of salvation even to the end.

---

[13] Cf. Fiorenza, 66, n. 153.

[14] For a comparison between the structure of ch. 17 and ch. 21, see Excursus 5 in Thomas, 2. 569-74. A table underlining explicitly the antithetical comparisons between Babylon and the New Jerusalem can be found in Sung-Min Park, *More than a Regained Eden: The New Jerusalem as the Ultimate Portrayal of Eschatological Blessedness and Its Implication or the Understanding of the Book of Revelation* (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1995), 296-97. For an extensive discussion of the contrast between the two cities given by various interpreters, see Loyd D. Melton, *A Critical Analysis of the Understanding of the Imagery of City in the Book of Revelation* (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1979), especially his own conclusions in 237-87.

[15] See C.H. Giblin, "Structural and Thematic Correlations," 487-504. He extended A' to 22:9 instead, although one may argue that the testimony section of 22:6-9 is outside of the chiastic pattern.

Other linkages of 17:1-18 with the rest of the book are less dramatic and deliberate. The theme of the evil great city has occurred in 11:8, 13 and 16:19 (cf. 14:20). The beast with seven heads and ten horns is the same beast that came out of the sea in 13:1 and was later thrown into the lake of fire in 19:19-20. In the first two instances, wisdom was necessary to discern its identity (13:18; 17:9). Whereas in its first appearance the beast was powerful and was able to deceive and receive worship from the earth-dwellers, the last two mentions of the beast were tied in with its waging of war against the Lamb and his followers and its ultimate defeat (17:8, 13f; 19:19f). The purpose of its triple appearance seems to have been explained by a programmatic statement in 17:17 ("For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled".) The beast is entirely circumscribed by the sovereignty of God. Again, elements in the earlier interlude after the seven trumpets are related to those in the interlude after the seven bowls, and both are finally brought to a closure in the last section of the Book.

Mystery in Rev 17:5, 7

Having seen the position of 17:1-18 in the larger structure of the Apocalypse, we now turn to examine the syntactical issues involving μυστήριον in 17:5, 7.

Μυστήριον occurs four times in the Apocalypse.[16] In 1:20 and 17:7 the term is qualified by appositive genitives (τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀστέρων and

---

[16] The study of the term μυστήριον has a rather checkered history in biblical scholarship. The vastly influential *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (as in Richard Reitzenstein) assigned much of Christianity's doctrinal development to under the tutelage of the religions of the Roman empire, which served as a common denominator. However, more sober research demonstrated that studies of the affinity between primitive Christianity and the Greco-Roman mystery religions of the same period suffered from a long period of faulty methodologies (see the excellent survey article by D. H. Wiens, "Mystery Concepts in Primitive Christianity and in its Environment," in *ANRW* II.23.2 [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980], 1248-284). The first major corrective came from A. D. Nock's short article in 1933 ("The Vocabulary of the New Testament," *JBL* 52 [1933], 131-39). Nock examined the ways in which certain words like εὐαγγέλιον, σωτήρ, ἐπιφάνεια, μυστήριον, ἐπόπτης, παλιγγενεσια, and ἐμβατεύω were purportedly used in both pagan and Christian writings and concluded that previous scholarly conclusions of affiliation between the two uses were vastly overdrawn. In addition, the NT does not use the words that were commonly used in everyday religious circles of the times. There is simply little or no appropriation of pagan religious terms for use in the Christian cult. In the case of the use of the word μυστήριον, which occurs 28 times in the NT (including the contested instance in 1 Cor 4:1), Wiens made the following observations: (1) the

τῆς γυναικὸς καὶ τοῦ θηρίου). In both cases, μυστήριον at least means something like "the secret, symbolic meaning".[17] This is confirmed by the context immediately following the appearance of μυστήριον in both cases.[18] In 10:7, the term is qualified by a possessive genitive (τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ) "the mystery belonging to God". It is quickly seen that the use of μυστήριον in 10:7 is different from that of 1:20 and 17:7. Rather than referring to the "secret, symbolic meaning" of something, it is referring to the mysterious will of God for the end of time.[19] In all these three cases, however, μυστήριον shares a sense of something previously concealed[20] now revealed or to be revealed.[21] In 17:5, μυστήριον stands alone, leading to some ambiguity as to its function in relation to what precedes it and what follows it. *Prima facie*, a sense of hiddenness now lifted may still be attributed. Finer nuance awaits further analysis, however. In 17:7, the appositive genitives make it easier to decipher the meaning of μυστήριον. The context seems to indicate that it is the fate and judgment of the woman and the beast that are being revealed.[22] The two "mystery's" are unified by the unity of the vision itself as revealed in 17:3 and confirmed in 17:7. The mystery then is explained in what follows. However, the structure of the mystery requires further unpacking, especially with respect to the name Babylon. Space will not allow us to do the same for the "Beast." For the rest of the paper,

plural form, typically employed in pagan references to the cultic sphere, is rare in the NT (only in 1 Cor 4:1; 13:2; and 14:2); (2) Unlike the pagan use of the term with its recondite connotations of a deus absconditus, the NT use of μυστήριον involves on the one hand the esoteric act of God's gracious act and, on the other hand, the exoteric disclosure of that act for all the world to observe; (3) it is increasingly clear that the actual provenience of the NT use of the term is the Semitic and OT world (see in particular, R. E. Brown, *The Semitic Background of the Term "Mystery" in the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968]); (4) in the case of Paul, actual acquaintance with the mysteries simply cannot be ascertained, and the list of terms coincident between Paul and the mysteries is simply unconvincing. Moreover, the determinative concepts in Pauline thought can better be explained on the basis of his Jewish backgrounds. In the Apocalypse, the religious and political rhetoric inherent in the text alone would rule out any direct alignment with Greco-Roman mysteries. The μυστήριον mentioned here refers rather to enactments in history of the sovereign (and hence mysterious) will of God, even as they embody the actions of the enemies of God himself.

[17] R.E. Brown, *The Semitic Background*, 38. However, see also n. 28 below.

[18] I.e., the interpretation of the mystery signified by the copulative εἰμί in 1:20b and 17:8, and more specifically by ἐρῶ σοι for the case of 17:7.

[19] Brown, *The Semitic Background*, 38.

[20] Either in the form of a symbol, as in 1:20 or 17:7, or by virtue of a "gag order," as in 10:4.

[21] In the first case, through the agency of the Son of Man himself; in the second case, through an angelic interpreter.

[22] Rev 17:8, 16-17.

focus will be on 17:5, with the view that the meaning of μυστήριον thus obtained will be applicable to 17:7 also.

The first syntactical question of μυστήριον in 17:5 is whether it is in apposition to ὄνομα,[23] or whether it is part of the inscription on the woman's forehead.[24] The latter option may be quickly disposed of.[25] A comparison with 14:8, 16:19, and 18:2 shows that the woman's name is "Babylon the Great," not "Mystery," or "Mystery Babylon the Great."[26] It may of course be objected that the woman is never addressed directly as "the mother of harlots and of earth's abominations" either. However, this second title properly characterizes the nature of the woman, and 17: 4 does describe her has the source of abominations and fornication, whereas it is not clear how μυστήριον serves to depict the nature of the woman. Moreover, the woman is indeed called "the harlot" in 17:15, 16, and "the great harlot" in 17:1 and 19:2.[27] The term "mystery" is then not part of the woman's title.

Many commentators adopt the first option in relating μυστήριον to the name of the woman.[28] Some translate μυστήριον adjectivally, "a mysterious name." A few like Ladd and Harrington translate the phrase ὄνομα μυστήριον as "a name of mystery." Others, however, prefer to leave the translation in apposition, "a mystery."[29] The last translation is

---

[23] That is, "a mystery," as with NRSV. Other translations make explicit the nature of the apposition: "a mysterious name," as in LB, JB; or "a name with a secret meaning," as in TEV, NEB.

[24] As with NIV, KJV.

[25] However, many commentators simply remark that such a rendering is very improbable, or that an alternative translation does a better job at clarifying the meaning. Cf. Morris, 200; Ladd, 224; Mounce, 310; Aune, 936.

[26] See, Thomas, 2.289; also Walvoord, 246. Beale seems to be correct in pointing out that the Danielic background of the passage really demands the prefixing of μυστήριον to the title rather than as part of the title (Beale, 858).

[27] 19:2 is especially interesting, for it repeats the themes of the great harlot as the source of earth's corruption, her fornication, and her role in spilling the blood of the saints, all of which are present in 17:5b and 6.

[28] See Aune, 936; Harrington, 171; Ladd, 224; Roloff, 194; Walvoord, 246; Ford, 276; Mounce, 310; Charles, 2.65; Dusterdieck, 431, Swete, 217, etc. The same is true for Stuart (2.322), even though he takes μυστήριον to be an accusative adverbial, i.e., κατὰ μυστήριον. Cf. A. T. Robertson, who takes the use of μυστήριον here to be similar to πνευματικῶς in 11:8 (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 6 vols. [Nashville: Broadman Press, 1933], 6.430).

[29] E.g., Roloff, Thomas, Beale, Düstersdieck. Düstersdieck (431) remarks that μυστήριον should not be regarded as "precisely an adjective attribute to ὄνομα" and no more. The present writer concurs: the adjectival rendering, at least in English, tends to have a narrower range of meaning than

preferred. By doing so nearly all[30] commentators regard μυστήριον as referring to the symbolic nature of the name, indicating that the meaning is not literal and its full significance can only be grasped by those to whom the meaning is revealed. Under this symbolism, Babylon is seen as referring to Rome.[31] I think the significance of μυστήριον does not simply lie in the explicit identification of what Babylon refers to. That is to say, the use of the term does not primarily reside in its ability to imply a symbolism. Other words could do a better job.[32] Despite R.E. Brown,[33] the contextual discussion in the last section strongly suggests that the use of μυστήριον, in conjunction with the name Babylon, the theme of whoredom and abominations, and the killing of saints and servants of the Lord, leads inevitably to the conclusion that, whatever the referent of Babylon may be, it must be bound up with the entire span of the dark side of human history which embodies an unrepentant opposition to God. In other words, μυστήριον here has to do with not just symbolism, but salvation history – not just a riddle, but also a story, a pattern that evolves but nevertheless repeats itself. This understanding of μυστήριον suggests not just a conflict, which is rather neutral about the relative strengths of the parties involved, but the resolution of a conflict, one in which the outcome is firmly grasped within the sovereign will of God. More specifically, the use of μυστήριον here is bound up with the fate of the great harlot. What is unveiled is the judgment of the

---

its nominal counterpart. This may be compared to a similar phenomenon between the usage of the Greek verb and its cognate noun (e.g. ἀποστέλλω versus ἀπόστολος). The verbal form may have a considerably narrower connotation compared with the nominal form, and thus one may not transform readily into the other, despite the fact that they share the same root. See D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 30.

[30] The exceptions being Thomas and Dyer, "The Identity of Babylon." Literal rendering of Scripture, even of apocalyptic symbols, unless explicitly forbidden, remains the trademark of a dispensational hermeneutic.

[31] Commentators who see this reference include Aune, Harrington, Mounce, Stuart, Roloff, Charles, Bauckham, A. Yarbro Collins, Caird, Swete, etc. As already mentioned, consensus is not reached. Both Ford and Corsini maintain that Babylon symbolically refers to Jerusalem, while Dyer and Thomas take Babylon literally. Still, Ladd and Morris insist that though Rome is the contemporary embodiment of Babylon, Babylon itself is not tied to any historical cities. It is an eschatological entity. Beale holds a similar view (*Revelation*, 924). As mentioned in the Introduction, this paper argues that Babylon is an eschatological entity now revealed for which contemporary Rome is one of its manifestations. To move further, the historical and canonical dimension of Babylon give it the force of a "type," whose significance rests entirely in the domain of salvation history, see below.

[32] E.g., πνευματικῶς of 11:8 or expressions like ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενον.

[33] See n. 16.

great harlot along with the beast that carries her (17:7).[34] What are clearly expressed are the inevitability and the finality of that judgment.[35] Hence both Babylon and the image of the harlot are proper types in salvation history (of which contemporary Rome is just a particular manifestation) employed by God to instruct John and the Asian Christians not only on what they are up against, but also on what they must do in such situations (18:4), and how such situations will inevitably wind up. A study of the typology of Babylon and the harlot is thus necessary.[36]

The Concept of Typology

The idea of a type is rather vague, part of the reason being that just about every discussion of typology generates its own unique understanding of the term itself. Fortunately, however, a common thread is discernible. According to an earlier understanding, types are simply

---

[34] That this is the case is seen in the introduction of the *angelus interpres*: δεῦρο, δείξω σοι τὸ κρίμα τῆς πόρνης τῆς μεγάλης (17:1). When the mystery is explained in 17:7, it has to do with the judgment and fate of the beast (εἰς ἀπώλειαν ὑπάγει, 17:8, 11), and the fate and judgment of the harlot (αὐτὴν κατακαύσουσιν ἐν πυρί, 17:17).

[35] It is inevitable because God's purpose must be carried out (17:17), and his words shall be fulfilled (17:17). It is so also because God has remembered her iniquities (18:5), and because seen from the eternal standpoint, God has already given judgment (ἔκρινεν, an aorist emphasizing the perfective aspect of the action) against her (18:20). The judgment is final because God is the judge (18:8, 20; 19:2), and Babylon shall be found no more (18:21).

[36] The following application of the category of typology is largely indebted to Richard M. Davidson's doctoral dissertation, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical τύπος Structures* (AUSDDS 2; Berrien Springs: Andrews Univ. Press, 1981). However, an important departure exists. Whereas Davidson allows final apocalyptic consummation and complete ushering in of the "Age to come" in his description of NT salvation-historical perspective (393), he does not elaborate on this portion of the substructure in his analysis of his τύποι passages (this is true at least regarding his discussion of 1 Cor 10:1-13; Rom 5:12-21; and 1 Pet 3:18-22). The impression is that the OT type is eschatologically "inaugurated" and "appropriated" in the NT antitype, with an absolutely intensified eschatological *Steigerung* between them (see below), but the consummation of the OT type remains unexplored. It seems as if there are only two points that matter in the typological framework: OT realities and NT realities, with little in between or beyond. This is perhaps the greatest weakness in many typological analyses. The typology used in Rev 17, it will be argued below, differs in that the OT type recurs throughout history and indeed must be understood as having its consummation toward the end of time. Any concrete appropriation of the type (in our case, contemporary Rome as Babylon), though real, must necessarily be provisional, until the final consummation when the type is not simply "principially obsolete" (see n. 42 below), but obliterated altogether. The same obviously cannot be said of the τύποι discussed by Davidson, where the fulfillment of the type in the antitype, though it involves an absolute *Steigerung*, and hence implying a principial obsolescence of the original OT type, does not necessarily lead to its obliteration even when the type is eschatologically consummated.

divinely pre-ordained and predictive prefigurations.[37] More recently, typology is understood in terms of historical correspondences retrospectively recognized within the consistent redemptive activity of God. The predictive element is lost, and typology becomes simply a common human way of thinking in terms of concrete analogies. In the case of biblical typology, the analogies may be based upon the recurring patterns of God's saving activity,[38] or they may be supplied by an arbitrary number of "structural analogies" within OT traditions for the prefigurement of the Christ-event.[39] Through a study of the NT hermeneutical τύπος passages,[40] Davidson tightens up significantly the typological structures previously proposed.[41] His τύπος structure has five components: (1) Historical structure, in which historical correspondence may be drawn between OT and NT realities based on historical realities as recorded in Scripture. The correspondence is not just general, but could extend to details, and the NT reality invariably involves an absolute *Steigerung* or escalation of the OT τύποι. (2) Eschatological structure, which clarifies the *Steigerung* by focusing on the fulfillment of the OT τύποι in the eschatological realities of the NT. (3) Christological-soteriological structure, which is crucial in the determination of the content of the τύπος/ἀντίτυπος. In this case, the OT τύποι are salvific realities which find fulfillment in the soteriological work of Christ or in the new covenant soteriological realities issuing from Christ. (4) Ecclesiological structure, in which the experiences of ancient Israel in the wilderness are τύποι of the end-time congregation, the church. The structure also often contains a call for a personal decision whether to be faithful or disobedient. (5) Prophetic structure, which has three aspects: the OT τύποι are a prefiguration of the corresponding NT reality/realities. Moreover, the OT realities are a divine design and superintended by God to be prefigurative even in specific soteriologically related details. Finally, these prefigurations involve a *devoir-être* ("must-

---

[37] Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 94. See also L. Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 18-19; A.B. Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 237-40.

[38] As stressed by G.W.H. Lampe and K.J. Woollcombe, *Essays in Typology* (Naperville: Allenson, 1957).

[39] As with G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 2.363.

[40] Including 1 Cor 10:1-13; Rom 5:12-21; 1 Pet 3:18-22; Heb 8, 9; and Exod 25:40.

[41] For a summary of his conclusions, see *Typology in Scripture*, 409-24.

needs-be") quality that leads prospectively/predictively to their intended NT fulfillments. Structures (1), (2), (3), and (5) together imply a principial obsolescence of the OT τύποι.[42] Now we will apply the Davidson model to OT τύποι of Babylon and the harlot.

Babylon as a Type

The Historical Structure

Babylon (בָּבֶל) first appears in Gen 10:8-12 in the account of the building of the world's first empire. The account is continued in Gen 11: 1-9, which sees the tower of Babel as the beginning of mankind's ongoing enterprise of organizing human society in opposition to God and to displace him.[43] The historical experience of Israel in the hands of the Babylonian empire is characterized by the OT prophets in the following ways: (1) a seductive power luring Israel into apostasy (Ezek 23:11-32); (2) a ruthless, haughty, and godless conqueror, a seducer of the nations (Isa 13:1-14; 21:1-10; 47; Jer 50, 51); (3) its fall will be brought about by the sovereign will of God and is coincident with the eradication of sinners and the destruction of tyranny. Moreover, Babylon's fall will usher in a period of peace and salvation to all peoples (Isa 13; 14:1-23; Jer 25:12-38; and the passages cited in point 3 above).[44] In other words, the historic city and empire of Babylon was always depicted in the OT as the ungodly power *par excellence*,[45] and Babylon becomes the model archenemy of God's people.[46]

As a type, then, Babylon's utility is based on historical reality. Its manifestation in John's contemporary Rome is not simply in terms of general "similar situations" but also specific parallel details. For example, just as Babylon overran Jerusalem, burned the temple, and slaughtered Jews (2K 24:10-25:21), Rome did the same and now persecutes God's

---

[42] The term "principial obsolescence" is applied by D.A. Carson to the problem of the use of the Law in the NT. Here, it is almost an inescapable conclusion, for typology as set forth here to work, that the OT τύποι be found principially obsolete. The concept of *Steigerung* is a close analogy.

[43] Gen 11:6b, "this is the beginning of their activity". See R. Bauckham, *The Bible in Politics: How to Read the Bible Politically* (London: SPCK, 1989), 93. Also Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 233.

[44] Cf. H. Seebass, *NIDNTT* 1.141.

[45] K.G. Kuhn, *TDNT* 1.151.

[46] Jean-Pierre Ruiz, *Ezekiel in the Apocalypse: The Transformation of Prophetic Language in Revelation 16:17-19:10* (European University Studies 23; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989), 386.

people.[47] Babylon "laid the nations low" (Isa 14:12), Rome now dominates the earth.[48] Babylon is blasphemous (Isa 14:14), Rome receives worship through its imperial cult.[49] Babylon boasts of her eternal existence (Isa 47:7-8), Rome is a self-promoted eternal city.[50] Thus Rome resembles the OT Babylon in its pride, idolatry, and oppression, especially regarding the people of God. Just like Babylon, Rome has "declared itself the heir of Babylon by setting itself against God in its political and religious policies."[51] Moreover, historical progression (*Steigerung*) can be detected. Whereas in Isa 47:15 all the "co-laborers" and "comrades" who trafficked with Babylon will eventually abandon her,[52] for John the allies (the ten horns and the beast) "will hate the whore (Rome); they will make her desolate and naked; they will devour her flesh and burn her up with fire" (Rev 17:16).

Eschatological Structure

Due to its anti-theistic nature, the eschatological structure of the type of Babylon does not involve specific fulfillment of certain Christological benefits on the community "upon whom the end of ages has come."[53] Nevertheless, the identity of the faithful follower of God is significantly modified with the advent of Christ. The key phrase here is ἡ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ or Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.[54] Most commentators take the

---

[47] Cf. Rev 1:9; 2:13; 3:10; 6:9; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4. The same could not of course be said of a Neronian dating of the Apocalypse.

[48] Cf. Rev 14:8, 18:3.

[49] See C.J. Hemer, *Letters*, 83-87; and J. Nelson Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John's Apocalypse* (JSNTSS 132; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 26-29. Cf. Rev 13:1, 4, 12; 17:3. In this sense, Rome, just like Babylon, is a seducer of the nations into idolatry.

[50] See A. Yarbro Collins, "Revelation 18: Taunt Song or Dirge?" in J. Lambrecht, ed. *L'Apocalypse johannique et l'Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament*, BETL LIII (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1980), 201. Cf. Rev 18:7. For the dependence of Revelation 18:7 on Isa 47:7-9, see Jan Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and Their Development* (JSNTSS 93; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 227-31. The measure of self-grandeur quickly degenerates into self-delusion and self-deception.

[51] Bauckham, *The Bible in Politics*, 92.

[52] See the translation and notes by John D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 44-66*, WBC (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 169-70.

[53] As in v. 11 of 1 Cor 10:1-13. See Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 282.

[54] The word μαρτυρία occurs nine times in the Apocalypse (thirty times total in the entire Johannine corpus, compared with seven times elsewhere), of which six times μαρτυρία is contained in this locution (1:2, 9; 12:17; 19:10, 2x; 20:4). Of the other three instances (6:9; 12:11, 17), 6:9 lacks

genitive as a subjective genitive, referring to the "testimony borne by Jesus."[55] In 1:2 and 1:9, the "testimony of Jesus" is closely related to Jesus as "the faithful witness" (1:5; 3:4). The same is true for 19:10 (followed in 19:11 with Jesus being called ὁ πιστός). It is then concluded that μαρτυρία᾽ Ιησοῦ is "the witness he has borne in his life and teaching, but above all in his death, to God's master plan for defeating the powers of evil by the sacrifice of loyalty and love."[56] Thus to "hold the testimony of Jesus" (ἔχειν τὴν μαρτυρίαν ᾽Ιησοῦ) is not only to confess the teachings of Jesus but also to claim solidarity with the same kind of loyalty that could lead to martyrdom. More importantly, though, it means to avail oneself of the blood of the μάρτυς/martyr Jesus.[57] A μάρτυς ᾽Ιησοῦ is then someone who "holds the testimony of Jesus."[58] The eschatological structure of the type of Babylon is thus framed by its antagonism towards the eschatological testimony of Jesus and his followers, so much so that the use of μάρτυς, μαρτυρεῖν, and μαρτυρία in Revelation contributes significantly towards the martyrological concept of the witness (μάρτυς = martyr) which emerged at once in the early church.[59]

---

the genitive, but the word is used in conjunction with λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, a feature shared by 1:2, 9; and 20:4 (ἐντολαὶ τοῦ θεοῦ in 12:17).

[55] The subjective genitive is held across all six occurrences by Thomas, Caird, Beasley-Murray, Mounce, Harrington, and Roloff. So also H. Strathmann, *TDNT* 4.500. However, Swete allows the subjective genitive only for 1:2, and Ladd vacillates on 19:10 and 20:4.

[56] Caird, 238.

[57] As made clear by Rev 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; and 12:11. Frederick D. Mazzaferri (*The Genre of the Book of Revelation from a Source-Critical Perspective* [Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1989]) argues that μαρτυρία᾽ Ιησοῦ, in apposition to λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, is prophetic in nature and signifies John's entire book. Thus to ensure their spiritual safety, "saints must heed it as the personal testimony of Jesus and the living voice of the Spirit." In addition, he proposes the nexus μάρτυς = προφήτης (*The Genre of the Book of Revelation from a Source-Critical Perspective*, 306, 264-317). However, a passage like Rev 2:13, which refers to an event that has already taken place using the very terminology of μάρτυς, becomes problematic. Mazzaferri could only say that "nothing more can be gleaned from 2:13 than the grim fact of slaughter" (306). There are also logical problems due to self-referencing if Mazzaferri's thesis on μαρτυρία᾽ Ιησοῦ is accepted. For example, Mazzaferri's formulation demands that 12:17 be understood as taking place in the future (i.e., post-Apocalypse). Yet the salvation-historical scheme in 12:13-17 suggests that the assault begins post-Christ, not post-Apocalypse.

[58] See 2:13; 11:3; and more directly relevant for our case, 17:6.

[59] See Strathmann, *TDNT* 4.502. Strathmann goes on to cite H. Delehaye, *Sanctus, Essai sur le culte des saints dans l'antiquité* (1927), 79: "Le NT ne nous fournit ... aucun exemple certain du mot μάρτυς ou de ses dérivés employés dans le sens restreint et précis de martyr qu'il a fini par prendre dans le langage chrétien."

Christological-Soteriological Structure

The soteriological framework is already embedded in the eschatological structure discussed above.[60] Again, the antagonistic nature of this type means that the counterpart to soteriology, that of judgment/ condemnation must also be taken into account. Where there is salvation for those who believe, there is also condemnation and judgment for those who refuse to believe.[61] Despite the fact that a call to repentance is a component of salvation history,[62] the dispensing of grace always exposes hardened hearts.[63] Babylon will not escape judgment, as it was already announced (14:8; 17:1) and God's word must be fulfilled (17:17).

Ecclesiastical Structure

The ecclesiological realities within the type of Babylon are Christologically determined. Babylon is drunk with "the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses to Jesus" (17:6). The solidarity of the people of God is characterized by their dependence on the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and their willingness to forego their lives when saving them implies apostasy.[64] Within the larger structure of the Apocalypse, Babylon is also seen as the antithesis of the New Jerusalem.[65] Whereas Babylon is the mother of harlots sitting on the beast (17:3, 7), the New Jerusalem is the bride of the Lamb (19:7). Babylon is haughty and glorifies herself (18:7), but the New Jerusalem receives her light from the indwelling of God and the Lamb (21:23). Whereas Babylon is the abode of demons and every foul spirit and hateful creature (18:2) and whose eventual fate is total destruction (18:21-23),

---

[60] I.e., the fact that the eschatological sacrifice of Jesus furnishes both the example and the power under which Christians operate.

[61] Cf. Jn 3:18.

[62] E.g., Rev 2:5, 16, 21, 22; 3:3, 19.

[63] See 9:20, 21; 16:9, 11.

[64] Cf. Rev 12:11.

[65] See n. 14. In particular, Park, *More than a Regained Eden*, 298. A parallel contrast of the same pair is made under the types of harlot and bride. For a detailed exposition of the contrast between the images of the Harlot/Babylon/Beast with the Bride/New Jerusalem/Lamb, see S. Timothy Wu, *A Literary Study of Isaiah 63-65 and Its Echo in Revelation 17-22* (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1995), 191-218. For the beast/harlot imagery, see John M. Court, *Myth and History in the Book of Revelation* (London: SPCK, 1979), ch. 6, The Jewish background of the New Jerusalem is treated comprehensively in Pilchan Lee, *The New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation: A Study of Revelation 21-22 in the Light of its Background in Jewish Tradition* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), though with little discussion of its rhetorical purpose.

New Jerusalem is a new creation in which God, the Lamb, and God's people dwell forever (21:1ff).

Prophetic Structure

Frederick D. Mazzarerri has put forth very forcefully the thesis that the Apocalypse is consciously continuous with OT prophecy.[66] This is largely supported by a general consensus that the Apocalypse contains more OT allusions than any other NT book, despite a lack of quotation formulas and explicit quotations.[67] John is seen as writing in a long tradition of prophetic oracles through his constantly echoing and reapplying the oracles of his predecessors.[68] Using the categories suggested by Davidson,[69] the prophetic structures of the type of Babylon may be analyzed as follows: (1) Advance-presentation or prefiguration. It seems clear from the discussion in historical structure above that Babylon as the representative ungodly city/empire may be regarded as providing an advance-presentation or prefiguration of Rome as the representative ungodly city/empire. Rome is second Babylon, and as such the basic categories of understanding Babylon will be applied to Rome. (2) *Devoir-être*. Prefigurements may be incidental, but the *devoir-être* connection between the OT type and its anti-type means that there is a prospective/predictive element to the relationship. Thus, for example, the judgment pronounced on ancient Babylon not only prefigures the judgment pronounced on contemporary Rome, it predicts it. (3) Divine design. It is divine design that makes possible both the prefigurative and prospective/predictive character of the typological correspondence. God is in control of the fate and judgment of ancient Babylon as much as he is in control of the fate and judgment of the present manifestation of Babylon.

It still needs to be noted that Babylon and Rome are not parallel in every detail. For example, in Jer 27:6, the king of Babylon is referred to as God's servant. Later on Jews exiled to Babylon are urged to seek the peace and prosperity of the city (Jer 29:7). No such sentiment of goodwill

---

[66] See his *The Genre of the Book of Revelation from a Source-Critical Perspective.*

[67] See *UBSGNT*, 3d ed., 897-911. The relative abundance of OT allusions and verbal parallels between Romans, Matthew, Hebrews and Revelation is tabulated by Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament*, 14-16.

[68] Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 345.

[69] See his *Typology in Scripture*, 401-402.

towards Rome can be found in the Apocalypse, only irreconcilable wrath.[70] Moreover, whereas the OT Babylon was never described as a harlot, the woman in Rev 17 is the mother of harlots.[71] In addition, the primary OT allusion in Rev 18 against Rome comes from Ezek 26-28, which is Ezekiel's great oracle against Tyre. All these point toward an escalation of the NT antitype when compared with the OT type. The OT Babylon remains a valid τύπος, but its NT manifestation has grown in both extensiveness and intensity.[72] From a strictly preterist angle, then, typology does not work too well. However, one can never foreclose the futurist dimension in an apocalypse, particularly when the work itself contains so many pointers towards fulfillment at the end of time. At any rate, even the judgment oracles against Babylon have not been entirely fulfilled. The hermeneutical τύποι studied by Davidson are capable of only four stages of development in salvation-historical perspective: (1) God's historical rule in the OT, laying the historical foundation of the τύποι; (2) the basic fulfillment of the OT eschatological hopes at the first advent of Christ; (3) the realization in the experience of the church in the time of tension between the "already" and the "not yet"; and (4) the final apocalyptic consummation and complete ushering in of eternity.[73] It is entirely possible that anti-theistic types are capable of multiple manifestations and more stages of fulfillment than those that function "positively" within the economy of God's salvation history.[74] Thus the Babylon of Revelation is not just a contemporary type finding its fulfillment in imperial Rome, but an eschatological type which transcends its original reference (read "principial obsolescence") and

---

[70] Cf. Rev 16:17-21; 18:6-8. See Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John's Apocalypse*, 151-52.

[71] The OT harlot imagery is primarily used to describe apostate Judah and Israel. This theme is largely overlooked in biblical theology, but is partly remedied by a recent work by Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., *Whoredom: God's Unfaithful Wife in Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996). The OT uses the epithet "harlot" on non-Israelite cities only in Isa 23:15-18 and Nahum 3:4. The former refers to Tyre whereas the latter refers to Nineveh. This has led Ford to conclude that Babylon really refers to Jerusalem, and not Rome. However, recent studies have shown that the harlotry imagery primarily refers to the economic activities of Rome. See Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, ch. 10; Kraybill, *Imperial Cult*, chs. 2 and 3.

[72] That is, a *Steigerung* has taken place.

[73] Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 392-93.

[74] One still need to note, however, that even for "positive" types Davidson's fourfold fulfillment of OT types is still a simplified schematic. For example, the type of "son" can easily be visualized to have gone through multiple developments and partial fulfillments in the OT before culminating in the Johannine sonship theology.

becomes "a symbol of the whole history of organized human evil whose fall will be the end of history."[75]

Conclusion

The implications of the above discussion of the meaning of μυστήριον are then these: (1) The meaning of μυστήριον in 17:5 is located salvation-historically and refers to a contemporary manifestation of an OT τύπος, namely Babylon. (2) It also points toward the possibility of further manifestations, for even though Babylon and Rome share historical parallels, the manifestation of the Babylon type represents a *Steigerung* beyond its confines. Certain aspects not contained in the OT type are now viewed as part of the "expanded" type. (3) In this sense, the term μυστήριον still carries the invariant semantic component of something previously hidden but now revealed. What was hidden was not the type itself *per se*, for Babylon was already typed as an evil city by Domitian's reign.[76] What was hidden was the fact that Babylon is an eschatological type that may recur as contemporary types. This is now revealed by the angel to John. (4) Of great importance in the unfolding of the mystery is the certain and final judgment on every and all manifestations of the type. (5) The meaning of μυστήριον in 17:7 is essentially the same as that in 17:5.

ABSTRACT

Both the theology of apocalyptic literature and the fantastic images it regularly employs make these works rather susceptible to typological interpretations. In this article, the typological framework proposed by Richard M. Davidson is modified and applied to the mystery of Babylon in Rev 17. The exercise results in a number of conclusions, one of which suggests that anti-theistic types like Babylon are capable of multiple manifestations and stages of fulfillment.

---

[75] Bauckham, *The Bible in Politics*, 93.

[76] Cf. 2 Esdr 3:1-2, 28-31; 2 Bar 10:1-3; 11:1; 67:7; Sib Or 5:143, 159, 434. See A. Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 78, n. 13; Thomas, 2.206.

撮　　要

一個合宜的詮釋方法，必須同時處理天啟文獻中的神學思想，和其所使用既傳統又怪異的象徵語言。本文試用大衛森的預表詮譯法，解讀啟示錄第十七章的部分內容，鋪陳「巴比倫」的奧祕。

Commentaries cited:

Aune, David E. *Revelation 17-22*. WBC. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998.

Beale, G.K. *The Book of Revelation. A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Beasley-Murray, G.R. *The Book of Revelation*. NCBC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981.

Caird, G.B. *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

Charles, R.H. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John I-II*. ICC. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1920.

Corsini, E. *The Apocalypse*. Wilmington: Glazier, 1983.

Düsterdieck, F. *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Revelation of John*. H. A.W. Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament 11. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1886.

Ford, J.M. *Revelation*. Anchor Bible. Garden City: Doubleday, 1975.

Harrington, W.J. *Revelation*. Sacra Pagina. Collegeville: Liturgical, 1993.

Hughes, P.E. *The Book of the Revelation*. Pillar Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

Ladd, G.E. *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972.

Morris, L. *The Revelation of St. John*. TNTC. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

Mounce, R.H. *The Book of Revelation*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977.

Prigent, P. *Commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr Siebeck, 2001.

Roloff, J. *Revelation*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.

Stuart, M. *Commentary on the Apocalypse*. 2 vols. Andover: Allen, Morrell, and Wardwell, 1845.

Swete, H.B. *The Apocalypse of St. John*. London: Macmillan, 1906.

Thomas, R.L. *Revelation 8-22. An Exegetical Commentary*. Chicago: Moody, 1995.

Walvoord, J.F. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1966.