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Trumpeting God's Mercy:
A Socio-rhetorical Interpretation
of the Seven Trumpets of Revelation

Kayle B. de Waal

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ABSTRACT

Socio-rhetorical interpretation, as developed by Vernon Robbins, uses five textures, namely, inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture and sacred texture. My work introduces intratexture. These textures are used to analyse Rev 8.2-9.21 and 11.15-18, which is identified as the focus text. Chapter 1 addresses the prior literature on the trumpets, analyses the dominant image of trumpet and introduces the interpretive analytic. Chapter 2 investigates inner texture to ascertain how words function as a means of communication. Chapter 3 concentrates on intertexture and intratexture which focuses on cultural intertexture. Constructs within this aspect of intertexture include allusions and echoes. A symbol marker establishes the intertextual relationship between the successor and precursor text. To facilitate whether the precursor text, initially identified by the symbol marker, is an allusion or echo, Richard Hays criteria are used. The allusions and echoes point to the enemies of God and his people in the Old Testament and the Second Temple literature. Echoes become very important in the exegetical enterprise. In chapter 4 I analyse the social and cultural texture, which is concerned with exploring the consequences of the communal and cultural location of the language of Revelation and the kind of world this language evokes. The construct of social marker engages and unravels the texts social and cultural features. The social markers point to spiritual and economic issues against the mythic backdrop of the cosmic conflict tradition. Chapter 5 investigates the ideological texture, which is concerned with systems of power and views of reality shared by individuals and groups. The ideological marker has distinctly ideological elements and reinforces and recasts the findings of the social markers. Chapter 6 examines the sacred texture, drawing together all the findings of the previous textures and developing insights on God, the cosmic conflict and the value of the markers. The core argument is that the cosmic conflict tradition, scripted out in the narrative world as a sharp social schism between the Roman empire and the authorial audience, allows this audience to make no accommodation to the dictates of Greco-Roman society.

To
Kerryn and Charé
and, especially, Charmaine

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	vi
TABLES	x
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1. The Purpose of this Study.....	1
2. Literature Review.....	4
Ronald Gibson	5
Jon Paulien	7
David E. Aune.....	9
Gregory K. Beale	12
Ben Witherington III.....	16
3. An Introduction to the Use of the Trumpet in the OT, Second Temple, Greco-Roman and NT Literature.....	20
a. Trumpets and Liturgy.....	21
b. Trumpets and Battle.....	22
c. Trumpets and Special Occasions	25
d. Trumpets and Judgment/Theophany.....	26
e. Trumpets and Eschatology.....	28
f. Trumpets in the New Testament.....	29
g. Trumpets in Greco-Roman literature	31
h. Trumpets in the Focus Text	32
4. The Need for this Study	33
5. Interpretive Analytic	35
a. Inner Texture	37
b. Intertexture and Intratexture	38
c. Social and Cultural Texture	50
d. Ideological Texture	53
e. Sacred Texture	53
6. The Apocalyptic Rhetorolect	54
7. The Implied Reader, Implied Author and Authorial Audience	56
8. The Design of this Study.....	59
CHAPTER 2 INNER TEXTURE.....	60
1. Repetitive Texture.....	60
2. Progressive Texture	64
3. Open-Middle-Closing Texture.....	68
4. Narrational Texture.....	77
CHAPTER 3 INTERTEXTURE and INTRATEXTURE	82
1. Cultural Intertexture.....	83
a. Analysis of Rev 8.2-8.6.....	83
b. Analysis of the First Trumpet	95
c. Analysis of the Second Trumpet.....	102
d. Analysis of the Third Trumpet.....	105
e. Analysis of the Fourth Trumpet	114

f. Analysis of Rev. 8.13	117
g. Analysis of the Fifth Trumpet.....	119
h. Analysis of the Sixth Trumpet.....	129
i. Analysis of the Seventh Trumpet.....	139
j. Summary.....	143
CHAPTER 4 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TEXTURE.....	148
1. Social Markers	149
2. Specific Social Topics.....	155
3. Common Social and Cultural Topics.....	160
4. Final Cultural Categories	164
5. Summary	170
CHAPTER 5 IDEOLOGICAL TEXTURE	173
1. Ideological Markers	174
2. Trumpets as Instruments of Power and Destruction.....	185
3. Summary:.....	191
CHAPTER 6 SACRED TEXTURE	196
1. The Role of Divine Beings	196
a. God as Judge over Creation and Empire.....	196
b. God as Warrior in Creation and against Empire.....	198
2. The Cosmic Conflict Tradition	203
3. The Value of the Markers	207
CHAPTER 7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	209
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	216
INTERNET SOURCES	248

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

General and biblical abbreviations and citation conventions follow the *The SBL Handbook of Style For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Edited by Patrick H. Alexander, et al. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999.

AB	Anchor Bible Commentary
<i>Alex.</i>	<i>Alexander</i>
ANE	Ancient Near East
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Antiquities of the Jews</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>Bell. civ.</i>	Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i>
<i>Apoc. Abraham</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Abraham</i>
<i>Apoc. Dan</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Dan</i>
<i>Apoc. Elijah</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Elijah</i>
<i>Apoc. Zeph.</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Zephaniah</i>
<i>3 Apoc. Bar.</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Baruch</i>
<i>Apoc. Paul</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Paul</i>
<i>As. Mos.</i>	<i>Assumption of Moses</i>
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
AUSDDS	Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series
<i>2 Bar.</i>	<i>Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch</i> (in OTP)
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich., <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 3 rd edn., 2000).
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDF	Blass, F., A. DeBrunner, and R.W. Funk, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Chicago: 1961).
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>

BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary
<i>BR</i>	<i>Biblical Research</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CC	Concordia Commentary
<i>CTJ</i>	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
<i>CTR</i>	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
<i>CurBS</i>	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>
DBI	Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation Leland Ryken et al. (eds.) (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1998).
Diod. Sic.	Diodorus Siculus, <i>The Library of History</i>
<i>EDNT</i>	<i>The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>1 En.</i>	<i>Ethiopic Book of Enoch</i> (in OTP)
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
IB	Interpreter's Bible
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Il.</i>	Homer, <i>Illiad</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
ITC	International Theological Commentary
IVPNTC	InterVarsity Press New Testament Commentary
<i>JAAS</i>	<i>Journal of Adventist Asia Seminary</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JPTSS	Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series

<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism, Supplement Series
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series
<i>Jub.</i>	<i>Jubilees (in OTP)</i>
<i>J.W.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
<i>1 Macc.</i>	<i>1 Maccabees</i>
<i>2 Macc.</i>	<i>2 Maccabees</i>
<i>Nat.</i>	Pliny the Elder, <i>Naturalis Historie</i>
<i>Nat. quaes.</i>	Seneca, <i>Naturalis Quaestiones</i>
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NIB	The New Interpreter's Bible
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NIDNTT</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i>
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NIVAC	New International Version Application Commentary
NT	New Testament
NTL	New Testament Library
NTM	New Testament Message
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>Od.</i>	Homer, <i>Odyssey</i>
OT	Old Testament

OTP	J. H. Charlesworth, ed., <i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983).
1 QH	Thanksgiving Hymns (Qumran Cave 1)
1 QM	War Scroll (Qumran Cave 1)
4 QM	War Scroll (Qumran Cave 1)
4 Q	War Scroll (Qumran Cave 1)
11QMelch	<i>Melchizedek</i> (Qumran Cave 11)
<i>Quis Her.</i>	Philo, <i>Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres</i>
<i>Div.</i>	Cicero, <i>De divinatione</i>
<i>RBL</i>	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
RHE	Review and Herald Expositor
SABH	Studies in American Biblical Hermeneutics
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
<i>SBLSP</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
Sir.	Sirach
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
<i>Syb. Or.</i>	<i>Sybilline Oracles</i> (in OTP)
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>
<i>Tob.</i>	<i>Tobit</i>
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary
<i>T. Mos.</i>	<i>Testament of Moses</i>
<i>T. Sol.</i>	<i>Testament of Solomon</i>
TNAC	The New American Commentary
UBSMS	United Bible Society Monograph Series
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>Wis.</i>	<i>Wisdom</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

TABLES

Table 1 – Repetitive Texture	60-62
Table 2 – Progressive Texture	65
Table 3 – Revelation 11.18 as a Springboard Text	73-74
Table 4 - Linguistic and Conceptual Parallels	
between Isa. 66.6-7 and Rev 11.19-12.1-5a	75
Table 5 – Literary Connections	109
Table 6 – Allusions and Echoes	144
Table 7 – Intensification between the Fifth Trumpet and the Sixth Trumpet.....	147
Table 8 – Empires in Collision	183

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The book of Revelation has intrigued and inspired scholars and laity alike for centuries of Christian history and interpretation.¹ Its vexing symbolism and mythopoetic language have resulted in bewildering interpretations, far removed from the author's world. The complexity of effecting a "fusion of horizons" between the text of Revelation and the interpreter demonstrate the seemingly unconquerable distance between this apocalyptic text and our present.² In fact, the book seems to have the innate ability to taunt and entice the reader, revealing and yet simultaneously obscuring its message. Yet despite the complexities of symbol and language, Revelation has inspired hope in generations of Christians with its vision of a new world without death, injustice and suffering.

1. The Purpose of this Study

My goal in this study is to ascertain the meaning and meaning-effects of Rev 8.2-9.21 and 11.15-11.18, which is identified as the focus text.³ A new methodology is enlisted to provide an analysis and exegesis of the focus text. It may be prudent to present a few remarks on why 8.2 is regarded as the opening text and 11.18 as the closing text. Revelation 8.2 is the starting point of the trumpet judgments with 8.1 serving both as a transitional passage and "a natural conclusion" to the seals.⁴ The strongest argument for seeing 8.2 as the starting point is the formula καὶ εἶδον (and I saw). This formula serves in other parts of the narrative to introduce a new aspect of the vision.⁵ There is general agreement that 9.21 is the end of the passage

¹ In relation to the challenge to interpret Revelation, see the following: Christopher Burdon, *The Apocalypse in England: Revelation Unravelling, 1700-1834* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Kenneth Newport, *Apocalypse and Millennium: Studies in Biblical Eisegesis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and Christopher Rowland and John Barton, eds., *Apocalyptic in History and Tradition* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

² In Hans-Georg Gadamer's, *Truth and Method*, 2nd edition, translated by William Glen-Doepel (London: Sheed and Ward, 1979), 273-274, fusion of horizons is the well-known metaphor for the process of understanding. For Gadamer the text and the interpreter each have a horizon that embraces everything within the limits of its own particular point of view. However, every act of interpretation transforms the horizons of both.

³ Revelation 8.2-9.21 and 11.15-18 is the "focus text." Each trumpet is identified as a symbolic judgment.

⁴ Brian K. Blount, *Revelation: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 157.

⁵ David E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, WBC 52A (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 338, concludes, after an analysis of all of John's 33 uses of the phrase καὶ εἶδον, that the construction serves as an introduction of "a major scene within a continuing vision narrative" cf. 6.1; 8.13; 13.11; 15.2; 19.19; 21.2, 22.

about the sixth trumpet.⁶ Revelation 11.15 is the beginning of the passage about the seventh trumpet and 11.18 is the conclusion.⁷ To strengthen the argument for 11.18 it will be suggested in chapter 2 that 11.19 is an *inclusio*.⁸ These brief comments in relation to the beginning and conclusion of the focus text will be fortified in the next chapter.

Further, the so-called interlude or intercalation of Rev 10.1-11.14 is not addressed.⁹ Firstly, the trumpets are not specifically mentioned in 10.1-11.14. Secondly, an intertextual analysis of this passage is beyond the purview and constraints of this study. Thirdly, even though scholars engage in an analysis of the trumpet judgments that interacts with the interlude, a responsible interpretation of the trumpet judgments can nonetheless be accomplished without specific reference to the interlude. Lastly, the interlude provides a Christian hermeneutical perspective offering encouragement, insight and guidance to the church as it grapples with various challenges in the first-century C.E.¹⁰

The focus text has been deemed by some to be the most difficult passage to interpret in Revelation and hence it will call for the trenchant application of a methodology that will responsibly interpret this enigmatic passage. R.H. Charles says chapter 8 and 9 present “insuperable difficulties.”¹¹ According to Herman Hoeksema, “the interpretation of the trumpets in the book of Revelation is very difficult.”¹² Roy Naden confirms that “Revelation 8 and 9 contain the most graphic example of apocalyptic writing in the Bible. The complexity of the imagery has led to more speculative nonsense than can be found written about any other chapter of John’s final work.”¹³

⁶ J. Ramsey Michaels, *Revelation*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 31, 131; Craig S. Keener, *Revelation*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 45, 270; Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, BNTC (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 20, 150.

⁷ There is agreement that this is indeed so. Cf. Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 167; Keener, *Revelation*, 304; David E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, WBC 52B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 634-47; Contra Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 438.

⁸ See pp. 75-81.

⁹ Scholars vary on terminology demonstrating the multi-faceted importance of the interlude: C. H. Giblin, “Revelation 11.1-13: Its Form, Function and Contextual Integration,” *NTS* 30 (1984): 433-59, calls it an “enlargement;” Martin Kiddle, *The Revelation of St. John*, *The Moffat New Testament Commentary* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1952), 127-29, identifies it as an “excursus” and James L. Resseguie, *The Revelation of John: A Narrative Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 135, who calls it “an embedded narrative.”

¹⁰ Keener, *Revelation*, 279-303; Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 547-632.

¹¹ R.H. Charles, *Revelation*, ICC, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920), 218.

¹² Herman Hoeksema, *Behold He Cometh: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1969), 300.

¹³ Roy Naden, *The Lamb Among the Beasts* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1996), 137.

R.C.H. Lenski laments the inability of interpreters to elaborate on the symbolism in the passages about the fifth and sixth trumpets and suggests one might “simply give up in despair, close the book, and say nothing whatever.”¹⁴ Perhaps the difficulty in interpreting the focus text lies in the fact that “in no part of the Apocalypse are the allusions to the OT so numerous as here.”¹⁵ In fact, the author’s use of antecedent literature and how this is appropriated by the reader is of crucial concern as the author “scarcely ever quotes a whole sentence from his predecessors...No author cites so little and alludes so much.”¹⁶

The last substantive research has been the work of Ronald Gibson who examined all seven trumpet judgments in 1980.¹⁷ The research of Jon Paulien, completed in 1987, focused on the first four trumpet judgments only.¹⁸ I will engage with Ben Witherington III’s socio-rhetorical commentary as he uses the same overall title and methodology as Vernon Robbins.¹⁹ I will seek to ascertain whether or not their categories and methodology are similar. The major commentaries on Revelation by Gregory Beale and David Aune will also be analysed, particularly their work on the trumpet judgments.²⁰ These two commentaries have been chosen because of the exhaustive range of primary and secondary material and depth of analysis provided by Beale in particular.

While these and other scholars have done considerable work on the focus text, a unique contribution to its interpretation is sought with the deployment of socio-rhetorical interpretation (SRI).²¹ In using this approach as an “interpretive analytic,” an examination of

¹⁴ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John’s Revelation* (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1957), 285.

¹⁵ Frederick Denison Maurice, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, 2nd edition (London: Macmillan and Company, 1893), 110.

¹⁶ Austin Farrer, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 30.

¹⁷ Ronald Gibson, *The Meaning and Chronology of the Trumpets of Revelation* (Th.D. diss., Grace Theological Seminary, 1980).

¹⁸ Jon Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, AUSDDS 11 (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1988).

¹⁹ Ben Witherington III, *Revelation*, NCBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

²⁰ G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) and Aune, *Revelation 6-16*.

²¹ This is the abbreviation used by Robbins and other practitioners of this approach. A SRI of apocalyptic literature is in its nascent stages in the biblical academy. See the following: Greg Carey and L. Gregory Bloomquist, eds., *Rhetorical Dimensions of Apocalyptic Discourse* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999); Duane F. Watson, ed. *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament*, SBL Symposium Series 14 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002); David A. deSilva, “Toward a Socio-Rhetorical Taxonomy of Divine Intervention: Miracle Discourse in the Revelation to John,” in *Fabrics of Discourse, Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins*, eds. David B. Gowler, L. Gregory Bloomquist and Duane F. Watson (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 303-16; R. Royalty, “The Rhetoric of Revelation,” in *SBL Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 596-617 and Robert L. Webb, “Intertexture and Rhetorical Strategy in First Peter’s Apocalyptic Discourse: A Study in Sociorhetorical Interpretation,” in *Reading First Peter with New Eyes*:

the historical, social, cultural, ideological, anthropological, theological and biblical context of the focus text will be made.²² Briefly, SRI is an approach to the biblical text that focuses on “values, convictions and beliefs” as discovered in the text as well as “in the world in which we live.”²³ This interpretive analytic facilitates specific awareness of the text itself.²⁴ In fact, Gregory Bloomquist has suggested that “socio-rhetorical analysis is very much an approach that is in the process of being shaped.”²⁵ This study seeks to contribute to the ongoing shaping of SRI and hence a more detailed analysis of this interpretive analytic to Revelation is provided later in this chapter.

Further, the focus text is engaged with from the perspective of the implied reader and implied author as well as the authorial audience.²⁶ It is hoped this approach will lead to a multidimensional appropriation of the text and elicit a fresh discovery of its meaning potentiality.²⁷ Attention is now turned to the major literature on the focus text in order to locate this particular reading.

2. Literature Review

The review proceeds chronologically in terms of the publication of research. Each writer’s methodology, which is the tools the writer employs in the analysis of the text, is scrutinized

Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter, eds. Robert L. Webb and Betsy Bauman-Martin, LNTS 364 (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 72-110. Outside of apocalyptic, Wesley Hiram Wachob, *The Voice of Jesus in the Social Rhetoric of James*, SNTSMS 106 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) has used SRI.

²² In his latest publication, Vernon Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, Vol. 1, Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity Series (Dorset: Deo Publishing, 2009), 4-5, suggests that “sociorhetorical criticism, properly understood and applied, is not a method.” Instead, Robbins believes that sociorhetorical criticism is an interpretive analytic, “applying analytical strategies for the purpose of inviting other analytical strategies where those other strategies could illumine something the first set of strategies did not find, exhibit, discuss, and interpret.” Hence, I will enlist the use of this term.

²³ Vernon Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996), 1.

²⁴ Ibid. According to Vernon K. Robbins, *Beginnings and Developments in Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Atlanta: Emory University, 2004), 1, SRI emerged in the 1970’s and received its name in 1984 with an integration of rhetorical, anthropological and social-psychological insights in a study of the gospel of Mark.

²⁵ L. Gregory Bloomquist, “Paul’s Inclusive Language: The Ideological Texture of Romans 1,” in *Fabrics of Discourse: Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins*, eds. David Gowler, L. Gregory Bloomquist, Duane F. Watson (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 165. For a discussion of the ongoing shaping of SRI see: David B. Gowler, “The Development of Sociorhetorical Criticism,” in *New Boundaries in Old Territory: Form and Social Rhetoric in Mark*, Emory Studies in Early Christianity, Vol. 3. (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 1–35.

²⁶ See pp. 56-9.

²⁷ See the article by Gregory Linton, “Reading the Apocalypse as an Apocalypse,” in *SBL Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 161-186, where he argues, on the basis of the genre and high level of intertextuality of Revelation, that a multidimensional reading of this work is indeed permissible.

and commented on. Finally, the academic and primary literature is surveyed to ascertain the influence of the trumpet symbolism to lay a foundation for the work to follow.

Ronald Gibson

Gibson, who completed his research at Grace Theological Seminary in 1980, states from the outset that his work would proceed along five lines: 1) investigate the use and significance of other biblical trumpets, 2) examine and evaluate other interpretations of the trumpets, 3) affirm the literal interpretation of the trumpets according to the biblical evidence, 4) review the arguments for the chronological setting of the trumpets and 5) set forth the conclusions regarding the seals, trumpets and bowls.²⁸ The central problems Gibson addresses include whether the trumpets are literal or symbolic, the chronological setting of the trumpets, their purpose and nature and their relationship to the seals and bowls.²⁹

Gibson uses a grammatical-historical methodology.³⁰ Interpreters who employ this methodology understand the figurative expressions in Revelation in their literal sense. A grammatical-historical methodology is sensitive to the archeological, linguistic and historical data and their socio-cultural contexts in interpretation. These are examined in the light of the normativity, canonicity, authority, unity and in the indivisible union of the divine and the human in Scripture.³¹ Even though Gibson admits the significant contribution of the OT to John's literary work, he advances no clear methodology for how the OT is to be interpreted in Revelation.

Gibson proposes a literal interpretation of the trumpet judgments with their fulfilment in the last half of the seven year tribulation, according to his understanding of Dan 9.24-27.³² During this period the church has already experienced the rapture and so is in heaven

²⁸ Gibson, *The Meaning and Chronology of the Trumpets of Revelation*, 5-6.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 7-8. Since Gibson does not explicitly clarify his methodology, my assumption is based on his evangelical bias, the seminary where his dissertation was completed and his insistence on a literalistic approach to the interpretation of Revelation. According to Gerhard Hasel, *Biblical Interpretation Today* (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 1985), 98, grammatical-historical methodology is practised largely by evangelicals. It comes under the various nomenclature of historical-theological method (George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974)); exegetical theology (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Towards an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978)); Idem., *Back to the Future: Hints for Interpreting Biblical Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989); theological-historical method (Gerhard Hasel) and historical-grammatical method (J.I. Packer, *God Has Spoken: Revelation and the Bible* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965)).

³¹ Hasel, *Biblical Interpretation Today*, 101-03.

³² Gibson, *The Meaning and Chronology of the Trumpets of Revelation*, 24-5.

awaiting the return of Christ to judge the earth.³³ His interpretation of the first trumpet judgment begins with a detailed outline of various options from a preterist and historicist viewpoint. After this assessment he presents his arguments for a futurist interpretation, seeing Rev 8.7 depicting actual hail, fire and lightning “crashing down upon the earth” sometime during the tribulation.³⁴ Gibson presumably foresees the destruction of trees in this trumpet as taking place in the United States, Japan, Korea, China and Western Europe.³⁵

The fifth trumpet judgment represents demonic affliction during the tribulation that lasts for five months, after which Christ returns in judgment. This demonic plague of real locusts strikes more than three billion living people. The 144 000, which he recognizes as a literal group of Jews, is excluded as they constitute the sealed.³⁶ In the concluding chapter Gibson argues for a recapitulatory view of Revelation, based on the writing style and Semitic thought in the OT. He concludes that the seven trumpet judgments are an expansion of the seventh seal and the bowls an unfolding of the seventh trumpet judgment.³⁷

Gibson’s work is deficient on a number of fronts. The only meaningful contribution he makes is his assessment of the role of the trumpet motif in the OT and his endorsement of the recapitulationist view of Revelation. While serious engagement with the strengths and weaknesses of the grammatical-historical methodology is beyond the purview of this thesis, an essential failure of Gibson’s research is the seeming one-to-one correspondence between events in the OT and events in Revelation, which he places under the guise of continuity between the OT and NT.³⁸ The primary audience of John’s literary work is the seven congregations in Asia Minor and hence a weakness of a futurist approach is that it leaves the book without any significance for this audience. Gibson’s poor knowledge of Greek is

³³ Ibid., 23-4. The concept of the rapture is popular in evangelical circles. Exponents of this view understand Christ’s coming as a secret to rapture the church, after which the earth undergoes a seven year tribulation period followed by Christ returning with the church in glory and judgment. Cf. John F. Walvoord, *Major Bible Prophecies: 37 Crucial Prophecies that Affect You Today* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991) for further articulation of these views. For a critique of this dispensational perspective see George E. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956) and Barbara R. Rossing, *The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

³⁴ Ibid., 91.

³⁵ Ibid., 96.

³⁶ Ibid., 156, 161-62.

³⁷ Ibid., 237, 274-75.

³⁸ While the broad salvation-historical perspective of Scripture is endorsed, that does not warrant the exegetically inconsistent practice of supposed literalness in the OT and hence literalness in Revelation.

evident in limited exegesis which seriously hampers his ability to grasp the nuances of the text and hence to provide a responsible interpretation of the focus text.³⁹

Jon Paulien

Paulien completed his doctoral dissertation on exegetical methodology and literary allusions in Rev 8.7-12 at Andrews University in 1987. His work has been categorized as providing a “history of interpreting the trumpets”⁴⁰ and has been recognized by Greg Beale and Steve Moyise as making a significant contribution to scholarship.⁴¹ In the first chapter he lays out issues of importance in the interpretation of Revelation. These include the text tradition of the OT,⁴² exegetical practices of early Judaism,⁴³ John’s christological use of the OT and the problem of allusions.

In the second chapter he proposes a methodology for the study of Revelation.

The main purpose of this dissertation is to suggest an exegetical method for Revelation which will minimize the interpreter’s Western bias and maximize his / her entering into the very heart and soul of the author’s message. The method consists of four fundamental steps: 1) basic exegesis of the passage being studied, including attention to the non-canonical background to the book, 2) an examination of relevant parallels to that passage in other parts of Revelation, 3) a careful search of the Old Testament to find the root sources of the imagery in the passage which can be found there and 4) consideration of how early Christians like John transformed the meaning of those symbols in the light of the Christ-event.⁴⁴

The methodology, however, is not new but has been previously postulated by numerous writers.⁴⁵ Paulien examines ten major commentaries in an attempt to establish how allusions

³⁹ Gibson uses the English translation for all the trumpets and provides limited analysis of Greek terms. See pp. 108, 116, where the third and fourth trumpet is written in English.

⁴⁰ Robert Wall, *Revelation*, NIBC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 134.

⁴¹ G.K. Beale, *John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*, JSNTSup 166 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 21, says Paulien’s work has “advanced our understanding of exegetical methodology in analyzing OT allusions;” Steve Moyise, “Does the Author of Revelation Misappropriate the Scriptures?” *AUSS* 40 (2002): 3-21, classifies his work as most important in establishing criteria for allusions.

⁴² No conclusive arguments are brought forward in this regard and it seems best to Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 100, that “the widest possible exposure to the various languages and text traditions” be made use of in the interpretive enterprise.

⁴³ Paulien’s categories include a typological approach, targumic exegesis and midrash. He provides brief analysis of each to substantiate his position, see *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 57-64.

⁴⁴ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 156-57.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 163-65. Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 164, writes: “H. Hailey argues that recent scholarship has seen a trend toward studying the Apocalypse 1) in the light of its historical setting 2) with attention to the Old Testament source of the symbolism, and 3) in the atmosphere of “New Testament truth.””

are developed in Rev 8.7-12. He discovers that all ten commentators differ widely over the number of allusions from the OT that each of them find in this passage.

Paulien seeks to differentiate methodologically between echoes and direct allusions. He states that echoes are not dependent “on the author’s conscious intention,” simply being “an idea the author picked up in previous literature, but was probably unaware of the original source.”⁴⁶ Direct allusions are classified as “certain,” “probable,” “possible,” “uncertain” and “non-allusion.”⁴⁷ This aspect of his method seems too cumbersome even though he claims that his method seeks to identify allusions on a “more objective and scientific basis.”⁴⁸ Direct allusions are to be determined on the basis of internal and external evidence.

Internal criteria include the establishment of verbal, thematic and structural parallels. The more verbal, thematic and structural parallels are evident in a text, the stronger the case for the possibility of authorial intention. Of the three categories, structural parallels are the most certain because of the “number of interlocking verbal and thematic parallels” they contain.⁴⁹ The weakest category is thematic parallels.⁵⁰ Paulien sees the external evidence of Judaic and Greco-Roman culture as somewhat important in the hermeneutical process, but demotes their significance to assisting only in the articulation of echoes.

Paulien interprets the first trumpet judgment as the judgment on the Jewish nation by the Romans in 70 C.E.,⁵¹ the second trumpet judgment as the eventual demise of the Roman empire,⁵² the third trumpet judgment as the “spiritual fall of leading Christian teachers whose doctrines result in spiritual decline and death”⁵³ and the fourth trumpet judgment as a development of the third trumpet judgment, namely, continuing apostasy from the apostolic gospel.⁵⁴

⁴⁶ Ibid., 172.

⁴⁷ Paulien sees the first two as having a higher level of certainty with the third category being problematic, in terms of certainty. The last two are not to be interpreted as direct allusions. His lack of sufficient controls in this matter has him place “echoes” in the same category as “probable” allusions.

⁴⁸ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 178.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 185-86.

⁵⁰ Jon Paulien, *The Deep Things of God: An Insiders Guide to the Book of Revelation* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2004), 142-46 (144).

⁵¹ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 380, where he sees the first trumpet setting the basic theme of the synoptic apocalypse into the context of a series of judgements leading up to the consummation.

⁵² Ibid., 388.

⁵³ Ibid., 403.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 415. Steven Thompson, “Review of Jon Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets: Literary Allusions and Interpretation of Rev 8:7-12*” *AUSS* 28 (1990): 269-71, suggests that Paulien’s assertion that Revelation contains “genuine prophecy of future events” (quoted from Paulien, *Decoding*, 361) is “problematic and

Although Paulien has made some advances in exegetical methodology in the interpretation of Revelation, Beale nevertheless claims that Paulien's formal discussion of echoes is too brief. He argues that Paulien fails to address the "degree of probability he sees echoes having, despite the fact that he sees echoes as being unconscious and unintentional."⁵⁵ Further, a weakness in Paulien's work is the large number of echoes he finds for specific texts in Rev 8.7-12 that are seemingly spread across the OT.⁵⁶ His method in this regard is "too uncontrolled if several echoes from different portions of the OT are posited which have no ostensible link with OT allusions already clearly identified in a verse."⁵⁷ Four key ingredients will be put forward later to clarify what constitutes an echo.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, Paulien's close reading of 8.7-12, the rigorous application of his methodology and the scholarly consensus of the influence of his work should cause any student of Revelation to thoroughly engage with his research.⁵⁹ While his work does make a limited contribution to our knowledge of the use of the OT in Revelation, its methodological soundness makes it still worthy of serious consideration in the interpretation of the focus text.⁶⁰ Paulien's methodological insights will also aid the interpreter in studying other parts of Revelation as well.

David E. Aune

Aune's magisterial commentary on Revelation was published from 1997-1998 in three distinct volumes in the Word Commentary series. It is the second volume that attends

unconvincing in places." Nevertheless, claims Thompson, with "further argumentation and documentation this weakness could have been salvaged."

⁵⁵ Paulien only provides five pages of discussion on this subject and p. 305-06 is simply restating and clarifying what he had already said on p. 175-77. Cf. G.K. Beale, "Review of J. Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets: Literary Allusions and Interpretation of Rev 8:7-12*," *JBL* 111 (1992): 358-61.

⁵⁶ Beale focuses specifically on Rev 8.7. However an examination of all the verses under consideration in Paulien's research, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 259, 276, 293, demonstrates that he has large numbers of echoes for each of the verses without sufficient controls.

⁵⁷ Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*, 21.

⁵⁸ See pp. 48-51.

⁵⁹ See the helpful reviews of his work in Marko Jauhiainen, *The Use of Zechariah in Revelation*, WUNT 2. Reihe 199 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 21-3 and Russell S. Morton, *One Upon the Throne and the Lamb: A Tradition Historical / Theological Analysis of Revelation 4-5*, Studies in Biblical Literature 110 (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 5-6. For an analysis of various church-historical approaches to Revelation see Richard Sabiun, "Historicism: The Adventist Approach? A Response to the Challenges of Historicism," *JAAS* 11 (2008): 159-74.

⁶⁰ Beale, "Review of Paulien," 361. So too, Thompson, "Review of Paulien," 270. Paulien also wrote an article, *Interpreting the Seven Trumpets* (Berrien Springs: Biblical Research Institute, 1986). The article will not be discussed as it also employs the same methodology Paulien uses in his dissertation.

specifically to the focus text and which will be the subject of analysis. However, the first volume will be also be scrutinized as it discusses issues of methodology. Aune's work provides a type of historical and cultural encyclopedia of background information on the first-century context in which Revelation emerged and is by far the most exhaustive commentary in relation to its provision of primary and secondary sources.

Aune has masterfully used diachronic composition criticism together with tradition and literary criticism. This reformulated approach to source criticism means that there are two important foci for Aune. Firstly, the significance of understanding the composition of Revelation as the end product and secondly as a literary process that took place during a relatively lengthy period of time. Moreover, this methodology seeks "the identification and analysis of the various written and oral sources," the various stages in the composition earmarked by "telltale signs" in the final composition and attempts to reconstruct the theological motivations that characterize the constituent parts of Revelation.⁶¹

Aune begins the section on the focus text of his commentary in the same manner as he does his previous sections of work, with a rigorous analysis of textual matters. Each verse is critically engaged within a study of the variant readings of the text and Aune articulates sound judgment in making conclusions in this matter. After providing an outline of the passage under consideration, Aune addresses the literary aspects of the text without recourse to historical, social or cultural contexts. In the next section of material he discusses the trumpet motif as a structuring device and highlights the parallels within the focus text as well as the broader context of Revelation.⁶² This highlights various literary techniques, like parallelism, for example, that are employed by the author.⁶³

Through the employment of tradition criticism Aune argues that the blowing of each successive trumpet is an eschatological application of the ten plagues inflicted on Egypt by Yahweh. Having made this foundational statement Aune moves on from there to address three difficult issues in relation to the interpretation of Revelation. Firstly, he raises the issue of recapitulation between the bowls and the trumpets; secondly, he discusses the issue of the

⁶¹ Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, cxviii.

⁶² Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 491-98.

⁶³ Cf. Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, revised and expanded (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008). For literary parallel discussions in Revelation see: William Shea, "The Parallel Literary Structure of Revelation 12 and 20," *AUSS* 23 (1985): 37-54; Idem., "Revelation 5 and 19 as Literary Reciprocals," *AUSS* 22 (1984): 249-57.

seven trumpets, seven bowls and the ten plagues of Exod 7.8-12.36; and thirdly he seeks to address the compositional problem of the intercalation of Rev 10.1-11.13 between the sixth and seventh trumpet.⁶⁴ After canvassing numerous scholarly options and citing an array of sources, Aune states, in relation to the use of seven trumpets in Revelation and the use of the ten plagues in Exodus, that “the tradition of the Egyptian plagues vacillates in early Jewish literature with regard to their number, order and character.”⁶⁵ In addition, Aune suggests that “the plagues are not enumerated in Exodus, thus leaving open the possibility for a certain degree of imprecision and vagueness.”⁶⁶

Interpretational clarity is what is lacking in Aune’s mastery of the text.⁶⁷ The seven trumpet motif is enlisted, not just because seven speaks of eschatological completeness, but also because of the ten Exodus plagues only seven fell on Egypt, while three fell on the land of Goshen (where the Israelites lived).⁶⁸ The notion of seven, in a similar vein to the Exodus plagues, is therefore also employed to show that the trumpet judgments fall on the enemies of God’s people.

Moreover, Aune provides a detailed account of the use of the trumpet motif in the OT and Jewish exegetical tradition.⁶⁹ He provides ten uses of the trumpet: 1) to alert; 2) to signal a raid; 3) to provide a warning for an impending attack; 4) to signal a withdrawal; 5) as a plea to God for assistance; 6) to designate a victory; 7) to publicize good news; 8) as an accompaniment to cultic services; 9) “as part of a theophany scene and 10) in various eschatological contexts.”⁷⁰ Aune points out that the concept of trumpet is absorbed into Jewish apocalyptic imagery where it mostly refers to eschatological judgment.⁷¹

⁶⁴ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 499.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 503.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 503.

⁶⁷ For similar conclusions see Morton, *One Upon the Throne and the Lamb*, 26, where he writes: “Aune’s second weakness is that he pays insufficient attention to the theological meaning of John’s imagery.” For further critique along similar lines see M. Eugene Boring, “Review of David E. Aune, *Revelation*, WBC, Volume 52 A, B, C,” *Int* 54 (2000): 312-16.

⁶⁸ See Exod 8.22. Alan Cole, *Exodus*, TOTC (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 94, writes: “Here is the first mention of ‘preferential treatment’ or special providence for Israel, in connection with the plagues, and also a deliberate justification of such preferential treatment. The purpose is to show by this setting-apart that the plague is no mere accident, but instead God’s judgment upon Egypt.” See also Philo, VI, *Moses*, I, xxvi, 350-51, who has a nuanced position. He writes: “With all these plagues and punishments was Egypt admonished, none of which touched the Hebrews, though they dwelt in the same cities and villages and houses...” I interpret Philo in this passage to mean that judgment for the Egyptians was vindication for the Hebrews.

⁶⁹ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 510.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Aune's comments on Rev 8.12 will now be considered. It reads: "The fourth angel sounded his trumpet (Καὶ ὁ τέταρτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν), and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars (τρίτον τῶν ἀστέρων), so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night." Aune contends that the author thinks of the sun, moon and stars like torches, "which burn out after a certain length of time, or an eclipse, in which the light from the sun or the moon is suddenly, if temporarily, obscured" and then quotes Amos 8.9 and Herodotus 7.37.2 to provide support for this idea.⁷² While Aune does direct the reader to Bousset and Charles for additional comments on the passage about the fourth trumpet, he provides no further analysis on this particular point.

Aune maintains that a prodigy is also evident in the Roman writer Lucan (1.536-43; LCL tr.): "The moon suddenly was smitten by the earth's shadow and grew dim. The sun himself, while rearing his head in the zenith, hid his burning chariot in black darkness and veiled his sphere in gloom, forcing mankind to despair of daylight."⁷³ A flaw which hinders his interpretation of the focus text is that he provides no conceptual, semantic or linguistic links between this text from Lucan and that of Revelation. While it can be argued that the use of "moon," "sun" and "darkness" are present in both texts, Aune does not, even implicitly, develop these possible intertextual connections.⁷⁴ Even though Aune's work is characteristically weak in actual explanation and interpretation, his work is deserving of serious attention in the interpretation of Revelation. His analysis of the similarities between Revelation and antecedent and contemporaneous literature as well as the development of the intratextual, linguistic and structural nuances in the text is most welcome.

Gregory K. Beale

Beale's monumental commentary, published in 1999 by Eerdmans, is a marvelous feat for scholarship on Revelation. His commentary has a wide array of primary and secondary literature and provides an exhaustive OT and Jewish background analysis of the focus text.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 522.

⁷⁴ This weakness has also been picked up by Jon Paulien, "Review of David Aune, Revelation, 3 Volumes, WBC, Dallas: Word Books, 1997-1998," *AUSS* 37 (1999): 286-88, though not in direct relation to the fourth trumpet but to his work as a whole.

Further, he articulates a unique interpretational perspective on the focus text which needs to be responded to.

The methodology employed by Beale is not overtly articulated. It is assumed he has employed a grammatical-historical methodology. Beale develops his methodology by tracing the OT text from the text of Revelation, examining the context of the OT text or passage in the OT and then importing that OT context into the context of the text of Revelation.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Beale examines the Revelation text Christologically. He then pursues the trajectory of the text in Jewish exegetical tradition and sees what weight this bears on the interpretive process in Revelation.

Beale's argument for the supremacy of the OT context in the interpretive process is based on four presuppositions:

- 1) Christ corporately represents Israel of the OT and NT, 2) because history is under the sovereignty of Christ the earlier part of canonical history corresponds typologically to latter parts of that same history, 3) Christ's first coming has inaugurated the age of end-time fulfillment and 4) Christ is the centre of history and is the key to interpreting the OT.⁷⁶

This forms the bedrock of his argumentation in his commentary as well.⁷⁷ Further, Beale contends that authorial intention is recoverable and necessary as the outcome of the interpretive enterprise and so meaning for him is derived from John's original intention.

The interpreter of Revelation needs to be cautious in articulating a definitive stance in relation to John's use of the OT.⁷⁸ My chief concern is not so much to categorize the historical author's use of the OT, but rather to ascertain the manner in which the allusions and echoes emerge, intersect and interact in the focus text and the exegetical and hermeneutical value this brings to the interpretational enterprise. Arguments regarding the veracity of authorial intention will be discussed later.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Beale, *Revelation*, 85, writes: "To clarify what is meant by "context" is important. What is usually meant is *literary* context: how a passage functions in the logical flow of a book's argument. But there is also *historical* context. For example, the historical context of Hos. 11.1 is the Exodus and not the argument of the book of Hosea. In addition, there is also the *thematic* OT context: a NT writer might focus first on a general OT theme (e.g. judgment or restoration) and then appeal to a number of specific passages from different OT books that pertain to that theme." My concern here, and throughout my work, is the literary and thematic context.

⁷⁶ Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament*, 45, 127.

⁷⁷ Beale, *Revelation*, 81-6; 96-9.

⁷⁸ See Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*, JSNTSup 115 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 108-46, who draws on the resources of intertextuality and suggests that there is no determinative consistency in the manner in which John has used the OT in Revelation.

⁷⁹ See pp. 41-3.

The noteworthy example of Beale's contention that the OT context dominates the interpretive process in Revelation is his use of the Exodus plagues as the primary OT background for focus text in Revelation. Beale writes the following:

God's overall intention in the plagues was to harden Pharaoh's heart so that he would not release Israel (Exod. 4.21) and to give himself the opportunity to perform his plague signs (Exod. 7.3; 10.1-2). These signs were not intended to coerce Pharaoh into releasing Israel but functioned primarily to demonstrate Yahweh's incomparable omnipotence to the Egyptians. God continued to harden Pharaoh's heart so that he could multiply his signs.⁸⁰

Moreover, the defeat of the Egyptians at the Red Sea is for Beale the ultimate conclusion for all the previous plagues. The Exodus plagues are not meant as warnings that could lead Pharaoh and the Egyptians to contrition but rather as judgments against the Egyptians because of their recalcitrance and to portray God's "incomparability and glory."⁸¹ Beale writes: "we have concluded above that the trumpets represent punitive judgments against hardened unbelievers instead of mere warnings to induce repentance."⁸² It is this theological interpretation that Beale applies to the Exodus plagues that is of serious concern, as this in turn supplies the entire framework within which the focus text is understood.

However, an analysis of the Exodus plagues presents other interpretative options which Beale seems to have not canvassed at all. While recognizing this as a theologically charged subject, the Exodus plagues were not meant to portray Yahweh hardening Pharaoh's heart.⁸³ Beale's position – that the Egyptian plagues were primarily about judgment without the possibility of repentance – is an unattractive hypothesis for the following reasons:

Firstly, Beale does not provide an analysis of the Exodus passages under consideration. His position seems to portray the inevitability of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart and hence the outcome of the entire narrative. Secondly, the weight Beale assigns to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is overstated. The act of hardening does not make one irrevocably resistant to outside influence. For example, though God has hardened Pharaoh's

⁸⁰ Beale, *Revelation*, 465. He also contends that "Moses' command to let Israel go, followed by an indictment of Pharaoh and announcement of the coming judgment. The announcement assumes that Pharaoh will not release the people and that judgment will definitely follow." *Ibid.*, 466.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, 471.

⁸³ Beale, *Revelation*, 518, recognizes this. He writes: "This issue of God's sovereign plan over against human repentance cannot be analyzed fully here and can only be discussed adequately by appeal to relevant passages elsewhere in Scripture." He provides an extensive list of scholars in n. 114 that need to be consulted.

servants hearts in Exod 10.1 their response in 10.7 is remarkable. Even after the hardening, the servants see the negative impact the plagues are having on Egypt, “are open to a different future for Israel” and implore Pharaoh to amend his ways.⁸⁴ The continued references to hardening in the text point out the possible buildup of hardness over time and hence “the effect of hardening at the beginning of the plague cycle is different from its effect at the end.”⁸⁵

Thirdly, Pharaoh’s obduracy and who is responsible for it is not as clearly apparent, as there are three different terms used to describe the hardening. In five instances the piel form of the Hebrew verb used is כָּבַד (meaning “to be heavy”) which “creates a sustained set of puns.”⁸⁶ The other dominant term used is חָזַק (meaning “to be strong”) and is attributed to P which can be translated literally as Pharaoh’s heart becoming “strong” in its resolve to refuse to release the Israelites.⁸⁷ The last term used is קָשָׁה (meaning “to harden”) which appears once in Exod 7.3. The assignment of a different subject to the English verb “to harden,” where Pharaoh is the subject in the first five plagues and Yahweh is the subject in the subsequent ones, keeps the sequence of the narrative from seeming explicitly “deterministic.”⁸⁸

Fourth, Beale’s perception that Yahweh desires to demonstrate his omnipotence to the Egyptians through these plagues is debatable. The assumption that Pharaoh and the Egyptians are the only objects of Yahweh’s powerful acts, make Yahweh out to be a tyrant. Conversely a balanced view, which is a more accurate reflection of the text, is that “the

⁸⁴ Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox, 1991), 97.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 97-8.

⁸⁶ According to Carol Meyers, *Exodus*, NCBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 70, Moses claims to be “heavy” of mouth and tongue in Exod 4.10; the labor of the Israelites becomes “heavier” in Exod 5.9 and four of the judgments are considered “heavy” (8.24; 9.3, 18, 24; 10.14).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* In agreement Fretheim, *Exodus*, 98, writes: “That both God and Pharaoh are subjects of the hardening is important. Pharaoh as subject actually counts for something; decisions he makes are related to his own stubbornness. The agonizing of Pharaoh gives evidence of internal decision making processes. God as subject intensifies Pharaoh’s own obduracy.” Both need to be kept in balance, Pharaoh hardens his own heart and so does God. Peter Enns, *Exodus*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 219, has a slightly nuanced position. He writes: “The tension cannot be resolved in a facile manner by suggesting, for example, that Pharaoh has already demonstrated his recalcitrance, so Yahweh merely helps the process along, or that he is doing what Pharaoh would have done on his own anyway...Yahweh hardens his heart. It is best for the tension of the text to remain.”

center of purpose of each of these narratives and all of them together is Israel, the community of faith,”⁸⁹ the Egyptians and indeed the whole earth (Exod 9.16).

Based on these arguments, a mediating position of limited determinism is preferable. God’s sovereignty does not destroy human freedom of choice, nor does human freedom to choose leave God less sovereign. Both God’s sovereignty and human freedom of choice operate in this tradition.⁹⁰ Hence, this study will argue that the trumpets are judgments intended to lead people to repentance. This tentative conclusion challenges Beale’s understanding of the trumpet judgments and demonstrates the importance of critiquing his commentary. In concluding this review, it should be stated that Beale’s work is still nonetheless most welcome and very important for the interpreter of the trumpet judgments and Revelation as a whole.

Ben Witherington III

Witherington published his socio-rhetorical commentary in 2003. He understands the seven trumpet judgments as not being punitive or final but rather as chastisements meant to lead humankind to repentance. Trumpets are associated as instruments of warning in a war situation, whether calling for attack or retreat or just alerting. The horrific nature of the images used by John in this section of his work make it evident that the material is not to be taken literally. The point for Witherington is that God’s judgments are horrific and will be devastating to humans.⁹¹

Witherington claims to have employed sociorhetorical criticism in his commentary.⁹² However, his use and understanding of the term is entirely dissimilar to that of Robbins and of this study. In fact, Witherington states that his approach has a different “orientation” to that of Robbins.⁹³ For example, he has no interest in an analysis of the text itself in what Robbins calls inner texture with the different categories of repetitive and progressive texture. He fails to develop a comprehensive intertexture of critical texts in the trumpets material. I intend to use the categories of allusion and echo of which Robbins also makes use.

⁸⁹ John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3 (Waco: Word Publishing, 1987), 105.

⁹⁰ Jon L. Dybdahl, *Exodus*, The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier (Boise: Pacific Press, 1994), 82.

⁹¹ Witherington, *Revelation*, 147.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 53.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 202.

Witherington does not address the intertextual dynamics of the text in terms of allusions and echoes in a sustained manner.⁹⁴

On occasion, he does make broad reference to social and cultural influences on the text, but then again not to the depth of analysis or with the categories used by Robbins. For example, in relation to the angels bound at the great river Euphrates in the passage about the sixth trumpet, Witherington raises the generally acknowledged possibility that the author has the Parthian invasion in mind as a referent for his Roman readers and furthermore that his Jewish readers would have in mind the Babylonian and Assyrian onslaughts.⁹⁵ Witherington also fails to use the categories of ideological texture. Ideological texture is concerned with systems of power and how this affects individuals and groups. The implications of power are not worked out in the focus text in any way in Witherington's discussion. The passage about the seventh trumpet, which addresses issues of power and authority, has only a few lines of discussion in Witherington's commentary.⁹⁶

It is possible that Witherington has adapted Robbins approach but he certainly has not expatiated on SRI in the manner and with the categories I propose. Witherington has restricted his analysis to the historical concerns of the first-century audience. Further, his literary analysis of the text of Revelation is weak. For example, Witherington does not address or identify literary techniques like chiasm or parallelism in the focus text. Duane Watson is in agreement with my position as he writes: "Two commentaries claiming to be socio-rhetorical, although excellent as commentaries, did not move beyond traditional historical-critical methods of interpretation with an emphasis on social history."⁹⁷

Witherington lists several keys to understanding the seven trumpets:

- 1) The three woes should be seen as identical to the last trumpets blasts, describing the same reality.
- 2) The third woe and the seventh trumpet are important for John's purposes in this segment.
- 3).... The delay in the second sequence of seven before the seventh trumpet is for

⁹⁴ Witherington does not clearly distinguish between an allusion and echo. See Witherington, *Revelation*, 153. Further, in relation to the interrelationship between texts, he uses phrases like "corresponds to" and "remarkable coherence." Idem., *Revelation*, 148, 153.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 154.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 160. There are six lines discussing Rev 11.15-17.

⁹⁷ "Why We Need Socio-Rhetorical Commentary and What it Might Look Like," in *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps, JSNTSup 195 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 129. The two commentaries are *Conflict and Community at Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) and *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

the sake of the witness of the people of God to the world. 4) There is an intricate structure to the judgments sequence. In Rev. 4.5; 8.5; 11.19 and 16.18-21 we have a formulaic listing of calamities basically in the same order used to link this material together.⁹⁸

The keys are quite basic and don't present anything unique. He recognizes John's free adaptation of OT traditions, particularly the Exodus/Sinai tradition. His discussion of the trumpet judgments focuses on correspondences to the Egyptian plagues and other antecedent traditions. Even though Witherington does draw parallels between Rev 8 and the Exodus material, he recognizes John's employment of the Exodus/Sinai motif on a "grander scale."⁹⁹

The analysis of the passage about the fifth trumpet brings to the fore the debate as to whether the figure of Rev 9.1 is the same as the figure in Rev 20.1 who comes down from heaven with the key to the abyss. Witherington aligns himself with Robert Mounce who identifies the two angels at one point acting for God in judgment, at another in mercy.¹⁰⁰ His work on fallen angels in early Judaism and Christianity is illuminating. He combines Jude 6, 2 Pet 2.4 and 1 Pet 3.19-20 for analysis. He understands "all these New Testament texts as pointing to the story in Gen 6.1-4 where God was so outraged by what the angels did with the daughters of humanity that God brought a flood upon the earth."¹⁰¹

In addition, the Gen 6.1-4 text which mentions the fallen angels or spirits, also has "the notion of their imprisonment" in a pit or abyss.¹⁰² To authenticate his claim for the importance of Gen 6.1-4 in understanding the NT texts as well as to assess the progress of revelation within the OT corpus itself, Witherington discusses Isa 24.21-22 and *1 En.* 10.4-6 which refer to the abyss and the concept of binding.¹⁰³ Isaiah 24.21-22 reads: "In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days."

Witherington maintains that while the powers in heaven are not explicitly identified, they can nonetheless be recognized as rebellious as they are likely controlling the kings of the earth. Various commentators understand the "powers of heaven" to refer to angelic

⁹⁸ Witherington, *Revelation*, 148.

⁹⁹ Ibid. By "grander scale" Witherington means that the previous pattern of the Exodus deliverance is exceeded as the promised land is on this occasion the New Jerusalem and the judgment involves all of humanity.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 150.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 152.

¹⁰² Ibid., 150.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 151.

beings who inhabit the heavens.¹⁰⁴ What is crucial about this passage is “the stress that these powers are put in something like an extraterrestrial prison or holding cell until the time comes for them to be punished.”¹⁰⁵ The importance of the Enochian text for Witherington’s analysis is that a particular demon, Azazel, is named. With these texts as background Witherington goes into a discussion of the aforementioned NT texts and in fact claims “a remarkable coherence between these five texts.”¹⁰⁶ In light of his discussion Witherington calls for a reconsideration of both Rev 9.1 and Rev 20.1-2. Because both 9.1 and 20.1-2 speak of the binding of the demonic in some pit and then their later release, this points to John being aware of the same tradition as the earlier texts and that he makes subsequent use of these traditions.¹⁰⁷

A number of areas in Witherington’s work deserve critique. Firstly, his discussion of Rev 9.1 only draws on comments from Caird and Mounce and is limited in developing the textual and thematic links between 9.1 and 20.1. I hope to study this more carefully.¹⁰⁸ Secondly, while he finds no significance in the concept of one-third repeatedly mentioned in the text I intend to demonstrate the significance of this term in the interpretation of the trumpet judgments.¹⁰⁹

Thirdly, in relation to the passage about the second trumpet Witherington suggests that the Jews saw the eruption of Vesuvius as a judgment on Rome “and Rome may soon come into the picture of our material here as well.”¹¹⁰ However, he does not develop this idea further in relation specifically to the trumpet judgments. I foresee the Roman empire emerging strongly in the intertextual dynamics of the focus text. Fourth, Witherington does not develop the intratextual relationship between the sealing of Rev 9.4 and that of Rev 7.1-8 which is something I intend to pursue.¹¹¹ Overall, Witherington does not make any substantive claims neither does he present any fresh historical or interpretational insights in

¹⁰⁴ S. H. Widyapranawa, *Isaiah 1-39, The Lord is Savior: Faith in National Crisis*, ITC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 146. See also John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 454-55; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 19 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 356-57; Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27, A Continental Commentary*, Translated by Thomas H. Trapp (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 505-10.

¹⁰⁵ Witherington, *Revelation*, 151.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 153.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ See pp. 120-22.

¹⁰⁹ The phrase is mentioned 28 times in 8.7-9.18.

¹¹⁰ Witherington, *Revelation*, 149.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 150.

relation to the focus text. Despite these critiques, Witherington's work does make a limited contribution to studies on Revelation.¹¹²

3. An Introduction to the Use of the Trumpet in the OT, Second Temple, Greco-Roman and NT Literature

The trumpet imagery is used in the focus text at Rev 8.2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11; 9.1, 13 and 11.15. Because this is the governing symbol in the focus text, I want to explore, as far as possible, the range of its influence and impact. It is assumed that the OT is a single unified document that makes sense on its own, though my reading will also be influenced by diachronic considerations as well.¹¹³ This compositional and literary unity is equally assumed for Revelation.¹¹⁴

If one of the primary quarries from which the textual material is hewn is the OT then the use of the concept of trumpet (σαλπίζω) will evoke a broad range of meaning from within that corpus. The necessity of studying the concept of trumpet and the blasts associated with them is underscored by Paul Minear when he writes:

In apprehending the full impact of the trumpet blast on the images of Israel, one needs to keep in mind these and many other allusions accruing from the long history of the exile and exodus, warfare and wilderness, covenant and cultus. If one gathers together all of these

¹¹² Contra, Thomas Heike, Review of Ben Witherington III, *RBL* 7 (2004): 1-4, who states that "this holds especially true since Witherington commands the state-of-the-art of biblical exegesis by applying new literary methods, such as the sociorhetorical approach."

¹¹³ Jauhainen, *The Use of Zechariah in Revelation*, 39-40.

¹¹⁴ Adela Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 31, 55; James Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament*, SNTSMS 54 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 87; Leonard Thompson, "The Mythic Unity of the Apocalypse," in *SBL Seminar Papers*, ed. Kent Harold Richards (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 13-28 and Frederick Mazzaferri, *The Genre of the Book of Revelation from a Source-Critical Perspective* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), 8-32, has a discussion on the unity of Revelation and various theories of redaction. He presents arguments for the strong scholarly consensus in favor of the book's unity. This follows his conclusion that "John was the sole author of the book" and that "major redaction ... is quite out of the question" (especially 32). Contra Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, cxviii-cxxxiv, who divides the writing of Revelation into three stages produced for a variety of reasons over a twenty or thirty year period. The author later combined the separate tracts into a single document. Josephine Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, AB 38 (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1975), 22-37, suggests that Rev 4-11 was written by John the Baptist and that Rev 12-19 was added by a later disciple of John. The final form of Revelation, including 1-3 and 20-22 was finished still later by a Jewish Christian disciple. For some interesting propositions in the 19th century on the issue of Revelation's unity, see the review by Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Offenbarung Johannis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1906), 109-10. Further, more recently, Steve Moyise, "Word Frequencies in the Book of Revelation," *AUSS* 43 (2005): 285-99, dismisses the argument of Richard Bauckham that the numbers in Revelation communicate theological content and hence unify the book as a whole. While his arguments in relation to the numbers four, twelve and twenty-eight are sustainable, the number seven, as Moyise admits, does convey meaning and serves to unify the book.

allusions he will be better prepared to understand the prophetic announcement of a day of terrible judgment ushered in by the ominous warning of the trumpet.¹¹⁵

Obviously an entire cultural symbol system around the trumpet motif had developed in Jewish thinking. N.T. Wright maintains that the stories that make up and comprise a nation or group express a particular worldview and “the answers which it provides to the questions of identity, environment, evil and eschatology are expressed in cultural symbols.”¹¹⁶ It will be demonstrated that the trumpet symbol did indeed take on a rich cultural meaning from the OT period all the way through to the first-century C.E. milieu.¹¹⁷

a. Trumpets and Liturgy

The most dominant setting is a liturgical one, which points to communal gatherings for worship, prayer, festivals and various cultic offerings. The covenant was the central component of Israel’s relationship with Yahweh and it comes as no surprise that whenever the covenant was renewed or remembered in a particular context, it would be accompanied with the blowing of trumpets.¹¹⁸ The cultic importance of the trumpet is depicted in its continued use for New Moon festivals, the New Year’s feast, Passover and the Day of Atonement (Lev 23.24-25). Philo mentions the blowing of the trumpet “in the temple at the same time that the sacrifices are brought there, and its name of “trumpet feast” is derived from this.”¹¹⁹ He suggests that the blowing of the trumpet is a reminder of a special event which took place when the law was given. Philo has in mind here the experience of Israel at the foot of Sinai. The sound of the trumpet was to strike fear into the hearts of those who were far and near and “that such mighty signs portended mighty consequences.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Paul Minear, *Christian Hope and the Second Coming* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 195. Cf. Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2002), 275; Eugene M. Boring, *Revelation, IBC* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989), 134; Barnabas Lindars, “The Sound of the Trumpet: Paul and Eschatology,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 67 (1985), 774; and the article by Friedrich, *TDNT*, Vol. 7, 78-81.

¹¹⁶ N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol. 1 (London: SPCK, 1992), 124.

¹¹⁷ I am indebted to the work of Ronald Gibson and Jon Paulien in this section of work. However, I have independently studied the other primary and secondary material. This section is important to lay a foundation for this thesis.

¹¹⁸ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 206-7.

¹¹⁹ Philo, VII, *The Special Laws*, II, xxxi, 425.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

b. Trumpets and Battle

The second setting is one in which Israel was summoned to battle (Judg 3.27; 6.34; Jer 51.27). On more than forty-three occasions the OT mentions trumpets in relation to war and other battle contexts.¹²¹ The complex integration of life in Israel in terms of liturgy and war is evident in that while the trumpet is employed for the purposes of war it still has liturgical connotations. One evidence of this is that the priests handled the battle trumpets of Israel (Num 10.8-10). There are three OT passages which speak of seven trumpeters who formed part of a ceremonial procession (Josh 6; 1 Chron 15.24 and Neh 12.41). Two of these passages refer to an ark. Of the two, Josh 6 seems the more likely text based on similar structural parallels.¹²²

The following structural parallels are evident: seven trumpets in Josh 6 and Rev 8-11; God gives the command to attack Jericho in Josh 6.2, so likewise in Rev 8.4 where the angel takes the censer and fills it with fire and hurls it to the earth before God's throne;¹²³ seven priestly figures in Josh 6 and seven angels in Rev 8.7, 8, 10, 12, 9.1, 13, 11.15; the presence of the ark in Josh 6.3, 12-13 and the mention of the ark in Rev 11.19;¹²⁴ God's mercy is seen in Josh 6.22-23 where Rahab, her family and all those who belong to her are saved, so also in Rev 11.13 where the survivors of the earthquake that devastates the city are terrified and give God glory; the people made up an army in Josh 6.7 and in Rev 7.3-8, which is prior to the narrative on the trumpet judgments, the people of God are here portrayed as conducting holy war by remaining faithful despite earthly suffering.¹²⁵ In Josh 6 God instructed Joshua in an obscure battle strategy. The Israelite army was to march around Jericho once every day for six days and seven times on the seventh, led by seven priests with trumpets, who were the

¹²¹ For example see Judg 3.17; 6.34; 7.8; 16.22; Neh 4.18-20; Jer. 6.1; Ezek 33.3-6; Hos 5.8; 2 Sam 13.3; 20.1.

¹²² According to G.K. Beale, *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 307, a structural dynamic is evident when whole sections of the OT are used by the author in a particular passage of Revelation. Normally the ideas and content are followed without exact wording. Beale suggests, in light of the similarities between Daniel 7 and 1 En. 90.9-27, that such structural dependence could be termed "apocalyptic midrash." Idem., *The Use of Daniel*, 86, 171. Frederick Denison Maurice, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, 2nd edition (London: Macmillan and Company, 1893), 110, also suggests that the Jericho episode is formative for understanding the focus text. See Beale, *Revelation*, 468; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 276, simply has a reference to the Joshua episode.

¹²³ According to Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 216, the phrase ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου and the phrase ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ is a circumlocution replacing a direct reference to God himself.

¹²⁴ Implicit mention is made of the ark in Rev. 8.3 in that the throne, according to Aune, *Rev.6-16*, 512, may be a way of referring to the ark since the ark originally appears to have functioned as a throne of Yahweh.

¹²⁵ Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament*, 211.

escort for the ark. On the seventh day, at the seventh trumpet blast, together with the shout of the army the walls of the city fell flat.¹²⁶

The use of the trumpet for battle continued in Roman times as chronicled in the work of Josephus. In describing the Roman army Josephus deals at length with trumpet signals and mentions that the Roman army prepared for departure to the sound of three trumpet signals. At the first trumpet signal the soldiers take down their tents, at the blowing of the second one they load their animals and “stand ready to start, like runners breasting the cord on the race-course. They set fire to the encampment, both because they can easily construct another [on the spot], and to prevent the enemy from ever making use of it.”¹²⁷ At the third trumpet signal the soldiers commence their march.

Josephus next has an interesting reference to the trumpet in the siege of Jotapata by Vespasian, the Roman general sent by Nero “to care for the East.”¹²⁸ “And now the trumpeters of all the legions simultaneously sounded, the troops raised a terrific shout, and at a given signal arrows poured from all quarters, intercepting the light.”¹²⁹ The trumpets in the Roman army were enlisted “to frighten the enemy with their terrifying sound,” for strategic purposes and to encourage the Roman soldiers.¹³⁰

The War Scroll is appropriate to study at this point as it has as one of its major sources the OT and it will be interesting to ascertain whether there is consistency in use or if there is discontinuity in the development of the trumpet motif.¹³¹ The War Scroll depicts the war between the sons of light and the sons of darkness. The sons of light are mentioned as

¹²⁶ G.B. Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine*, BNTC (London: A & C Black, 1966), 106, asserts that the typological parallel between the Joshua episode and Revelation is being highlighted here. So also Dennis E. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb* (Phillisburg: P & R Publishing, 2001), 140-41. A typological understanding of Scripture would have been central to thinking in the first-century church. Goppelt emphasizes that typology “is the central and distinctive New Testament way of understanding scripture,” see Idem., *TDNT*, Vol. 8, 255-56. E. Ellis, *History and Interpretation in New Testament Perspective*, Biblical Interpretation Series, Vol. 54 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 115, states that “typological interpretation expresses most clearly the basic approach of earliest Christianity toward the Old Testament.” Cf. P. Joseph Cahill, “Hermeneutical Implications of Typology,” *CBQ* 44 (1982): 266-81.

¹²⁷ Josephus, *J. W. III*, v, 603.

¹²⁸ Josephus, *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, translated by William Whiston, commentary by Paul L. Maier, revised and expanded edition (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999), 775.

¹²⁹ Josephus, *J. W. III*, vii, 653.

¹³⁰ Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness*, translated by Batya and Chaim Rabin (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 113.

¹³¹ See Jean Duhaime, “War Scroll,” in James Charlesworth, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations. *Damascus Document, War Scroll and Related Documents* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 87-88, for a helpful discussion relating the War Scroll to the OT.

the sons of Levi, Judah and Benjamin, among others, while the sons of darkness are the army of Beliah, composed of Edom, Moab and Ammon, among others.¹³²

The War Scroll discusses several types of use for the trumpets – “trumpets of alarm, trumpets of remembrance, trumpets of assembly, trumpets of retreat and trumpets of pursuit.”¹³³ Even though all the trumpets were silver in color, they would be blown for different situations.¹³⁴ These included the call to remembrance; to assemble the army; to sound the alarm; to announce the engagement of a pursuit of the enemy; and to recall the army or to alternately announce a retreat. On each of these trumpets were written various words that seem to correspond to each trumpets particular usage.¹³⁵ For example:

And on the trumpets of pulling out they shall write: God’s mighty deeds to scatter the enemy and force all those who hate justice to flee, and withdrawal of mercy from those who hate God. And on the trumpets of battle formations they shall write: God’s battle formations for avenging his wrath against all thrones of darkness.¹³⁶

In 1 QM 7 the writer outlines the ages of those allowed to engage in battle as well as the ages of those who will supervise the camps and the physical attributes of those not allowed to engage in battle. After this he refers to the drawing of the battle lines and states that while one priest strengthens the men for battle the other six “shall hold in their hand the rallying trumpets, the memorial trumpets, the alarm trumpets, the pursuit trumpets and the trumpets of re-assembly.” Accompanying the priests will be seven levites with ram’s horns. In 1 QM 8 and 9.1-9 the writer outlines battle strategy with the trumpets dictating maneuvers and directing the army as they are blown by the priests.¹³⁷

In 1 QM 10.6-8 the trumpet motif is employed once more but this time it is in relation to the OT as Deut 20.2-5 and Num 10.9 are alluded to. The allusion to Num 10 underscores its importance in the traditions related to the trumpet motif. The trumpet motif is extensively employed in the War Scroll as a means to guide the eschatological army in the battle between

¹³² Florentino Garcia Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, The Qumran Texts in English (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 95.

¹³³ Yadin, *The Scroll of the War*, 89.

¹³⁴ Ibid. Yadin also subdivides the trumpets into a table with three sections with far more extensive use. However, these five categories are the main lines of use. See also Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 215.

¹³⁵ For a brief discussion in relation to the inscriptions see Yadin, *The Scroll of the War*, 104-06.

¹³⁶ Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, 97.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 101. Detailed instructions are given regarding battalions, infantry-men and the dead. In my research continuing references to trumpets and battle can be found in 4 QM 11.1-24; 4 Q493.1-14 and 4Q496.3-5.

the sons of light and the sons of darkness. The fact that the trumpets are handled by the priests underscores their covenantal purpose.

In *1 Macc* 7.45 the Judean army sounded an alarm while pursuing the remnant of Nicanor's army. "In response to the signal, men came out of all the neighboring villages of Judea and struck all along the flanks of the enemy and then wheeled about to meet Judas and his men, so that the enemy all fell by the sword; not even one of them was left."¹³⁸ *1 Maccabees* 9.12 mentions the use of the trumpets by both the Jewish and Greek armies in preparation for the battle at Elasa.

2 Maccabees 15.25-26 refers to Nicanor's army using trumpets but that Judas and his men did not. "It seems clear enough," according to John Collins, "that the Maccabean use of trumpets had developed beyond the biblical precedents, but this may have been a phenomenon of Hellenistic warfare more generally."¹³⁹ While not being explicit in his remarks I take it to mean that Collins sees the progression in the use of the trumpet motif particularly in relation to naming the various trumpets and the inscriptions that were written on them.

Philo states that the trumpet has a dual purpose. Firstly, it is used in war to inform the army to advance and engage the enemy. Secondly, it is used to recall the troops "when they have to separate and return to their respective camps."¹⁴⁰ The trumpets are used to guide and direct the army at different stages of the battle.

c. Trumpets and Special Occasions

The third occasion for the enlistment of trumpets is to announce the coronation of a king (2 Sam 15.10; 1 Kgs 1.34, 39; 2 Kgs 9.13). Given that the king is Yahweh's representative the coronation trumpet pointed forward to the future Yahweh desired for his people.¹⁴¹ The fourth setting is to call the people to an important gathering or function (1 Sam 13.3-4; Neh 4.20) and serves as a warning of approaching danger (Jer 4.5; Amos 3.6). In addition,

¹³⁸ Jonathan A. Goldstein, *1 Maccabees*, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 328.

¹³⁹ John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997), 97. According to Duhaime, "War Scroll," 89, the others references to *Maccabees* include *1 Macc* 3.54; 4.13; 5.31, 33; 6.33; 7.45; 9.12-13; 16.18. In these verses the trumpets are repeatedly used before, during and after battle.

¹⁴⁰ Philo, VII, *The Special Laws*, XXXI, 425. Philo's work represents a weaving together of Jewish tradition and Greek philosophy.

¹⁴¹ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 209.

trumpets are used to summon the people, break camp and sounding the alarm in a time of war. In fact, many of the religious and civil occasions of the nation are governed by the use of trumpets.¹⁴²

d. Trumpets and Judgment/Theophany

The trumpet motif is used both literally and symbolically to portray judgment. It is mentioned in Exod 19.6 at the theophany on Mount Sinai. The theophany is a reference to the power and majesty of Yahweh in manifesting his unrivalled presence. Jeremiah mentioned trumpets with regard to the future judgment of Babylon (Jer 51.27). Ezekiel also warned the people of impending judgment (Ezek 33.3-6). Strikingly, whereas judgment and theophany are the least employed motifs for trumpets in the OT, these become the major motifs in the development of the use of trumpets in the NT.¹⁴³

As one traces the development of the use of the trumpet motif in Jewish apocalyptic literature one finds a re-adaptation of the use of the trumpet motif that differs from the OT. Whereas the OT conveyed a predominantly liturgical use for the trumpet, in Jewish apocalyptic literature there is a shift to the motif of eschatological judgment. Numerous examples will now be given to substantiate this claim.

The *Apoc. Abraham* records the following use of trumpets at the end of the age:

And then I will send the *trumpet* out of the air, and I will send my chosen one, having in him one measure of all power, and he will summon my people, humiliated by the heathen. And I will burn with fire those who mocked them and ruled over them in this age and I will deliver those who have covered me with mockery over to the scorn of the coming age.¹⁴⁴

Similarly the *Apoc. Zeph.* also indicates that trumpets will be used at the end of the age. It reads:

And again the great angel comes forth with the golden *trumpet* in his hand blowing over the earth. They hear from the place of the sunrise to the place of the sunset and from the southern regions to the northern regions. And again he blows up to heaven and his sound is heard. I said: "O Lord why did you not leave me until I saw all of them?" He said to me, "I do not have authority to show them to you until the Lord Almighty rises up in his wrath to destroy the earth and the heavens. They will see and be disturbed, and they will all cry out, saying, "All flesh which is ascribed to you we will give to you on the day of the Lord.""¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² See Num 10.1-10 for an outline of some of the major uses of the trumpet.

¹⁴³ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 221.

¹⁴⁴ *OTP*, 1.683

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 515.

Sybilline Oracles 4 mentions the annihilation of the impenitent at the blowing of the trumpet (4.171-178) “at the rising of the sun.”¹⁴⁶ In *Syb. Or.* 4.175 the whole world hears “a bellowing noise and mighty sound” and one is not certain whether this is the noise of the trumpet or of the great sign depicted in the previous verse. Nevertheless, the trumpet is used once again to signal an eschatological conflagration and judgment. “And then there will be a judgment over which God himself will preside, judging the world again.”¹⁴⁷

Another portrayal of the trumpet motif in the context of eschatological judgment is *4 Ezra* 6.18-23. It reads:

And it said, “Behold the days are coming, and it shall be that when I draw near to visit the inhabitants of the earth, and when I require from the doers of iniquity the penalty of their iniquity, and when the humiliation of Zion is complete, and when the seal is placed upon the age which is about to pass away ...the *trumpet* shall sound aloud, and when all hear it, they shall suddenly be terrified.”

What is becoming evident is that there is the clear thematic use of the trumpet motif in Second Temple Judaism with particular reference to the eschaton and judgment and one can be certain that this strongly influenced the deployment of the trumpet motif in the NT writings as well.¹⁴⁸

In the NT, the focus on judgment/theophany continues. Hebrews 12.19 reads: “and the sound of a trumpet (καὶ σάλπιγγος ἤχῳ), and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them.” The use of the trumpet motif is to “heighten the sense of uneasiness” for the listeners.¹⁴⁹ The next text that mentions the trumpet motif is Rev 1.10 which reads: “I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet.” The opening vision of Jesus Christ (1.13-18) is presented and indeed it is Christ's voice that is like a trumpet which parallels the theophany of Exod 19.16-20, where God's voice is likened to a trumpet as well.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 381, 388.

¹⁴⁷ *Syb.Or.* 4.183-4.

¹⁴⁸ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 510. For a limited discussion about Philo and his interpretation of the trumpet motif see Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 214-5. Paulien also references the above mentioned Jewish texts. Idem., *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 210-13.

¹⁴⁹ Craig Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 36 (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 549.

¹⁵⁰ Beale, *Revelation*, 203.

e. Trumpets and Eschatology

Trumpets are used for eschatological purposes in at least two special contexts in the OT. The first context is seen in four eschatological texts pointing to one of the OT's most dominant themes, namely, the *Yom Yahweh*. In each of these texts the blowing of trumpets is mentioned (Zech 9.14; Isa 27.13; Joel 2.1, 15; Zeph 1.16).¹⁵¹ Paulien asserts "that no other portion of the Old Testament is as intensively utilized in a section of Revelation as is the book of Joel in the seven trumpets."¹⁵² The concept of the *Yom Yahweh* as used in the Joel tradition, following Amos and Zephaniah, has both a negative and positive aspect, the negative aspect pointing to the day as one of judgment while the positive points to the day as one of salvation.¹⁵³

In regards to the first aspect, the description of the *Yom Yahweh* is about calamity for Israel. Drought has paralyzed the economy (Joel 1.4-12), giving gifts in worship has stopped (1.13) and the survival of animals has been seriously jeopardized (1.18). To forestall the annihilation of the people the prophet calls for a fast (1.14; 2.12).¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, Douglas Stuart suggests that Joel's depiction of Yahweh's unrivalled authority over all the nations is among the strongest in the OT.¹⁵⁵ Joel depicts two important Phoenician cities, Tyre and Sidon, as singled out for consideration. They will be judged on the basis of their treatment of the people of God. These nations are indicted for their "plundering and slave trade" (3.6), for the inhumane treatment of boys and girls (3.3, 6) and seeking to attain commercial gain, for annexing part of Israel's land (3.2) and for expropriating temple articles (3.5).¹⁵⁶ The *Yom*

¹⁵¹ The origin of the *Yom Yahweh* has been debatable. Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 119-125 argued that the OT Holy War traditions form the basis of the *Yom Yahweh*, where Yahweh intervenes for his people and engages in battle on their behalf. Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), 132-33, claims that the *Yom Yahweh* is an expected theophany during the New Year's Enthronement Festival. In light of the differing viewpoints found within scholarship, Ben Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul and the End of World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 148, suggests that the Sinai theophany and other OT theophanies, with possible influence from the Holy War traditions, has influenced the development of the *Yom Yahweh* tradition.

¹⁵² Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 231-32.

¹⁵³ Bruce C. Birch, *Hosea, Joel and Amos*, Westminster Bible Companion (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 128. Cf. James Limburg, *Hosea-Micah*, IBC (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), 63-64. For a discussion of the *Yom Yahweh* in Amos, Zephaniah, Ezekiel, Isaiah and Obadiah see John Strazicich, *Joel's Use of Scripture and Scripture's Use of Joel: Appropriation and Resignification in Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 89-96.

¹⁵⁴ Elmer A. Martens, "The Day of the Lord," *EDBT*, 146-149 (146).

¹⁵⁵ Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 229.

¹⁵⁶ James L. Crenshaw, *Joel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1995), 181-86.

Yahweh also affects the natural order. In Joel unproductive conditions result from the *Yom Yahweh* for trees, vines and animals (1.12, 18).

The second context is the blowing of the Jubilee trumpet which is important to understand the eschatological meaning of the trumpets in relation to liberty and returning.¹⁵⁷ The jubilee year is inaugurated with the blowing of trumpets on *Yom Kippur*, at the beginning of the fiftieth year. At the sounding of the Jubilee trumpet all Israelites are pronounced free from any bondage to their countrymen and those who had been compelled to sell their belongings through poverty or other adverse circumstances received them back. The Jubilee trumpet announced that incarceration of people to situations of bondage is over and that the land would be restored to its rightful owners. Consequently, in the OT the Jubilee trumpet had a social undercurrent that promulgated freedom and equality for all without negating the spiritual component that depicted freedom from sin. Not surprisingly then, this synopsis of the use of the trumpet motif in the OT points to the religious context in which trumpets were mostly employed.¹⁵⁸

f. Trumpets in the New Testament

The use of the trumpet motif continues within Jewish culture as is evidenced in its use in the NT on two occasions in relation to the *parousia*.¹⁵⁹ 1 Corinthians 15.51, 52 expresses the *parousia* in the following manner: “Listen, I tell you a mystery (μυστήριον): We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet (ἔσχατη σάλπιγγι). For the trumpet will sound, the dead (νεκροί) will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.” Gordon Fee asserts that the use of the trumpet motif here is in accord with its use in Jewish prophetic-apocalyptic to herald the eschaton.¹⁶⁰ “It is the last trumpet not because it is the final in a series, but because it signals the End.”¹⁶¹ The trumpet

¹⁵⁷ See Lev 25.9-10.

¹⁵⁸ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 207.

¹⁵⁹ For a discussion of the term *parousia* see Oepke, *TDNT*, Vol.4, 866-70.

¹⁶⁰ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 801. Alan Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, IVPNTCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 307, believes it points also to “the apocalyptic victory signal that in the Qumran Dead Sea Communities heralded the ultimate victory of God (1 QM 18.3-4)...”

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 802. Similarly, Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians*, Revised Edition, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 228. Other variations on the notion of “last trumpet” are given by Cleon Rogers Jr. and Cleon Rogers III. According to them the Jewish view of the resurrection begins at the sound of the trumpet, with the seven trumpets sounded for the various stages of resurrection. At the seventh trumpet all were made alive and stood to

motif is employed by the writer to “announce the moment of change, in accordance with the timing of God’s royal decree.”¹⁶² At the sound of the trumpet the dead are raised imperishable (ἀφθαρτοι) and the author assures the Corinthians that they will be changed (ἀλλαγησόμεθα).

The trumpet motif is next used in the Pauline tradition in 1 Thess 4.16-17, which reads: “For the Lord himself, with a cry of command (κελεύσματι), with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet (ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ), will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air.”

The background to this verse is found in verse 15 where the writer refers to the coming of the Lord at his *parousia*, a term that commonly meant the majestic “coming” of someone important, a king, an official dignitary or conquering general for example.¹⁶³ Paul describes the pomp and glory that will accompany the *parousia* of the Lord, while assuring the hopeless Thessalonians that all believers, both the living and the dead, will participate in this spectacular event.¹⁶⁴

The Lord refers here to Jesus Christ (see 1 Thess. 2.19). The command is given, supposedly by Christ, although the text is unclear whether it is a cry or command that must be obeyed.¹⁶⁵ The *parousia* of the Lord is also accompanied by the voice of the archangel. In 1 Cor. 15.52 the voice is also mentioned and its use was pointed to in John 5.28-29. Here,

their feet. Idem., *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 388. Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, reprint (Philipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1986), 141, contends that the use of the word “last” is a “technical eschatological term which does not indicate plurality, but duality; there is one at the beginning, and there will be another, corresponding to it at the end...” He provides no argumentation however on when or where the first trumpet is blown.

¹⁶² Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1296. According to Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 580, “with the sound of the trumpet comes the passing of the present order of reality and the beginning of the kingdom of God.”

¹⁶³ According to G. K. Beale, *1 – 2 Thessalonians*, IVPNTCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 140, a number of commentators understand the reference to Christ’s *parousia* (4.15) together with the mention of the resurrected saints meeting Christ in the clouds (4.17) reflects this Hellenistic background. Cf. W. Radl, *EDNT*, Vol. 3, 43-4, for a technical discussion of the word.

¹⁶⁴ Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 224.

¹⁶⁵ Lothar Schmid, *TDNT*, Vol. 3, 656-659. This is the only use of the word *κελεύσμα* here in the NT.

however, it is the voice of the archangel. The ambiguity in its use is unclear but probably points to the apocalyptic nature of the Thessalonian pericope.¹⁶⁶

Of all the NT uses of the trumpet motif the most impressive is the one in the Matthean Apocalypse. Matthew 24.31 reads, “And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” The notion of the trumpet is connected with the gathering of God’s elect or the deliverance of God’s people.¹⁶⁷ Since Matt. 24.31 is interpreted as the *parousia* the trumpet motif is employed to indicate the presence of the divine Messiah and to summon the elect to inherit the kingdom of God.¹⁶⁸ The trumpet motif is also used in 1 Cor 14.8, which reads: “Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?” Obviously, the use of the trumpet for battle was still commonplace in the first-century.

g. Trumpets in Greco-Roman literature

In the Greek writings of Lucan, Cassius Dio, Plutarch and Lactantius, the sounding of the trumpet is sometimes considered a prodigy – a warning of divine anger.¹⁶⁹ Plutarch, in particular, states that the Etruscan diviners deemed the prodigy of the sounding of the trumpet to be the forerunner of a new age, one of eight ages in all.¹⁷⁰ A portent was often called a *portentum* which is a term in ancient Roman religion for an unnatural or special occurrence that warned of divine anger.¹⁷¹ Phenomena considered to be portents include: “eclipses of the sun and moon (Plutarch, *Alex.* 31), the raining of blood and stones, unusual hail, lightning, thunderclaps in a clear sky (Cassius, *Dio* 37.25.2), comets, meteors, earthquakes, and the behavior of birds, the sight and sound of armies in the sky, the sound of clashing arms and horses (Appian, *Bell. Civ.* 4.1.4)...”¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Thessalonians: The Bible Speaks Today* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 105, writes: “For the sleep of the dead, the spatial “descent” of the Lord, the archangel’s voice and the trumpet blast, the clouds and the air all belong to the realm of symbolic and apocalyptic imagery.”

¹⁶⁷ Craig S. Keener, *Matthew*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 352. For a discussion in relation to the gathering motif in the OT see R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 927.

¹⁶⁸ According to Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 784, “both banners and trumpets were associated in Jewish apocalyptic thought with the majestic arrival of the Messiah.” See n. 39 in Wilkins for references.

¹⁶⁹ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 519.

¹⁷⁰ *Sulla* 7.3-4 cited in Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 519.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 417.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

A number of elements or aspects of what has been mentioned by the Greek writers can be found in the focus text. While an eclipse of the sun and moon is not mentioned, the sun and moon are darkened by the sounding of the fourth trumpet. The features mentioned by Cassius, namely raining blood and unusual hail, are also found in the focus text at 8.7. In 8.7, however, it is the merging of the imagery of blood, hail and fire. Appian mentions an earthquake which is also found in 8.5 as well as a reference to a bird which is found at 8.13. Pliny the Elder refers to the sounding of a trumpet in the sky in relation to the wars with the Cimbri. Apparently the sounding of a trumpet and the “noise of clanging armour” had been heard before this war and later as well.¹⁷³

h. Trumpets in the Focus Text

The focus text is divided into a 4-3 pattern or, perhaps more accurately, a 4-2-1 pattern. The three woes are set apart as a separate unit (8.13; 9.12; 11.14). The first four trumpet judgments are set apart by Rev 8.13 and share a much briefer format than the last three. The first four trumpet judgments fall on the natural world with an apparent escalation of judgment as each trumpet progresses. From plagues on the natural world, the trumpets become demonic horrors which first harm (fifth trumpet) then kill (sixth trumpet) the inhabitants of the earth. They end in the consummation of God's wrath under the seventh trumpet judgment.

There is a basic pattern shared by most of the trumpet judgments. First an angel sounds the trumpet, then a form appears (hailstorm, falling star), then the effects are described (burning of greenery, defiling of the springs and rivers). Each judgment is limited in its sphere of operation, usually in terms of a third of something. The focus text is introduced in Rev 8.2-6, where incense arises along with the prayers of the saints. The angel responds by throwing down the censer which results in the blowing of the first trumpet. A preliminary conclusion is that the focus text is a response to the prayers of the saints. This is a striking parallel to Num 10.8-10 “where the sounding of the trumpet is understood as an act of prayer reminding Yahweh of his covenant” obligations.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Pliny, *Nat.*, II, LVIII, 285.

¹⁷⁴ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 222. For a valuable discussion of a parallel see Richard D. Altick and John Fenstermaker, *The Art of Literary Research*, 4th revised edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993), 110-11.

Secondly, while the text evokes the number seven schematically, the number seven is used most often in relation to the Hebrew cultus.¹⁷⁵ However, this must not exclude the overriding notion of judgment that pervades this section of text. The deduction can be made that the use of the trumpet motif in the context of eschatological judgment is similar to its ongoing development in Jewish apocalyptic literature as well. The indebtedness to the OT, Jewish apocalyptic tradition and later Christian tradition are the hallmark of the development and use of the trumpet motif.¹⁷⁶ The progressive development of the trumpet motif from the OT has been traced with a shift in focus from liturgy and battle to eschatological judgment in Jewish apocalyptic literature and the NT traditions.

4. **The Need for this Study**

Firstly, the grammatical-historical methodology of Gibson unfortunately allowed him to make a one-to-one correspondence from the OT to Revelation which is overly simplistic. While Paulien's exegetical methodology is resourceful, he fails to take into account the external influences of the Greco-Roman culture and Jewish exegetical tradition on John's text. Paulien, like Gibson, displays concerns for the recovery of the historical author's message. His research built considerably on the work of Gibson particularly in the area of allusions and echoes. His allusion categories is complex and sometimes ambiguous, particularly the overlap between "possible" and "probable" allusion. While Paulien's work on echoes is illuminating, he does not clarify clearly enough the controls for its use and implementation, resulting in too many echoes.

Witherington also has a number of shortfalls in his socio-rhetorical approach. Robbins analyses the text from the perspective of the implied reader and implied author, while Witherington examines the text from the viewpoint of the historical author. Whereas Robbins draws on a wide range of analytical and literary categories in the execution of his interpretive analytic, Witherington, and indeed Gibson and Paulien, seem bound by the concerns of historical criticism. Robbins use of SRI is dissimilar in comparison to that of

¹⁷⁵ Jacques Doukhan, *The Secrets of Revelation* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2002), 13-15.

¹⁷⁶ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 229.

Witherington. Witherington does not employ categories like inner texture, intertexture or social and cultural texture.¹⁷⁷

In addition, it is in regard to the use of historical criticism that the comments of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza are most enlightening.

All scholarly attempts to arrive at a definite interpretation of certain passages or of the whole book seemed to have failed. This failure seems to suggest that the historical-critical paradigm has to be complemented by a different approach that can do justice to the multivalent character of Revelation.¹⁷⁸

What Fiorenza suggests is that historical criticism alone is inadequate for ascertaining the richness of meaning within Revelation. Because of the penchant of some interpreters to explore theological and textual issues, this methodology placed an overwhelming emphasis on matters such as authorial intention and historical authorship, date and provenance as well as a “scientific” attempt to uncover the message for the original audience. Without wanting to over-simplify a complex subject, the various historical critical methodologies: source, form, redaction and tradition criticism; in an attempt to “uncover” the history-of-composition, the historical setting, date and authorship of the text, unwittingly abandoned the text in favor of the quest for history. To the extent that the focus was on history and not the text, the method became an obstacle to interpretation.¹⁷⁹

In spite of the huge gains made by historical criticism, dissatisfaction with its tenets and results by some, like Gerhard Maier and Eta Linnemann, and the advancement of new literary theories for the interpretation of texts, led to the application of literary-oriented methodologies to the biblical texts and vindicated the insightful analysis of Schüssler Fiorenza.¹⁸⁰ The value of these approaches has been to interpret the text itself and of seeing how the text functions in a self-enclosed narrative world.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ See pp. 36-53.

¹⁷⁸ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment*, 2nd edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 21. She then introduces her literary-historical perspective. In a similar vein, Jan du Rand, “A Socio-psychological View of the Effect of the Language of the Apocalypse of John,” *Neotestamentica* 24 (1990): 351-365, writes that “an historical understanding of the text and the possible context of the Apocalypse of John is essential, but not adequate for coming to complete grips with its meaning.”

¹⁷⁹ See Fernando L. Canale, “Revelation and Inspiration: The Liberal Model,” *AUSS* 32 (1994): 169-95.

¹⁸⁰ See Gerhard Maier, *The End of the Historical-Critical Method*, translated by Edwin W. Leverenz and Rudolph F. Norden (St. Louis: Concordia, 1977); Eta Linnemann, *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology*, translated by Robert W. Yarbrough (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990); W. Wink, *The Bible in Human Transformation: Toward a New Paradigm for Biblical Study* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1973) and R. Kendall Soulen, “The Believer and the Historian: Theological Interpretation and Historical Investigation,” *Int*

In my view, a historical, social, theological and literary approach to the text is important and believe it is the delimitation of traditional concerns that makes it possible to apply SRI to the focus text to expand its meaning possibilities. SRI seeks to engage the focus text in its first-century milieu by amplifying the OT traditions and Greco-Roman and Second Temple texts that were not canvassed by prior researchers.¹⁸² Even though Aune has engaged the Greco-Roman literature on a deeper level, his analysis and interpretation still lacks clarity. Beale, on the other hand, has his own theological predispositions that guide his exegesis. Moreover, none of the aforementioned scholars, with the exception of Aune, have provided a detailed literary analysis of the focus text which is something I will pursue. Further, new constructs will be applied to the focus text to uncover its meaning potentiality.

The trumpet symbolism is found most strongly in the context of liturgy, battle and eschatological judgment. Since prior researchers have failed to explore the ideological ramifications of the use of the trumpet motif, an attempt will be made to advance this use of the concept of trumpets. SRI is uniquely positioned therefore to move “NT criticism from the limited examination of historical questions to an exploration of the fascinating web spun by each of the NT writers and their worlds.”¹⁸³

5. **Interpretive Analytic**

A programmatic statement regarding the place of the methodology (what Robbins calls interpretive analytic) in the interpretive process is given by Sandra Schneiders when she states that “the interpretive project begins with the proper formulation of the questions one wishes to ask of the text and the selection, from the repertoire of methods, of those that are useful for soliciting from the text the material for answering those questions.”¹⁸⁴ As already

Vol.57, No.2 (2003): 174-86. Literary-critical methodologies include, but are not limited to, post-structuralism, reader-response criticism, narratology and deconstructionism. For further theological critique of historical criticism see the comments in Angus Paddison, *Theological Hermeneutics and 1 Thessalonians*, SNTSMS 133 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 37-66.

¹⁸¹ The work of David L. Barr, *Tales of the End: A Narrative Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Santa Rosa: Poleridge Press, 1998) and James Resseguie, *Revelation: A Narrative Commentary*, fit this category.

¹⁸² These include, but are not limited to, the Exodus tradition, the fall of Babylon tradition, the creation tradition and the fall of Jericho tradition.

¹⁸³ L. Gregory Bloomquist, “A Possible Direction for Providing Programmatic Correlation of Textures in Socio-Rhetorical Analysis,” in *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible*, Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps, eds., JSNTSup 195 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 61.

¹⁸⁴ Sandra Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*, 2nd edition (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 152.

stated, my primary focus will be to establish the background and meaning of the trumpet judgments of Revelation. The formulated research question is, “*How does one interpret the focus text using SRI to ascertain the meaning of the seven trumpet judgments?*” The focus text is regarded as an unyielding part of Revelation to interpret. Interpreters have struggled with the symbolism and enigmatic language employed by John in this part of his book. As a result there is a lack of consensus in the interpretation of the book as a whole, including the focus text.¹⁸⁵

The present project differs from prior studies with a research question that focuses on the meaning and meaning-effects of the seven trumpets and the judgments they unleash. The work of previous researchers is advanced through the enlistment of various categories for allusions and also cultivating criteria for the controlled exegesis of both allusions and echoes. While the danger of anachronism is always present when new theories are used to interpret ancient texts, SRI is not a theory *per se* but a contextual, integrated and systematic way of approaching the biblical text to unravel the many layers of texture and hence ranges of meaning within a biblical text. The multi-dimensional nature of SRI “brings insights from literary critics, linguists, sociologists and anthropologists into an organized frame of understanding and activity.”¹⁸⁶ The usefulness of SRI is not only its welcoming of opposing voices to the interpretational table but also its ability to dialogue meaningfully with those voices. Further, SRI approaches the text as a “thickly textured tapestry” containing complex patterns and images.¹⁸⁷

This interpretive analytic, especially as it has been formulated by Vernon Robbins, seeks to engage and explore the multiple textures of the biblical text through five different angles: 1) inner texture, 2) intertexture, 3) social and cultural texture, 4) ideological texture and 5) sacred texture.¹⁸⁸ Each texture will now be explored, including my new texture,

¹⁸⁵ C. Marvin Pate, ed., *Four Views on Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998). For a preterist perspective on the seven trumpets see Kenneth L. Gentry, “A Preterist View of Revelation,” 57-65. Gentry grounds his interpretation in the writings of Josephus and sees the realization of the text in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. For an idealist perspective on the focus text see Sam Hamstra Jr., “An Idealist View of Revelation,” 107-11.

¹⁸⁶ Vernon Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 17. According to Robbins, *Beginnings and Developments in Sociorhetorical Interpretation* (Atlanta: Emory University, 2004), 1, SRI emerged in the 1970’s and received its name in 1984 with an integration of rhetorical, anthropological and social-psychological insights in a study of the Gospel of Mark.

¹⁸⁷ Robbins, *Exploring*, 2.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

intratexture. The text is like an onion with the ever present challenge of finding and naming new layers overlooked by previous peelers.

a. Inner Texture

Inner texture focuses on words as tools for communication. This analysis is prior to determining real “meaning” in the text. It is involved in the basic sense of the words in the textual unit under consideration. Here texts are thought of as “specific words on the page arranged in a specific order.”¹⁸⁹ The purpose of inner texture is to gain an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, structures, devices and modes in the text which the interpreter analyses with the other arenas in SRI. This purpose is attained by examining the following four kinds of inner texture in a text, namely, repetitive, progressive, open-middle-closing and narrative texture.¹⁹⁰

Repetitive texture involves the occurrence of words and phrases more than once in a textual unit. It is evident in multiple occurrences of grammatical, syntactical, verbal or topical phenomena in the text. An important question in this section is: What patterns emerge from the repetition of certain words in the text?¹⁹¹ Progressive texture is evident in sequences of words and phrases throughout the textual unit. It is an extension of repetitive texture. Questions evoked in this “arena” include: “What topics replace other topics in the progression of the text? Does the progression bring certain kinds of words together but not others?”¹⁹²

The open-middle-closing texture focuses on the beginning, body and conclusion of a section of text. Repetition, progression and narration work together to create open-middle-closing texture. The complexity of discerning the opening and closing of a unit of text is evidenced in the differing views interpreters often have in this matter.¹⁹³ Finally, narrational texture is concerned “with the voices through which the words in the text speak.”¹⁹⁴ The focus text is examined for attributed speech and what function it has in the text. In

¹⁸⁹ Peter D. Miscall, “Isaiah: New Heavens, New Earth, New Book,” in *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1992), 43.

¹⁹⁰ Robbins, *Exploring*, 7.

¹⁹¹ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 50.

¹⁹² Ibid. “Arena” is the term used by Robbins to speak of a section of material or area of analysis.

¹⁹³ See Robbins, *Exploring*, 19-21, for further discussion.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 15.

conclusion, repetitive, progressive, open-middle-closing, and narrational texture is used to investigate the focus text.

b. Intertexture and Intratexture

Intertexture concerns the relation of data in the text to various kinds of phenomena outside the text. It also concerns the dynamics of the text within Revelation itself, identified in this work as intratexture, which is a new feature that has been added to the resources of SRI. This feature is needed in interpreting Revelation because of the high degree of cross-referencing of images, concepts and language. The author has created a narrative of textual intricacy and interconnectedness. For example, the imagery of “sword” in Rev 1.16 and 2.12, 16 is used. However, the imagery is not explained or interpreted. In 2.16 the author seems to imply that the “sword” is an agent of judgment. The term is used once again in 19.15, where the author explicitly refers to the “sword” as the instrument the Son of Man uses to execute judgment. This example can be multiplied but it goes to demonstrate the importance of this aspect of textual analysis.¹⁹⁵ Intratexture is also important in light of the implied reader and implied author both being intratextual constructs.¹⁹⁶

The intertexture of a text, on the other hand, is the interaction of language in the text with outside material like historical events, texts, customs, values, roles, traditions and systems.¹⁹⁷ It recognizes the text as a literary work, the production of the author. A goal in this arena is to ascertain “the nature and result of processes of configuration and reconfiguration of phenomena in the text” but taken from the world outside of the text. Here the “imitation of earlier texts, the restructuring of well-known traditions and the rhetoric of previous situations in the creation of new and distinct traditions are explored.”¹⁹⁸

The interpreter is faced with choices as to the boundaries he/she will establish in intertexture. The present study will explore intertexture in relation to OT, Second Temple and Greco-Roman literary texts. Further, the literary category of intertextuality will be

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Resseguie, *The Revelation of John*, 51-2.

¹⁹⁶ Jeffrey Lloyd Staley. *The Print's First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel*, SBLDS 82 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 37.

¹⁹⁷ Robbins, *Exploring*, 50.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

explored further as there are remarkable nuances in intertextuality that can richly benefit intertexture, especially in a study of Revelation.¹⁹⁹

Julia Kristeva, who first coined the term *intertextualité*, understood the text as a “mosaic of quotations where every text is the absorption and transformation of another text.”²⁰⁰ Intertextuality is concerned primarily with the relationship between texts and suggests that no text exists in a vacuum, but is embedded in a larger web of related texts, bound by culture and language itself.²⁰¹

Steve Moyise brought the literary category of intertextuality into research on Revelation. According to Moyise, the undergirding principle of intertextuality is that “alluding to a past work sets up a link or correspondence between two texts. The reader is asked to follow the current text while being mindful of the previous context (or contexts).”²⁰² For him the “task of intertextuality is to explore how the source text continues to speak through the new work and how the new work forces new meanings from the source text.”²⁰³ Intertextuality then explores the “potentiality” of the text.²⁰⁴

According to Pieter de Villiers, “the intertextuality of the book, its links with many other literary traditions, is perhaps one of its most outstanding features and one of the reasons

¹⁹⁹ According to Heinrich F. Plett, “Intertextualities,” in *Intertextuality: Research in Text Theory*, ed. Heinrich F. Plett (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991), 3, Kristeva initially used the term as a form of protest against cultural and social values. For biographical information on Julia Kristeva see *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. T. Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 1-22. The term was popularized in biblical studies by Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (London: Yale University Press, 1989). There is a deluge of scholarly resources on the literary concept of intertextuality and its influence and impact on biblical studies. See *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality*, Vol.1: Thematic Studies, eds. Craig A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias, LNTS 391 (London: T & T Clark, 2009) and *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality*, Vol. 2: Exegetical Studies, eds. Craig A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias, LNTS 392 (London: T & T Clark, 2009).

²⁰⁰ Julia Kristeva, *Semeiotike: Recherches pour une Sémantologie* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), 146, quoted in Alan H. Pasco, *Allusion: A Literary Graft* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 4. For an introduction to Kristeva’s view of intertextuality see, George Aichele and Gary A. Phillips, “Introduction: Exegesis, Eisegesis and Intergesis,” *Semeia* 69 / 70 (1995): 9. While she was the first to coin the term, Michael Worton and Judith Still, eds. *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 2-7, find similar ideas in the work of Plato and other classical writers and conclude that theories of intertextual relationships have existed from the time texts have been discussed. A critique of Kristeva’s work is beyond the scope of this inquiry. For a critique of her work see, Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 105-11.

²⁰¹ Danna Nolan Fewell, “Writing, Reading and Relating,” in *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1992), 17.

²⁰² Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*, 18.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 111.

²⁰⁴ The term is borrowed from Steve Moyise, “Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament in the New,” in *The Old Testament in the New: Essays in Honor of J. L. North*, JSNTSup 89 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 16.

for its complexity and sophistication.”²⁰⁵ Meaning in Revelation is in the tension between the antecedent text and the Revelation text. For Moyise this is not an imposition on the text but rather an attempt to do justice to its complexity.²⁰⁶

The old context does not determine John’s meaning, because the text has been set free from its textual moorings and now exists in a new context. However, neither is it true that John can make texts mean whatever he likes, for the old text brings with it connotations and associations that influence the new setting. Thus there is a dynamic whereby the new affects the old and the old affects the new.²⁰⁷

In light of Moyise’s comments, an attempt will be made to assess the effect of allusions and echoes on a reading of the focus text whilst also taking notice of the rhetorical features that come to light in the interpretive enterprise. Hence, the literary category of intertextuality will be kept in the foreground of interpretation and serve “as a reminder of the need to consider the interaction between the new and old contexts in interpreting allusions....”²⁰⁸

1. Cultural Intertexture

This texture focuses on the “insider” knowledge readers have about a particular society and culture. People who are inherently part of the culture and society or have studied the culture through education or direct involvement have access to this kind of knowledge.²⁰⁹ To engage the resources of cultural intertexture, allusions and echoes in Greco-Roman, Second Temple and OT texts will be analysed. In a departure from the restrictive sense in which Robbins investigates this texture, the broad parameters of the aforementioned literature is scoured, neither to establish allusions and echoes, nor to use any guidelines, but rather to ascertain the meaning possibilities of cultural intertexture in relation to specific symbol markers.

1.1 Allusions

Revelation is unique among NT documents. It contains no explicit quotations from any antecedent literature, even though its whole fabric exhibits a closely knitted tapestry of

²⁰⁵ Pieter G.R. de Villiers, “Prime Evil and its many Faces in the Book of Revelation,” *Neotestamentica* 34 (2000):57-85.

²⁰⁶ Moyise, “Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament in the New,” 138.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁰⁸ David Mathewson, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: The Meaning and Function of the Old Testament in Revelation 21.1-22.5* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 23.

²⁰⁹ Robbins, *Exploring*, 58.

allusion and evocation of both OT, NT and extra-biblical texts.²¹⁰ The absence of introductory formula in particular has led scholars to focus on assessing the presence of OT allusions in Revelation.²¹¹

In his 1984 monograph Beale proposed three categories of allusions in determining degrees of dependence between two literary works.²¹² These are clear allusion, probable allusion (with more assorted wording), and possible allusion or echo.²¹³ Beale then points out that to decide whether or not a subsequent author depended on an antecedent tradition, one must assess the following similarities of “1) theme, 2) content, 3) specific construction of words and 4) structure ... 5) a reasonable or persuasive explanation of authorial motive should be given.”²¹⁴ The strength of his proposal is that he maintains the case for an allusion should not be made by only one point of connection but should rest on an aggregation of evidence.²¹⁵

My first critique is in regarding the notion of authorial intention as of first importance in determining allusions. The present work recognizes the limitations of discerning authorial intention when it comes to assessing OT allusions, particularly from a SRI perspective.²¹⁶ I concur with Adela Yarbro Collins who writes:

I would agree that full explanatory power should not be given to the author’s intention. What the author *intended to say* and what he or she actually *said* may not always fully coincide. I would also agree that a text has its own symbolic coherence, that it proposes a way of looking at things. By being committed to writing and being preserved and circulated beyond its

²¹⁰ There is an immense range of secondary literature on the use of Scripture and other writings in Revelation. See Jon Paulien, “The Book of Revelation and the Old Testament,” *BR* 43 (1998): 61-9; Steve Moyise, “Intertextuality and the Book of Revelation,” *ExpTim* 104 (1993): 295-98; Moyise, *The Old Testament in Revelation*; Charles, *Revelation*, 1, lxii-lxxxvi; William Dumbrell, *The End of the Beginning: Revelation 21-22 and the Old Testament*, The Moore Theological College Lectures 1983 (Homebush West, Australia: Lancer Books, 1985) and Beale, *John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*.

²¹¹ Assessing these works is beyond the purview of this project. The most important works according to Beale, *John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*, 16-59, are those of J. M. Vogelgesang, Jon Paulien, Richard Bauckham, Jean Pierre Ruiz, Jan Fekkes and Steve Moyise.

²¹² Beale, *The Use of Daniel*. He uses the same categories in his monograph. See Idem., *John’s Use of the Old Testament*, 62-3, as well as his commentary, Idem., *Revelation*, 78-9.

²¹³ Beale, *The Use of Daniel*, 43.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 307-08.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 309.

²¹⁶ This is a contentious issue. Some, like Francis Watson, *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 95-126, have championed the concept of authorial intention. On the other hand, others like Edgar McKnight, *The Bible and the Reader: An Introduction to Literary Criticism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 12, have argued that it is readers that make sense of a text. It is not so much a perspective from the reader or the author but rather the text that is central in the meaning-making exercise in SRI.

original situation, a text is, in a sense, cut loose from the existential, historical situation in which it emerged.²¹⁷

A text can therefore “generate readings that transcend both the conscious intention of the author and all the hermeneutical strictures that we may promulgate.”²¹⁸

Secondly, Ian Paul has correctly observed that all of the above criteria and systems of classification are based more on the interpreter’s confidence in ascertaining allusions rather than on what is happening in the text.²¹⁹ While the work of Greg Beale, Jan Fekkes and Jon Paulien have provided an important check on uncontrolled exegesis, the interpretive significance of allusions and echoes and how these fit into larger textual and cultural traditions will be sought in this work. Further, attention will be on the role of the implied reader in the process of interpretation. The implied reader and the implied author are at the same level of narrative meaning.²²⁰

Since the inability of the interpreter to recover the historical author’s intention is advocated, from the vantage point of the implied author it is still possible to address a level of textual intention, without becoming “bogged down” in issues related to a “stable determinacy of meaning.”²²¹ My purpose in focusing on the implied reader and implied author is to use guidelines to provide a controlled analyse of the intertexture of the focus text.²²² My use of the implied author retains a focus on the text, in that the text will yield up

²¹⁷ Adela Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 19 (her emphasis). Philip Payne, “The Fallacy of Equating Meaning with the Human Author’s Intention,” *JETS* 20 (1977): 243-252, outlines four reasons why the author’s intention is elusive: 1) intention can be understood at many levels, 2) an author may have more than one reason for making a statement, 3) intention is a complex category involving mental states that are in a constant flux and 4) the “distance gap” makes it extremely difficult to access the author’s intention. For a discussion from a wider NT perspective see Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text*, 144-48. For a perspective on Revelation see Steve Moyise, “Does the Author of Revelation Misappropriate the Scriptures?” *AUSS* 40 (2002): 3-21 and Idem., “Authorial Intention and the Book of Revelation,” *AUSS* 39 (2001): 35-40.

²¹⁸ Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (London: Yale University Press, 1989), 33.

²¹⁹ Ian Paul, “The Use of the Old Testament in Revelation 12,” in Steve Moyise, ed., *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J.L. North*, JSNTSup 189 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 260.

²²⁰ Staley, *The Print’s First Kiss*, 30.

²²¹ E.D. Hirsch Jr., *The Aims of Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 1. For a critique of Hirsch, see McKnight, *The Bible and the Reader*, 94-100.

²²² The importance of controls for the analysis of allusions and echoes is underscored in an article by Stanley E. Porter, *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals*, eds. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, JSNTSup 148 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 92, in which he laments the misuse of these terms by highlighting the work of J. D. G. Dunn. In his article [J. D.G. Dunn, “Jesus Tradition in Paul,” in *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research*, eds. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, NTTS 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 155-78], Dunn uses both the terms “echo” and “allusion,” at times with distinction, at other times they are equated, whilst at other times “echo” is seemingly

the rhetorical clues by which the implied author evokes an allusion or echo for the implied reader.

Robbins has correctly argued that allusions and echoes are part of cultural intertexture. He states that an allusion

is a statement that presupposes a tradition that exists in textual form, but the text being interpreted is not attempting to “recite” the text. With allusion, the text interacts with phrases, concepts, and traditions that are “cultural” possessions which anyone who knows this culture may use.²²³

Since Robbins admits that an allusion or echo can only be accessed via cultural knowledge, the categories of allusion and echo are enlisted with an eye open to the cultural resonances that may be evoked by these constructs and by their role, function and placement in the focus text. Furthermore, Robbins has not articulated how exactly an allusion is actualized. The scholar who has attempted to clarify the issue in relation to this task is the work of Michael Thompson. He noticed that scholars have not been accurate in their definition of an allusion and so he distilled the insights of literary criticism into a concise form with an attempt at a far more exacting definition.

According to Thompson, literary critics agree on the following: “Allusion involves 1) the use of a sign or marker that 2) calls to the reader’s mind another known text 3) for a specific purpose.”²²⁴ For Thompson the allusion “works” in the following fashion in a text: the reader must “recognize the sign, realize that the echo is deliberate, remember aspects of the original text to which the author is alluding, and connect one or more of these aspects with the alluding text in order to get the author’s point.”²²⁵

For my purposes, the author has placed in the text *symbol markers* that point to an antecedent text.²²⁶ The symbol markers are found in both the precursor and successor text

given a subordinate role to “allusion.” Porter, *Early Christian Interpretation*, 82, concludes that “it is difficult to get the precise meaning of Dunn’s terminology.”

²²³ http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/a_defns.html. Accessed on 22 September, 2008.

²²⁴ Michael B. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12.1-15.13*, JSNTS 59 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 29.

²²⁵ Ibid. While this part of his work is helpful for my present discussion, Thompson goes on to identify eleven criteria for detecting an allusion which is too burdensome for the exegetical enterprise. His classification of allusions is also unnecessarily complex.

²²⁶ Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*, 61, also uses the term “marker,” but simply as part of his language and not as a construct. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and*

and constitute the primary symbols for beginning to articulate meaning. The literary and thematic context of the antecedent text must be taken account of in the exegetical enterprise as attempts are made to connect one or more aspects from the original text to the successor text. The activation of the two texts results in the formation of dynamic intertextual patterns and it is this interconnectedness that begins to constitute meaning and meaning-making. These symbol markers are to be found extensively in biblical and Jewish apocalyptic and to a lesser extent in Greco-Roman literature. Hence, the symbol marker is a “live symbol” full of cultural meaning and meaning associations. The cultural ramifications of the symbol marker will also be sought by scouring the literature and culture for ways in which the symbol marker would have been appropriated.

Because this is a new term a brief example of its potential use is provided by examining Rev 8.7. It reads: “The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came **hail** (χάλαζα) and **fire** (πῦρ) mixed with **blood** (αἷματι), and it was hurled (ἐβλήθη) down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.” The words in bold (χάλαζα, πῦρ, αἷματι) are symbol markers that alert the implied reader to precursor texts that use the same language or combination of language.

These symbol markers are the main constituents in the meaning-making endeavor and allow the implied reader to begin to actualize the precursor text (s) as well as appropriate the successor text. The more symbol markers there are in the purported precursor text, the greater the likelihood of an allusion being present. The difference between the symbol markers and the other symbols in a particular text is that the symbol markers have a stronger cultural and literary resonance. In other words, these symbol markers will be known more widely in society and will also be used more frequently in the literature of the time. A symbol marker is therefore a well-known marker in society and literature that is the main constituent in the meaning-making endeavor.

Moreover, Robbins has no controls for the establishment of allusions and echoes. For example, he sees both cultural allusion and cultural reference in Luke 1.68-69. He writes:

Good examples of cultural reference and cultural allusion occur in Luke 1:68-69. Both "a horn of salvation" and "the house of his servant David" are references in these verses that

Judgment, 2nd edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 188, also uses the term “marker,” but as a means of persuading and moving the audience to a “desired action.”

evoke cultural intexture. What do they mean? Only people who have been raised in Jewish culture or have been educated in it as an "other" culture will know their meanings. The phrase "a horn of salvation" appears in 1 Samuel 2:10; Psalm 18:2 and Psalm 132:17, alluding to a Davidic ruler who will have power. These texts do not, however, also refer to "the house of David." Rather, 2 Samuel 7:1-17 contains an oracle by Nathan to David that refers twice to David as "servant" (2 Sam 7:5, 9) and presents the word of the Lord as saying: "the Lord will make you a house ..." and "Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever ..." (2 Sam 7:11, 16). All of these texts exhibit the existence of a cultural tradition to which Luke 1:68-69 makes reference.²²⁷

Robbins is correct in his analysis of Luke 1.68-69 but he does not demonstrate *how* the implied reader is able to establish the textual connection between the Lukan text and 1 Sam 2.10, Ps 18.2 and Ps 132.17.

Further, Robbins argues that Burton Mack has uncovered echoes from Greek and Latin texts in his analysis of *paedeia* (instruction on how to live a successful life according to the values of Greek society) in the planting of the seeds in Mark 4.1-34.²²⁸ Here again Robbins falls short in providing interpreters with the guidelines to establish these echoes. In addition, Robbins disqualifies the work of Richard Hays, suggesting that Hays' criteria and work restrict Paul's echoes to those only found in Scripture, without recourse to the social and cultural realities and implications of these echoes.²²⁹ However, if there are no controls then the interpretive process is seriously undermined and the credibility of allusions and echoes is jeopardized in the meaning-making endeavour. The application of these guidelines is to therefore establish the authenticity of apparent allusions and echoes.

The pioneering work of Richard Hays is used in this regard. Hays suggested seven criteria for the assessment of echoes, which he called "serviceable rules of thumb."²³⁰ The guidelines are as follows: 1) Availability – is the proposed text available to the historical author; 2) Volume – is the pattern of words or themes repeated; 3) Thematic coherence – does the echo fit the thought of the author's text; 4) Historical plausibility – does this use of the text reflect the historical context of the interpreter; 5) Recurrence – does a particular OT passage appear in various locations and forms; 6) History of interpretation – is the current

²²⁷ <http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/Examples/textures/inter/reference.html>. Accessed on 24 September 2008.

²²⁸ Robbins, *Exploring*, 60.

²²⁹ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 108.

²³⁰ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 31-2. I recognize that these guidelines are terse. For further discussion of these criteria see Richard Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 34-45. I will expatiate later on the four that are substantial for my work.

echo influenced by additional texts and traditions and 7) Satisfaction – does the reading make sense within the context of the book as a whole.²³¹ Since Robbins is correct in his assessment of Hays' exclusion of the social and cultural implications of the allusions and echoes he uncovered in his work on Paul, an awareness of the social and cultural features that may be evoked by the text will be maintained in this work.

Four of the weightiest of Hays' criteria are enlisted since he himself recognizes that to use all of the criteria for each verse under consideration would be wearisome. These are volume, thematic coherence, recurrence and history of interpretation.²³² Thematic coherence analyses how an allusion would fit in the thematic and theological context of a passage. The history of interpretation guideline looks for how other interpreters have read the passage and whether they have categorized the precursor text as an allusion or echo. A designation of weak is assigned to a text if only three interpreters engage with it. Alternately, if six or more interpreters reference the text it has high status. Recurrence takes into account how often the author alludes to or echoes the same text in Revelation. Volume is determined largely on the basis of precise repetition of words or syntactical relationships. It also “depends on the distinctiveness, prominence or popular familiarity of the precursor text.”²³³

Since thematic coherence and history of interpretation focus more on interpretation, they are balanced by the criteria of volume and recurrence that strengthen the possibilities of impartiality. These two criteria are seemingly the same, yet volume pays attention to similar words and ideas that are present in both the precursor and successor text while recurrence focuses on where else the same text is used in Revelation. In addition, objectivity is negated as the standard bearer in relation to the establishment of allusions and echoes.²³⁴

²³¹ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 31-2. For a critique of Hays work see: Robert Brawley, *Text to Text Pours Forth Speech. Voices of Scripture in Luke-Acts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 13-4; Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 13-4; Porter, “The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament,” 83 and Kenneth D. Litwak, “Echoes of Scripture? A Critical Survey of Recent Works on Paul's Use of the Old Testament,” *CRBS* 6 (1998): 260-88. For a response to his critics see Richard Hays, “On the Rebound: A Response to Critiques of *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*,” in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, eds., JSNTSup 83 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 70-96.

²³² Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 32.

²³³ Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination*, 36.

²³⁴ See the useful discussion on the difficulty of providing objectivity in the establishment of allusions and echoes in Juhanean, *The Use of Zechariah in the Book of Revelation*, 33-6. He writes: “The arrival of postmodernism has revealed that “objectivity” is to a large extent just a myth. It is now recognized that there is no such thing as an objective observer, but that the observer is always involved in the scientific process, whether by acquiring, describing, choosing or interpreting the data and / or the “facts”.... It must be emphasized, however, that abandoning the quest for scientific and objective criteria does not mean a return to

Moreover, Robbins does not provide categories or classifications for allusions which is helpful in interpreting Revelation. Here again, Hays' guidelines provide the opportunity to determine whether the tentative allusion is a clear allusion, probable allusion or an echo. While the symbol markers point the reader to the precursor text, Hays guidelines aid in the clarification of the relationship between the successor and precursor text in identifying the textual relationship on the basis of an allusion or an echo.

A clear allusion has high volume, thematic coherence, recurrence and history of interpretation. High volume is determined on the basis of there being identical wording in both the precursor and successor text and with a common core meaning. I anticipate this being the most important criterion as "shared language is the single most important factor in establishing a textual connection."²³⁵ When six commentators have recognized the allusion the history of interpretation guideline is given high status. While scholars do build on the work of others, the fact that they concur with other scholars, indicates that they recognise, or are prepared to allow, that an allusion is present. The important point for this criterion is maintaining that a good number of commentators recognise the possibility of an allusion. The high status for recurrence means that the text or passage is used independently in other parts of Revelation. The high status for thematic coherence means there is a high degree of thematic consistency between the precursor and successor text.

A probable allusion, because the wording is not as close, has a lower status of volume, thematic coherence, recurrence and history of interpretation. It may still contain an idea or wording that is traceable to the precursor text or at least exhibits a structure of ideas that especially point to a particular text. However, the low volume between a successor and tentative precursor text, is evident in minimal shared language. The low status in relation to

irresponsibility. Rather, it means that we see the study of these of the OT in Revelation as normal exegesis – no more or no less "scientific" or objective" than the exegesis of other NT documents. Regardless of how an interpreter discovers an allusion, his main task is to give a satisfying account of the passage containing the allusion (or "marked sign"), which includes an account of the rhetorical end for which the marked sign is utilized." Idem., *The Use of Zechariah*, 33.

²³⁵ Jeffrey M. Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case," *JBL* 127 (2008): 241-65 (246). Leonard lists another seven factors on why shared language is so critical in determining allusions. These include shared language is more important than non-shared language; shared language that is rare or distinctive suggests a stronger literary connection than language that is commonly used; shared language suggests a stronger literary connection than does a single shared term or phrase; the accumulation of shared language suggests a stronger connection than does an individual term; shared language in similar contexts is better than language that is contextually isolated; ideology and form are not important for determining the value of shared language.

recurrence means the text is not used as extensively in other parts of Revelation, while low status in terms of history of interpretation means only three commentators admit the allusion or make reference to it. The low status of thematic coherence means the contextual links between the purported precursor and successor text may not be a neat textual and thematic “fit.”

1.2. Echoes

Robbins suggests that echoes have a strong basis in cultural tradition and that the evocation of an echo is normally a word or phrase. However, the evocation of the echo, whether it be a word or phrase, is never incontrovertibly from only one cultural tradition. Thus, “interpreters regularly will debate the presence or absence of a particular echo in the text under consideration.”²³⁶

Literary critic John Hollander first developed the concept of echo in a study of Milton’s poetry.²³⁷ According to Hays, Hollander seeks to “trace the way in which motifs and images are passed along through literary traditions in such a way that they gather significations through time.”²³⁸ The notion of echo is recognized as an acoustic occurrence in Hollander’s initial discussion and is used figuratively and at times synonymously with reverberation and resonance.²³⁹

For Hollander an echo is a “substitute” for an allusion, in the same way as an allusion is a substitute for a quotation. “There seems to be a transitive figurational connection among them; it points to what we generally mean by echo, in intertextual terms. In contrast with literary allusion, echo is a metaphor of, and for, alluding, and does not depend on conscious intention.”²⁴⁰ In order to overhear echoes the reader must have access to the text’s “cave of resonant signification.” Hollander suggests that the cave of resonant signification is accessed

²³⁶ Robbins, *Exploring*, 60.

²³⁷ For a useful discussion on the current debate involving allusions and echoes see Ian Paul, “The Use of the Old Testament in Revelation 12,” in *The Old Testament*, 256-67; Robby Waddell, *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation*, JPTSS 30 (Dorset: Deo, 2006), 39-96 and Jon Paulien, “Dreading the Whirlwind: Intertextuality and the Use of the Old Testament in Revelation,” *AUSS* 39 (2001): 5-22.

²³⁸ Hays, “On the Rebound: A Response to Critiques of *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*,” 72.

²³⁹ John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 1-3.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 64.

when a reader has reference to both the earlier text and the later text and is found at the point of their intersection.²⁴¹

There are four key ingredients that need to be understood in order for the interpreter to grasp the complexity of echoes. Firstly, an echo may either be a conscious or unconscious act on the part of the author. According to William Green, while an allusion “usually connotes a conscious authorial act and perhaps a knowing audience,” an echo “requires neither.”²⁴² Secondly, an echo has “in each instance a single identifiable source.” Hollander believes that echo is a form of citation in that it refers back to a particular precursor text.²⁴³

Thirdly, by echo the author does not intend to point the audience to the precursor text. While this may seem contradictory to my second point, intentionality implies conscious activity on the part of the author and an echo is often but not always a conscious act. Rather, an echo is a linking of texts so that an intertextual relationship can be established between the precursor and successor text. Fourth, the echo is not dependent on the original literary and thematic context of the precursor text to be understood in its new literary environment. The meaning of the echo in its new literary context is not dependent on or tied to the previous context.²⁴⁴

Even so, the original literary and thematic sense of the purported echo will be investigated. This is based on the cumulative arguments of both Hays, Moyise and other scholars. In relation to Paul’s use of Scripture in Romans, Hays suggests that the reader will overhear the context of the Hab 2.4 quotation in Rom 1.16. That literary and thematic context, from Hab 2.1, was the issue of theodicy. Hence, Hays argues that by Paul placing the echo at the beginning of his letter to the Romans, “he links his gospel to the OT prophetic affirmation of God’s justice and righteousness.”²⁴⁵ Hays demonstrates repeatedly that an

²⁴¹ Ibid., 65.

²⁴² William Scott Green, “Doing the Text’s Work for It: Richard Hays on Paul’s Use of Scripture,” in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, 58-63 (59), cited in Christopher A. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 14.

²⁴³ Hollander, *The Figure of Echo*, 72.

²⁴⁴ I am indebted to Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians*, 11-35, for these four points.

²⁴⁵ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the letters of Paul*, 40. Other scholars who confirm Hays position include Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 43-56 (50), “In Rom. 1.17 the Habakkuk citation must be allowed to determine the sense, not only of the “righteousness of God” but also of “by faith for faith,” referring to Rom. 1.16 and F. F. Bruce, *Romans*, TNTC, reprint (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 79-81. For a stimulating discussion of Rom 1.16 and how James Dunn, Francis Watson and

examination of the original literary and thematic context of the echo enriches, colors and expands the understanding of the new context.²⁴⁶

I will now demonstrate the functionality of the cave of resonant signification. Hollander suggested that the cave of resonant signification is accessed when a reader has reference to both the earlier text and the later text and is found at the point of their intersection.²⁴⁷ The assessment of the focus text begins by establishing the symbol markers through the evocation of the text. After this the scholarly literature is combed to ascertain the status of the history of interpretation criterion. This guideline is established on the basis of how many interpreters have identified the precursor text as either an allusion or echo. Most interpreters in fact just reference the OT text. In any case, after Hays' taxonomy is applied to the purported text a judgment will be made as to whether it is a clear allusion, probable allusion or an echo.

Once the texts are categorized by using Hays' criteria, those texts that have the strongest thematic coherence are brought into a deeper intertextual relationship through the cave of resonant signification. In other words, the two or three texts are scrutinized together to ascertain their hermeneutical and exegetical value in the new context of the focus text. The interaction and intersection of the two or three texts in this cave should yield some interesting discoveries.

c. Social and Cultural Texture

It is of central importance in the interpretation of Revelation to familiarise oneself with the social and cultural meanings of this particular text "in the context of first-century Mediterranean society and culture."²⁴⁸ This society is governed by preindustrial methods of manufacture and allocation and access to food, housing and health is restricted and limited.

Richard Hays approach this verse see Steve Moyise, *Evoking Scripture: Seeing the Old Testament in the New* (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 49-62.

²⁴⁶ See Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 42, passim. The example on p. 42 is in relation to Prov 24.12. He writes: "Allusive echo functions to suggest to the reader that text B should be understood in a broad interplay with text A, encompassing aspects of A beyond those explicitly echoed...(it)...places the reader within a field of whispered or unstated correspondences." Cf. Stephen Ahearne-Kroll, *The Psalms of Lament in Mark's Passion: Jesus' Davidic Suffering*, SNTMS 142 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 23-37, especially 33-4; Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians*, 11-35.

²⁴⁷ Hollander, *The Figure of Echo*, 65.

²⁴⁸ Robbins, *Exploring*, 89.

The common person considered that all goods are in fixed quantities and short supply.²⁴⁹ Powerful socio-political forces dominated regions and strong extended family ties epitomized the networks that provided the basic needs of life.²⁵⁰ The values of honor and shame dominated the cultural landscape since everyone was dependent on “traditional loyalties and relationships.”²⁵¹

Sociological criticism has uncovered many contemporary theories to explore the intricacies and wonders of ancient societies and cultures. The constructs of SRI will be used to articulate how this texture is to be developed in relation to the focus text. Social and cultural texture draws particularly on the resources of “anthropological and sociological theory to explore the social and cultural nature of the voices in the text under investigation.”²⁵² It includes exploring “the social and cultural location of the language and the type of social and cultural world the language evokes and creates.”²⁵³ The rhetorical topics this area of research focuses on are “specific social topics,” “common social and cultural topics” and “final cultural categories.”²⁵⁴

There are seven kinds of specific social topics that appear as types of social rhetoric.²⁵⁵ The first is “conversionist social rhetoric.”²⁵⁶ This view is characterized by the perception that “the world is corrupt because people are corrupt.”²⁵⁷ If people can be transformed the world will also be transformed. Second, “revolutionist social rhetoric” is the view that only the devastation of the natural world and the social order is adequate to save people. Third, “introversionist social rhetoric” views the world as evil and therefore admits

²⁴⁹ Bruce Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 90-116, cited in Robbins, *Exploring*, 84.

²⁵⁰ Robbins, *Exploring*, 89.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Robbins, *Tapestry*, 144. Robbins draws on the typology of sects developed by Brian Wilson (see Robbins, *Exploring*, 137, for references). Based on a cross-cultural spectrum of religious groups, Wilson established a taxonomy of seven types of religious responses to the world. This taxonomy is: conversionist, revolutionist, introversionist, gnostic-manipulationist, thaumaturgical, reformist and utopian. Robbins then drew on the insights of the anthropologist Clifford Geertz and suggested that each of Wilson’s responses could be classified as a particular kind of culture that gives meanings, values and traditions to people. According to Robbins, *Exploring*, 72, “applying this taxonomy to the New Testament literature reveals the kinds of cultures earliest Christianity nurtured and maintained in the first-century Mediterranean world.”

²⁵³ Robbins, *Exploring*, 71.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ I have followed Robbins closely here because it needs to be ascertained whether or not these categories are applicable to the focus text.

²⁵⁶ Robbins, *Exploring*, 72 states: “As an interpreter approaches the New Testament literature, each kind of social response appears as a type of social rhetoric.”

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 72.

that salvation is only possible by renouncing the world and withdrawing from it. Fourth, “gnostic-manipulationist social rhetoric” perceives transformed relationships as the only mechanism for managing evil.²⁵⁸ Fifth, “thaumaturgical social rhetoric” focuses on the individual’s concern for relief from present and specific ills through special dispensations while the reformist perspective understands social structures as corrupt and that salvation can only be attained through the transformation of these structures. Contrastingly, “utopian social rhetoric” seeks to reconstruct the entire social world according to divinely orchestrated principles.²⁵⁹

Common social and cultural topics include the cultural and social concepts of honour, shame and purity. In final cultural categories the category of dominant culture rhetoric and counter-culture rhetoric will be employed.²⁶⁰ Dominant culture rhetoric represents “a system of attitudes, values, dispositions and norms of dominant culture rhetoric, and it claims to enact them better than members of dominant status.”²⁶¹ Countercultural or alternate culture rhetoric seeks to create a better society and to express a constructive image of an alternate way of life. It seeks to provide a new future for those within the dominant culture who desire a better way of life. Each of these various aspects of social and cultural texture will be explored in dialogue with the focus text.

In this regard the idea of a *social marker* is introduced. A social marker is embedded in the text of Revelation and has distinctly social overtures and features. It is a marker that points specifically to social practice, to happenings or occurrences within society or to positions and rank within the infrastructure of first-century society. These markers constitute the primary means of studying the text and seeking to uncover the social and cultural features in this texture. Social markers comprise four categories: 1) “social role” (e.g. soldier, slave); 2) “social institution” (e.g. empire, synagogue) ; 3) “social code” (e.g. honour, hospitality) and 4) “social relationship” (e.g. patron, friend).²⁶²

To conclude this section, I will firstly explore the focus text for social markers and assess these to gauge the social and cultural issues faced by the authorial audience. Secondly,

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 73-4.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Robbins, *Exploring*, 86-7.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² I have adapted Robbins, *Exploring*, 62, who has these categories in social intertexture.

Robbins constructs are applied to the focus text to see if his categories are applicable or not. Thirdly, the rhetorical implications that emerge from this texture are discussed as well.

d. Ideological Texture

In SRI, ideology is concerned with systems of value, structure and power. It is concerned with the power structures of a society and the manner in which what we say and believe connects with those power structures and relations. Further, ideology concerns the values, perceptions and beliefs which “have some kind of relation to the maintenance and reproduction of social power.”²⁶³ It concerns “the particular ways in which our speech and action, in their social and cultural location, relate to and interconnect with resources, structures and institutions of power.”²⁶⁴

The ideology of the focus text is partly uncovered through the *ideological markers*. An ideological marker is a marker that is embedded in the text of Revelation which has distinctly ideological overtures and features. While social markers are concerned with the social happenings, social experience and the infrastructure of the first-century world, ideological markers are determined by issues of power, authority and legitimacy. These markers are indicated in the text by referencing positions, places, concepts, things and people which relate to matters of power, sovereignty and authority. In addition, the ideological marker is not concerned with antecedent literature, but rather with the issues and structures that challenge and undermine the belief system and values of the authorial audience. Ideological markers reveal the hidden complexities behind the text and provide the controlling factor for uncovering the ideological features of the focus text. Once the ideological markers have been assessed, the ideological implications of the use of the trumpet will be paid attention to.

e. Sacred Texture

This chapter is concerned with locating ways in which the text speaks about God or about realms of religious life. Sacred texture employs the following categories to guide the

²⁶³ T. Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1983), 15.

²⁶⁴ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 36.

interpreter in determining and examining the sacred aspects of the text. According to Robbins, these include God, divine history, human redemption, human commitment, religious community and ethics. “These aspects of a text are embedded deeply in the inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture and ideological texture of a text.”²⁶⁵

After a thorough analysis of these prior textures, insights, ideas and concepts from these textures are drawn together and deployed in an attempt to reach a fuller understanding of the meaning and meaning-effects of sacred texture. Insights on God, the cosmic conflict, and the markers are developed. Inner texture, intertexture and intratexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture and sacred texture is enlisted in this study to explore the meaning and meaning-effects of the focus text.²⁶⁶

6. The Apocalyptic Rhetorolect

According to Robbins a number of distinct modes of discourse manifest themselves in early Christian literature. Each type of discourse contains a “distinctive configuration of themes, topics, reasonings, and argumentations” and thus each could rightly be classified a distinct “rhetorolect.”²⁶⁷ Six different modes of discourse have been identified by Robbins: wisdom,

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 130.

²⁶⁶ The procedures of SRI are adapted to better accommodate the indeterminable nature of the focus text and to assist in the applicability of SRI to Revelation. Firstly, the section called “references” in Robbins work (see Robbins, *Exploring*, 58) is not discussed in the chapter on intertexture. The literature review has addressed various authors with differing theological persuasions and approaches to the text. Secondly, sensory-aesthetic texture (see Robbins, *Exploring*, 29-31) has been omitted due to the constraints of this project. Thirdly, oral-scribal texture’s focus on recitation, recontextualization and reconfiguration (see Robbins, *Exploring*, 41-50) is omitted as I will work primarily with allusions and echoes. The construct of parallel is used sparingly. Thirdly, I have omitted the category of social intertexture (see Robbins, *Exploring*, 62-3) because it becomes confusing when one examines the social and cultural texture of Revelation. The sub-categories that Robbins outlines for this intertexture are not evident in the focus text. Fourth, argumentative texture (see Robbins, *Exploring*, 21-9) is also omitted as his rhetorical categories are not sustainable in apocalyptic narratives. Categories like qualitative and logical progression in terms of argumentation are not germane to Revelation as this apocalyptic text cannot be reduced to manageable and neatly accessible textual argumentation because of its apocalyptic symbolism and mythopoetic language. David A. deSilva, *Seeing Things John’s Way: The Rhetoric of the Book of Revelation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009) however, addresses the rhetorical implications of Revelation by using categories like ethos, pathos and logos. His work breaks new ground.

²⁶⁷ According to Vernon Robbins, “The Dialectical Nature of Early Christian Discourse,” *Scriptura* 59 (1996): 353-62 (356), “a rhetorolect is a form of language variety or discourse identifiable on the basis of a distinctive configuration of themes, topics, reasonings, and argumentations...By their nature, rhetorolects interpenetrate one another and interact with one another like dialects do when people from different dialectical areas converse with one another. The interaction of rhetorolects in early Christianity created new configurations of speech as the movement grew. Every early Christian writing contains a configuration of rhetorolects that is somewhat different from every other writing. These differences, interacting with one another, create the overall rhetorical environment properly called early Christian discourse.”

prophetic, miracle, precreation, priestly and apocalyptic.²⁶⁸ It is important to recognize that none of these rhetorolects are static, but that there is a freedom of movement and interaction between them. While the rhetorolects provide heuristic categories that explicate the nature and function of early Christian discourse, it is the textures that assist and guide the interpreter in the analysis of individual texts.

One of the key aspects of this thesis is the assessment of the apocalyptic rhetorolect in early Christian literature.

Early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect blends human experiences of the emperor and his imperial army (i.e. first space) with God's heavenly temple city (i.e. second space) which can only be occupied by holy, undefiled people. In the space of blending, God functions as a heavenly emperor who gives commands to emissaries to destroy all the evil in the universe and to create a cosmic environment where holy bodies experience perfect well-being in the presence of God. Apocalyptic rhetorolect, then, features destruction of evil and the construction of a cosmic environment of perfect well-being. The goal of this blending is to call people into action and thought guided by perfect holiness. The presupposition of the rhetorolect is that only perfect holiness and righteousness can bring a person into the presence of God, who destroys all evil and gathers all holiness together in His presence. Apocalyptic redemption, therefore, means the presence of all of God's holy beings in a realm where God's holiness and righteousness are completely and eternally present.²⁶⁹

Robbins outlines the importance of the emperor in his definition, giving it both an earthly and heavenly dimension. Attention is paid to this notion of emperor, as well as how the destruction of evil takes place. Further, how God brings about the "perfect holiness and righteousness" required for people to live in the presence of God is looked at.

The term "blending" comes from conceptual blending theory. This is a theory in cognitive science used to understand how people think at particular moments. Robbins depends especially on the work of Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner.²⁷⁰ Fauconnier and Turner seek to portray conceptual blending as "central, uniform and pervasive" in the

²⁶⁸ For a useful discussion of each of these rhetorolects see Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 121-479.

²⁶⁹ Robbins, "Beginnings and Developments," 37-38. The discussions that have been brought forward in relation to the concept of apocalyptic in the scholarly literature are too numerous to mention here. For a discussion on the nature and scope of apocalyptic see the two part discussion by Lorenzo DiTommaso, "Apocalypses and Apocalypticism in Antiquity (Part 1)," *CBR* 5 (2007): 235-86 and "Apocalypses and Apocalypticism in Antiquity (Part 2)," *CBR* 5 (2007): 367- 432.

²⁷⁰ Cf. Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002). For the application of conceptual blending theory in a sociorhetorical framework, see Robert von Thaden, *Fleeing Porneia: 1 Corinthians 6.12-7.7 and the Reconfiguration of Traditions* (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2007) and Vernon K. Robbins, "Conceptual Blending and Early Christian Imagination," in *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism: Contributions from Cognitive and Social Science*, eds. Petri Luomanen, Ikka Pyysiäinen, and Risto Uro; Biblical Interpretation Series 89 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 161-95.

meaning making exercise.²⁷¹ Robbins has done elaborate work on developing conceptual blending theory as an important aspect of SRI. He has also developed diagrams showing how conceptual blending theory integrates across the various rhetorolects.²⁷² Since my work is restricted to the apocalyptic rhetorolect conceptual blending theory will not be employed.

The progressive development of SRI led Robbins further down the path of attempting to uncover and unravel, not just what happens in an individual, but also what happens in the places, situations and spaces people occupy. As the chief architect, Robbins enlisted the resources of critical spatial theory to further facilitate discovering the relationship between individual experience, social location and cultural context.²⁷³ However, because of the constraints of this project critical spatial theory will also not be used.

7. The Implied Reader, Implied Author and Authorial Audience

The implied reader is presupposed by the narrative itself and is separate from the real, historical reader in the same way that the implied author is distinct from the real, historical author.²⁷⁴ The term implied reader for Iser “incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning of the text, and the reader’s actualization of this potential through the reading process.”²⁷⁵ The structure and composition of the text is preeminent in formulating the concept of the implied reader and in no way predetermines the historical circumstances of the reader.²⁷⁶

Furthermore, the implied reader is the representation of all the moves and understandings that the historical author intends the historical reader taking towards the narrative. The implied reader is a competent reader who is intricately familiar with the

²⁷¹ Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, “Conceptual Integration Networks,” *Cognitive Science* 22 (1998): 133-87.

²⁷² Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 108-09.

²⁷³ According to Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, xxii, critical spatial theory “is a special form of cultural geography that guides socio-rhetorical interpreters in determining the relationship between the geophysical places people experience (first space) to the mental spaces humans create and manipulate in their minds (second space) to understand and give order to their experiences throughout life (third space).” For a discussion of critical spatial theory see Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 8, 88-90.

²⁷⁴ Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 1990), 19. Significant works and comment on the implied reader include: Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); idem, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); R. Alan Culpepper, ‘The Implied Reader,’ in *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 209-210; and Staley, *The Print’s First Kiss*.

²⁷⁵ Iser, *The Implied Reader*, xii.

²⁷⁶ Iser, *The Act of Reading*, 34.

repertoire of literary, socio-historical and cultural assumptions of the authorial audience – that is the audience that the historical author has in mind when he writes.²⁷⁷ In many ways the implied reader is the ideal reader of the text.

According to Robbins, “the implied reader designates the reader the text implies and the interpreter infers in relation to real readers and audiences both in the Mediterranean world and in the world of the interpreter today.”²⁷⁸ For Robbins the borders between the reader the text implies and the real reader inferred by the interpreter are porous. However, the implied reader is a textual construct that is guided by the procedures of the text in order to convey meaning and to obtain a meaning effect.

The text evokes the name of John to designate the author in Rev 1.9.²⁷⁹ Hence, the literary category of implied author is used at times and at other times the first name of John. In SRI John is a literary and historical construct.²⁸⁰ The textures are engaged with and assessed from varying perspectives. In the chapter on intertexture work is discussed from the viewpoint of “the author as the producer of the text.”²⁸¹ In the chapters on social and cultural texture and the ideological texture, the focus text is examined from the perspective of the authorial audience, “the represented world of the text.”²⁸²

The authorial audience encompasses a broad spectrum of personages across the first-century C.E. societal context that would have included women, men and children, masters and slaves, patrons and clients, Gentile and Jew, the powerful and weak and Roman citizens and non-citizens. The exclusion of any of the above from the authorial audience is reductionistic and narrows the possibilities for evaluating the meaning potentialities of the text beyond the boundaries of Revelation.

²⁷⁷ James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 32.

²⁷⁸ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 22.

²⁷⁹ J. Ramsey Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992), 29. The concept of the implied author was originally coined and popularized by Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 70-76 and 151.

²⁸⁰ See Greg Carey, *Elusive Apocalypse: Reading Authority in the Revelation to John*, SABH 15 (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1999), 93.

²⁸¹ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 32.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 34, 37. I follow Warren Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 3-4, who understands the authorial audience as a contextualized audience. It “is an ideal audience although it approximates an actual audience. The author images an audience that is able to respond appropriately to and understand everything in the text.” He, in turn, develops his ideas from P. J. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 15-46, cited in Carter, *Matthew*, 9.

Further, the authorial audience is located in a Greco-Roman urban setting as early sources tell us that first-century C.E. Christianity in Western Asia was an urban phenomena and the implied author explicitly informs us of the locations of each of the seven churches.²⁸³ I assume that the authorial audience is comprised mostly of the labor classes but that there are also wealthy members in various churches.²⁸⁴ Because it was addressed to urban communities living in first-century Asia Minor, a Roman province, the text reflects and responds to this surrounding cultural context.

Moreover, the authorial audience has knowledge of Greek, comprehension of the Revelation's genre, knowledge about Jesus and biblical traditions, insight into and an understanding of extra-biblical traditions, the experience of belonging to a minority community and the ability to interpret various narrative conventions. The authorial audience also makes no distinction between religion and politics but rather comprehends the overlapping and interpenetration of both of these modern categories.²⁸⁵

The relationship between the implied author and the authorial audience is an interesting one. Kenneth Burke's contribution to literary criticism has been the provocative insight that identification is at the heart of rhetoric. While theorists have always advised speakers to align themselves with their audience's sympathies, Burke's contribution has been to locate identification as the central feature of rhetoric.²⁸⁶ The implied author identifies with the authorial audience by associating with concepts, persons and things valued by the audience and in doing so he is able to win their attention and credibility. Rhetoric persuades

²⁸³ These are Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. For an excellent discussion of the seven cities in their Greco-Asian context see Roland Worth, Jr. *The Seven Cities of the Apocalypse and Greco-Asian Culture* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999). For a detailed and thorough discussion on Ephesus see Paul Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

²⁸⁴ Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, 2nd edition (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 29-59 and Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 51-79. Contra Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, 202 who perceives the Christian community comprised of only "the lower ranks of society." This was the view of earlier scholars like Beckwith. This view was first challenged by E. A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century* (London: Tyndale, 1960), 52-4, 60-1, who studied the names and occupations of the early Christians and asserted that they were a cross-section of society.

²⁸⁵ S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 15-16.

²⁸⁶ Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, reprint (Berkeley: University of California, 1969), 35, 46.

by means of identification.²⁸⁷ The implied author seeks to identify with the authorial audience in terms of the values of endurance, obedience, faithfulness and humility.²⁸⁸

8. The Design of this Study

Chapter 1 examines prior research and develops my interpretive analytic. Chapter 2 pays attention to the inner texture. The text is engaged at face value to ascertain word patterns and voices in the text. The structure of the text is also analysed in open-middle-closing texture. Chapter 3 pays attention to the manner and scope of how earlier and contemporary texts interact and intersect with the focus text and conclude with the implications for the implied reader and implied author. While the allusions and echoes that emerge from a SRI of the text will be listed, this study is far more concerned with gauging their exegetical and hermeneutical value.

Chapter 4 pays attention to the social and cultural texture in an exploration of the social and cultural “location” of the language and the type of world the text evokes.²⁸⁹ Ideological texture addresses the issues of power and authority embedded in the text in chapter 5. I draw on the resources of postcolonial theory to unpack the ideology of the text. Chapter 6 focuses on sacred texture and addresses the how and why of God’s involvement in the text, the cosmic conflict and the value of the symbol, social and ideological markers in this sociorhetorical reading of Rev 8.2-9.21 and 11.15-11.18. In chapter 7, entitled, summary and conclusions, the unique claims of my work are addressed in a ten point summary.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 55, 67

²⁸⁸ Carey, *Elusive Apocalypse*, 95.

²⁸⁹ Robbins, *Exploring*, 71.

CHAPTER 2

INNER TEXTURE

Inner texture is concerned with the words in the focus text. The interpreter looks at the ways in which the text uses words and phrases. Interpretation is not the focus of this chapter but rather ascertaining the basic sense of words. The purpose of this texture is to gain a clearer understanding and knowledge of “words, word patterns, structures, devices and modes” in the focus text.¹ It comprises repetitive texture, progressive texture, open-middle-closing texture and narrational texture.

1. Repetitive Texture

This texture involves the analysis of the occurrence of words and phrases more than once in a textual unit. It is evident in multiple occurrences of grammatical, syntactical, verbal or topical phenomena in the text. An important question in this section is: What patterns materialize from the repetition of certain words in the text?² This texture regularly exhibits initial glimpses into the overall rhetorical movements in the text. It invites the reader to move closer to the details of the text, whilst providing an overarching view of the texture of the text.³ What follows is a table outlining the occurrence of significant words in the focus text.⁴ The numbers in bold indicate the number of times the word is mentioned in a particular trumpet judgment. The verse numbers indicate the verse in which the words occur.

Table 1								
Repetitive Texture								
Words /	8.2-	8.7	8.8-9	8.10-	8.12-	9.1-	9.12-	11.15-18
Phrases	8.6			11	13	11	21	
Abyss						3 (vv.		

¹ Robbins, *Exploring*, 7.

² Robbins, *Tapestry*, 50.

³ Robbins, *Exploring*, 8.

⁴ I am indebted to Ekkehardt Müller, *Microstructural Analysis of Revelation 4-11* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1996) for the idea of the table but have independently carried out the research. After carrying out the research I discovered a reference work by Andreas Köstenberger and Raymond Bouchoc, *The Book Study Concordance of the Greek New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003), which solidified my earlier research.

(ἄβυσσος)						1, 2, 11)		
Angel (Ἄγγελος)	5 (vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)				2 (v.v 12, 13)	2 (vv. 1, 11)	4 (vv. 13, 14, 15)	
Holy (Ἅγιος)	2 (vv. 3, 4)							
Humanity (Ἄνθρωπος)						5 (vv. 4, 5, 6, 7, 10)	3 (vv. 15, 18, 20)	
Kill (ἀποκτείνω)							2 (vv. 15, 18)	
Star (ἀστήρ)			2 (vv. 10, 11)			1 (v.1)		
Empire (βασιλεία)								2 (v. 15)
Earth (γῆς)	.	2 (v. 7)				4 (vv. 1, 3, 4)		
Were given (ἐδόθη)						3 (vv.1, 2)		
Fire (πῦρ)	1 (v. 5)	1 (v. 7)					1 (v. 17)	
Authority (ἐξουσία)						3 (vv. 3, 5, 10)		
Sea (θάλασσα)			3 (vv. 8, 9)					
God (Θεοῦ)	2 (vv. 7. 8)							3 (vv. 15, 17, 18)
Altar (Θυσιαστήριον)	3 (vv. 3, 5)							
Horse (Ἴππος)						2 (v.	4 (vv. 17,	

						7)	19)	
Burn up (κατακαίω)		3 (v. 7)						
Lord (κύριος)								2 (vv. 15, 17)
Name (ὄνομα)				1 (v. 11)		2 (v. 11)		
Heaven (οὐρανου)				1 (v. 10)	1 (v. 13)	1 (v. 1)		1 (v. 15)
Plague (πληγή)							2 (vv. 18, 21)	
War (πόλεμος)						2 (vv. 7, 9)		

James Muilenburg points out that in ancient Israel repetition served many diverse functions in the literary composition of a text. He argues that repeated words “do not appear haphazardly or fortuitously, but rather in rhetorically significant collocations.” He finds repetition a valuable and effective mnemonic device and while Muilenburg references ancient Israel the focus text is built on the concepts, ideas and images of the OT.⁵

Janice Capel Anderson has also provided a helpful introduction to the literary concept of repetition. She uses the concept of repetition in relation to single words, phrases and concepts. She suggests that repetition functions

to highlight or draw attention; to establish or fix in the mind of the reader; to emphasize the importance of something; to create expectations, increasing predictability and assent; to cause review and reassessment; to unify disparate elements and to build patterns of association or draw contrast.⁶

These insights are helpful in comprehending the dynamics of repetition.

The first word in the repetitive texture table is ἀβύσσοῦ, which is mentioned at Rev 9.1. The fact that ἀβύσσοῦ is next mentioned in 9.11, to complete the passage about the fifth trumpet plague, suggests that something of importance is being conveyed in this plague. Abyss (ἀβύσσου) is a *lietwort*. It is a “word or word-root that recurs significantly in a text, in

⁵ James Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” *JBL* 88 (1969): 1-18 (10).

⁶ Janice Capel Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web: Over, and Over, and Over Again* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1994), 36-45.

a continuum of texts, or in a configuration of texts: by following these repetitions, one is able to decipher or grasp a meaning of a text, or at any rate, the meaning will be revealed more strikingly.”⁷ The use of the word in 9.1 and again at 9.11 tentatively indicates that this could be the middle of the focus text. As the journey continues into the next textures close attention needs to be paid to this word.

Another discovery is the use of the word βασιλεία in the culmination of the focus text at 11.15. The word is enlisted here on two occasions. It is also intriguing to find θεοῦ at the beginning of the focus text and then finally mentioned with greater frequency in Rev 11.17 on two occasions. The pattern that emerges is one where God is seemingly absent from the narrative, in that θεοῦ is used in the beginning of the focus text, just after the middle and then in the culmination of the focus text. This observation is underscored by the use of κυρίου on two occasions in Rev 11.15-18, without any prior mention of the word in the focus text.

The seeming absence of God in the narrative at the textual junctures mentioned is qualified by the use of ἐδόθη on three occasions in 9.1-3. It is a divine passive indicating the activity of God in the passage about the fifth trumpet plague (9.1-11).⁸ Interestingly, God’s passivity is highlighted in conjunction with the use of the word ἐξουσία on three occasions in 9.1-11. It would appear that the rhetorical effect of the use of the word ἐξουσία in the passage about the fifth trumpet plague pertains to the nature and person of God.

The word “star” (ἀστήρ) is found in the passage about the third trumpet judgment (Rev 8.10, 11) and again in the passage about the fifth trumpet (Rev 9.1), suggesting a literary relationship between the third and fifth trumpet respectively. In addition, this is a special star as it is identified as “great” (μέγας). If there is indeed a connection between the star of 8.10 and that of 9.1 then the work in the chapter on intertexture needs to explore what this might be.

The word ὄνομα in 9.11 is used to identify the king of the abyss as Abaddon in Hebrew and Apollyon in Greek. Interestingly, the use of the word ὄνομα initially is in 8.11 where the star Wormwood is identified. Anderson’s category of “building association” is evident in the use of ὄνομα to identify powers that seem opposed to God and his people.

⁷ Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 93.

⁸ The designation of “divine passive” is a theological category and not a linguistic/grammatical one in Koine Greek.

The text evokes battle imagery in 9.1-11 with the use of πόλεμον (9.9). The realities of war are evident in the passages about the fifth and sixth trumpet with words like “kill” (ἀποκτείνωσιν) being used. The passages about the fifth and sixth trumpets are the only ones that reflect the involvement of human beings. That human beings are the subject of Rev 9.20 seems to be an important consideration as three significant words are employed in this text, namely, rest/remnant (λοιπός), repent (μετανοέω) and idols (εἰδωλον). Worship (προσκυνέω) indicates the activity of the rest of humankind in Rev 9.20 and is intentionally contrasted by its use in Rev 11.16 (προσκυνέω). In 9.20 the worship of idols is taking place, while in 11.16 the twenty four elders are worshipping God because he has taken his great power and begun to reign. The text implies that there are only two options, either worship idols or worship God.

The first pattern is the use of the word abyss (ἀβύσσου) found in 9.1 and 9.11. The second pattern is the seeming absence of God in the focus text. However, this absence is qualified with the presence of divine passives in the focus text. The third pattern is the use of the word star (ἀστῆρ) in Rev 8.10, 11 and again in Rev 9.1, suggesting a literary connection between these texts. The fourth pattern is the word name (ὄνομα) in 8.11, where the star Wormwood is identified, and 9.11 where the king of the abyss is named. Finally ὄνομα is used in 11.18 to refer to God’s name. The final pattern is the language and symbols of battle and war found in the sixth trumpet judgment. While other patterns may be present, these are a helpful starting point in furthering this study.

2. Progressive Texture

The task of progressive texture is to ascertain the progression and development in the text. In a similar manner to Robbins, a table outlining significant phrases and structuring formulas that portray the development and progression in the focus text is provided. Once this is completed the table is analysed in conjunction with a scrutiny of the text itself to uncover its progression. This decision has been made because progressive texture lies in sequences of words and phrases throughout the focus text.⁹

⁹ Müller, *Microstructural Analysis of Revelation 4-11*, has a number of tables that are similar, where each trumpet is discussed.

Table 2								
Progressive Texture								
Structuring Formulas	8.2-8.6	8.7	8.8-9	8.10-11	8.12-13	9.1-11	9.12-21	11.15-18
Καὶ εἶδον	1				1	1		
(καὶ) ἤκουσα							2	
Καὶ ὁ ... ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν·		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
καὶ ἐγένοντο	1	1	1	1				1
οὐαὶ					3		2	
Phrases								
φωναὶ μεγάλη / φωνῆ μεγάλη						1		1
εἰς τὴν γῆν	1	1				1		
ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ	2						1	1
ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς					1			
θυσιαστήριον τὸ χρυσοῦν	1						1	
καὶ ἀνέβη ὁ καπνὸς	1					1		

Καὶ εἶδον has been highlighted in the introduction to the trumpet plagues and in 8.13 and 9.1. Καὶ εἶδον also serves as a structuring device and is used to introduce new aspects of the overall vision of Revelation.¹⁰ Revelation 8.2 reads: “And I saw (καὶ εἶδον) the seven angels who stand before God (ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ), and to them were given seven trumpets.”

¹⁰ Blount, *Revelation*, 282.

Interestingly, while Rev. 8.6 forms an *inclusio* with 8.2, this text (8.6) also portrays the progression in the text in regards to the seven angels as they are now preparing to blow their trumpets.¹¹ The similarities between 8.2 and 8.6 include ἑπτὰ ἄγγέλους and ἑπτὰ σάλπιγγας.

Καὶ ὁ ... ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· is used to introduce the passage about each trumpet judgment. The blowing of each trumpet suggests the passage of time as the focus text moves progressively toward the seventh trumpet judgment. The word τρίτον is found at Rev 8.8-9 and shifts the focus from the earth to the sea (θάλασσα), with the term being used on three occasions. All three clauses employ the word τρίτον with the mention of a three-fold result that effects the sea. The devastation includes the living creatures and the ships.

In Rev 8.10-11 the action begins with the angel blowing the trumpet. While the discussion here may seem laborious, it is crucial to establish the continuing downward motif as well as introduce a new feature to the focus text. The aorist indicative third person verb ἔπεσεν is used by the implied author twice in 8.10. In its first use it is followed by one prepositional clause (ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ), whereas on its second occurrence in the text two prepositional clauses (ἐπὶ τὸ τρίτον and ἐπὶ τὰς πηγὰς) are used.¹² Revelation 8.11a is a narrative aside, whereby the narrative flow is interrupted in the middle of vision descriptions by καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ ἀστέρος λέγεται ὁ ῥαψινθος.¹³ Two results are mentioned, namely a third of the waters become wormwood, and many people die from the water, because it was made bitter.

The emphasis in the passage about the fourth trumpet judgment (Rev 8.12) is the heavenly bodies and their ability to provide light. It is dominated by the use of τρίτον with each use of the term denoting a particular action. The result of this trumpet judgment is that the light of the sun, moon and stars is darkened and a third of the day and night are affected.¹⁴

¹¹ According to Stephen Pattemore, *Souls Under the Altar: Relevance Theory and the Discourse Structure of Revelation*, UBSMS 9 (New York: United Bible Societies, 2003), 116, καὶ “is the default conjunction for linking elements of the same vision segment.”

¹² Müller, *Microstructural Analysis of Revelation 4-11*, 333.

¹³ Dal Lee, *The Narrative Asides of the Book of Revelation* (New York: University Press of America, 2002), 19. Charles, *Revelation*, vol. 1, 235, states that this phrase “interrupts the steady development of thought in the stanza” and that “the phrase τὸ ὄνομα ... λέγεται is unique in the Apocalypse.” Further, he states that asides “can either be parenthesized, are often supplementary and explanatory to the main line of the text, consist mainly of phrases and an abrupt change of tense, verb form, point of view or mood.” Idem., *The Narrative Asides of the Book of Revelation*, 117-118.

¹⁴ Müller, *Microstructural Analysis of Revelation 4-11*, 334.

The focus text is unique compared to the other septets (the others being seals and bowls) in that it has a special introduction to the last three trumpets. The verse (Rev 8.13) is introduced by καὶ εἶδον which is the first use of this vision formula since its use in Rev 8.2 as the introduction to the trumpet judgments.¹⁵ A bird, presumably an eagle, is introduced into the narrative at 8.13. Further, two new concepts are introduced with the announcement of the woes. Firstly, this is the first occasion in the focus text where direct speech is used. Secondly, the inhabitants of the earth (τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) are mentioned for the first time as well.

The passage about the fifth trumpet judgment (Rev 9.1-11) is much longer than any of the previous trumpet judgments. As already stated the vision formula καὶ εἶδον introduces the visionary aspect of this material in Rev 9.1. The phrase εἰς τὴν γῆν occurs in both 9.1 and 9.3 and points to the continuing downward movement of the text that began in 8.5. In the first three verses the shaft (φρέαρ) of the bottomless pit and the smoke (καπνός) dominate the picture and are found four times each. From repetitive texture it was shown that ἐξουσία is used in this text on three occasions at 9.3 and 10.

The use of καὶ ἐδόθη in 9.1 is also found in 8.3. The use of both καὶ εἶδον and καὶ ἐδόθη in 9.1 and 8.3 and καὶ ἀνέβη ὁ καπνὸς in 8.4 and 9.2 reinforce the importance of the passage about the fifth trumpet judgment as imagery that introduces the focus text is re-introduced in this trumpet judgment. Humankind are introduced in 9.4 but are concentrated on in 9.6. From 9.7 to 9.10 there is a description of the locusts. The descent motif demonstrated in 8.5 seems to continue in a description of the locusts that proceeds from head to tail in 9.10.¹⁶

The text evokes the same stock apocalyptic language and imagery in 9.5 and 9.10 where τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, μῆνας πέντε, the concept of ἀδικῆσαι and the presence of the σκορπίοις are seen in both verses. The king of the locusts, who is the angel of the abyss, is identified through the use of two languages, Hebrew and Greek. Revelation 9.12 provides a short transition from the fifth to the sixth trumpet judgment and is an important marker in

¹⁵ Pattemore, *Souls Under the Altar*, 116, suggests that καὶ εἶδον is a high level discourse connective that draws attention to a new visual component.

¹⁶ The text moves from the head (κεφαλῆς), to various items on the head like hair (τρίχας) and teeth (ὀδόντες), to the breastplates (θώρακας) and wings (πτερύγων), representing the body, and finally tails (οὐράς) and stings (κέντρα).

determining the progression in the text. The use of the word οὐαί in 8.13 and 9.12 provides the progressive link between these two verses. The verse (8.13) looks back to the passage about the fourth trumpet judgment and also looks ahead, not just to the fifth trumpet judgment but also to the sixth and seventh.

Revelation 9.13-21 has the standard introduction, namely, the blowing of a trumpet by an angel. Furthermore, the passage about the sixth trumpet judgment also has variations from the other trumpet judgments, even the fifth. This is seen in the use of καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μίαν ἐκ τῶν [τεσσάρων] κεράτων τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. The use of the phrase τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ χρυσοῦ, used in 9.13, is last used in 8.3. From the above-mentioned table one can also learn that ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ is last employed in 8.2. The prepositional phrase denoting “place” introduces the Euphrates river (ἐπὶ τῷ ποταμῷ τῷ μεγάλῳ Εὐφράτῃ).

The progressive nature of the text is seen in the notion of “giving a command” and “fulfilling the command” as something new that seems to dominate this piece of text.¹⁷ In Rev 9.14 the voice from the golden altar gives the command to the angel to release the four angels bound at the Euphrates river which is carried out in 9.15. The same concept is repeated in 9.15b where the intent in releasing the four angels is to kill a third of humankind and this is carried out in 9.18a.

In Rev 9.16 there is a shift from “hearing,” which introduced the sixth trumpet judgment in 9.13 and continues until 9.16, to “seeing” in 9.17. . In 9.17 the phrase Καὶ οὕτως εἶδον is used to introduce this vision of the horses and riders. The characterization of the horses is accomplished with the use of nominal and verbal clauses, while the horsemen are described using a participial clause.¹⁸ The downward movement (8.5; 10-11; 9.7-10) in the text is evident up until the end of the passage about the sixth trumpet judgment.

3. Open-Middle-Closing Texture

This texture affords me the opportunity to articulate arguments for the open-middle-closing of the focus text. The literary-structure of Revelation in particular is of such significance that to arrive at a satisfactory interpretation of the text requires detailed attention to both micro

¹⁷ Müller, *Microstructural Analysis of Revelation 4-11*, 345.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 348.

and macro-structural features in the text.¹⁹ Revelation contains a detailed architectural design in its literary construction and is an extraordinarily complex literary composition.²⁰

The assessment of Adela Yarbro Collins that “there are almost as many outlines of the book as there are interpreters” is still valid.²¹ Furthermore Robert Mounce states: “This rather complete lack of consensus about the structure of Revelation should caution the reader about accepting any one approach as definitive.”²² Richard Bauckham goes further to say that “*the* major literary study that will do justice to this complexity in Revelation has yet to be written.”²³ Thus, dogmatism in relation to a definitive structure for the focus text is unwise. A point of central importance in this matter of structure, however, is that the “text itself must be the source for and the guide to determining literary structure.”²⁴ A brief outline follows.

The sounding of the seven trumpets (8.2-11.18)

¹⁹ I would like to suggest the following major categories that comprise studies on the structure of the book of Revelation: liturgical patterns, for example Michael Goulder, “The Apocalypse as an Annual Cycle of Prophecies,” *NTS* 27 (1981): 322-341 and Massey Shepherd, *The Paschal Liturgy and the Apocalypse*, Ecumenical Studies in Worship 6 (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960), 77-84; drama, for example, James L. Blevins, “The Genre of Revelation,” *RHE* 70 (1980): 393-408; Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 19-22 and Michael Wilcock, *I Saw Heaven Opened* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1975); the structure of Old Testament literature, for example, Jeffrey Marshall Vogelgesang, *The Interpretation of Ezekiel in the Book of Revelation* (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1985), 68-71 and A. K. W. Siew, *The War between the Two Beasts and the Two Witnesses: A Chiastic Reading of Revelation* (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 22; structural analysis, for example, Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 32-41, where he identifies the phrase ἐν πνεύματι at Rev 1.10, 4.1, 17.3 and 19.10 as influential for interpreting Revelation and Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 170-77; chiasm, for example, Nils Lund, *Studies in the Book of Revelation* (n.p., Covenant Press, 1955), and Kenneth Strand, “Eight Basic Visions,” in *Symposium on Revelation*, Bk. 1, ed. Frank Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, Vol. 6 (Silver Springs: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 35-50; and recapitulation, as championed by Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation*, HDR 9 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976). While I have sought to outline the broad contours of studies on the structure of Revelation it is equally clear that any or all of my categories can be challenged by scholars. For example, in relation to recapitulation, Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, xciii, contends that because the text of Revelation “lacks any clear formal literary indications of its [recapitulation] presence” it is seriously questionable whether John’s audience understood this technique.

²⁰ Hans LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End Time Prophecies of the Bible* (Sarasota: First Impressions, 1997), 99.

²¹ Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation*, 8.

²² Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, revised, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 32.

²³ Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies in the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 1.

²⁴ Kenneth Strand, “Foundational Principles of Interpretation,” in *Symposium on Revelation*, Bk. 1, ed. Frank Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, Vol. 6 (Silver Springs: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 30.

A. Opening: Introductory Vision: A view of trumpets, the altar of incense and the throne of God (8.2-6)

1. The sounding of the first four trumpets (8.7 – 8.13)
 - a. A plague falls to earth–hail and fire (8.7)
 - b. A burning mountain sinks into the sea (8.8-9)
 - c. A polluting star falls on the rivers and springs (8.10-11)
 - d. A plague partially darkens the heavenly bodies (8.12)
2. Announcement of three further woes (8.13)

B. Middle: A scourge of darkness and locusts arises from the Abyss to attack unsealed humanity (9.1-11)

1. Transition from first to second woe (9.12)
2. Preparation for the eschatological battle (9.13 – 9.21)

C. Ending: Christ claims His everlasting Kingdom (11.15-18)

Revelation 8.1 points to the conclusion of the seven seals and “is part of the narrative’s dramatic jarring technique,” shocking its audience to attention.²⁵ The effect of the silence is to make “even more impressive the judgments about to fall upon the earth.”²⁶ Revelation 8.1 further serves to introduce the angels who usher in God’s judgment. Their appearance at this point in the focus text helps lock together the septenary of unsealings and the septenary of the trumpets.²⁷ In other words, the seventh seal is an interlocking vision that concludes the seal judgments and simultaneously introduces the trumpet plagues.²⁸ Mazzaferrri states that an

²⁵ Keener, *Revelation*, 253.

²⁶ Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 170. Further, according to Resseguie, *The Revelation to John*, 142, the half hour mentioned in 8.1 is also a “dramatic pause in the relentless march to the end, heightening the reader’s anticipation of what new thing will happen or what more could take place.”

²⁷ Charles Griblin, *The Book of Revelation: The Open Book of Prophecy* (Collegeville:Liturgical Press, 1991), 94.

²⁸ Michaels, *Revelation*, 117 writes: “At the end of the half hour comes the expected reference to something John saw (v. 2), suggesting that far from being over, the seventh seal is only beginning. What John saw is reminiscent of what he saw in the preceding chapter in connection with the sixth seal: first a group of angels (four in one instance, seven in the other) and then another angel (v. 3; compare 7.2) who in some way determines their course of action, probably because he is greater than they. This parallel confirms the notion that the half hour of silence did not bring the series of seals to an end, but that the seventh seal is still playing itself out.”

interlocking vision “involves a transitional passage that looks both backwards and forwards” which is met in Rev 8.1.²⁹

Evidence for seeing Rev 8.2 as the beginning of the focus text is that 8.2-8.6 can be read chiastically.

A Seven angels given trumpets (verse 2)

B Angel given incense (verse 3)

C Incense smoke rises with prayers of holy ones (verse 4)

B' Angel throws down the incense (verse 5)

A' Seven angels prepare to blow their trumpets (verse 6)³⁰

The chiasm gives evidence of bilateral symmetry around a central axis (8.4) which lies between 8.2-3 and 8.5-6. It is a unique central element invoking the prayers of the saints and hence points to a feature of “special prominence.”³¹ Similar ideas and concepts are found in A and A' as well as B and B'. On the basis of this chiasm and the earlier argument regarding the nature and use of the phrase καὶ εἶδον in 8.2, it is my contention that 8.2 is the beginning of the trumpet judgments.³²

From Rev 9.1 onward that there is a distinct shift in narrative style. “Characteristic of John’s pattern, the first four visions of the series form a concise unit, while the fifth and sixth are told in more detail and represent a further intensification of the eschatological troubles.”³³ Revelation 9.1 reads: “The fifth angel (πέμπτος ἄγγελος) sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star (ἀστήρ) that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss (ἄβυσσος).” John introduces the new concept of ἄβυσσος in the passage about the fifth trumpet plague. It has not been mentioned before in Revelation. The significance of ἄβυσσος is seen in its use on three occasions in 9.1-11 (9.1-2, 11). The fact that ἄβυσσος is

²⁹ Frederick Mazzaferri, *The Genre of the Book of Revelation from a Source-Critical Perspective* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), 349. See also Yarbrow Collins, *The Combat Myth*, 16-19. Adela Yarbrow Collins, *The Apocalypse*, NTM 22 (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1979), 55, writes “the whole cycle of the trumpets is, in a sense, a series of events set in motion by the opening of the seventh seal. But this relationship should not be understood chronologically...the interlocking of the two cycles is a literary device. It provides an opportunity for beginning again and telling the story from another perspective.”

³⁰ Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 131.

³¹ Ian H. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters*, JSNTSup 111 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 43.

³² See pp. 1-2 for initial discussion.

³³ Eugene Boring, *Revelation*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox, 1989), 130.

used at the beginning of the passage about the fifth trumpet plague and at the end lends support to understanding Rev 9.1-11 as the middle of the focus text.

While it may be tempting to suggest that the fourth trumpet plague is the middle of the focus text, the *inclusio* of abyss disqualifies giving that designation to 8.12. Rather, Rev 9.1-11 is framed by the concept of abyss and has words and features that make it unique, for example, terms like σφραγίδα τοῦ θεοῦ (9.4) and πόλεμον (9.7). These terms, as well as others, are not used in the focus text except here in 9.4 and 9.7 demonstrating the significance of this portion of text.

The position that clinches this discussion is the realization that the focus text is in the form of a chiasm.³⁴

A Introductory Vision: Heavenly setting, but earth mentioned (8.2-6)

B Four Trumpets: Movement from heaven to earth (8.7-12)

C Fifth Trumpet: Movement from abyss to earth (9.1-12)

B' The Sixth Trumpet: Movement from heaven to earth (9.13-21)

A' Conclusion: Seventh Trumpet: Heavenly setting, but earth mentioned (11.15-18)

According to Lund, the heart and focus of the textual unit is the centre. Here we can expect to discover some new concept or idea. Those new ideas have been addressed in the preceding paragraph. According to Lund, “*the centre is always the turning point*. At the centre there is often a change in the trend of thought and an antithetic idea is introduced. This is called the

³⁴ I have adapted the chiasm from Müller, *Microstructural Analysis of Revelation 4-11*, 400. New Testament scholars have noted with increasing significance the influence of chiasmic structures for the interpretation of micro and macro textual units in the NT corpus. See Thomas, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters*; W. Brouwer, *The Literary Development of John 13-17: A Chiasmic Reading*, SBLDS 182 (Atlanta: SBL, 2000); John Breck, *The Shape of Biblical Language: Chiasmus in the Scriptures and Beyond* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1994); John Harvey, *Listening to the Text* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998). For chiasmic insights on Revelation see: Kenneth Strand, “Chiasmic Structure and Some Motifs in the Book of Revelation,” *AUSS* 16 (1978): 401-408; Strand, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation: Hermeneutical Guidelines with Brief Introduction to Literary Analysis* (Ohio: Ann Arbor Publishers, 1976), 76, maintains that the beginning of his independent research of Revelation antedated by several years the appearance of Lund’s work; C.H. Giblin, “Recapitulation and the Literary Coherence of John’s Apocalypse,” *CBQ* 56 (1994): 81-95; Idem., “Structural and Thematic Correlations in the Theology of Revelation 16-22,” *Bib* 55 (1974): 487-504 and William Shea, “Chiasm in Theme and by Form in Revelation 18,” *AUSS* 20 (1982): 249-256. Recently, David A. deSilva, “X Marks the Spot? A Critique of the Use of Chiasmus in Macro-Structural Analyses of Revelation,” *JSNT* 30 (2008):343-71, asserts that previous attempts to develop chiasmus are problematic because of the selective choices of interpreters, in terms of summary statements, key terms and manipulating formal markers. His cautions, together with the guidelines set out by Thomas, Breck and Blomberg should aid interpreters in being more judicious in establishing a chiasm in the future.

law of the shift at the centre.”³⁵ Blomberg argues that “the center of the chiasm should be a passage worthy of that position in light of its theological or ethical significance. If its theme were in some way repeated in the first and last passages of the text, as is typical in chiasmus, the proposal would become that much more plausible.”³⁶

From an exegetical standpoint the conceptual centre of the textual unit allows the interpreter the opportunity to determine the primary point the author sought to convey and the shift in argumentation.³⁷ The passage about the fifth trumpet judgment exhibits the features mentioned by Lund in terms of distinctive new concepts. While there are no themes that are found in the fifth trumpet judgment that are repeated in the introduction and closing of the focus text, the theological import of the concepts of the “seal” and the “war” found in the passage about the fifth trumpet judgment meets Blomberg’s requirements.

Focus is now shifted to developing arguments for Rev 11.18 as the closing text. Ranko Stefanovic calls 11.18 a “springboard text” that points to the end of the seven trumpet judgments as well as looking forward to what lies ahead in the narrative of Revelation.³⁸ “The springboard passage of Rev 11.18 contains five basic statements which outline the structure of the second half of the book of Revelation and summarize the themes of its major portions.”³⁹ The table below outlines how the five statements suggest a trajectory for John’s writing in the latter half of the book.⁴⁰

Table 3	
Revelation 11.18 as a Springboard Text	
Rev 11.18	Rev 12 -22.5

³⁵ N. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in the Form and Function of Chiastic Structures* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 40 [his emphasis].

³⁶ Craig Blomberg, “The Structure of 2 Corinthians 1-7,” *CTR* 4 (1989): 3-20 (6).

³⁷ Breck, *The Shape of Biblical Language*, 341.

³⁸ Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 365, writes: “The springboard passage functions both as the concluding statement of the preceding section and as the introduction of the section that follows.” The notion of the springboard passage also introducing the section that follows may seem confusing as I will argue later that Rev. 11.19 is indeed the introduction to Rev 12.1-17. This can only be accounted for by recognizing that John has employed soft boundaries in his work. According to Thompson, *The Book of Revelation*, 81, while “the seer marks his boundaries well – often as battle lines – those boundaries between good and evil are not hard and impenetrable borders separating the two into separate, limited spheres. Even here distinctions are blurred and soft.” This is applicable to imagery as well as structure.

³⁹ Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 365.

⁴⁰ This table is an adaptation of the one by Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 366.

And the nations were angry (καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ὠργίσθησαν)	Rev12-14 describes the anger of the dragon and his allies, the sea-beast (Rev13.1-10) and the land-beast (Rev 13.11-18), who are setting themselves up against God and his people.
And your wrath has come (καὶ ἦλθεν ἡ ὀργή σου)	The seven last plagues (Rev 15-16) and judgment on Rome/Babylon (Rev 17-18) are the means by which the “wrath of God” is completed (Rev 15.1).
The time has come for judging the dead (καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τῶν νεκρῶν κριθῆναι)	Rev 19-22 outlines this time and the reward and punishment which follow.
And for rewarding your servants (καὶ Δοῦναι τὸν μισθὸν τοῖς δούλοις σου)	Rev 19.1-10 and Rev 21-22 are about rewarding God’s people in terms of the new earth and the new Jerusalem.
And for destroying those who destroy the earth (καὶ διαφθεῖραι τοὺς διαφθείροντας τὴν γῆν)	Rev 19.11-20.15 portrays the destruction of those who destroyed the earth at the final judgment.

From the aforementioned evidence it can be adduced that 11.18 is the end of the trumpet judgments as it heralds the eventual destruction of Satan and his allies and the establishment of God’s sovereignty. In addition, there is an adjustment in the tripartite formula of the divine name “who is and who was and who is to come” as used elsewhere in Revelation and its usage in Rev 11.17.⁴¹ In Rev 11.17 the term ὁ ἐρχόμενος is omitted pointing to the fact that God has now come and that the eschaton has arrived. All this serves to demonstrate that the trumpet judgments have come to a conclusion, with 11.18 pointing ahead in the narrative landscape.

Arguments are now developed that demonstrate that 11.19 is the start of a new series of visions. It reads: “Then God's temple in heaven was opened (Καὶ ἠνοίγη ὁ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ), and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came

⁴¹ For example, Rev 1.4, 8; 4.8.

flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake (σεισμός) and a great hailstorm (χάλαζα μεγάλη).”

First, a number of literary devices in Rev 11.19-12.3 serve to link these texts together. One of the pertinent literary features that indicates a new part of the book has emerged is the use of καὶ ὥφθη. The fact that this formula occurs just three times in Revelation, in 11.19; 12.1 and 12.3, underscores its importance.⁴² A further link between 11.19 and 12.1-3 is the phrase ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ in 11.19; 12.1 and 12.3.⁴³ The focus of the action in all three texts is the same.

A second argument for seeing Rev 11.19 as the introduction to Rev 12 is “the verbal and structural influences of Isa 66.6-7, which reflects a pattern similar to that in Rev 11.19-12.5a.”⁴⁴ A table follows indicating the linguistic and conceptual parallels.

Table 4	
Linguistic and Conceptual Parallels between Isa. 66.6-7 and Rev. 11.19-12.1-5a	
<p>Hear that uproar from the city, Hear that <u>noise</u> from the <u>temple</u>! It is the sound of the Lord repaying his enemies all they deserve. Before <u>she</u> goes into labor, she gives <u>birth</u>; before the <u>pains</u> come upon her, she delivers a <u>son</u>. (Isa. 66.6-7)</p>	<p>Then God’s <u>temple</u> in heaven was opened, and within his temple as seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, <u>rumblings</u>, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm. A great sign appeared in heaven: a <u>woman</u> clothed with the sun.....She was pregnant and cried out in <u>pain</u>, as she was about to give birth...She gave <u>birth</u> to a <u>son</u>, a male child.... (Rev. 11.19-12.1-5a)</p>

The six verbal similarities make it probable that this passage has been drawn on in the composition of Rev 11.19-12.1-5a. A third line of argumentation emerges when one compares 11.19 with 4.5 and 8.5 which all make reference in increasing measure to

⁴² Pierre Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 366; Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 679 and Smalley, *Revelation to John*, 314.

⁴³ Müller, *Recapitulation in Revelation 4-11*, 274.

⁴⁴ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 662.

atmospheric and seismic phenomena (lightning, thunder, rumbling, earthquake and hail). Both 4.5 and 8.5 form part of the allusions to the heavenly temple. Revelation 4-5 introduces a vision of the heavenly temple and serves as an introduction to the seven seals. Revelation 8.2-6 serves the same function, that of introducing the seven trumpets, whilst 11.19 explicitly makes mention of the temple and introduces the next vision.⁴⁵ Whereas 8.5 anticipates the divine judgments that follow the sounding of the seven trumpets, 11.19 anticipates the divine judgments that will begin in 16.1. This is sustained by recognizing the reference to the *ναὸς* in both 11.19 and 15.5-8. In light of the arguments presented it can be concluded, along with Aune, that “Rev. 11.19 functions both as an introduction to Rev. 12.1-17 and as a conclusion to 11.15-18.”⁴⁶

An important question that needs to be addressed in this chapter is whether Rev 11.15-18 provides the content of the third woe and if so how far does it reach? Interpreters have struggled with this issue because the contents of the seventh trumpet are not seemingly “woeful” but rather celebratory. A number of suggestions have been brought forward. Kraft and Lohse argue that the third woe is introduced but never executed.⁴⁷ A number of other scholars contend that the third woe or the seventh trumpet judgment consists of the seven bowl plagues or the entire narrative after 11.14.⁴⁸

Revelation 11.15-18 is indeed the third woe. Firstly, the passage about the seventh trumpet includes a message of judgment. The hymn sung by the twenty four elders declares that God’s wrath has come and that he will destroy those who destroy the earth. God’s judgment and defeat of evil and antagonistic powers is assured.⁴⁹ Secondly, the passage about the seventh trumpet may even point to a greater severity in judgment when compared

⁴⁵ Michael Wilcock, *I Saw Heaven Opened: The Message of Revelation*, 112, points out that the four texts which refer to “openings” in heaven (Rev 4.1; 11.19; 15.5 and 19.11) all lead the implied author to a new viewpoint and set the stage for a new vision. Likewise, Barr, *Tales of the End*, 14, also recognizes Rev 11.19 as the beginning of what he calls “a new movement.”

⁴⁶ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 661. See the interesting arguments presented by Pattemore, *Souls Under the Altar*, 118-120 for recognizing Rev 11.19 as a hinge text between 11.18 and 12.1.

⁴⁷ Heinrich Kraft, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, HNT 16A (Tubingen: Mohr, 1974), 160; Eduard Lohse, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1971), 58.

⁴⁸ Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, reprint (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 606-08; George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 160; Gerhard A. Krodel, *Revelation*, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1989), 229. On the other hand, Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 340, equates the third woe with the seven last plagues. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 524, suggests the possibility of the third woe consisting of the judgment of Babylon in 17.1-19.8 where the phrase “Woe, woe, you great city” is repeated three times (18.10, 16, 19).

⁴⁹ Mitchell Glenn Reddish, *Revelation* (Macon: Smyth and Helwys Publishing, 2001), 215.

to the fifth and sixth trumpet judgment as the final judgment is here depicted, including the unbelieving dead who are judged and destroyed. Thirdly, the passage about the seventh trumpet judgment points to the eschatological coming of God's kingdom.⁵⁰ Since the first woe is identical with the fifth trumpet and the second woe is identical with the sixth trumpet, including its two-fold expansion, it seems consistent to take the third woe as the seventh trumpet (11.15-18) as well.⁵¹

4. Narrational Texture

This texture is concerned with the voice of John through whom the words in the text speak.⁵² The narrator is, within any story, the person who conveys the story to the audience. The interesting thing about this construct is that when "the narrator is speaking, God is speaking."⁵³ In Revelation the voice of the narrator is the voice of Jesus. The narrator of Revelation embodies the discourse in speech, action, decisions, emotions and convictions.⁵⁴ The implied author and the authorial audience both inhabit the narrative world of the text. It is the implied author's function to create the socio-cultural context, the people, and events within the story. It is the authorial audience's function to understand and interpret the story. The narrator exists within the world of the story and presents it in a way the authorial audience can comprehend.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Beale, *Revelation*, 610.

⁵¹ Müller, *Microstructural Analysis of Revelation*, 384-85. See also George R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation*, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1974), 187-88 and Lenski, *Revelation*, 360. Craig Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 112, takes a nuanced position: "When John warns that the third woe is coming very soon readers might expect it to occur when the angel blows the seventh and final trumpet, but again John surprises them. Instead of hearing about destruction, as one would expect after a warning of woe, readers learn that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ (11.15).....So should the end be understood as woe (11.14) or as a celebration of God's reign (11.15)?" According to Koester it depends on the perspective of the reader. If the reader acknowledges God's rule then the woe is good news. On the other hand, if the reader is seeking to usurp the place of God then the woe is one of destruction.

⁵² Robbins, *Exploring*, 15.

⁵³ John A. Beck, *God as Storyteller: Seeking Meaning in Biblical Narrative* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2008), 57.

⁵⁴ Resseguie, *The Revelation of John*, 47. Resseguie seems to identify the narrator and the implied author as the same construct. However, the narrator is at a "lower level" of the text than the implied author "since they can die or be killed by the implied author without having the story come to an end" cf. Staley, *The Print's First Kiss*, 38.

⁵⁵ See also Staley, *The Print's First Kiss*, 38-9 for further clarification on the role of the narrator. His examples however, are from John's gospel. The complexity of clearly defining the narrator in Revelation is underscored in a paper David Barr delivered to the Rhetoric and New Testament Section of the SBL in Orlando, 1998. He suggested that "at level one the heterodiegetic narrator addresses the extradiegetic narratee (neither is a part of

The narrator opens the focus text with an exposition of the heavenly throne room scene in Rev 8.3-5. This opening scene provides an introduction to the governing symbol of trumpet, the location for the beginning of the trumpet judgments, namely the throne of God, and the circumstances that will shape the unfolding of the focus text. These circumstances are the prayers of the saints. When this introduction is out of the way, it becomes the narrator's responsibility to disclose the images and sounds that will be part of the story.⁵⁶ These include the sounding of the trumpet and all that proceeds from 8.7 onwards.

This study isolates attributed speech for comment and analysis. The first instance attributed speech is found occurs at Rev 8.13, which reads: "As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!" This is an important text as it moves the narrative forward in announcing the reality that three more trumpet blasts are still to come. It seems to separate the focus text into the first four trumpet judgments which are short and pointed whilst the remaining three are longer and more extensive in detail. It also introduces a new character in the narrative, namely, the inhabitants of the earth. Their identity and features will be discussed later in this work.

There is some discussion on the identity of the bird and what it references in 8.13. Is it a vulture or an eagle? J. M. Ford is indecisive, developing an argument for the eagle to depict God, particularly from the Exodus tradition but also developing a short argument for the eagle or vulture referring to the Roman army.⁵⁷ Smalley, however, is far more decisive in stating that the word *ἀετοῦ* here in 8.13 refers to an eagle while in other contexts the word refers to a vulture (such as Matt 24.28 = Luke 17.37).⁵⁸

The use of attributed speech next appears in Rev 9.4 which reads: "They were told not to harm (μὴ ἀδικήσουσιν) the grass of the earth or any plant or tree (δένδρον), but only

the story); at level two John addresses the seven churches; and at level three Jesus/God addresses John." Idem., "Who Says? Who Hears? The Narrative Rhetoric of John's Apocalypse."

<http://www.wright.edu/~david.barr/rhet.htm>. Accessed on 11 February 2010. Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, xciii, asserts that "the narrator is present as a character in the story but only in a secondary role as a bystander, observer and witness."

⁵⁶ Beck, *God as Storyteller*, 59.

⁵⁷ J. Ford, *Revelation*, 140. See also Michaels, *Revelation*, 123, who also vacillates in identifying the bird. According to Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, Vol. 1 (Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa, 1993), 45, the "basic distinction between eagles and vultures is that the former either capture their prey or feed upon dead carcasses, while vultures only feed upon dead carcasses."

⁵⁸ Smalley, *Revelation*, 224. Cf. Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 310 and Keener, *Revelation*, 258-59.

those people who did not have the seal of God (σφραγίδα τοῦ θεοῦ) on their foreheads.” The narrator does not inform the implied reader who told the locusts not to damage the vegetation but only the unsealed. The importance of this use of the narrator’s voice in the focus text, even though subtle, points again to the introduction of the concept of the seal of God which heretofore has not been mentioned.

The narrator’s voice is heard in Rev 9.12. It reads: “The first woe (οὐαὶ) is past; two other woes are yet to come (μετὰ ταῦτα).” Here the narrator keeps the audience abreast of key time and location details that change the conditions in the focus text.⁵⁹ This verse points to the sequence of the visions in the focus text and not to any historical sequence. The first vision is over and two more visions will follow. Further, the phrase μετὰ ταῦτα (after these things) refers to the order of visions as in 4.1.⁶⁰ Attributed speech appears in 9.13-14, which is the introduction to the sixth trumpet judgment. The text reads: “The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice (ἤκουσα φωνήν) coming from the horns of the golden altar (θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ χρυσοῦ) that is before God. It said to the sixth angel (λέγοντα τῷ ἔκτῳ ἀγγέλῳ) who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates (ποταμῷ τῷ μεγάλῳ Εὐφράτη).”

Once again the narrator does not inform the implied reader who exactly spoke the words, whether an angel or God. In fact, in this new altar scene the speaker and the speech are rather different from previous ones. Brian Blount maintains that the voice that comes from the altar is not God’s voice as the altar is before God or in front of God. Furthermore, Blount argues that the implied author does not position an angel in the narrative, so it is unlikely that an angel is speaking. “It is more likely that John hears the altar, through its horns, speak up for itself.”⁶¹ In addition, two new elements are introduced for the first time in the narrative, namely the four unnamed angels and the Euphrates river. A pattern seems to be emerging where the narrator introduces attributed speech firstly at significant junctures in the narrative and secondly to introduce new features or characters, at least in so far as the first six trumpet judgments are concerned.

⁵⁹ Beck, *God as Storyteller*, 60.

⁶⁰ Beale, *Revelation*, 505, 318.

⁶¹ Blount, *Revelation*, 181. Swete, *Revelation*, 120, questions whether it is the voice of an angel or God. Gerhard A. Krodel, *Revelation*, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 204, asserts that the voice may be that of an angel.

Attributed speech is next found in Rev 11.15, which reads: “The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices (φωναὶ μεγάλαι) in heaven, which said (λέγοντες): “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.” The use of attributed speech in this text serves to announce that there are two kingdoms present in the unfolding of the seven trumpet judgments.

The last use of attributed speech is found in 11.17-18 which reads:

Saying (λέγοντες): “We give thanks to you (εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι), Lord God Almighty (κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ), the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power (δύναμίν σου τὴν μεγάλην) and have begun to reign. The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great-- and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

This speech is the culmination of the entire trumpet judgments. It is a saying that focuses on expressing thankfulness to God and is in the form of a prayer or hymn. Another specific area of attention is God’s power. By taking his power, God begins his reign. Lastly, this speech also addresses whom God will judge, the nations, the dead and those who destroy the earth. The narrator employs first-person narration inviting the reader to “see what he sees and hear what he hears,” enhancing the vividness and immediacy of what happens.⁶²

5. Summary

Repetitive texture has yielded a number of interesting finds in the enlistment of particular words and phrases. These words, and others, like star (ἀστήρ) found in 8.8, was hurled (ἐβλήθη) found in 8.7, abyss (ἄβυσσος) found in 9.1 and authority (ἐξουσία) found in 9.3 will prove important in later textures. Progressive texture has consolidated some of the initial findings in repetitive texture. The text evokes the word “three” on four occasions, in 8.8 and 8.12. This texture brought to the fore the downward motif evident from 8.5 onward. The motif takes on an interesting twist where it is even used with respect to a description of the locusts in 9.7-10.

Narrational texture has highlighted the voices in the text and how these voices move the narrative programmatically forward. Direct speech has been used in relation to the eagle

⁶² Resseguie, *A Narrative Commentary*, 48.

(8.13), while attributed speech has been used in relation to the seal of God (9.4), the Euphrates river (9.13), the empire of God and the empire of the world (11.15) and the final judgment (11.18). It is probable that direct speech has been used in 8.13 because it is the text that separates the seven trumpet plagues into a four/three pattern.

The interpenetration of narrational and progressive texture leads to further conclusions. For example, the structuring formula “and I saw” (καὶ εἶδον) used in Rev. 8.13 also introduces the voice of the eagle in the text. The narrator introduces speech at important turns in the focus text, redirecting and refocusing the issues and concerns addressed by the text. Open-middle-closing texture has provided the structural framework in which to continue researching the meaning and meaning-effects of the trumpet judgments. The chiasmus of 9.1-11 strengthens its identity as the middle of the focus text. In light of the comments of Lund and Blomberg it is anticipated that the passage about the fifth trumpet judgment will yield interesting insights in relation to the overall message and theme of the focus text. In particular, the concepts of seal (σφραγῖδα) and war (πόλεμον), which are distinctly found in the passage about the fifth trumpet judgment, should prove interesting as the various textures are studied.

CHAPTER 3

INTERTEXTURE and INTRATEXTURE

In this chapter I engage in an assessment of relationships that exist within Revelation and also between Revelation and antecedent literature. Intertexture is a “text’s representation of, reference to, and use of phenomena in the ‘world’ outside the text being interpreted.”¹

Revelation has been recognized as a highly allusive book and so the interpreter must engage and discuss the value and significance of allusions and echoes to responsibly interpret this text.

The comments of Susan Holthuis provide a deeper probe of the intertextual dynamics of the text. She argues that intertextuality is not a “text-inherent property” but “a specific form of meaning constitution and therefore... a phenomenon of text processing.”² She distinguishes between the “intertextual disposition” of a text “which reflects the determining potential of texts in the light of the fact that the text itself motivates intertextual interpretation by means of its various text signals” and “intertextual text processing” which “takes into account specific strategies of inter-textual meaning constitution, which are triggered as complementary processing strategies when the reader decides on intertextual meaning constitution.”³

Holthuis distinguishes between two aspects of intertextuality: that which the text itself signals and that which the reader uses. This is a helpful distinction. This study focuses on how the text is appropriated through the allusions and echoes that it evokes and only in summarizing the evidence in each particular passage about the trumpet plague are the implications for the implied reader drawn on. Further, the author’s primary quarry from which the literary material has been hewn is the OT and secondarily from Jewish apocalyptic literature.⁴ The Greco-Roman texts and the first-century C.E. socio-cultural context is also

¹ Robbins, *Exploring*, 40. This world includes other texts (oral-scribal intertexture), other cultures (cultural intertexture), social roles, institutions, codes and relationships (social intertexture) and historical events or places (historical intertexture). I will not use oral-scribal texture, aspects of social intertexture and historical texture. These constructs do not fit within the purview of Revelation. For further discussion on these categories see http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defs/i_defns.html. Accessed on April 7, 2008.

² Susan Holthuis, “Intertextuality and Meaning Constitution,” in *Approaches to Poetry: Some Aspects of Textuality, Intertextuality and Intermediality*, eds. Jano S. Petofi and Terry Olivi (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), 77.

³ *Ibid.*, 77-78.

⁴ For a few examples of the importance of the OT in the interpretation of Revelation see Kraft, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, 16; William Milligan, *Lectures on the Apocalypse* (London: MacMillan and Company, 1892), 76;

important.⁵ Hence, the implied reader would build meaning and meaning associations from the intersection and interaction of both this anterior (OT texts) and contemporaneous literature (Second Temple Jewish and Greco-Roman texts) in relation to Revelation as well as the first-century C.E. socio-cultural milieu.

The intratextual relationship that exists within Revelation is also studied. Revelation has a high degree of cross-referencing of ideas, images and language. Staley maintains that the implied reader is only able to understand the text up until the text which is being studied and no further in the narrative. However, the implied author “knows the text forward and backward.”⁶ The relationship between the implied author and the implied reader is therefore critical in this section. Since the implied author has created a narrative of textual intricacy and interconnectedness the task is to uncover how meaning develops as the narrative unfolds. The task is also to simultaneously probe the images and ideas for intratextual meaning.

1. Cultural Intertexture

a. *Analysis of Rev 8.2-8.6*

Revelation 8.2 reads: “And I saw (Καὶ εἶδον) the seven angels who stand before God (ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ), and to them were given seven trumpets (ἑπτὰ σάλπιγγες).”⁷

Beale, *John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* and Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*.

⁵ Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation*, 2nd edition, 197, writes: “Although the open and multivalent images of Rev. have many overtones derived from Greco-Roman society and religion, the dominant tenor of its symbolic language is the cult of Israel. The symbols of temple, priest, sacrifice ...are all derived from Jewish religion.”

⁶ Staley, *The Print’s First Kiss*, 35.

⁷ This study uses Bible Works 7 and Bible Works Greek for the OT text. For arguments in favor of a Greek language background to Revelation see Stanley Porter, “The Language of the Apocalypse in Recent Discussion,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 582-603, who concludes that “the language of the Apocalypse can be understood as falling within the range of possible registers of Greek usage of the first century;” Steve Moyise, “The Language of the Old Testament in the Apocalypse,” *JSNT* 76 (1999): 97-113 and Gregory Beale, “A Reconsideration of the Text of Daniel in the Apocalypse,” *Bib* 67 (1986): 539-43 who claims “at least five references in the Apocalypse which read against the MT and Theodotion but are in unique agreement with the old version of the LXX.” Louis A. Brighton, *Revelation*, CC (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1999), 26, states: “John’s quotations from and allusions to the OT are primarily from the LXX.” While Bible Works Greek is used, I also recognise the influence and impact of Semitic thought on the Greek of Revelation, see Steven W. Thompson, *The Apocalypse and Semitic Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Even though it may appear that I am vacillating between two positions, my comments here demonstrate the complexity of determining the text and language tradition used by the author of Revelation. Cf. Charles C. Torrey, *The Apocalypse of John* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 27-48; G. Mussies, *The Morphology of Koine Greek as Used in the Apocalypse of John*, *Supplements to Novum Testamentum* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 10-11 and Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 47-49.

The text is introduced with the standard phrase “καὶ εἶδον.” While this verse does seem to interrupt the scene of silence in 8.1, it allows verses 3-5 to act as a “parenthetical transition,” simultaneously concluding the seals vision-narrative and introducing the focus text.⁸ In addition, the use of the word ἑπτὰ serves as an intentional structuring device, as the narrative already refers to seven churches (Rev 2-3), seven stars (Rev 1.20) and seven seals (Rev 6.1-8.1). The fact that “seven” is now coupled with “angels” would suggest their importance with the addition of the use of τοὺς pointing to specific seven angels.⁹

However, what might prove disconcerting is that the seven angels are not named and there is no precedent for their use in the OT or the NT.¹⁰ The idea seems to be drawn from a widely held literary tradition that employed the idea of “seven angels.”¹¹ The extensive use of the phrase “seven angels” in Revelation (15.1, 6-8; 16.1; 17.1; 21.9) and Jewish apocalyptic tradition suggests that the concept of “seven angels” is part of the cultural environment as well.¹² These seven angels are given seven trumpets. The image of trumpet is a powerful symbol marker. It will be recalled that a symbol marker is a symbol that dominates the biblical, Jewish and Greco-Roman tradition and hence is a strong constituent of the culture of the first-century C.E.¹³

Revelation 8.3-5 functions as “a heavenly temple scene.”¹⁴ The literary technique of intercalation, where a literary unit is split in two parts, is used. Between these two parts (8.2 and 8.6) another unit (8.3-5), different in content, is intercalated with a parenthetical function that thus interrupts the scene description.¹⁵ Revelation 8.3 reads: “Another angel (ἄλλος ἄγγελος), who had a golden censer (λιβανωτὸν χρυσοῦν), came and stood at the altar

⁸ Beale, *Revelation*, 454.

⁹ Morris, *Revelation*, 117. According to Peter Antony Abir, *The Cosmic Conflict of the Church: An Exegetico-Theological Study of Revelation 12.7-12* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995), 233, the word “angel” occurs sixty times in Revelation and always in the sense of heavenly beings. For a useful discussion on the posture of the angels see Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 213-14.

¹⁰ Brighton, *Revelation*, 215.

¹¹ *Tob. 12.15; 1 En. 20.1*. According to Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 509, the definite article is enlisted in both *Tob. 12.15* and *Rev 8.3*, suggesting that these angels are well-known. In the Enochian tradition the seven angels are Uriel, Michael, Raphael, Raguel, Sariel, Gabriel and Remeeiel. While 4Q403 does not mention seven angels, it does make reference to seven chief princes, presumably seven angels as well.

¹² Beale, *Revelation*, 454, suggests that it is tempting to identify these seven angels with the seven guardian angels of the seven churches. This is a very weak temptation however.

¹³ See pp. 43-4.

¹⁴ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 511.

¹⁵ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Vision of a Just World*, Proclamation Commentaries (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 69-70.

(θυσιαστηρίου). He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints (προσευχᾶς τῶν ἁγίων πάντων), on the golden altar before the throne (θρόνου).” The identity of the angel is critical for the interpretation of the focus text as it is the angel that takes the censer which is filled with fire from the altar and hurls it to the earth. It is this action that is the catalyst for the trumpet judgments to begin. Scholars are divided on the matter of the identity of the angel. Some suggest the angel is Christ, while others contend that the angel is Michael.¹⁶ My aim in this discussion is to identify the angel that commences the trumpet judgments. I do not share the view that this is an unimportant or trivial exercise, rather, confirming the identity of the angel will strengthen my position in interpreting the focus text.¹⁷

Seeing the angel of 8.3 as Christ is supported by the two notions of mediator and judgment that are evident in 8.3-5.¹⁸ The angel responds to the prayers of the saints by hurling fire from the altar which results in judgment. These mediatorial and judgment roles are carried out by Christ elsewhere in the NT.¹⁹ However, the thematic link between 8.3-5 and the NT texts of John 5.22-27, 2 Tim 4.1 and 1 Tim 2.5, which are assumed by commentators, is weak. Robert Gundry suggests a number of interesting insights, which at first appear winsome, but on closer scrutiny are deficient.²⁰ Gundry contends that the use of

¹⁶ Some commentators like Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 286, suggest that the reader is reminded of Jesus; Beale, *Revelation*, 454 and William Hendriksen, *More than Conquerors: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 142, see the angel as representative of Christ in his mediatorial role of High Priest. In support of his position Beale draws on earlier commentators like Gill, but provides no textual or traditional support. On the other hand, Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 515, following suggestions in *3 Apoc. Bar.* 11.3, Philo in *Quis Her.* 205 and *Apoc. Paul* 43, contends that the angel is Michael. While the text of *Apoc. Paul* is compositionally later than Revelation, Aune believes it is part of the traditional conception of Michael. Mounce, *Revelation*, 182, on the basis of prior material in the narrative (4.8-11; 5.8-14; 7.11-12), where the priestly function of angels is emphasized, suggests the ἄλλος ἄγγελος functions as a heavenly priest who presents the prayers of the saints to God. Charles, *Revelation*, 1.225-26, contends that the angel may have been identified with Michael in an earlier form of Revelation. His source theories have not, however, found wide acceptance among interpreters.

¹⁷ Beale, *Revelation*, 454, has a brief comment that perhaps portrays his lack of interest in wanting to carefully identify the angel.

¹⁸ Further, on the basis of her research in other parts of Revelation, Adela Yarbro Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism*, JSJSup 50 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 159, concludes that “the book of Revelation expresses an angelic Christology which is best understood in the context of the Jewish motif of the principal angel.” For an excellent discussion on the motif of principal angel see L.W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*, 2nd edition (London: T & T Clark, 1998), 71-92. I quote Collins to demonstrate the complexity and interrelatedness of angelology and Christology in the first-century.

¹⁹ See John 5.22-27; 2 Tim 4.1 and 1 Tim 2.5.

²⁰ Robert H. Gundry, “Angelomorphic Christology in the Book of Revelation,” *SBL Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994): 662-78.

ἄλλος can mean “another of a different kind.”²¹ Hence, the angel of 8.3 can refer to Christ, who is divine. Since Christ is portrayed wearing a golden belt in 1.13 and the twenty-four elders have golden bowls of incense in 4.4 and 5.8, Gundry suggests that this somehow connects to the prayers of the saints in 8.3. Further, he asserts that the standing angel alludes to Yahweh standing in Amos 9.1. The supposed thematic link is that judgment is being carried out in both Amos and Revelation. Finally, Gundry maintains that prayer is always in Christ’s name and that he alone is humanity’s advocate before God.²²

Briefly, Gundry’s points can be contested on the following grounds. Firstly, Christ has been previously portrayed as a judge and the Lamb with authority (1.13-18; 5.5-14; 6.16-17). It is doubtful that Christ would be now depicted in the form of “another angel.” In fact, Christ is never depicted as an angel in Revelation. He is recognised as divine and worthy of worship and adoration alongside God.²³ Secondly, no major commentator references Amos 9.1 as a valid allusion in relation to 8.3. Thirdly, the supposed connections between the golden apparel worn by Christ, the golden bowls of incense and the incense in 8.3 is tenuous and debatable. Lastly, Gundry assumes Johannine authorship for his final claim, which is once again questionable. It is more plausible to assume that the angel of 8.3 is Michael as demonstrated in Jewish apocalyptic literature.²⁴ The three best contextual arguments are the mediatorial and judgment roles of the angel of 8.3, roles that are specifically carried out by Michael.²⁵ The third point is that this angel is referred to as “another angel” to distinguish this angel from the seven trumpet-angels.²⁶

Turning my attention to the altar, one finds two altars in the OT literature, the altar of burnt offering and the altar of incense.²⁷ The θυσιαστήριον of 8.3a is the same as the

²¹ Ibid., 668.

²² Ibid., 673-74.

²³ See Peter R. Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels: Angelology and the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 119-28, 130-39.

²⁴ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 515.

²⁵ See Dan 12.1 and Jude 9. After an analysis of the primary literature, Darell D. Hannah, *Michael and Christ: Michael Traditions and Angel Christology in Early Christianity*, WUNT 2.109 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 33-54 (54), suggests that Michael held an important position “in the minds of those who wrote and read the Jewish apocalypses. The traditions about him as the protector, both in a military and judicial sense, of the holy people, and as the commander-in-chief- of the heavenly armies are quite widespread.” Cf. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 693-94.

²⁶ The problem with this third point is that the seven angels are named in 1 *En.* 20.1-7 and Michael is in the list. It is possible that the implied author is not aware of this tradition and hence depicts Michael as “another angel” or that the seven angels of Rev 8.2 are not the same as those referred to in Enoch.

²⁷ See Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 238.

θυσιαστήριον of 8.3b as there is no evidence of two altars in heaven in Jewish apocalyptic literature.²⁸ It is possible to comprehend the θυσιαστήριον as a symbol marker based on its wide use in the OT corpus and in relation to the Jerusalem temple, prior to its destruction in 70 C.E., demonstrating its significant cultural capacity.²⁹ It will be recalled that the symbol marker evokes a possible precursor text that needs to be appropriated in order to understand the successor text. Hays' criteria are enlisted to ascertain whether the purported precursor text is an allusion or echo.

One possible precursor text the symbol marker points to is Exod 40.26 which reads: "Moses placed the gold altar (θυσιαστήριον τὸ χρυσοῦν) in the Tent of Meeting in front of the curtain." There is little volume here as repetition of syntactical patterns and words found in Exod 40.26 is weak in 8.3.³⁰ In addition, the history of interpretation guideline is very weak as only one scholar identifies Exod 40.26 as an allusion in relation to 8.3.³¹ Recurrence pays attention to where else the text is alluded to and this guideline is not met either and so I conclude that this is not a legitimate allusion but at best is an echo.³² The value of this echo is in pointing to the OT sanctuary service as a means of understanding this text.³³

Revelation 8.4-5 reads: "The smoke of the incense (ἀνέβη ὁ καπνὸς), together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God (ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ) from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire (πυρὸς) from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake." While the saints (ἀγίων) describes all those who worship God and keep the witness of Jesus, the

²⁸ See Charles, *Revelation*, 1.227. Contra Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, 552, who understands the angel going to the supposed altar of burnt offering (8.3a), taking the coals and offering them on the altar of incense (8.3b) and finally returning to hurl down fire at the altar of burnt offering. See the counter arguments in relation to contextuality found in Beale, *Revelation*, 454-55. Further, Ranko Stefanovic, "The Angel at the Altar (Revelation 8.3-5): A Case Study on Intercalation in Revelation," *AUSS* 44 (2006): 79-94, contends that two distinct altars are being presented in 8.3-5. The altar in 8.3a must be understood as the altar of sacrifice on the earth, while the altar in 8.3b is to be understood as the altar of incense in heaven. To my mind the arguments of both Beale, *Revelation*, 455 and Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 215, are more cogent in admitting that the θυσιαστήριον combines aspects of both the altar of burnt offering and the altar of incense of the earthly temple. In a similar vein Osborne, *Revelation*, 344, writes: "In the apocalyptic vision of this book, the altar in heaven blends together the altar of burnt offering (primary in 6.9) and the altar of incense (primary here in 8.3-5)."

²⁹ For the OT texts see: Exod 27.1-8; 30.1; 40.5; Num 3.31; 1 Kgs 6.22. For the NT texts see: Luke 1.9; Heb 9.4. For references to the LXX, the pseudipigrapha and Josephus see BDAG, 463.

³⁰ Kenneth Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God's People Intertextually* (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 61.

³¹ Osborne, *Revelation*, 344.

³² Beale, *Revelation*, 78.

³³ Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation*, 14, et passim, has provided a detailed structural and literary analysis of Revelation based on the significance of the OT sanctuary service.

incense offered is a complement to the prayers of all the saints.³⁴ In fact, the burning of incense in cultic contexts is most often mentioned in the OT in association with sacrifice (e.g. Lev 2.1; Num 16.6-7; Exod 30. 7-10).³⁵

The phrase καὶ ἐγέμισεν αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν γῆν is important as it points to a downward movement that begins here and continues all the way through to the end of the passage about the sixth trumpet. The fire that is initially thrown down in 8.5 is once again pointed to in the first (8.7) and second trumpet (8.8) judgment. The downward movement or descent motif then begins in 8.5 and continues through 8.7-9 with the enlistment of the word fire (πῦρ) in particular.

The text may evoke an allusion here in 8.5 to Ezek10.2b based on the symbol marker of πυρός.³⁶ Ezekiel 10.2b reads: “Fill your hands with burning coals from among the cherubim and scatter them over the city.” Whereas volume is low between these texts, the history of interpretation guideline is strong as numerous scholars identify Ezek 10.1-2 or Ezek 10.1-7 as an allusion in relation to 8.5.³⁷ Beale suggests that 8.5 is reminiscent of Ezekiel’s vision in which a man dressed in linen takes coals of fire from between the cherubim and scatters them over Jerusalem as a token of divine judgment. However, the only conceptual parallel is the similarity in the action that produces the judgment. Beale also suggests that the order is significant, namely, prayer for help, followed by a divine response to that prayer which leads to fire proceeding from the heavenly temple to consume the persecutors.³⁸

Otherwise, as one compares the immediate context of both of these two texts they fail in every other regard. In Ezekiel it is a man, while in Revelation it is an angel; in Ezekiel it is Jerusalem, while in Revelation no specific place is mentioned. In Revelation the outcome of the fire being hurled is the seismic phenomena, while in Ezekiel there is no such events.

³⁴ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 512. Contra Caird, *The Revelation*, 103, who understands the incense as a token of the prayers.

³⁵ Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 215.

³⁶ BDAG, 898, states that the word refers here to the eschatological judgment and also provides important cultural information on the use of this word in the literature preceding the composition of Revelation and immediately thereafter.

³⁷ Traugott Holtz, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 73; Leonard L. Thompson, *Revelation*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 115; Mounce, *Revelation*, 182; Müller, *Offenbarung*, 187; Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 286; Beale, *Revelation*, 459-60 and E. Nestle, et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1995), 647.

³⁸ Beale, *Revelation*, 460. He suggests that this is a legitimate pattern of divine judgment in the OT and cites Ps 18.6-15 and Hab 2.20-3.1-5.

Moreover, there are few similar patterns or words in both the precursor and successor text. Beate Kowalski writes: “The similarities with Ezekiel 10.2 is limited to the subject of the fire, which is on the earth (Revelation) and is thrown over the city (Ezekiel). The similarities with Ezekiel 10.6, where only the fire is the unifying theme in Revelation 8.5, are lower still [my translation].”³⁹

The fact that there is low volume suggests that thematic coherence is also not suitably satisfied. The precursor text does not correspond strongly enough to the successor text. Furthermore, the images and ideas do not illuminate the allusive constituents in 8.3-5, except the use of fire (πύρ). Recurrence pays attention to where else the implied author alludes to the same precursor text and this guideline is not met either and so this is not a credible allusion but at best is an echo.

It is the combination of the two echoes of Exod 40.26 and Ezek 10.2 in 8.3-5 that allows for an extension of meaning from the OT sanctuary in the Exodus text to the daily service (*Tamid*) in the Ezekiel text. This can be seen in the use of the following common elements found in the daily service (*Tamid*) as well as Rev 8.3-5: 1) the blowing of trumpets, 2) the altar, 3) the golden censer, 3) the incense, 4) the mingling of the incense with the prayers of the saints and 5) the casting down of the censer with fire. According to Ezell, the daily liturgy became a convenient vehicle to communicate the historical consequences of Jesus’ death. Therefore “the death of Jesus is the sacrifice, and it has ended. It is time to blow the trumpets to signify that the sacrifice has been made.”⁴⁰

The progression between these two echoes, within their respective contexts, leads to the conclusion that the imagery in 8.3-5 can indeed point to the daily service (*Tamid*), but also provides applicability of the symbol marker to the yearly (*Yom Kippur*) liturgy as well.⁴¹ According to Norman Young

³⁹ Beate Kowalski, *Die Rezeption des Propheten Ezechiel in der Offenbarung des Johannes*, Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge 52 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2004), 141.

⁴⁰ Douglas Ezell, *Revelations on Revelation* (Waco: Word, 1977), 49. See also Eugene Corsini, *The Apocalypse: The Perennial Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Good News Studies 5, translated and edited by Francis J. Moloney (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983), 173, who suggests that 8.3-5 is “an indirect reference to the death of Christ and its effects...”

⁴¹ Jon Paulien, “The Role of the Hebrew Cultus, Sanctuary and Temple in the Plot and Structure of the Book of Revelation,” *AUSS* 33 (1995): 245-64, argues that the focus text is modeled on the *Tamid* rather than the *Yoma* liturgy in rabbinic tradition. In the *Mishna*, according to Paulien, the incense altar was the main event of the *Tamid* as in Rev 8.3, but was bypassed during the *Yoma*. Secondly, in the *Tamid* liturgy of the *Mishna*, the officiating priest is given the incense, as in 1.3, while he had to gather it for himself during the *Yoma*

the only day that the specially compounded daily incense was offered in a censer as well as on the golden altar was the Day of Atonement; on no other occasion was it permitted to burn this special incense in a censer. This explains John's conflation of the altar and censer in the incense offering which he mentions in Rev. 8.3. The reference to trumpets at the introduction of the chapter is a further indication that we are in the midst of Day of Atonement imagery, for the trumpets were the means of announcing New Year and the coming judgment of the Day of Atonement. Even more pertinent, on the Day of Atonement itself trumpets proclaimed the Year of Jubilee, the day of release and restoration (cf. the seventh trumpet Rev. 11.15 ff.). Thus the prayers of the people of God for salvation are answered by an act of divine judgment and deliverance, and this is portrayed by John by means of Day of Atonement symbols.⁴²

Based on the cultural resonances of the symbol markers of *σάλπιγγες* and *θυσιαστήριον*, it can be concluded that the cultic imagery employed in 8.3-5 is a combination of both the Tamid and Yom Kippur liturgies.⁴³

In fact, the merging of imagery from both the Tamid and Yom Kippur liturgies is the standard manner of treating the Hebrew cultic imagery in the NT literature, where the authors

celebrations. Thirdly, the incense of the *Tamid* is ministered on the incense altar, as in 8.3, while the incense of *Yoma* is ministered on the Ark of the Covenant. The description in the *Mishnah* is briefly as follows: The trimming of the lampstand (*m. Tamid* 3.9 = Rev. 1.12-20); the opening of the great door (*m. Tamid* 3.7 = Rev. 4.1); the slaying of the lamb (*m. Tamid* 4.1-3 = Rev. 5.6); the pouring out of the blood as the base of the bronze altar of sacrifice (*m. Tamid* 4.1 = Rev. 6.9); the offering of incense at the golden altar (*m. Tamid* 5.4 = Rev. 8.3-4); the break in the singing (*m. Tamid* 7.3 = Rev. 8.1); and the blowing of the trumpets to signal completion of the sacrifice (*m. Tamid* 7.3 = Rev. 8.2-6). Therefore, according to Paulien, both in the significant details and order "the material making up the septets of the churches, seals and trumpets is subtly associated with the activities in the temple related to the continual or *Tamid* service." See also John Sweet, *Revelation* (London: SCM Press, 1979), 159.

⁴² Norman H. Young, *The Impact of the Jewish Day of Atonement upon the Thought of the New Testament* (Ph.D. diss., Manchester University, 1973), 367-68. See also Stephen D. Renn, ed., *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 29. Renn states the word *θυσιαστήριον* occurs on eight occasions in the NT and that the term refers to the heavenly altar on each of these times. Seven times the word is used in Revelation and only once in Heb 13.10. The text reads, "We have an altar (*θυσιαστήριον*) from which those who officiate in the tent have no right to eat." According to William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, WBC 47B (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 530-40, the phrase "we have an altar (*ἔχομεν θυσιαστήριον*)" is an important one in the context of Heb 13.10-16. It is the determining creedal thesis (in line with 4.14 "*ἔχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα*" and 10.19 "*ἔχοντες οὖν, ἀδελφοί, παρρησίαν*") that is elaborated on in vv 11-12. In its immediate context the *θυσιαστήριον* is a reference to the historical reality of Golgotha and it is "employed metaphorically for the event of the sacrificial death of Christ outside the city gate." Furthermore "it is significant that the sacrifice of Jesus is expressly set in parallel with the atonement sacrifices on the Day of Atonement" and "presupposes the writer's developed presentation of Jesus as high priest who bore his own blood into the heavenly sanctuary..." Further support for Lane's view is found in Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Vol. 2, Translated by Thomas Kingsbury (Minneapolis: Klock and Klock Christian Publishers, 1978), 384. The book of Hebrews is the most forthright example in NT literature where the sacrifice of Christ (*Tamid* liturgy) is fulfilled and finds its prophetic meaning in the Jewish cult, specifically, the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur* liturgy). While I am not suggesting any intended allusion or echo, the use of the word *θυσιαστήριον* here in Heb 13.10 provides an illuminating and significant textual locale to understand Rev 8.3.

⁴³ See Desmond Ford, *Crisis! A Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, Vol. 2 (New Castle: Desmond Ford Publications, 1982), 429.

comprehended the death of Christ as having eschatological and prophetic significance. As a result, all the OT services meet their fulfilment in Christ's death and resurrection.⁴⁴

Therefore, the combination of the symbol markers of altar and the trumpet blast in 8.3-5, in the context of the daily liturgy, point to the sacrifice *par excellence* in the death of the Lamb.⁴⁵

Since "context in Revelation consists of a system of references that progressively build up hermeneutical precedents in the text, precedents that precondition the meaning of each new passage in highly significant ways" the intratextual dynamics of Rev 8.3-5 also needs to be studied.⁴⁶ An important intratext in relation to 8.3-5 is 6.9-10. Most scholars see this text as the intratextual key to unlock the meaning of 8.3-5.⁴⁷ Revelation 6.9-10 reads:

When he opened the fifth seal (πέμπτην σφραγίδα), I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God (λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ) and the testimony (μαρτυρίαν) they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord (ὁ δεσπότης), holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood (αἷμα)?"

The initial stimulus for analysis of this text and the discovery of its overall importance in Revelation came from an article by John Paul Heil and the later research of Joel Musvosvi and Stephen Pattemore.⁴⁸ According to Pattemore this is an important text because it is "the starting point for a number of threads which are woven into the whole fabric of the book's tapestry."⁴⁹ If one follows the trajectory of lexical and semantic elements in these verses through the whole narrative of Revelation, one would find over forty brief texts where two or more of the semantic components come together.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 462.

⁴⁵ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 322.

⁴⁶ J. Webb Mealy, *After the Thousand Years: Resurrection and Judgment in Revelation 20*, JSNTSup 70 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 13. This furthers my understanding of intratexture. The intertexture is analysed first, and secondly, intratexture. Further, the use of the symbol marker of πῦρ in 8.5 may evoke Rev 13.13 and 20.9 on the basis of the high volume between these texts. I was alerted to this possibility while studying BDAG, 898.

⁴⁷ Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation*, 79; Sweet, *Revelation*, 160; Boxall, *The Revelation*, 134; Morris, *Revelation*, 118; Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 151. Contra Holtz, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, 73, who does not even list 6.9-10 as a possible intratext.

⁴⁸ John Paul Heil, "The Fifth Seal (Rev. 6.9-11) as the Key to the Book of Revelation," *Bib* 74 (1993): 220-243 and Joel Nobel Musvosvi, *Vengeance in the Apocalypse*, AUSDDS 17 (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1993) and Stephen Pattemore, *The People of God in the Apocalypse: Discourse, Structure and Exegesis*, SNTMS 128 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁴⁹ Pattemore, *The People of God in the Apocalypse*, 68.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 90. The most important texts, which have at least three semantic components in common with Rev 6.9-11, are 7.9-10; 13-14; 8.3, 13; 9.13; 11.7,18; 12.10-12; 13.7-8; 14.13; 16.5-7; 17.6; 18.20, 24; 19.1-2, 8; 20.3-4; 22.6-9.

Whereas Pattermore fails to substantiate any semantic and literary connections between 6.9-11 and 8.3-5, focusing rather on other texts in Revelation which further the aims of his research, Heil sees 6.9-11 resonating verbally and conceptually with the trumpet judgments.⁵¹ Heil suggests that the angel of 8.3 performs a similar liturgical ritual that corresponds to the prayers of the souls in 6.10 by coming with a golden censer and standing at the altar under which the souls uttered their prayers.⁵² The literary and conceptual connection between the trumpet judgments and the fifth seal is made in 8.3-5 where incense from the golden altar is mingled with “the prayers of the saints.”

Another reference is in 8.13, which stands at the structural center of the focus text, pointing to the “inhabitants of the earth” (τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) when taken in conjunction with 6.10 where the inhabitants of the earth are also pointed to. This verse indicates that the trumpet judgments fall on “those who live on the earth,” the same group who were martyring the saints, referred to in 6.9-10 as the “souls under the altar.”

This connection between the altar of 6.9-11 and that of 8.3, 5 as well as the inhabitants of the earth in both 6.10 and 8.13, indicates that the focus text is God's response to the prayers of the saints for vengeance on those who have persecuted and martyred them.⁵³ The martyrs were anxious for the judgment to begin but it was delayed until all the seals had been opened. In 8.5 the altar which receives the prayers of the saints becomes the source from which judgments are poured out on the wicked in response (cf. 9.13-15; 14.18-20 and 16.4-7). Thus, the focus text should be understood as God's judgment-response to the prayers of the martyrs, resulting in justice being done with respect to those who persecuted the saints.

Revelation 8.5 highlights seismic phenomena culminating in an earthquake.⁵⁴ According to Richard Bauckham, the earthquake is not just a conventional apocalyptic image, a “tired apocalyptic cliché,” but rather is intended to evoke a range of conceptual associations as a symbol marker due to its strong literary-cultural resonances.⁵⁵ In the focus

⁵¹ Heil, “The Fifth Seal,” 232.

⁵² Ibid., 232. For a discussion on the identity and purpose of the altar see Musvosi, *Vengeance in the Apocalypse*, 182-89; also Pattermore, *The People of God in the Apocalypse*, 81.

⁵³ So also Gibson, *The Meaning of the Trumpets*, 78.

⁵⁴ Henry Barclay Swete, *Commentary on Revelation*, reprint (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1977), 109, suggests the fire refers to the destruction of Sodom in Gen 19.24. He provides no textual links between this text and Rev 8.5. However, if this is so then this reinforces the view that the trumpet judgments are against the enemies of God's people.

⁵⁵ Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 199, 209. According to Bauckham it also plays a distinguishable role in the structure of the book and points to the Sinai theophany. Contra Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 518, while not

text one finds the earthquake mentioned on one occasion in 8.5. It is also referred to in the *inclusio* of 11.19b which reads: “And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.” The progression between 8.5 and 11.19 can be seen with the addition of *χάλαζα μεγάλη*.

Cultural intertexture is concerned with meaning-making from the wider culture. I turn now to engage in a broad analysis of the OT and Greco-Roman literature, neither to pursue allusions and echoes, nor to apply Hays’ criteria, but rather to attempt to ascertain the resonances of meaning connected to the symbol marker of earthquake.⁵⁶ An earthquake is often an instrument of divine judgment (2 Sam 22.8; Isa 24.18-20; Hag 2.6-7); accompanies a theophany (Judg 5.4-5; Joel 2.10; Mic 1.4); is apparent before the coming of God to govern the nations (Ps 97.5; 99.1) and is witnessed before the coming of God to pronounce judgment on those who are evil (Isa 13.13; 24.18-20; Jer 51.29; Ezek 38.20).⁵⁷

The earthquake also has strong associations in Jewish apocalyptic tradition. It is employed as part of the final judgment on the enemies of God’s people,⁵⁸ as part of the “signs” of the eschaton or introductory judgments leading up to the eschaton and is also developed as a new Sinai theophany in relation to the Yom Yahweh.⁵⁹ Further, the great cosmic quake which will accompany the eschatological theophany in Jewish thought is found at *1 En.* 1.3-9; 102.1-2; *T. Mos.* 10.1-7 and *2 Bar.* 32.1.⁶⁰ The Enochian text in book 1 refers to the God of the universe coming from his dwelling in mighty power. Great fear will grip everyone and the “mountains and high places will fall down...and the high places will fall down.” After the earth is “rent asunder,” a judgment of both the righteous and the wicked follows.

Beyond this normal range of association the image of an enthroned god emitting lightning and thunder was also common in the Hellenistic and Roman religions. The cult of

commenting on the structural value of this symbol marker, but rather, in reference to the Exodus tradition, writes: “...it appears that such language has become so conventional that no direct allusion to the Sinai tradition should be automatically assumed.”

⁵⁶ I believe I am justified in pursuing this course of research in this texture. Cf.

<http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/Examples/textures/inter/cultural.cfm>. Accessed on 9 March, 2010. While I am justified, on the basis of Robbins work on the webpage, I am not slavishly following him and being restricted to references, allusions and echoes at every stage.

⁵⁷ Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 199. Cf. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 517-18.

⁵⁸ See *Syb Or.* 3.675-693.

⁵⁹ See *2 Bar.* 27.7; 70.8; *4 Ezra* 9.3. Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 201.

⁶⁰ Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 199.

Zeus in Greek religion and Jupiter in Roman religion employed this kind of imagery. Zeus is referred to as the one “that hurleth the thunderbolt” and as one “who thunders on high” in *Il.* 5 and in *Od.* 5.1-5. According to J.R. Fears the figure of Jupiter is pictured on coins and columns during the reigns of Domitian and Trajan as hurling thunderbolts.⁶¹ Interestingly, Domitian popularized the cult of Jupiter even further by assuming the prerogatives of Jupiter in his deportment and demeanour.⁶² In addition, the earthquake and its accompanying theophanic manifestation is part of Greek tradition. Callimachus mentions several signs that took place outside Apollo’s temple that revealed the imminent epiphany of a god.⁶³

The notion of God and thunder also emerges at Qumran in the *Hodayot* (Thanksgiving Hymns). Midway through the hymn, after the petitioner has praised God for delivering him (vv. 19-28a), there is a shift in emphasis as the power of Belial is depicted as a terrifying assault on the earth. It reads:

For God thunders with the thunder of his great strength,
And his holy residence echoes with the truth of his glory,
And the host of heaven add its noise,
And the eternal foundations melt and shake,
And the battle of heavenly heroes spans the globe.⁶⁴

The earthquake and war defeat the demonic enemy, even though it results in horrific destruction.

The earthquake serves as one of the decisive agents in portraying the eschatological signs of the eschaton and of the impending judgment of the enemies of God’s people. Revelation 8.2-6 serves then as an apt introduction to the focus text, with its literary and cultural emphasis on the dominant symbol of trumpet.⁶⁵ The most important discovery based on the intertextual work is that 8.3-5, with its altar and trumpet blast, in the context of the

⁶¹ J. R. Fears, “The Cult of Jupiter and the Roman Imperial Ideology,” *ANRW* 2.17, 1, 79. Pliny, *Nat.* II, XVIII, 227, suggests that thunderbolts are the fires of the three upper planets, particularly those of Jupiter, which is in the middle of Saturn and Mars. These thunderbolts come from the moisture of the upper circle of Saturn and the heat from the circle of Mars below. Pliny claims that this is the origin of the myth of the thunderbolts that are hurled as javelins by Jupiter.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 74-80.

⁶³ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 518. These include: “the quivering laurel, the shaking of the temple, a palm tree nodding, a swan singing, and the temple doors opening themselves ...”

⁶⁴ 1 QH 11.19-36 (34-5).

⁶⁵ Brighton, *Revelation*, 219, asks: “Why do the angels use trumpets and not loud voices (as an angel does in 5.2; cf. 14.6-7, 9; 18.1-2; 19.17)? Because the exalted Son of Man speaks with a trumpet-like voice (1.10; 4.1), trumpets given to the angels demonstrate that the angels act within and under the mediation of the Lord Christ even though he now no longer stands before John as the visual mediator of the message (cf. 8.13)

daily liturgy, is an indirect reference to the death of Jesus. Secondly, based on the intratexture analysis, the focus text should be understood as God's judgment-response to the prayers of the saints in 6.9-10.

b. Analysis of the First Trumpet

Revelation 8.7 reads: “The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail (χάλαζα) and fire (πῦρ) mixed with blood (αἷματι), and it was hurled down upon the earth (ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν). A third (τρίτου) of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.” On the basis of the symbol markers of χάλαζα and πῦρ, in conjunction with the shared language of εἰς τὴν γῆν, Exod 9.24 is the possible allusion being drawn on in this text. It reads: “hail (χάλαζαν) fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt (πᾶσαν γῆν Αἰγύπτου) since it had become a nation.” The high volume between both texts, in terms of the symbol markers and shared language and the recognition among scholars of its authenticity, strengthen the intertextual relations between Exod 9.24 and Rev 8.7.⁶⁶

The guideline of recurrence is suitably met as the Exodus tradition is used extensively in the focus text.⁶⁷ Adela Collins suggests that “the story of the exodus is being used as a model for understanding the situation in which John’s first readers found themselves. An analogy is seen between their ill treatment by the Romans and the slavery experienced by the children of Israel in Egypt.”⁶⁸ Her statement demonstrates the thematic link between the Exodus and Revelation text. Since all of Hays’ criteria have been fulfilled, it can be concluded that Exod. 9.24 is indeed a clear allusion in relation to Rev 8.7.

⁶⁶ The following scholars all recognize the influence of the Exodus narrative on the focus text: Holtz, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, 75; Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John*, 306-07; Thompson, *Revelation*, 115; Michaels, *Revelation*, 121-22; Keener, *Revelation*, 256; Boring, *Revelation*, 9), 135-136; Akira Satake, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 242; Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 178-179; Wilfrid Harrington, *Revelation*, Sacra Pagina, ed. Daniel Harrington (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 105; Sweet, *Revelation*, 163; H. Bietenhard, *NIDNTT*, Vol. 1, 657; Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 287-88; Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Revelation: I Saw Heaven Opened*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 92; Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation*, 82; Rebecca Skaggs and Priscilla C. Benham, *Revelation*, Pentecostal Commentary Series (Dorset: Deo Publishing, 2009), 95-8 and Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, 556-57 and Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 647.

⁶⁷ The Exodus tradition is also used in Rev 1 and 12. Cf. Resseguie, *The Revelation of John*, 67; Blount, *Revelation*, 35-7, 229 and Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 36, 317.

⁶⁸ Adela Collins, *The Apocalypse*, 58.

On the basis of the symbol markers, Zech 13.8-9a, Ezek 5.2, Joel 2.30; Ezek 38.22 and Isa 30.30 could also be considered precursor texts being drawn on with respect to 8.7. Zechariah 13.8-9a reads: “In the whole land,” declares the LORD, “two-thirds (δύο μέρη) will be struck down (ἐξολεθρευθήσεται) and perish; yet one-third (τρίτον) will be left in it. And I will bring the third part through the fire (πυρός), Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested.” This text is suggested as an allusion based on the elements of one third, the concept of judgment and the symbol marker of fire (πυρός).⁶⁹

However, a number of factors mitigate against simply adopting this view at face value. Firstly, Zechariah specifically points to one third being left, in reference to God’s people, while in Revelation one third of the earth, trees and grass were burned up. Secondly, the use of fire in Zech 13 is part of the “refining by fire” metaphor, unlike the fire in 8.7 where it is coupled with hail. Thirdly, hail and fire destroy flora in 8.7 whereas the fire in Zechariah purifies humans. One other factor opposes the Zechariah intertext in Rev 8.7, namely, that the Exodus and Ezekiel tradition is being engaged with at this stage in the narrative. At best then, there are remote connections between the two texts. Zechariah 13.8-9 is not a legitimate allusion in Rev 8.7, but only an echo.

Ezekiel 5.2 reads: “When the days of your siege come to an end, burn (κατακαύσεις) a third (τὸ τρίτον) of the hair with fire (πυρὶ) inside the city. Take a third and strike it with the sword all around the city. And scatter a third to the wind. For I will pursue them with drawn sword.” It has the symbol of fire (πῦρ) and the numeral of a third (τὸ τρίτον). The concept of judgment is present in both texts as it describes the destruction of Jerusalem at the time of the Babylonian exile.⁷⁰ Recurrence is the strongest of Hays’ criteria. Steve Moyise has written an important chapter in his monograph on the influence of Ezekiel in Revelation that supports supplying recurrence the designation of high.⁷¹ While the history of interpretation criterion is strong, volume and thematic coherence are all weak. This text is therefore an echo.⁷²

⁶⁹ Charles, *Revelation*, 1. 233; Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation*, 82.

⁷⁰ For a discussion on how meticulous God acts in judgment see Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 98.

⁷¹ Moyise, *The Old Testament in Revelation*, 64-84.

⁷² Support for the history of interpretation criterion includes: Edmondo F. Lupieri, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John*, Italian Texts and Studies on Religion and Society, translated by Maria Poggi Johnson and Adam Kamesar (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 156, suggests that the construct of one third is further developed by the author in 9.15, 18 and 11.1-2; Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 307, states: “the

Ezekiel 38. 22 reads: “I will execute judgment (κρινῶ) upon him with plague (θανάτω) and bloodshed (αἵματι); I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones (λίθοις χαλάζης) and burning sulfur (πῦρ καὶ θεῖον) on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him.” It may be understood as an allusion based on the presence of three symbol markers, namely, blood, hail and fire, giving this text a high degree of volume. Recurrence is also fulfilled as the wider contextual background of the precursor text is mentioned elsewhere in Revelation.⁷³ Even though the history of interpretation guideline is weak, the strong demonstration of the other criteria, make this text a probable allusion.⁷⁴

Joel 2.30-31 may also be alluded to. It reads: “I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood (αἷμα) and fire (πῦρ) and billows of smoke (καπνοῦ). The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” Joel 2.30-31 shares blood and fire in common with Rev 8.7.⁷⁵ Joel 2.31 is included in this allusion as it lends conceptual support to the overriding theme of the Yom Yahweh. Whereas there is a low degree of volume, as only two symbol markers are present in both texts, recurrence is adequately fulfilled as the Joel tradition is used quite extensively in the focus text.⁷⁶ Joel 2.30-31 is a probable allusion in relation to Rev 8.7.

The last tentative intertext to be examined is Isa 30.30. It reads: “The LORD will cause men to hear his majestic voice and will make them see his arm coming down with raging anger and consuming fire, with cloudburst, thunderstorm and hail.” This verse contains two similar symbol markers, that of fire and hail, which are poured out on the Assyrians in judgment. Thematic coherence is fulfilled as the Assyrians, like Egypt in Exod 9.24, are an enemy of God. Volume and the history of interpretation guideline are weak and hence it can be concluded that Isa 30.30 is also an echo in Rev 8.7.⁷⁷

I have argued that Ezek 38.22 and Joel 2.30-31 are probable allusions based on these texts meeting most of Hays’ criteria. The rhetorical effect of these probable allusions is that

language we find here is well known to the prophets (Ezek. 5.2...);” Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 287, mentions Ezek. 5.12-13; Beale, *Revelation*, 474-81, Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 647.

⁷³ This wider contextual background is Ezek 38-39 and in Revelation it is 20.7-10. Cf. Skaggs and Benham, *Revelation*, 209.

⁷⁴ Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 287 and Kurt Aland, et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 850, and Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 647.

⁷⁵ Harrington, *Revelation*, 105.

⁷⁶ Sweet, *Revelation*, 169; Cf. Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 232-34, who has a table with numerous literary connections between Joel and Revelation.

⁷⁷ J. Ford, *Revelation*, 138, has a reference to this text.

they all point to God's judgment on an enemy of his people and provide the thematic coherence that unifies each of these probable allusions. The history of interpretation criterion is fulfilled in relation to all four texts, however, with varying degrees of low and high status.⁷⁸ Ezekiel 5.2 is admittedly an echo because of its low volume, while Isa 30.30 is an echo based more on its low history of interpretation.

The text has numerous hints to open possibilities for ascertaining meaning and meaning-effects from both the biblical tradition as well as first-century C.E. Jewish literature. It is evident that in the Jewish mindset hail and fire refer to eschatological judgment.⁷⁹ Hail and bloody rain appeared as a prodigy, a warning of divine judgment in the ancient Mediterranean world as well.⁸⁰ While the notion of blood draws attention to Joel 2.30, this does not limit its association. The use of ἄμματι in the vision could also lead to the appropriation of *Sib. Or.* 5.377, which reads, "For fire shall rain on mortal men from the fields of heaven, fire and blood, water, meteors, darkness..." This text has high volume and history of interpretation.⁸¹ Recurrence is also met as the Sybilline Oracle is used quite extensively in Revelation.⁸² Further, the occurrence of blood raining from the sky occurs frequently in Roman prodigy lists.⁸³ Pliny the Elder refers to "a yawning of the actual sky" a "chasma" and "also something that looks like blood and a fire that falls from it to the earth." Apparently, this took place "in the third year of the 107th Olympiad, when King Philip was throwing Greece into disturbance."⁸⁴

Josephus recounts the first Egyptian plague by stating that at God's command the river, presumably the Nile, "ran with a blood-red stream" so that no one could drink from it. Not only could the Egyptians not drink from the Nile, but if they did they were "seized with tortures and excruciating pain."⁸⁵ However, for the Hebrews the waters of the Nile remained "sweet and drinkable..." While the king did allow the Hebrews to depart, once the plague

⁷⁸ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 519, suggests that the notion of "third" in 8.7 is loosely based on Ezek 5.2, 12. Thompson, *Revelation*, 115, references Joel 2.30-31 and Ezek 5.2; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 287, mentions Ezek. 5.12-13; Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 306 does not reference Joel 2.30-31 but instead Joel 3.3-4.

⁷⁹ *Syb. Or.* 3.691 and 2 *Bar.* 27.10.

⁸⁰ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 519. Charles, *Revelation*, 1, 233, thinks the blood may point to an actual experience of John, but this is debatable.

⁸¹ Thompson, *Revelation*, 115; Mounce, *Revelation*, revised, 178; Brighton, *Revelation*, 225.

⁸² Thompson, *Revelation*, 90-120.

⁸³ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 519. The list includes: Cicero *De div.* 1.43.98; 2.27.58; Pliny, *Nat.* II, LVII, 147; Luterbacher, *Prodienglaube*, 14; Wülker, *Prodiengswesens*, 11.

⁸⁴ Pliny, *Nat.*, II, XXVI, 241.

⁸⁵ Josephus, *Ant.*, II, XIV, 293.

had subsided, he changed his mind and denied them freedom.⁸⁶ Josephus also makes reference to the hail which was unknown to the climate of Egypt. He reports that the hail fell when “spring was in its prime” and destroyed the Egyptian crops.⁸⁷

At Qumran Belial, like a fire, “devours all those drawing water” and he destroys “every tree, green or dry, from its canals. He revolves like flames of fire until none of those who drink are left.” Belial also burns “the bases of the mountains” “and converts the roots of flint rock into streams of lava.”⁸⁸ The writer depicts a flood of fire that sweeps through the whole earth. The mounting fire destroys everything in its path, overtaking even the ocean. While Belial uses fire for his own destructive ends, God seemingly uses fire for the same purpose here in 8.7.

The combination of hail, fire and blood in the OT literature, Jewish apocalyptic and the Greco-Roman literature strengthen my argument for perceiving these as symbol markers.⁸⁹ The use of fire by both God and Belial will need to be further dialogued with.⁹⁰ Interestingly, the use of the Exodus plague has been modified “in that now only a third of the land and the tree are harmed, yet the affliction of all the grass remains unchanged.”⁹¹ Also in Exod 9.13-35 hail is the main agent of devastation, whereas in Revelation fire “is responsible for the extensive conflagration.”⁹²

Jewish texts to be considered include *Sib.Or.* 5. 377-378 and *Wis.* 16.16-24. These apocalyptic texts have the symbol markers of χάλαζα, πῦρ or αἷματι and hence volume is fulfilled. Recurrence and the history of interpretation guideline are met as these texts are used

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Josephus, *Ant.*, II, XIV, 299.

⁸⁸ 1 QH 11. 29-31.

⁸⁹ A feature of the text is the use of πῦρ. The effect of the fire burns a third of the earth, the trees and all the green grass. Fire is part of the apocalyptic arsenal the implied author utilizes to convey the extent of the devastating judgment that falls in this trumpet. Since there is wide cultural scope in any substantive text, it is not possible to pursue anything that approaches a comprehensive survey of the concept of fire. Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 248, states that in the OT it has the meaning of Yahweh's judgment, whether against Israel and Judah (Ps 80.8-11; Jer 11. 16-17; Ezek 5.1-4; 15.6-7; Joel 1.19-20) or against her adversaries (Isa 10.16-20; 30.30; Jer 51.41-42). Fire was a weapon of Yahweh to deliver his true people and demolish his enemies (Ps 11.6; 18.13; Isa 29.1-6; Ezek 39.1-6; Amos 1.4; 7.4). For a detailed discussion of the OT background to the word fire see H. Bietenhard, *NIDNTT*, Vol. 1, 655. For hail see Isa 30.30; Ezek 13.11-13; and for fire see Ps 80.14-16; Jer 21.12-14. According to Hailey Homer, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 219, the spilling of blood in the OT points to God punishing or avenging his people before the nations.

⁹⁰ See pp. 184-90.

⁹¹ Beale, *Revelation*, 473. Cf. Charles, *Revelation*, 1, 234.

⁹² Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 219.

throughout Revelation.⁹³ However, since the history of interpretation guideline and thematic coherence are both weak suggests these texts are echoes.

The allusions and echoes drawn on represent judgment with a wide range of association in the OT and Second Temple tradition. These texts have been creatively drawn on and their juxtaposition causes a dilemma as to whom this judgment is directed against, as this is not explicitly mentioned in the text. It is possible to argue that the first trumpet plague is a reference to coming judgment on *both* those in the audience who are conspiring with Jezebel, Balaam and the Nicolaitans as well as a contemporary empire in opposition to God and the audience. The case for assessing the first trumpet as judgment against the unfaithful in the audience is made possible by the fact that hail or fire are used in the OT as judgment against Israel for forsaking the covenant.⁹⁴

Furthermore, the judgment depicted in Ezek 5.1-4 describes the destruction of Jerusalem at the time of the exile to Babylon. The argument for seeing judgment against a contemporary empire like Rome is corroborated in that hail and fire together are used consistently in the OT as a weapon of judgment against nations in opposition to God.⁹⁵ When one takes into account the apocalyptic language of trees and grass, the complexity of establishing meaning is exacerbated, in that these symbols are used in the OT both for Yahweh's covenant people and for those outside the covenant as well.⁹⁶

On the burden of the evidence presented it is more likely that this trumpet points to a judgment against the Rome empire, even though Rome is not explicitly mentioned.⁹⁷ Based on the fact that “the old text brings with it connotations and associations that influence the new setting” Exod 9.24, Ezek 38.22, Joel 2.30-31 and Isa 30.30 all characterize judgment

⁹³ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 519; Beale, *Revelation*, 473; Thompson, *Revelation*, 90-105, 115, 123; Brighton, *Revelation*, 225; Lohse, *Offenbarung*, 51.

⁹⁴ For hail see Isa 30.30; Ezek 13.11-13; and for fire see Ps 80.14-16; Jer 21.12-14.

⁹⁵ Cf. Ps 18.12-14; Isa 10.16-19, 30.30. I argue for the Roman empire as this is the *Sitz em Leben* of Revelation. For a full discussion of the two dominant views on the date of Revelation, see Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 31-6. For a discussion on the *Abfassungszeit* of Revelation that further endorses a Domitianic date late in his reign see Müller, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, 41-2 and also Skaggs and Benham, *Revelation*, 8-9.

⁹⁶ According to Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 251, “trees and grass can symbolize both the enemies of Yahweh's people such as Lebanon and Assyria (Zech 11.1, 6; Isa 2.13) and also Israel (Ezek 15.6-7; 20.47-48; Joel 1.19-20). When grass and trees are green and flourishing they symbolize Yahweh's faithful people, but when they are dry and withered they symbolize the fate of evil-doers (Isa 44.3-4; Ps 1.3; 52.8; 92.12-13).”

⁹⁷ Christopher Wordsworth, *Lectures on the Apocalypse* (London: Francis & John Rivington, 1849), 205.

against an enemy of God's people. This solidifies my argument for judgment against a contemporary empire in Rev 8.7.⁹⁸

In Rev 8.7 the divine passive is used to depict God, without expressing explicit divine activity.⁹⁹ In 8.7 the hail and fire mingled with blood “were thrown” (ἐβλήθη) to the earth, with the judgment coming from heaven. The text evokes the mythic cosmic conflict tradition here in 8.7 that dominates the second half of the narrative (Rev 12-20).¹⁰⁰ I will attempt to defend the notion of the cosmic conflict as the struggle for cosmic supremacy between God and Satan as portrayed in the wider Scriptural narrative and played out in the context of the authorial audience in the first-century world.¹⁰¹ The clear allusion to Exod 9.24 evokes the

⁹⁸ Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*, 19.

⁹⁹ Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 435-438, lists eight reasons why the agency of a passive verb is not expressed. Wallace suggests that divine passives focus on the implicit agency of God and that naming it would be rhetorically intrusive. In relation to the gospels, according to Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, Vol.1, The Proclamation of Jesus, translated by John Bowden (New York: Scribner's, 1971), 9-14, the “divine passive” is an authentic saying of Jesus and is widespread in the gospels as well as the Pauline tradition. For further discussion see Stanley Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd edition (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 64-5; Maximilian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, 3rd reprint (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1987), 76 and BDF, 72.

¹⁰⁰ For a discussion on Rev 12-20, see Sigve Tonstad, *Saving God's Reputation: The Theological Function of Pistis Iesou in the Cosmic Narratives of the Apocalypse*, LNTS 337 (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 55-108. The concept of “cosmic conflict” comes from Abir, *The Cosmic Conflict of the Church*. This is not a well-used term. Others, like Siew, *The War between the Two Beasts and the Two Witnesses*, 75, contend for the idea of “war-in-heaven” which has the same intended meaning, while Tonstad, *Saving God's Reputation*, 65-80 also uses the term cosmic conflict. Douglas Ezell, *Revelations on Revelation* (Waco: Word, 1977), 79, refers to “cosmic war.” Even though cosmic conflict is the term used in this project, other scholars contest for the combat myth as the mythic background for Revelation based on the ideas, themes and symbols that lend support to this perspective. From an examination of the most prominent motifs in Collins, *Combat Myth*, 57-85 and developed in greater detail by Barbara Wooten Snyder, *Combat Myth in the Apocalypse: The Liturgy of the Day of the Lord and the Dedication of the Heavenly Temple* (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1991), 301-43, it is evident that these motifs are not recognizable in the focus text in the manner in which they are explicated in Collins and Snyder. These include the dragon, chaos and disorder, an attack, a champion, the champion's death, the recovery of the champion, the renewal of the battle and victory, restoration and confirmation of order and finally the dragon's reign. Hence, it is on this basis that an argument is made for the validity of the cosmic conflict tradition as the primary mythic background against which to comprehend the focus text. In addition, the notion of a final conflict between God and Satan is anticipated in the eschatological period, which would result in Satan's defeat (see 1QM 15.12-16.1; 17.5-8; 11QMelch 13-14; *T. Levi* 18.12; *T. Dan.* 5.10; *Sib.Or.* 3.796-807; *T. Jud.* 25.3). Further, he points to the use of this verb in its active and passive form on eight occasions in Rev 12. According to Siew, “this word is used to describe the deeds carried out by the dragon and actions done to the dragon:” τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀστέρων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἔβαλεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν γῆν. (12.4); καὶ ἐβλήθη ὁ δράκων ὁ μέγας, ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὁ καλούμενος Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς, ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην, ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐβλήθησαν. (12.9); ὅτι ἐβλήθη ὁ κατήγωρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν (12.10); Καὶ ὅτε εἶδεν ὁ δράκων ὅτι ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν (12.13); Καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ ὄφις ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ὀπίσω τῆς γυναικὸς ὕδωρ ὡς ποταμόν (12.15). The extensive use of this word in Rev 12 in relation to the activities of the dragon strengthens the conclusion that the cosmic conflict tradition is being drawn on by the implied author already in 8.7. Idem., *The War*, 73.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Mounce, *Revelation*, revised, 235-42; Osborne, *Revelation*, 454-86; Beale, *Revelation*, 621-80.

larger OT narrative of Israel's emancipation from the oppressive regime of Pharaoh through a display of Yahweh's mighty power, while the probable allusions of Ezek 38.22, Joel 2.30-31 and Isa 30.30 all reinforce the fact that God is involved in judgment against his enemies.

c. Analysis of the Second Trumpet

Revelation 8.8-9 reads: "The second angel (ὁ δεύτερος ἄγγελος) sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain (ὄρος μέγα), all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood (αἷμα), a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships (πλοίων) were destroyed." Most scholars contend that Exod 7.20 is an allusion in relation to 8.8-9, even though the shared language is minimal.¹⁰² Exodus 7.20 reads: "He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was changed into blood (αἷμα)." The criterion of volume, while weak, is nevertheless met between these texts (Rev 8.8-9 and Exod 7.20), as not only is αἷμα present in both texts, but there are similar and dissimilar patterns of thought that can be used to compare and contrast the relationship between these texts. The major similarity between these texts is the use of water in both, whether for a river or the sea. Vos suggests the following differences between Exod 7.20 and Rev 8.8:

In Exod.7.20 Moses smote the river with his rod and the water was turned into blood, whereas in Rev.8.8 the change is caused by a burning mountain being cast into the sea. The waters which were affected also differ; it was the river which was affected in Exodus, and the third part of the sea in the Apocalypse. There is also a difference in the severity of the respective plagues; in Exodus all the fish which were in the river died, but in Revelation only one third of the fish in the bloody waters died... Thus we see that it is only the allusion to this event which is the linking factor... The Apocalyptist develops this affliction along more independent lines.¹⁰³

Recurrence and thematic coherence are fulfilled as the Exodus material is being interacted with in 8.7-12 and Exod 7.20b illumines the rhetorical effect of the text. In spite of the fact that numerous constructs of Hays are satisfied, Exod 7.20 is a probable allusion, particularly in light of the low volume.

¹⁰² Charles Talbert, *The Apocalypse: A Reading of the Revelation of John* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), 41; Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 157; Thompson, *Revelation*, 116.

¹⁰³ Louis A. Vos, *The Synoptic Traditions in the Apocalypse* (Kampen: J. H. Kok N.V, 1965), 45-6.

The symbol marker of ὄρος μέγα πύρι provides the initial textual cue to unravel the meaning potentiality of the text. The use of ὡς here is rather common in the narrative so far (cf. 1.10, 14; 2.18; 3.3; 4.1). The use of this symbol marker evokes a wide range of meaning from the OT corpus which is an important well to draw cultural intertextual insights from.¹⁰⁴ The most likely appropriation of meaning would be comprehending the mountain as representative of a nation which is the object of God's judgment.

This conclusion is endorsed when the description of the mountain is taken into consideration, ὄρος μέγα πύρι. It is the wholistic picture of the symbol that has led numerous scholars to see in this symbol an allusion to Jer 51.25, which reads: "I am against you, O destroying mountain, you who destroy the whole earth," declares the LORD. "I will stretch out my hand against you, roll you off the cliffs, and make you a burned-out mountain (ὄρος ἐμπεπυρισμένον)."¹⁰⁵ In this text Babylon is prophetically denounced and portrayed as a burning mountain. Volume is relatively weak as there are limited words and ideas that are similar. Recurrence is also weak as Babylon has not been depicted in any way, shape or form in the text so far.

Furthermore, since Babylon of the OT is destroyed by means of the Euphrates river, so likewise the sea here in 8.8 endangers Rome. This endangerment comes about through the "pollution of the sea waters, the consequent death of sea life."¹⁰⁶ The reach and implications of this symbol marker are seen when one draws on the cultural meaning inherent in the OT.

¹⁰⁴ According to Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 259-60, "a mountain is generally perceived to be representative of a nation (Isa 13.4) such as Edom (Obad 8) or Babylon (Jer 51.24, 25). A second meaning of this symbol in the OT is that it can represent God's throne or dwelling (Isa 2.2, 3; 14.12-14; Ezek. 28.14) and building on this association, a mountain can also refer to God's sanctuary (Exod 15.17) or everlasting kingdom (Dan 2.44, 45). Thirdly, a mountain can refer to an obstacle as in Zech 4.7 where Zerubbabel is attempting to complete the temple (cf. Zech 4. 9,10). In this Zecharian text the mountain is the object of Yahweh's judgment and it seems likely that this is so in Rev 8. 8, 9 as well."

¹⁰⁵ Kraft, *Offenbarung*, 137; Keener, *Revelation*, 257; Boxall, *The Revelation*, 138; Sweet, *Revelation*, 163; Caird, *The Revelation*, 114; Beale, *Revelation*, 476; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 290; Osborne, *Revelation*, 352-53. Contra, Thompson, *Revelation*, 116, who does not mention the Jeremiah text and Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 519-20, who argues rather for the "tragic eruption of Vesuvius on 24 August A.D. 79...". I understand this focus on Vesuvius as strengthening the cultural aspects of the symbol marker. Why Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 157, says it is unlikely that Jer 51.25 is in view here is not expounded on. He simply says it is part of the apocalyptic imagery the author employs. Yet on the very same page, he suggests that Joel 2.30 is influential in Rev 8.7 without any explanation. It is this sort of indiscriminate selection of allusions, without criteria and controls, that I am attempting to avoid. Wordsworth, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, 206, also sees the destroying mountain in Jer 51.25 as the OT allusion, however his historical references to the Goths, Vandals and Huns has no textual basis. Contra Moses Stuart, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse* (Edinburgh: Maclachlan, Stewart and Co., 1847), 184, who only recognizes Exodus 7 and maintains that the notion of mountain is unique to John.

¹⁰⁶ Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 221.

The sea (θάλασσα) in the OT was viewed as the abode of the enemies of God and with whom God was engaged in a cosmic battle and is another symbol marker with a rich literary and cultural dynamic to it.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the use of the divine passive (ἐβλήθη) in 8.8 coupled with the use of “third” on three occasions amplifies the interplay between cosmic forces in this trumpet judgment.¹⁰⁸

A tentative allusion in Jewish apocalyptic is *Syb. Or.* 5.158: “Then shall come a great star from heaven into the divine sea, and shall burn up the deep sea and Babylon itself...”¹⁰⁹ Another likely text is *I En.* 18.13 which refers to “stars like burning mountains.”¹¹⁰ These burning mountains represent fallen angels who are the recipients of God’s judgment. Similarly, in *I En.* 108.4-5, burning mountains point to the fate of evil doers. Even though the Sybilline and Enochian texts all have low volume, the history of interpretation guideline is high.¹¹¹ Thematically these texts support the notion of identifying Rome with Babylon.

Pliny the Elder mentions a story that the Greeks told of Anaxagoras of Clazomenae in the 2nd year of the 78th Olympiad. With his knowledge of astronomical literature he was able to “prophecy that in a certain number of days a rock would fall from the sun; and that this occurred in the daytime in the Goat’s River district of Thrace (the stone is still shown – it is of the size of a wagon -load and brown in colour), a comet blazing in the night at the time.”¹¹²

The clear allusion to Jer 51.25, as well as supportive aspects found within the Jewish apocalyptic literature, all point to the identity of the symbolic burning mountain as the

¹⁰⁷ BDAG, 442. See also Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 83-100.

¹⁰⁸ The notion of third in Rev 12.3 possibly aligns this numeral with Satanic activity. See Tondstad, *Saving God’s Reputation*, 111-12, who asserts that the numeral third is an indicator of satanic agency. He suggests that it is a “qualitative reference” and answers to the question “who.” In agreement with Tondstad, the agency is a reference to Satanic involvement in the focus text. Incidentally, the numeral “third” is mentioned 28 times in 8.7-9.18; J. M. Ford, *Revelation*, 159, suggests a “third” denotes a part of Satan’s kingdom is under divine judgment. According to Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 369-70 “the number three has divine implications in the ancient world. John parodies this background with a satanic trinity (Rev 12-13; 16.13) whose leader has cast down a third of the stars of heaven (Rev 12.4) and whose kingdom has three parts (16.19). The thirds of the trumpets, therefore, may represent parts of Satan’s kingdom which are brought under God’s judgments.” Contra Emil Bock, *The Apocalypse of Saint John*, revised edition (London: Christian Community Press, 2005), 81, who suggests the concept of one third is to be taken qualitatively and refers to man or human beings.

¹⁰⁹ Beckwith, *Revelation*, 557.

¹¹⁰ Swete, *Revelation*, 111.

¹¹¹ Thompson, *Revelation*, 90-120; Beale, *Revelation*, 476, 480, 483, 487; Kiddle, *Revelation*, 151.

¹¹² Pliny, *Nat.*, II, LIX, 285.

Roman empire.¹¹³ Pliny's writings strengthen the notion of a stone or rock falling to the earth. Moreover, there is an intensification and extension of the use of stock apocalyptic imagery by including the θάλασσα, the ὄρος μέγα and the destruction of the ships. The implied author, with the most subtle of hints, is preparing the argument for those later visions "in which he treats Rome as the current embodiment of Babylon, but also for his theological exposition of the self-destroying power of evil."¹¹⁴ The Patmos historical context makes the sea prominent in Revelation and validates the perspective of the Roman empire's dominance over the sea.¹¹⁵ In addition, like Egypt which is dependent on the Nile for drinking water and her food supply, so the Roman empire, which profited from its sea trade with other nations would suffer under the judgment of the second trumpet judgment also.¹¹⁶

d. Analysis of the Third Trumpet

Revelation 8.10-11 reads: "The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star (ἀστήρ μέγας), blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers (τρίτον τῶν ποταμῶν) and on the springs of water - the name (ὄνομα) of the star is Wormwood (Ἄψιυθος). A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters (ὕδατων) that had become bitter." The complexity of attempting to understand this trumpet judgment is found in the fact that nowhere in the OT or Jewish apocalyptic literature is a falling star connected with wormwood, bitterness and springs of water.¹¹⁷ The following symbol markers provide the textual hints or pointers to begin establishing meaning possibilities. These include the ἀστήρ μέγας, Ἄψιυθος, πικραίνω and ὕδωρ, which occurs on three occasions in this text alone.

¹¹³ Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 97, provides an interesting interpretation of the second trumpet judgment. He suggests that this trumpet evokes the image of the power of the imperial army. The emperor has passed on orders to the trumpet blower to blow the trumpet. The blowing of the trumpet results in massive destruction of a portion of the empire. After describing what happens during the second trumpet, Robbins suggests that while the imagery is grotesque the message would have been understandable "in the context of the Mediterranean world." While interesting, it is not based on analysis or exegesis of the text.

¹¹⁴ Caird, *The Revelation*, 114.

¹¹⁵ Boxall, *The Revelation to Saint John*, 138.

¹¹⁶ Keener, *Revelation*, 257. In relation to the first and second trumpet plague, M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., *Revelation: Holy Living in an Unholy World*, A Francis Asbury Press Commentary (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1990), 192, writes: "God's action against the rebellion of Pharaoh was but a historical particularization of the larger consequences of the rebellion that flawed the entire creation. God's action against the rebellion of Israel in Jeremiah was but a specific application of the principle of God's response to the rebellion that caused creation's fall."

¹¹⁷ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 275. For possible precedents for the notion of a falling star see Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, 557, and Charles, *Revelation*, 1. 235.

The wider culture, and aspects of it known only to “insiders,” is the starting point for meaning-making in cultural intertexture and so once again I turn to engage in an analysis of the OT, Greco-Roman and Jewish literature.¹¹⁸ Here I am departing from Robbins who is restricted to references, allusions and echoes. The fact that this is ἀστήρ μέγας may point to its uniqueness and importance. The concept of stars referring to heavenly beings is evident in the OT writings (Job 38.7) where Yahweh could use them either as agents of judgment (Judg 5.20 cf. 1 Kgs 22.19) or as objects of judgment (Job 3.9; Isa 14.12-14). Since the mountain in 8.8 is the object of judgment, so it would appear here in 8.10 in relation to the star.¹¹⁹

Further, in Greco-Roman literature, Artemidorus suggests that the falling star means the death of an individual.¹²⁰ Falling stars may also be considered a prodigy or omen requiring interpretation.¹²¹ Seneca, in an attempt to depict the coming cosmic dissolution of the world, gives a striking explanation of its destruction by flood. He writes: “Stars will clash with stars and all the fiery matter of the world that now shines in orderly array will blaze up in common conflagration.”¹²² The extent of the damage in Seneca is far worse as the great star only destroys the rivers in Rev 8.10-11. The notion of stars destroying water is clearly evident in Lucan’s *Civil War*. At various points in the poem Lucan alludes or explicitly refers to the destruction of the world in the context of the fall of the Roman Republic. He writes:

when the whole framework of the world is dissolved and the final hour, closing so many ages, reverts to primeval chaos, then [all the constellations will clash in confusion], the fiery stars will drop into the sea, and earth, refusing to spread her shores out flat, will shake off the ocean...¹²³

Again there are differences. In Revelation it is obviously one star while in Lucan it refers to many stars.

The symbol marker of ἀστήρ could also evoke a reference to either a god or other-worldly being.¹²⁴ Pliny the Elder refers to a comet or “bright star” that was an object of

¹¹⁸ Robbins, *Exploring*, 58.

¹¹⁹ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 277.

¹²⁰ *Oneirocritica* 2.36; 5.23 cited in Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 520.

¹²¹ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 415.

¹²² *Consol. Ad. Marc.* 26.6-7 in Seneca, *Nat. quaes.* III, 27.

¹²³ Lucan, *Phars.* I, 72-4.

¹²⁴ According to Osborne, *Revelation*, 99, stars were considered gods in Hellenistic thinking, while according to Werner Foerster, *TDNT*, Vol. 1, 503, stars represent divine beings. Pliny, *Nat.*, II, xxxvii, 245, refers to the star-

worship at a temple in Rome. Apparently Augustus thought this comet was very important as it appeared at the beginning of his rule. Pliny quotes him as saying:

On the very day of my Games a comet was visible for seven days in the northern part of the sky. It was rising about an hour before sunset, and was a bright star, visible from all lands. The common people believed that this star signified the soul of Caesar received among the spirits of the immortal gods, and on this account the emblem of the star was added to the bust of Caesar that we shortly afterwards dedicated in the forum.

Pliny concludes his analysis by saying that the notion of this star had “a healthgiving influence over the world.”¹²⁵

Falling stars are equated in Jewish apocalyptic with fallen angels. 1 *Enoch* 86.1-3 reads:

Again I saw (a vision) with my own eyes as I was sleeping, and saw the lofty heaven; and as I looked, behold, a star fell down from heaven but (managed) to rise and eat and to be pastured among the cows...Once again I saw a vision, and I observed a the sky and behold, I saw many stars descending and casting themselves down from the sky upon that first star...

From this Enochian text one can deduce that it is not just one star but many stars that are part of this motif. The motif is essentially about the spiritual fall or decline of an angel or angels and was frequently used to portray eschatological realities.¹²⁶

Interestingly the star in 8.10 is named Wormwood, a bitter tasting plant.¹²⁷ It can symbolize injustice (Amos 5.7; 6.12), affliction and suffering (Lam 3.15, 19) and the horrible consequences of adultery (Prov 5.3-4). However, in the context of Yahweh’s judgment it is a punishment for various sins. Wormwood represented Yahweh’s punishment for Judah’s idolatry (Jer 9.14-15; 23.15), false prophecy (Jer 23.11-40) and apostasy (Jer 8.5, 14) and also appears as a metaphor for sin itself (Deut 29.18).¹²⁸ According to Aune, “the bitterness of wormwood was proverbial throughout the ancient world.”¹²⁹ The cumulative meaning derived from the OT and Jewish texts points to the gross and detestable nature of this star. It is a god or other-worldly being that has evil qualities. The Greco-Roman literature has conflicting views on the concept of star. It seems it can depict the death of an individual and

gods, Castor and Pollux, who people pray to for aid at sea. Seneca, *Nat. quaes.*, VII, i, 155, asserts that stars have power over individuals.

¹²⁵ Pliny, *Nat.*, II, XXIII, 237.

¹²⁶ See *T. Sol.* 20.16; *Apoc. Elijah* 4.11. For a helpful discussion on stars and angels in Jewish apocalyptic see Beale, *Revelation*, 218-19.

¹²⁷ For useful information about this plant see Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 521-22.

¹²⁸ Kraft, *Offenbarung*, 137.

¹²⁹ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 522.

also point to the prominent rise of an individual. Further, in Lucan and Seneca, the notion of star is used as part of the cosmological language of destruction. What is common to the OT, Jewish and Greco-Roman perspectives is the worship of a star.

Even after having assessed these two symbol markers, it is difficult to decide on a tentative precursor text. There is a subtle hint within the successor text that forms a faint literary connection with a precursor text. That literary connection is the concept of “falling,” which possibly can lead to appropriating the imagery of the myth of the demise of Heylel (symbolically portrayed as the king of Babylon) depicted in Isa 14.12.¹³⁰ While the history of interpretation guideline is weak, the advancement of cultural intertexture in this section of work requires that an allusion or echo be found that tentatively matches the grotesque qualities of this god-star.

Isaiah 14.12 reads: “How you have fallen (ἐξέπεσεν) from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!” This text has low volume as there are no similar words, images or ideas, except the concept of “falling.” The concept is depicted with the word ἐξέπεσεν in the Isaiah text and ἔπεσεν in the Revelation text. The difference in word use further weakens Jeffrey Leonard’s contention that shared language is pivotal in establishing a literary connection.¹³¹ On the other hand, W. Bauder, on the basis of the word ἐξέπεσεν understands that both Isa 14.12 and Rev 8.10 refer to the fall of a powerful ruler.¹³² This literary node between Isa 14.12 and Rev 8.10 provides

¹³⁰ The history of interpretation criterion is met with the following commentators: Beale, *Revelation*, 479; Caird, *Revelation*, 115; Sweet, *Revelation*, 163-64. Beale writes: “The identification of the star as Babylon’s representative angel becomes more convincing if v. 10 is understood as alluding to Isa. 14.12-15.” Blount, *Revelation*, 169-70; Resseguie, *The Revelation of John*, 145 and Brighton, *Revelation*, 227, have no discussion in relation to this Isaianic verse. According to Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27, A Continental Commentary*, translated by Thomas H. Trapp (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 63, Helel, son of Shachar, was a warrior who had the impudence to place himself on an equal level with Elyon. He wanted to ascend into heaven so that he could take the throne of the universe. Wildberger suggests that while the myth has its sources outside Israel, no Canaanite or other materials can be found to support it. He maintains the myth has been historicized to refer to a historical person. Cf. John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, revised, WBC 24 (Colombia: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 264 and Matthias Albani, “The Downfall of Helel, the Son of Dawn: Aspects of Royal Ideology in Isa. 14.12-13,” in *The Fall of the Angels*, Themes in Biblical Narrative, eds. Christoph Auffarth and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 62-86, who argues for Ugaritic and Egyptian royal ideology as the legitimate background.

¹³¹ Cf. Leonard, “Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case,” 241-65.

¹³² W. Bauder, *NIDNTT*, Vol. 1, 610.

the thematic coherence as the concept of “falling” is present in both.¹³³ Even though Hays other criteria are satisfied the low volume makes Isa 14.12 an echo in relation to Rev 8.10.¹³⁴ While one may be tempted to immediately discard this connection, seeing as it is so weak, one must bear in mind that echoes convey unstated points of resonance that the reader may dispense with to the detriment of the interpretational endeavor.¹³⁵

The cave of resonant signification, developed by Hollander, is accessed when a reader has reference to both the earlier text and the later text and is found at the point of their intersection.¹³⁶ The cave of resonant signification is operative when two texts intersect, whether as an allusion or echo is immaterial. The intersection and interpenetration of Isa14.12 and Rev 8.10 would introduce the significance of Luke 10.18 in the intertextual dynamics of that intersection.¹³⁷

Table 5		
Literary Connections		
The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a <i>great star, blazing like a torch, fell</i> from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. Rev 8.10	How you have fallen from heaven, O <i>morning star</i> , son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! Isa 14.12	He replied, "I saw <i>Satan fall like lightning</i> from heaven. Luke 10.18

¹³³ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 279, suggests that the use of the concept of “falling” on a number of occasions in the NT indicates a spiritual decline (Rom 11.11,12; 1 Cor 10.12; Heb 4.11 and Rev 2.5). In my view, it reinforces the possible cultural perspective the implied author seeks to convey.

¹³⁴ The history of interpretation includes: Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 647; Contra, Simon Kistmaker, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 275, who suggests that the size of the star, its appearance, the damage it causes and its name, disqualify Isa 14.12.

¹³⁵ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 20. Further, he contests that “we must reckon with varying degrees of certainty in our efforts to identify and interpret intertextual echoes. Sometimes the echo will be so loud that only the dullest or most ignorant reader could miss it...other times there will be room for serious differences of opinion...Precision in such judgment calls is unattainable, because exegesis is a modest imaginative craft, not an exact science.” Idem., *Echoes of Scripture*, 29. Contra, Jan Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and their Development*, JSNTSup 93 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 186, who dismisses Isa 14.12 in relation to 8.10 on the basis of a weak literary relationship and contends that the connection “rests to a greater extent on the history of interpretation ... and the dating of certain events in Jewish and Christian angelology.”

¹³⁶ Hollander, *The Figure of Echo*, 65.

¹³⁷ Steven Thompson, “The End of Satan,” *AUSS* 37 (1999): 257-68 (266), sees Luke 10.18 containing an allusion to Isa. 14.12-15. Cf. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC, reprinted (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 425, 428-29, understands this text (10.18) as having Isa 14.12 as its primary background. Contra John Nolland, *Luke 9.21-18.34*, WBC 35B (Dallas: Word, 1993), 563, who states, “despite the long history of linking this verse with Isa. 14.12 as applied to the fall of Satan...there is finally no adequate basis for such a connection...”

While volume would be low in terms of exact wording, the imagery of falling from heaven is the strongest literary connection. The reference to Satan in Luke 10.18 is weakly connected to “great star” in Rev 8.10 on the basis of this depicting a god or other-worldly being. Based on the contextual use of the word “great” in Revelation, it probably refers here to a unique star.¹³⁸ The concept of “star” is also found in Isa 14.12. The imagery of light in relation to “lightning” in Luke 10.18 and “blazing like a torch” in Rev 8.10 are also tentative points of correspondence. All the above would underscore the interpenetration of this text in the intertextual intersection of Rev 8.10 and Isa14.12. The low status of the history of interpretation criteria and thematic coherence would make Luke 10.18 an echo in relation to Rev 8.10.¹³⁹

It is through this Lukan text that the imagery of Heylel in the Isaianic text takes on added meaning and is re-appropriated now to designate Satan or Satanic involvement in the light of NT revelation.¹⁴⁰ This text adds further hermeneutical weight to the echo of Isa14.12 and consolidates the view that the implied author here points in quick succession, through the clear allusion of Exod 9.24 in 8.7 and this particular echo in 8.10, not only to an enemy of Yahweh and the demise of Babylon, but more especially to the implication of Satan’s involvement in the focus text.¹⁴¹

What this argument also demonstrates is that echoes are of far greater interpretational substance than previously thought. The possibility of comprehending Satan or an aspect of Satan in 8.10 is only brought to the foreground in a stronger manner through the linking of

¹³⁸ According to Osborne, *Revelation*, 499, throughout Revelation the use of μέγας is a term used for the “great” acts of God (8.8; 12.14; 18.21; 19.17) and the “great” voices of God’s angelic heralds (1.10; 5.2; 7.2; 8.13).

¹³⁹ Scholars that authenticate Luke 10.18 include: Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 292; Philip Mauro, *The Patmos Visions* (Boston: Scripture Truth Depot, 1925), 291.

¹⁴⁰ Further, Jose M. Bertoluci, *The Son of the Morning and the Guardian Cherub in the Context of the Great Controversy between Good and Evil* (Th.D. diss., Andrews University, 1985), 289-91, argues for the typological understanding of this Isaianic text. In his view the text refers to Satan because 1) the term māšāl means comparison, resemblance or likeness, 2) Babylon is used in the OT corpus and Jewish apocalyptic to portray a religious power in opposition to God and 3) the strong vertical dimension of the poem points to a power that transcends a historical figure. See p. 1-49 for a summary of the long tradition history of interpreting this verse.

¹⁴¹ Sweet, *Revelation*, 164 and Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 222, perceive the great star as an aspect of Satan, but not Satan himself. Contra Mauro, *The Patmos Visions*, 291, who unequivocally identifies the great star as Satan. He writes: “My opinion is that this “great star” represents the devil himself. His name, “Lucifer,” means light bearer, so that the words, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning?” (Isa. 14.12) agree in meaning with Revelation 8.10.” Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 403, goes too far, without stronger textual support, in arguing that the falling star symbolizes the spiritual fall of leading Christian teachers whose teaching results in spiritual decline and death.

the echoes of Isa 14.12 and Luke 10.18 and introduces the cosmic conflict tradition as the primary mythic background to understand the trumpet judgments.¹⁴² Other arguments will be developed to demonstrate that the cosmic conflict tradition is the primary mythic background against which the focus text is to be understood.

In an important article, Steven Friesen presents five descriptive points which I find helpful in clarifying my views on what myth is.¹⁴³ Firstly, he maintains that myths are “the stories that everyone knows and the stories that everyone has heard before.”¹⁴⁴ Therefore the storyline is not new as they are shared by an identifiable group. Secondly, myths can be distinguished from other stories because they have a distinctive importance for a group of people. Particular myths provide a shared meaning for a group and answers to the big questions of life. Thirdly, myths often draw on and use aspects of other myths or traditions passed on from generation to generation within the same social cluster or another social group. Fourth, Friesen is interested, like me, in the functionality of the concept of myth and how it is deployed in a specific historical and social setting. In this regard, he claims that myths are flexible and do not always support the overriding social concern. Fifth, myths are part of an inter-reliant system of ritual and social structures. Friesen contends that myth, ritual and social structures are part of a “triadic co-definition” that interact with and

¹⁴² This Isaian text is also used in Rev 12. Barr, *Tales of the End*, 124, argues for Isa 14.12 to be in view in relation to Rev 12.7; Beale, *Revelation*, 658, contends for the fall of Satan and his angels at the beginning of creation with reference to Isa 14.11-16 and Ezek 28.12-19; Kraft, *Offenbarung*, 167, understands the influence of Isa 14.12 to be pervasive, appearing in Lk. 10.18 as well. He writes: “With the fall of the dragon, world history became final history. Isaiah 14.12 was decisive in the formation of this idea. The widespread evidence of this idea is in different texts such as Luke 10.18 and John 12.31. These two points emphasize the importance of the event as a key for understanding the present” [my translation]. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 695, takes Isa 14.12ff. to be the OT motif for the expulsion of Satan from heaven; Yarbrow Collins, *Combat Myth*, 81-2, also supports the connection between Rev 12.7 and Isa 14.12 but prefers direct influences from Greek and Ugaritic mythology and Abir, *Cosmic Conflict*, 91, sees a possible role for Isa 14.12-15, and following Collins, that this is behind the combat theme in Rev. 12. Contra Fekkes, *Isaiah in Revelation*, 188, who argues that “1) John gives no hint that the fall is the result of angelic ambitions and pride, 2) the heavenly battle is a direct consequence of the ministry of the Messiah and 3) Satan is cast into the pit in 20.1-3” and that this is evidence against allusions to Isa 14 in Rev 12. A weakness in Fekkes work however, according to Beale, *John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*, 28, is that it is limited only to proposed allusions to Isaiah.

¹⁴³ Steven J. Friesen, “Myth and Symbolic Resistance in Revelation 13,” *JBL* 123 (2004): 281-313.

¹⁴⁴ Bruce Lincoln, “Mythic Narrative and Cultural Diversity in American Society,” in *Myth and Method*, eds. Laurie L. Patton and Wendy Doniger, Studies in Religion and Culture (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 165, cited in Friesen, “Myth and Symbolic Resistance in Revelation 13,” 285.

interpenetrate each other.¹⁴⁵ Friesen focuses on the role of myth or tradition in the formation and shaping of groups.

The cosmic conflict tradition, the battle between God and Satan, is part of what shaped the formation and worldview of the early Christian community.¹⁴⁶ In looking at the writings of the NT, which provide an important cultural intertextual window of insight and understanding into the thinking of the writers and the communities they wrote to, one is struck by the plethora of texts that use the language and imagery of warfare and of a conflict between the powers of heaven and the forces of darkness.¹⁴⁷ The concept of cosmic conflict was central in shaping and developing the theology and worldview of the early Christians. It is this tradition that is more fully drawn on by the time of Revelation's composition.

The next symbol marker to be examined is that of ὕδωρ, evidently important because of its mention on three occasions in the passage about the third trumpet plague. Leonard Goppelt has provided excellent information on the use and importance of water in the OT that I will not pursue here.¹⁴⁸ In the literary context of Revelation water is a source of both spiritual and physical life (Rev 7.17; 21.6; 22.1, 17); water is removed from the persecutors of God's people (Rev 8.10-11; 11.6, 10) and water is also "identified with the blood of the Lamb, by which the robes of the redeemed can be made pure" (Rev 7.14).¹⁴⁹

On the basis of the use of river and the symbol of water, Exod 7.20 could be deduced to be an allusion. It reads: "He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water (ὕδωρ) of the Nile, and all the water was changed into blood (αἷμα)." The history of interpretation guideline is strong as a number of commentators see this as a genuine allusion.¹⁵⁰ The criterion of volume is low as there are only two similar words. Thematic coherence is strong as its inclusion deepens the notion of blood that was mentioned

¹⁴⁵ The notion of "triadic co-definition" comes from Lincoln, "Mythic Narrative," 175, cited in Friesen, "Myth and Symbolic Resistance in Revelation 13," 286. For a discussion about the notion of myth that addresses its beginnings and development see J. W. Rogerson, *Myth in Old Testament Interpretation* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974). For a number of interesting conclusions, some of which are similar to Friesen, see especially pp. 174-78.

¹⁴⁶ According to N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 451-61 (453-54), Jesus was involved in a battle, "a climactic conflict" with "the satan." Only when one understands this conflict can one fully appreciate the gospels and the worldview of the early Christians. See also George Caird, *Principalities and Powers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956).

¹⁴⁷ See Boyd, *God at War*, 169-268 and Mark 1.21-28; 5.1-20; 9.14-29; Matt 9.32-34; 12.22-32; 12.43-45; Acts 5.16; 8.7; Rom 16.20; Eph 6.10-18.

¹⁴⁸ Leonard Goppelt, *TDNT*, Vol. 8. 315-17.

¹⁴⁹ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 284-85.

¹⁵⁰ Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 187; Osborne, *Revelation*, 354; *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 647.

in 8.7. The fulfillment of Hays' criteria suggest this text is a probable allusion in relation to 8.10-11.

The perceptive inclusion of the symbol of "springs of water" in 8.10 no doubt points to the source of the waters being polluted. This view can be consolidated as in the ancient world springs were also associated with supernatural spirits and even demons.¹⁵¹ Further, the concept of "springs of water" has a spiritual connotation pointing to the eschatological blessings of God. When the last symbol marker of "bitterness" (ἐπικράνθησαν) is appropriated in conjunction with the use of river and water, the tentative allusion or perhaps echo of Jer 9.15 and 23.15 emerges. It reads: "Therefore, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "See, I will make this people eat bitter food and drink poisoned water."'" Once again, although the criterion of volume is low, the history of interpretation guideline is strong.¹⁵² While recurrence is weak, these Jeremiah texts add overall weight to the rhetorical effect of judgment in 8.10-11, strengthening thematic coherence. These texts are considered probable allusions.

1 Enoch 86.1; 21.3-6 and *Sib. Or.* 2.202; 8.190-193 in Jewish apocalyptic could also be evoked. *1 Enoch* 86.1 reads: "And I looked, and behold, a star fell down from heaven." In this Enochian text the tradition of the falling stars is symbolic of the demise of the leader of the rebellious angels. In both the Sybilline texts falling stars are associated with the eschatological destruction of the earth.¹⁵³ From an assessment of the symbol markers and the range of meaning association from the OT, Jewish apocalyptic and the first-century C.E. cultural context, it can reasonably be concluded that the third trumpet judgment points to the identification of the great star as Babylon's representative angel, particularly in light of Isa 14.12. The connection between Isa 14.12 and Luke 10.18 points, in more distinct tones, to Babylon's representative angel as Satan or an aspect of Satan.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ J. Moffatt, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine," in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, vol. 5, ed. W.R. Nicoll (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), 405. See also Kiddle, *Revelation*, 152.

¹⁵² Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 222; Prigent, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 308; Mounce, *Revelation*, revised, 181; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 292.

¹⁵³ *Sib.Or.* 2.202 reads: "For all the stars will fall together from heaven on the sea." *Sib. Or.* 8.190-193 reads: "All the stars will fall directly into the sea, all in turn and men will call a shining comet "the star," a sign of much impending toil."

¹⁵⁴ Caird, *Revelation*, 115, writes, "we are justified in supposing that Wormwood is the star of the new Babylon..."

The focus text portrays a progressive development in the unfolding of the elements involved in the cosmic conflict. In 8.8 the Roman empire, through the OT lens of Babylon, is depicted, whereas in 8.10 it is Babylon's angel specifically that is portrayed in the symbolic imagery. The use of the adjective of μέγας for both the mountain in 8.8 and the star in 8.10 evoke the comparison with the acts of God and his angelic heralds who are depicted as great throughout Revelation.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, a preliminary conclusion is that Satan or at least Satanic involvement, in and through the Roman empire, characterized as Babylon, pollutes the sources of spiritual nourishment, namely the rivers and the springs of water resulting in the death of many.¹⁵⁶ The consequences of defiling the rivers and the springs of water leads to apostasy and spiritual death portrayed in the effect of the waters turning bitter.

At this stage in the intertextual journey it should also be evident that the sort of intertextuality I am engaged in is neither concerned with finding the one to one correspondence between the precursor and successor text, nor the perfect intertextual answer, but rather how the narrative of Revelation serves as a kind of “echo chamber” for the interplay of the ancient and contemporary traditions that impact and influence its narrative.¹⁵⁷

e. Analysis of the Fourth Trumpet

Revelation 8.12 reads: “The fourth angel (Καὶ ὁ τέταρτος ἄγγελος) sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun (τρίτον τοῦ ἡλίου) was struck, a third of the moon (σελήνης), and a third of the stars (ἀστέρων), so that a third of them turned dark (ἵνα σκοτισθῆ τὸ τρίτον αὐτῶν). A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.” Since the Exodus tradition is used extensively in the focus text up to this point in the narrative, it could be determined that Exod 10.21 is an allusion in relation to Rev 8.12.

¹⁵⁵ See Osborne, *Revelation*, 499, for references.

¹⁵⁶ J. Nelson Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John's Apocalypse*, JSNTSup 132 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 149, writes: “Rome destroyed the temple and now persecutes God's people (Rev. 13.10; 18.24) – just as Babylon slaughtered Jews and took them captive (2 Kgs. 24.10-25.21). Rome now appears omnipotent to people of the earth (Rev. 13.4; 17.18), just as Babylon once seemed in world affairs Rome now dominates the earth (Rev. 14.8; 18.3), just as Babylon ‘laid nations low’ (Isa. 14.12). The Roman Empire takes ‘blasphemous names’ and receives worship from its subjects (Rev. 13.1, 4, 12; 17.3), repeating Babylon's offense of saying ‘I will make myself like the Most High’ (Isa. 14.14).”

¹⁵⁷ Green, *Luke*, 14.

The Exodus text reads: “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt-- darkness (σκότος) that can be felt.’” While the criterion of volume is low, the history of interpretation guideline and thematic coherence has high status.¹⁵⁸ Recognizing Exod. 10.21 as a valid precursor text in 8.12 is corroborated, not by the guideline of volume as is often the case, but rather on the strength of the history of interpretation criterion. If volume was stronger this text could be construed to be a probable allusion, but instead this Exodus text is given the designation of echo.

On the basis of the symbol markers Ezek 32.7-8 could also be appropriated as an allusion. It reads: “When I snuff you out, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars (ἄστρα αὐτοῦ); I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give its light (καὶ σελήνη οὐ μὴ φάνη τὸ φῶς αὐτῆς).” The criterion of volume is met as there are “verbatim repetition of words” in both the precursor and successor text.¹⁵⁹ While there are two words (ἀστέρων and σκοτισθη in the Revelation text) that are dissimilar morphologically, their syntactical meaning within their respective texts is similar. Thematic coherence is fulfilled as the precursor text mentions the darkening of the heavenly bodies as a portrayal of judgment against Pharaoh and Egypt. In fact, the darkening of the heavenly bodies in the OT seems to consistently portray Yahweh’s judgmental action in relation to the nations.¹⁶⁰ The guideline of history of interpretation is weak, however, and so this text is understood to be a probable allusion.¹⁶¹

A number of scholars see Joel 2.10 as a valid allusion. Joel 2.10 reads: “Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine.” This conclusion is reached on the basis of the apocalyptic imagery of the dimming of the stars and the darkening of the sun and moon. Evidently, the history of interpretation and volume criteria are equally strong.¹⁶² Recurrence is also strong as the implied author is

¹⁵⁸ Osborne, *Revelation*, 355; Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 223; Sweet, *Revelation*, 164, Beale, *Revelation*, 481; Jürgen Roloff, *Revelation*, A Continental Commentary, translated by John E. Alsup (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 111; Mounce, *Revelation*, 181.

¹⁵⁹ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 35.

¹⁶⁰ See Isa. 13.10; Amos 5.18; Joel 2.2. According to Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 295, this notion of darkness referring to judgment is found in the NT as the writers mention the darkening of the celestial bodies in connection with the parousia (cf. Matt 24.19; Mark 13.24-25).

¹⁶¹ Osborne, *Revelation*, 356; Beale, *Revelation*, 484.

¹⁶² Thompson, *Revelation*, 116; Mounce, *Revelation*, revised, 181, recognizes the influence of the Joel tradition in this trumpet plague; Prigent, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 309, states: “The theme of the sudden

employing the Joel tradition at this stage in the narrative.¹⁶³ It can be concluded that Joel 2.10 is a probable allusion in relation to 8.12. The passage about the fourth trumpet plague provides an appropriate transition to the passage about the fifth trumpet plague as in both the sun is darkened.

The difficulty in interpreting the fourth trumpet judgment is in its minimal content in terms of symbol markers. Even if I scour the cultural intertextual world, further clarity is not forthcoming. For example, the darkening of the heavenly bodies in the OT depicting Yahweh's judgmental action in relation to the nations, is specifically for desecrating the covenant (cf. Ps 69.23; Isa 5.30; Ezek 30.18) and is in all likelihood drawn from the fact that darkness is one of the curses of the covenant (cf. Deut 28.29). In the Qumran literature darkness continues to be a symbol of destruction and judgment, while in the NT darkness is also associated with demonic power.¹⁶⁴ Josephus states that because Pharaohes did not give the Hebrews permission to take their livestock with them when they left Egypt, "dense darkness, without a particle of light, enveloped the Egyptians – darkness so thick that their eyes were blinded by it and their breath choked..."¹⁶⁵ These points add minimal interpretational light on the passage about the fourth trumpet judgment, except to confirm that it is a cultural and literary symbol.

In turning to contemporary literature the writer of Wisdom reflects on the plague narratives of Egypt and sees in them theological images of judgment on the Egyptians because of their idolatry and oppression of Yahweh's people.¹⁶⁶ The symbol markers also point to 4 Ezra 5.4-5; 6.45; 1 En. 80.4-8 and Sib.Or. 3.801; 5.346-349. In 4 Ezra 5.4-5 the common elements of sun, moon and stars point to high volume and the fulfilment of the history of interpretation criterion.¹⁶⁷ Although the same ideas and concepts are enlisted they are quite different from the apocalyptic dimensions in the focus text. The high volume,

darkening of daylight is very well attested in the prophetic and apocalyptic literature: Isa. 13.10; Jer. 4.23; Ezek. 32.7; Joel 3.4; 4.15;" Beale, *Revelation*, 484.

¹⁶³ So Smalley, *Revelation*, 224. The use of the Joel tradition becomes more pronounced as the fifth trumpet judgment begins. Idem., *Revelation*, 230-31.

¹⁶⁴ See 1 QM 13.5-6 and in the NT see 2 Cor. 6.14-15.

¹⁶⁵ Josephus, *Ant.*, II, XIV, 5, 299.

¹⁶⁶ See *Wis.* 15.1-16.29; 17.1-21 and 18.3-4. For example, *Wis.* 16.1 reads: "For this cause were these men worthily punished through creatures like those they worship and tormented through a multitude of vermin."

¹⁶⁷ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 519-21; Beale, *Revelation*, 47375; Thompson, *Revelation*, 90-105, 115-16, 123-24; Brighton, *Revelation*, 225-26.

thematic coherence and history of interpretation make these Jewish texts probable allusions in relation to the fourth trumpet plague. On the other hand, *1 En.* 80.4-6 reads:

The moon shall alter its order, and will not be seen according to its (normal) cycles. In those days it will appear in the sky and it shall arrive in the evening in the extreme ends of the great lunar path, in the west. And it shall shine (more brightly), exceeding the normal degree of light. Many of the chiefs of the stars shall make errors in respect to the orders given to them; they shall change their courses and functions and not appear during the seasons which have been prescribed for them.

This text has low volume, recurrence and thematic coherence. It provides a cultural window into the ideas associated with the moon and stars and is classified as an echo. The implied reader represents the “embedded responses” to be detected in the process of reading, what Iser (as quoted by Alan Culpepper) calls “a network of response inviting structures, which impel the reader to grasp the text.”¹⁶⁸ On the basis of the limited evidence presented, the implied reader would deduce the fourth trumpet judgment to be a symbolic reference to the eschatological judgment of those within the Roman empire, who have caused spiritual darkness to overtake the empire.¹⁶⁹

f. Analysis of Rev. 8.13

An eagle flies in mid-air announcing the next three woes. An eagle is a symbol for Zeus and sometimes other deities (Diod. Sic. 16.27.2).¹⁷⁰ Revelation 8.13 introduces the “inhabitants of the earth” (τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς).¹⁷¹ There are also at least five further constructions that occur in Revelation which appear to function in a similar manner.¹⁷² All of

¹⁶⁸ R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 209.

¹⁶⁹ So Beale, *Revelation*, 482 and Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 224. Lenski, *Interpretation of St. John's Revelation*, 275, suggests that all six trumpet plagues strike humanity. However, he is going against the plain reading of the text as only from the fifth trumpet plague onward are human beings mentioned. It may be more correct to say that humanity is affected but certainly not struck. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 414, suggests that the motif of darkness on the Yom Yahweh is developed into the motif of the darkening of the sun or the destruction of the sun, moon and stars in Jewish apocalyptic. If this is so, then the fourth trumpet judgment can be considered to be ushering in the Day of Yahweh and reinforces the fact that the trumpets cannot be analysed chronologically.

¹⁷⁰ Thompson, *Revelation*, 117.

¹⁷¹ According to Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 239, the term occurs ten times in Revelation (3.10; 6.10; 8.13; 11.10 (twice); 13.8; 14 (twice); 17.8; 17.2 (where a stylistic change is made). *Contra* Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 524, who sees the term occurring nine times only.

¹⁷² According to Ronald Herms, *An Apocalypse for the Church and the World: The Narrative Function of Universal Language in the Book of Revelation* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 185, these include: 1) “the tribes of the earth” at 1.7 (αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς); 2) “the whole inhabited earth” at 3.10; 12.9 (τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης) and 3) “the whole earth” at 13.3; 16.14 (ὅλη ἡ γῆ). Bauckham also lists the following: 4) “the earth and those who

these terms, due to their etymological and conceptual affinity with the primary term, as well as their contextual use, communicate the complementary idea of “universal scope” with each of them.¹⁷³

In Revelation the term is used consistently to designate those in opposition to God and the faithful community.

The inhabitants of the earth are guilty of the blood of the martyrs (6.10), come under God’s judgments (8.13), are the enemies of the two witnesses (11.10), are deceived by the second beast and worship the beast (13.8, 14; 17.8) and are drunk with Babylon’s wine (17.2). They are distinguished from God’s people (3.10) and above all they are those whose names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life (13.8; 17.8).¹⁷⁴

It is clear that the inhabitants of the earth in Revelation refers to unbelievers whose “ultimate home is on this transient earth.” The designation reveals their limited perception in only what is visual and their trust in earthly security.¹⁷⁵

I will explore the OT for suggestive meanings in relation to this phrase. Hays’ guidelines are not used as I am not seeking to establish allusions or echoes in this transitional passage. The phrase “the inhabitants of the earth” (τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) occurs most often in the Exodus tradition. It also describes the inhabitants of the land of Canaan and other people-groups surrounding it, into which the Israelites were moving (cf. Num 32.17; 33.55; Deut 2.29; Josh 7.9; 9.11; 13.21; Judg 1.33; 1 Chron 11.4). The phrases also describe the inhabitants of Egypt, from which God brought out Israel (cf. Deut 9:28).¹⁷⁶

Richard Sabiun asserts that the phrases in these verses simply refer to a group of people who live in a certain place. In other places of the OT the phrase is used to announce judgment on the Israelites as well as other nations (Joel 1.2; Isa 24.6; Jer 25.9; 29.2; Hos. 4.1; Zeph 1.18).¹⁷⁷ The use of τοὺς κατοικοῦντας γῆν is related to the sounding of the trumpet of judgments: “Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; surely it is near” (Joel 2.1).

inhabit it” at 13.12 (τὴν γῆν καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ κατοικοῦντας) and 5) “those who sit on the earth” at 14.6 (τοὺς καθημένους ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς).

¹⁷³ Herms, *An Apocalypse for the Church and the World*, 185.

¹⁷⁴ Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 239.

¹⁷⁵ Beale, *Revelation*, 175.

¹⁷⁶ Richard Sabiun, *Repentance in the Book of Revelation* (Ph.D. diss., Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, 2007), 252.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

Jeremiah particularly mentions the coming of the enemy from the north. The enemy brings a curse and judgements to the land of Israel. In this case, the people of Israel are called τοὺς κατοικοῦντας γῆν (Jer 1.14; 29.2). The north represents the army of Babylon that came to bring the captives from Israel to the land of exile—Babylon (Jer 20.4; 21.10; 24.1; 25.9; 29.1-3).¹⁷⁸ These examples indicate that the phrase τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν refers to the recipients of judgment, which confirms its use in Revelation.

Ideas and concepts from the Exodus, Joel and Jeremiah traditions have been interwoven in 8.13. The use of the Exodus tradition serves to point back to earlier developments in the focus text, while the use of the Joel and Jeremiah tradition serve to move the focus text forward. This is most appropriate as 8.13 is a transition between the fourth and fifth trumpet plague. As the focus text unfolds the OT symbolism in the passage about the fifth trumpet plague will emerge mostly from the Joel tradition while the passage about the sixth trumpet plague judgment will focus on the destruction of the Babylonian empire with the Jeremiah tradition as an important reference text.

g. Analysis of the Fifth Trumpet

Revelation 9.1-3 reads:

The fifth angel (πέμπτος ἄγγελος) sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star (καὶ εἶδον ἀστέρα) that had fallen (πεπτωκότα) from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key (ἡ κλεῖς) to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss (ἀβύσσου), smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace (ὡς καπνὸς καμίνου μεγάλης). The sun (ἥλιος) and sky were darkened (ἐσκοτώθη) by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth (ἀκρίδες εἰς τὴν γῆν) and were given (ἐδόθη) power (ἐξουσία) like that of scorpions of the earth (σκορπίοι τῆς γῆς).

The intensity of the focus text builds as the fifth trumpet judgment is introduced.¹⁷⁹ Star (ἀστήρ), abyss (ἄβυσσος) and smoke from a huge furnace (καπνὸς καμίνου μεγάλης) are symbol markers based on their strong cultural features. One of the central questions that

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Barr, *Tales of the End*, 89, suggests that the trumpets are “images of disaster” mentioned for their “cumulative effect. So too Kiddle, *Revelation*, 160, “woes grow worse as the End draws near.” Stefavonic, *Revelation*, 299, comments at length: “Although the first four trumpets were ‘woes’ themselves, they were mainly the divine warnings to the wicked. The scene is now moving from the divine warnings to the manifestation of the demonic woes. They are now to be unleashed. The next two trumpet plagues represent ‘spiritual torment and death’ which result from demonic activities on ‘those who persist in resisting the divine invitation to repent.”

needs addressing in this trumpet plague is the identity and nature of the ἀστέρα. After supplying varying scholarly opinion, Morris suggests that if the experts are so divided “it is unwise to be dogmatic. John does not identify him and we simply do not have enough information to do so.”¹⁸⁰ The following discussion challenges this stance and argues that the literary dynamics of the text and the symbol markers with their intertextual and intratextual nuances reveal strong clues for the identity of the ἀστέρα of 9.1.¹⁸¹

Firstly, there is the literary relationship between 8.10 and 9.1. The “initial verbal action” under the passage about the third trumpet judgment – “great star fell” (ἔπεσεν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀστήρ μέγας) – lies close to “a star had fallen” (ἀστέρα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεπτωκότα) under the passage about the fifth trumpet judgment suggesting that the difference in verbal form indicates that the implied author desired to communicate progression in the activity of the same agent.¹⁸² On the basis of the echoes of Isa 14.12 and Luke 10.18 the identity of the great star in 8.10 is possibly Satan or an aspect of Satan and the same can be stated about the angel of 9.1.¹⁸³ The implied author does not simply state “Satan” or “aspect of Satan” here in 9.1, neither in 8.10, nor anywhere else in the focus text, because of the nature of apocalyptic literature.¹⁸⁴

Secondly, the verb “πεπτωκότα” in 9.1 is used to portray those in opposition to God as in Babylon the great (11.13;14.8; 18.2), the cities of the nations (16.19) and five Roman kings (17.10).¹⁸⁵ On the basis of the symbol marker of ἀστήρ and its associated ideas of ἔπεσεν and πεπτωκότα the Jewish apocalyptic literature could also be appropriated as well (1 En. 18.15-16; 21.6; 86.3; 88.1; 90.24; T. Sol. 20.14-17). Thirdly, the symbol marker of ἀβυσσός has a vibrant cultural dynamic witnessed in its use in Jewish, biblical and extra-biblical literature.¹⁸⁶ The use of the definitive article in its genitive case - τῆς ἀβύσσου –

¹⁸⁰ Morris, *Revelation*, 124.

¹⁸¹ Contra, Huges, *The Book of Revelation*, 108.

¹⁸² Tonstad, *Saving God's Reputation*, 113.

¹⁸³ Contra, Beale, *Revelation*, 492-493, who suggests indecisively that the angel in 9.1 “is either Satan or one of his minions... This angel then represents sinful humanity;” Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 525, states: “Here the fallen angel should be understood as an angelic messenger ... and not identified with the angel of the abyss named Abaddon or Apollyon in 9.11 or Satan in 12.9.”

¹⁸⁴ Blount, *Revelation*, 14, writes: The author must appeal to “symbols and codes that must bear the weight his language cannot.”

¹⁸⁵ Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 142.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Osborne, *Revelation*, 363. BAGD, 2, and Thompson, *Revelation*, 117-18, provide additional insight into the cultural aspects of ἀβύσσος. According to Köstenberger and Bouchoc, *The Book Study Concordance*, 1448, it is mentioned on seven occasions in Revelation (9.1, 2, 3; 11.7;17.8; 20.1,3).

indicates an awareness of this term.¹⁸⁷ Barr suggests that the manner in which the earth is “perched precariously” between the ἀβυσσός and heavens means that the earth is expected to be the scene of battle. This will become more evident as the analysis of this trumpet plague continues.¹⁸⁸

On the basis of the symbol marker of ἀβυσσός Rev 20.1 is an impressive intratext, on the grounds of similar ideas and words.¹⁸⁹ Revelation 20.1 reads: “And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain.” Both texts have ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἡ κλεῖς(ν), and ἀβυσσός. Steven Thompson has written an insightful article that deals with aspects of the literary relationship between 9.1 and 20.1.¹⁹⁰ Thompson’s argument hinges on who exactly the key of 9.1 is given to. Is it given to the fifth angel or the star of 9.1? He correctly suggests that both “angel” and “star” are masculine nouns and “could grammatically be the antecedent of the masculine personal pronoun.”¹⁹¹ A number of commentators, like Charles and Aune, assume, according to Thompson,

that the key was given to the star, who, they then argue, was in fact a fallen angel. But this creates a problem when the star-angel of 9.1 is identified with the angel of 20.1, as is done by both commentators. How can a fallen angel, sentenced to incarceration in Sheol, be entrusted with the key to his own prison? The problem is solved by reading 9.1b in such a way that the key is given to the fifth archangel, who then reappears with the key in 20.1...The *aggelos* in Rev. 9.1 and the *aggelos* in 20.1 have the same heavenly origin and the same responsibility—the key to the abyss. They are both to be identified as one and the same *aggelos*.¹⁹²

What Thompson’s study does is distinguish between the fifth angel and the star angel of 9.1 and helps clear the murkiness of the interpretational waters regarding to whom exactly the key of 9.1 is given. Fourth, the use of ἐδόθη in 9.1 in relation to the star angel indicates God’s sovereign activity. This conclusion is reinforced with the striking profusion of divine passives on five occasions (9.1, 3, 4, 5), demonstrating the heightened activity of God and

¹⁸⁷ Mussies, *Morphology*, 188, quoted in Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 525.

¹⁸⁸ Barr, *Tales of the End*, 64.

¹⁸⁹ See the discussion in Louw and Nida, *The Greek-English Lexicon*, 6.

¹⁹⁰ Steven Thompson, “The End of Satan,” *AUSS* 37 (1999): 257-68.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 261.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

reinforcing the reality of God's sovereignty.¹⁹³ The previous four arguments are further building blocks to consolidate the argument for Satanic involvement in the focus text.

The next symbol marker that needs to be analyzed is that of καπνός καμίνου μεγάλης. Exodus 19.18 and Gen 19.28 may be appraised as possible allusions. Volume is stronger for Exod 19.18 as both texts have the phrase ὡς καπνός καμίνου and the concept of ἀνέβαινεν ὁ καπνός whereas Gen. 19.28 makes use of ἀτμός instead of καπνός. In terms of recurrence, it seems more likely that Exod 19.18 is in view here, on the basis of the Exodus tradition being used so extensively in the first four trumpet judgments. The history of interpretation criterion is weak for both texts, but on the basis of the high volume and recurrence for Exod 19.18, it is reasonable to conclude that this is a clear allusion, while Gen 19.28 is an echo.¹⁹⁴ The echo serves to highlight the fact that this trumpet judgment is against the ungodly.¹⁹⁵

The introduction of the next symbol marker solidifies the designation of the echo of Gen. 19.28 with respect to judgment of the ungodly. Revelation 9.4 reads: "They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God (σφραγίδα τοῦ θεοῦ) on their foreheads." I will now scrutinize τὴν σφραγίδα τοῦ θεοῦ and suggest that it is a vibrant symbol marker that has strong resonances in the cultural environment. The use of the term here in 9.4 demonstrates the two different groups in the focus text, those with the seal of God and the inhabitants of the earth, introduced in 8.13.

The two most cited OT texts in relation to the idea of sealing are Exod 12.23 and Ezek 9.1-11.¹⁹⁶ While the history of interpretation criterion has high status, volume and thematic coherence have low status. There is nothing in the immediate context of Exodus 12, whether lexical or semantic, to suggest that this text is an allusion. Even though two guidelines (history of interpretation and recurrence) have high status, the low status of volume and thematic coherence make Exod 12.23 an echo in relation to Rev 9.4.¹⁹⁷ The idea

¹⁹³ Blount, *Revelation*, 174, writes: "It is God who decides if satanic forces are to be given the ability – the key – to open the realm and gain access to earth and the humans who inhabit it. It is God who decides when that access comes and how long it will last. It is God who decides the purpose of the destruction that access enables." Cf. Resseguie, *The Revelation to John*, 146.

¹⁹⁴ Blount, *Revelation*, 175; Thompson, *Revelation*, 118.

¹⁹⁵ Hughes, *The Book of Revelation*, 108.

¹⁹⁶ Harrington, *Revelation*, 98; Boring, *Revelation*, 128; Sweet, *Revelation*, 148.

¹⁹⁷ See Pattermore, *The People of God*, 130-31, for a complete discussion in relation to Exod 12 and Rev 7.1-8. He also has an illuminating discussion on Ezek. 9.1-11.

of “seal” in Revelation and earlier tradition leads to the inference that this image is enlisted particularly as a means for God to authenticate the ownership of his people as well as to protect them.¹⁹⁸

The intratextual dynamics of 9.4 are also of great interest. Sigve Tonstad has a fascinating section on the intratextual relationship between Rev 7.1-3 and Rev 9.4. He maintains that the sealing happens in the context of the cosmic conflict and is magnified since the notion of sealing progresses as the narrative of Revelation unfolds. He writes:

In connection with the demonic horrors unfolding in connection with the fifth trumpet the sealing is recalled (9.4), and a clearer picture of its significance emerges. While the backward look to the sealing creates a powerful literary and thematic crosslink between the seal cycle and the seven trumpets, it also makes the reality of the cosmic conflict explicit, employing starkly evocative language in order to underscore what must be the issue in the conflict.

The “starkly evocative language” is the use of darkness as a controlling symbol marker in the passage about the fifth trumpet judgment.¹⁹⁹ It has already emerged in relation to the passage about the fourth trumpet plague (8.12) and serves to connect both these plagues. Darkness therefore becomes the dominant motivator of the suffering that is exacted on those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads (9.4). The term σφραγίδα is also used in reference to the name of God and the Lamb in 14.1 and 22.4, where it is also written “on their foreheads” (ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν).²⁰⁰ The use of the term σφραγίδα in 9.4 therefore brings the Lamb into the thematic context of the focus text and focuses on the name of God and the Lamb in contrast to the name of Wormwood (8.11) and Abaddon and Apollyon (9.11). Those who are marked with the seal of God overcome the darkness.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ See R. Schippers, *NIDNTT*, Vol. 3, 500. With respect to my comment about earlier tradition, Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation*, 86, suggests that the image of seal derives from the ANE usage to indicate ownership. “Merchandise or letters were sealed to identify or attest to whom they belonged. When applied to human beings, the imagery signifies a unique personal relationship.” Doukhan goes on to quote the Song of Songs where the Shulammitte employs the imagery of the seal to express her love. Caird, *A Commentary on Revelation*, 96-7, argues that the notion of seal is used in Revelation “to protect from a specific danger.” Whereas he goes on to assess Ezek 9.1 ff and Exod 12.23 as the chief background to consolidate his view that the essential meaning of the imagery is that of protection, I have contested that these texts are only echoes.

¹⁹⁹ Tonstad, *Saving God’s Reputation*, 148, writes: “The striking qualitative parameter intrinsic to the demonic activity is darkness.”

²⁰⁰ Beale, *Revelation*, 410-412, for a complete discussion.

²⁰¹ Tonstad, *Saving God’s Reputation*, 148, maintains that “the marking of the unbeliever is the counterpart to the sealing (13.16-17). Just as the seal of God contains the name of God and signifies what God is like in the context of the cosmic conflict, ‘the mark of the beast’ (16.2; 19.20) conveys the essential character of the opposing power because it is the mark of its name’ (14.11).”

Attention is now focused on Rev 9.6 which reads: “During those days men will seek death (θάνατον), but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.” Wall has deduced Job 3.21b as an echo in relation to 9.6. It reads: “to those who long for death that does not come, who search for it more than for hidden treasure” (οἱ ὁμείρονται τοῦ θανάτου καὶ οὐ τυγχάνουσιν).²⁰² While the notion of a desire for death in the place of a life of torment is fairly common in the OT, Jewish and Greek exegetical tradition, Hays’ criteria will be enlisted to ascertain the intertextual status of this text.²⁰³ Volume, recurrence and the history of interpretation all have low status, while thematic coherence, which provides the contextual connection, is strongest.

In relation to this last criterion Wall suggests that the theological questions raised by Job’s response to his suffering provide another way of understanding the passage about the fifth trumpet.²⁰⁴ Although Job felt persecuted by God, he misunderstood his suffering. Its purpose, according to Wall, was “to disclose a reigning God in control of humanity’s existence.”²⁰⁵ This tradition clarifies “the ultimate purpose of the suffering of humanity which is to bring it to repentance.”²⁰⁶ Because a number of Hays’ criteria have not been successfully met, this text is recognized as an echo. However, the importance of this echo is that it demonstrates the purpose of the trumpet plagues, namely, to lead humanity to repentance.

Revelation 9.7-9 reads:

The locusts (ἀκρίδων) looked like horses prepared for battle (πόλεμον). On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold (στέφανοι ὅμοιοι χρυσοῦ), and their faces resembled human faces. Their hair was like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lions’ teeth (ὡς λέοντων ἦσαν). They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle (πόλεμον).

²⁰² This intertextual relationship is referenced by Lohse, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, 59; Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 531.

²⁰³ For the notion of a desire for death in the place of a life of torment see 1 Kgs 19.1-4; Ps 55.4-8; Jer 8.3; Jonah 4.3; *Sib. Or.* 2.307-308; *Apoc. Elijah* 2.5, 32 and *Apoc. Dan.* 12.4.. For Greek texts see Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 531. One important Greek text by Ovid *Ibis* 123-24 states: “May you have cause enough for death but no means of dying; may your life be forced to avoid the death it longs for” cited in Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 531.

²⁰⁴ Wall, *Revelation*, 129. Cf. Michaels, *Revelation*, 126, writes: “The situation is reminiscent of the book of Job, where the righteous Job suffered at Satan’s hand, but only because God permitted Satan to put him to the test (see Job 1.6-12; 2.1-6).” For more detailed discussion on the value of suffering in the first century world see also Talbert, *The Apocalypse*, 43.

²⁰⁵ Wall, *Revelation*, 129.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

The next symbol marker in this text is locust (*ἀκρίδων*). Throughout the OT locusts are enlisted as symbols for destruction and among the ancients the locust plague was understood as a sign of the anger of the gods.²⁰⁷ Philo states that the locusts, in the context of the the Exodus tradition, did “great damage to plants and fruit and animals and men” and that this plague was even worse than the hail and thunderstorms.²⁰⁸ Josephus avers that “a horde of locusts devoured whatever seed had not been ruined by the hail,” hence destroying all hopes for a harvest.²⁰⁹

Because of the extensive enlistment of the Exodus tradition in the focus text so far, Exod 10.21 may be regarded as a tentative allusion as this plague involves locusts (cf. Exod 10.19). It reads: “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt-- darkness that can be felt.’” Volume is low between these two texts, while expectedly the history of interpretation criterion is once more rather strong.²¹⁰ Thematic coherence, concerned with whether the allusion fits the thought of the author’s text is sufficiently fulfilled. Once again though, the low volume makes this an echo.

Another passage that is of importance is the Joel tradition which has a strong history of interpretation.²¹¹ The implied author’s description of the demonic *ἀκρίδες* is partially dependent on Joel 1.6b and 2.4-5 and has high volume based on similar words (*αὐτοῦ ὀδόντες λέοντος* and *ὡς φωνὴ ἁρμάτων*) and concepts which include: 1) the locusts’ appearance and preparedness for battle, 2) the portrayal of the locusts as horses, 3) their teeth compared to those of a lion, 4) the relative use of *ὡς* and 5) their noise as the sound of chariots.²¹² Both of these texts (Joel 1.6; 2.4-5) are clear allusions based on the high thematic coherence, history of interpretation and volume.

The last text in the passage about the fifth trumpet is 9.11, which reads: “They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss (*ἔχουσιν ἐπ’ αὐτῶν βασιλέα τὸν ἄγγελον τῆς ἄβύσσου*), whose name (*ὄνομα*) in Hebrew is Abaddon (*Ἀβαδδών*), and in Greek, Apollyon (*Ἀπολλύων*).” A symbol marker of importance is the term *Ἀπολλύων* and by extension the

²⁰⁷ Rogers Jr. and Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, 631; see also DBI, 516, for biblical insights into locusts.

²⁰⁸ Philo, *Moses*, I, XXVI, 351.

²⁰⁹ Josephus, *Ant.*, II, XIII, 299.

²¹⁰ Hughes, *The Book of Revelation*, 109; Talbert, *The Apocalypse*, 42; Harrington, *Revelation*, 109.

²¹¹ Michaels, *Revelation*, 125; Blount, *Revelation*, 175; Beale, *Revelation*, 499-500; Keener, *Revelation*, 267-68; Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 304 and Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 315-16.

²¹² Strazicich, *Joel’s Use of Scripture*, 354.

phrase βασιλέα τὸν ἄγγελον as a depiction of the Greek god Apollo who the emperor Domitian characterized himself as.²¹³ This is the first place in Revelation where an angel is named.²¹⁴ The cultural context is examined first to establish the veracity of the symbol marker of Ἀπολλύων. Secondly, Revelation is scrutinized to make a case for allusions and echoes to Domitian.

According to R. van dan Broek “Apollo is the most typical divine representative of classical Greek culture, the Greek god *par excellence*.”²¹⁵ In Asia Minor, which is of special significance for this work, there are apparently two great oracular sanctuaries of Apollo at Didyma and Clarus.²¹⁶ In addition, van den Broek states “the popularity of Apollo is reflected in the frequency of theophoric personal names and toponyms: Apollodorus, Apollonia, Apollonius and others which cause him to see 9.11 as also a theophoric reference to this Greek god.”²¹⁷

Furthermore, Allen Kerkeslager convincingly demonstrates that Jews and Christians living in the first-century C.E. world would have been familiar with the imagery and motifs that were associated with Apollo. By drawing on the writings of Philo, Josephus and the Jewish Sybilline Oracle, Kerkeslager points to the widespread recognition of Apollo in antiquity.²¹⁸ Accordingly, he argues that the audience would have had general knowledge about the Apollo myth and that there would have been local devotion to and worship of Apollo.²¹⁹

The first reference to Domitian is possibly found at Rev 1.16 where Christ is holding seven stars in his hand. The audience would perceive here the historical depiction of

²¹³ Osborne, *Revelation*, 374. While this is an argument I will put forward I admit that there are some who disagree with this position. Cf. M. Eugene Boring and Fred B. Craddock, *The People's New Testament Commentary* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 792 and Mark Wilson, “Revelation,” in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*, Clinton E. Arnold (general ed.), Vol. 4, Hebrews to Revelation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 309.

²¹⁴ Matthias Reinhard Hoffmann, *The Destroyer and the Lamb*, WUNT 2. Reihe 203 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 125.

²¹⁵ R. van den Broek, “Apollo,” 138-143, in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, eds. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, Peter W. van der Horst (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 138.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 142.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ Allen Kerkeslager, “Apollo, Greco-Roman Prophecy and the Rider on the White Horse in Rev.6.2,” *JBL* 112 (1993): 116-121 (119). Even though I am arguing for Apollo here, Domitian is also closely aligned with Jupiter in the ancient sources, cf. Carter, “Toward an Imperial-Critical Reading,” 313-314.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Domitian holding seven stars on some coins that were struck during his emperorship.²²⁰ Domitian is being contrasted with Christ and who exactly in this apocalyptic vision is in charge of the world.

The second possible Domitianic echo is found at 4.11 which reads: “You are worthy, our Lord and God (Ἄξιός ἐστίν, ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν), to receive glory (δόξαν) and honor (τιμὴν) and power (δύναμιν), for you created all things, and by your will (θέλημα) they were created and have their being.” According to Beasley-Murray, the underlined phrase does not occur in the Septuagint, but it is the precise representation of the sacrilegious title claimed by Domitian, *dominus et deus noster*.²²¹ In agreement, Aune states that the phrase, our Lord and God, is a Christian reaction to imperial propaganda. “The official title of the Roman emperor “Imperator,” was alternately rendered in Greek with the terms βασιλεύς, κύριος and δεσπότης while in Latin *rex* and *dominus* were preferred.”²²² The imagery in these two texts (Rev 1.16; 4.11), in conjunction with the symbol marker of Ἀπολλύων in 9.11, provide the narrative amplification for the portrayal of Domitian.²²³ Having presented the cultural aspects of the symbol marker of Ἀπολλύων together with its narrative development leads me to concur with Beasley-Murray that “John’s last word about the fifth trumpet was a master stroke of irony: the destructive host of hell has as its king the emperor of Rome.”²²⁴

What is interesting about the intratextual dynamics of the texts just used for this argument is that both texts (1.16; 4.11) have a close affinity with Christ. In fact, the implied author has once more ingeniously highlighted the cosmic conflict by subtle comparison and

²²⁰ Barr, *Tales of the End*, 47.

²²¹ Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 119. For further support and insight for this position see David Seal, “Shouting in the Apocalypse: The Influence of First-Century Acclamations on the Praise Utterances in Revelation 4.8 and 11,” *JETS* 51 (2008): 339-52.

²²² Albert Wifstrand, “Autokrator, Kaiser, Basileus,” *DRAGMA* (Lund: C. Gleerup, 1939), 529-39, quoted in David E. Aune, *Apocalypticism, Prophecy and Magic in Early Christianity*, WUNT 199 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 117.

²²³ Müller, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, 195, sees a possible reference in 9.11 to the god Apollo but does not go as far as the present work in identifying the symbol in 9.11 with Domitian. Holtz, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, 77, suggests that 9.11 may be a reference to Nero.

²²⁴ Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 162-63. Cf. Boring, *Revelation*, 137-38; Caird, *The Revelation*, 120 and Osborne, *Revelation*, 374. Siew, *The War Between the Two Beasts and the Two Witnesses*, 145, writes: “While we are not proposing that the dragon is to be identified with the angel of the bottomless pit of the fifth trumpet / first woe, it is interesting to note the similarity, in that the dragon is also an angelic being (12.7) and that the dragon calls forth the beast that will ascend from the sea (12.18-13.1) or from the bottomless pit (11.7). It is evident that the angel of the bottomless pit called Abaddon/Apollyon is at least a satanic messenger if not Satan himself.”

contrast with Christ in 9.11. The angel is identified as king, a title that refers to Christ in Revelation (Rev 17.14; 19.16). The angel of 9.11 is presented as a parody of Christ.²²⁵

In light of the arguments brought forward with respect to 8.10 and 9.1, it can now be concluded that the identity of the fallen angel of 9.1 “is unmistakable, for it is the personality that is embodied by the dragon in 12.3 and who is described as the devil and Satan (12.9).”²²⁶ The fact that the same angel is being symbolically portrayed in 9.1 and 9.11 confirm that the implied author perceived behind the power and rule of Domitian, the influence of Satan.²²⁷ The ultimate identification of this king-angel as Satan is further corroborated by the parallel found in Jubilees. The author of Jubilees consistently identifies an evil angel as “prince Mastema,” another name for Satan, in *Jub.* 11.5; 17.16; 18.9, 12; 48.2-15.²²⁸

Another piece of corroborating evidence for the angel of 9.11 to be identified as Satan is seen in the use of the word ὄνομα in this verse. In chapter 2 ὄνομα is used to identify powers that seem opposed to God and his people.²²⁹ In addition, the star of Rev 8.10-11 is also to be identified as Satan or depicting Satanic involvement, hence making Wormwood another designation for Satanic activity.²³⁰ It is the use of the word ὄνομα in 8.11 and once more in 9.11 that is the connecting link between these verses. In both of these instances the word is used to depict an enemy of God. The implied author’s final use of the word ὄνομα occurs only at the end (11.18) of the focus text in relation to reverence for God’s name.

Since the implied author is “that singular consciousness which the reader constructs from the words of the text: a consciousness which knows the story backward and forward” the earlier use of the word ὄνομα must be taken into consideration here in 11.18.²³¹ These three uses of the word ὄνομα in the focus text point to two authorities in the text, either the “name” of a power or concept that is evil or the “name” of God. Since the word separates two distinct persons, it is further possible that this supports the notion of there being two

²²⁵ Cf. Hoffmann, *The Destroyer and the Lamb*, 125-28 for a complete discussion.

²²⁶ Brighton, *Revelation*, 235-6. Cf. Edwin Reynolds, *The Sodom/ Egypt /Babylon Motif in the Book of Revelation* (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1994).

²²⁷ So also Mark Bredin, *Jesus, Revolutionary of Peace : A Nonviolent Christology in the Book of Revelation* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003), 136, who writes, “Consequently the nature of Revelation...is opposed to Domitian...”

²²⁸ Beale, *Revelation*, 504.

²²⁹ See pp. 63-4.

²³⁰ See pp. 105-10.

²³¹ Staley, *The Print’s First Kiss*, 29.

groups in the focus text who follow each particular name, namely, the inhabitants of the earth and those with the seal of God.

The final consideration in relation to 9.11 is the fact that two names are used to identify Satan, namely, Abaddon and Appolyon. The use of two different languages to identify Satan also occurs in 12.9 and 20.2.²³² Revelation 9.11 serves therefore as an introduction to a literary technique enlisted by the implied author, whereby Satan is mentioned by employing two different languages.²³³ The identification of the angel of 9.11 as Satan is therefore sustained when one recognizes the progressive unfolding of Satan's involvement in the focus text and a deeper probe of the intratextual and intertextual relationship of 9.11, as well as the parallels in Jewish apocalyptic. This is the only place in Scripture where the "destroyer is a personal name for Satan."²³⁴ The focus in the passage about the fifth trumpet is the destructive character of Satan whereas the slanderous nature of his character becomes evident from Rev 12 onward.²³⁵

h. Analysis of the Sixth Trumpet

The passage begins in verse 13 with the sixth angel sounding his trumpet, and a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God (φωνήν μίαν ἐκ τῶν [τεσσάρων] κεράτων τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ).²³⁶ In narrational texture it was concluded that the voice mentioned in the text is more likely that of the altar itself.²³⁷ The altar orders the sixth angel to participate in the judgment that the trumpet blast initiates by releasing the four angels who have been bound at the great river Euphrates.

The action in this trumpet plague is upon God's directive. It is, in the words of Michaels, a "recital" of what John saw in heaven.²³⁸ As God was in control of the events

²³² Pieter G. R. De Villiers, "Prime Evil and its many faces in the Book of Revelation," *Neotestamentica* 34 (2000): 57-85 (76). He writes: "Not only is Satan once again named, but it is done with two names in two languages, exactly as in Revelation 12.9 and 20.2."

²³³ De Villiers maintains that this literary technique is also utilized in Rev. 16.16 in relation to Armageddon.

²³⁴ Brighton, *Revelation*, 236.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Müller, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, 196, divides this trumpet judgment into three sections: 1) Preparation for the plagues (13-16); 2) Appearance and activity of the horses (17-19); 3) Reaction of survivors (20-21). Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 294, sees explicit parallel to the sixth seal in that the sixth trumpet also climaxes in affliction. He comments: "In addition, as the sixth trumpet reaches the climax of afflictions, so the opening of the sixth seal proved to be climactic."

²³⁷ See p. 79.

²³⁸ Michaels, *Revelation*, 129.

under the fifth trumpet judgment, so here God guides the shape and timing of what unfolds in the sixth trumpet judgment. God's involvement in this trumpet judgment is once more evident in yet another divine passive construction in Rev 9.15, namely, the concept of "released" (ἐλύθησαν). The binding and releasing are all under the direction of God. The shocking conclusion is that God is therefore responsible for the killing of one-third of humanity. The angels were released for the express purpose of killing humanity.²³⁹ This idea of God being responsible for the killing of humanity will be explored further.²⁴⁰

Brian Blount has a fascinating discussion on the author's understanding of death. He suggests that death has two distinct layers in Revelation, the first layer is where death ends earthly existence, what he calls Type A death. He maintains that this is the kind of death being portrayed in 9.6. Further, he contends that the audience know that Type A death is not final. On the other hand, Type B death is "a permanent cessation of existence."²⁴¹

In this passage about the sixth trumpet the symbol markers of ποταμῶ τῷ μεγάλῳ Εὐφράτῃ, οἱ λοιποὶ, προσκυνήσουσιν and εἶδωλα will be examined. The significance of the imagery of the Euphrates river has largely been undervalued and its interpretive importance inadequately portrayed by the scholarly community in the interpretation of Rev 9.13-21. Interpreters have firstly assessed the OT background and pointed to the importance of Israel's major enemies coming from beyond the borders of the Euphrates and that this is *the* interpretive cue and one of the chief reasons the implied author has employed this image.²⁴² Secondly, scholars have then pointed to the Parthian invasion as an impressive historical allusion and the widespread belief that Nero would return from beyond the borders of the Euphrates river at the head of the Parthian army.²⁴³ These are legitimate avenues of interpretation.

²³⁹ Blount, *Revelation*, 183. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 531, reports that in the ancient world the desire for death was common place among both Greeks and Jews. After the eruption of Vesuvius, Pliny reports that "people bewailed their own fate or that of their relatives, and there were some who prayed for death in their terror of dying" (*Ep.* 6.20.14 LCL tr.). For Jewish texts see *Sib. Or.* 2.307-8; 8.353.; *Apoc. Elijah* 2.5, 32.

²⁴⁰ See pp. 186-92.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 178.

²⁴² Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 150; Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, 136 and Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 237, who writes: "In the Old Testament there is a strong prophetic tradition which maintains that an army will appear from beyond the Euphrates ('the north'), to bring God's judgment on his sinful people." He goes on to discuss Jer. 46 and Isa. 8.5-8. Contra Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 536-37, who has no discussion in 9.13 in relation to the OT background of the Euphrates river.

²⁴³ Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, 101; Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 407-31; Keener, *Revelation*, 270; Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, 565; Wall, *Revelation*, 132. See the conflicting arguments

An influential article by Kenneth Strand on the the relationship between the Exodus plagues and the fall of Babylon alerted me to the deeper intertextual dynamics involved in the sixth trumpet judgment.²⁴⁴ However, the depth of both the intertextual and intratextual allusions has not been sufficiently mined, even by Strand, and it is in this regard that I hope to excavate new meaning potentiality from the striking symbol marker of Εὐφράτην ποταμὸν.²⁴⁵ What is different about the intertextual relationships in this section of work is that the literary concept of parallel is more helpful in discerning the nuances of this section of the focus text.²⁴⁶ This is so because a passage of text is being examined rather than individual texts. Jeremiah 50-51 and Dan 5 are parallel passages that illuminate the passage about the sixth trumpet judgment. The implied author has used these two intertextual passages as Jer 51.25 was already alluded to in Rev 8.8 as a clear allusion to Babylon in the introduction of the focus text and the book of Daniel has been enlisted earlier on in Revelation.²⁴⁷

The passage in Jeremiah 50-51 is set in the historical context of around 538/539 B.C.E. when Babylon fell to Cyrus which the overarching theme of these chapters.²⁴⁸ In fact, the claims of the text make no sense unless placed within the socio-historical context of the Near East. The life of Israel was dominated by Babylonian policy and power prior and during this time. The intent and aim of the book of Jeremiah is to relate the Babylonian imperial propaganda and prerogatives of power credibly to the claims of Yahwehism.²⁴⁹

This text makes it clear that Babylon's demise is not per chance but is part of Yahweh's purpose. Babylon had become an oppressor of Israel and Yahweh desired to demonstrate His power to defend and deliver His people. Prior to 538/539 B.C.E. Babylon was "Yahweh's mode of sovereignty," where the resolve of Yahweh and the "policies of

in relation to the Nero redivivus myth by Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 384-452, and Sigve Tonstad, "Appraising the Myth of *Nero Redivivus* in the Interpretation of Revelation," *AUSS* 46 (2008): 175-199.

²⁴⁴ Kenneth Strand, "The 'Victorious Introduction' Scenes in the Visions of the Book of Revelation," *AUSS* 25 (1987): 279, 281-283, 285.

²⁴⁵ According to Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 151, "the reference to the Euphrates must not mislead us into a geographical literalism: what John saw was in vision, so its symbolic character must be recognized."

²⁴⁶ One must be cautious of seeing parallels where there are none. In this regard see the helpful article by S. Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 (1962): 1-13.

²⁴⁷ Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 129. According to Charles, *Revelation*, 1xviii-1xxxi, John alludes to twenty-seven different verses in Daniel. Beale, *Revelation*, 77, states that in "proportion to its length Daniel yields the most references" in Revelation to the OT.

²⁴⁸ William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*, ICC, Vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 1285 and Douglas Rawlinson Jones, *Jeremiah*, NCBC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 521.

²⁴⁹ Walter Brueggemann, *Jeremiah 26-52, To Build. To Plant*, ITC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 210.

Babylon converge completely and are to be equated.”²⁵⁰ When Israel’s time of discipline was up (70 years of captivity), Yahweh intended to free Israel even if the Babylonians would not.

Against this background it is now intriguing to consider that one of the distinguishing marks of the Euphrates River in ancient times was that it passed right through the center of the city of Babylon and was pivotal to her defenses in the provision of a moat around the city that made it almost impenetrable by alien forces.²⁵¹ But the Euphrates River is even more than this in Jer. 50.38. It is a symbol of all the resources that supported Babylon, representing not only the “physical moat around the city,” but her financial and military prowess as well.²⁵²

To dry up the Euphrates River meant Babylon’s loss of all the resources that she needed to survive. Yahweh’s judgment on Babylon was repeated in Jer 51.36-37: “Therefore, this is what the Lord says: “See, I will defend your cause and avenge you; I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry. Babylon will be a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals, an object of horror and scorn, a place where no one lives.” The drying up of the Euphrates river becomes the “triggering event” that results in the destruction of Babylon.²⁵³ Recognition can now be made of a whole narrative history from the Jeremiah tradition lying behind the use of the imagery of the Euphrates river in Rev 9.13.²⁵⁴

Strikingly, most commentators see Dan 5 as depicting the final downfall of the Neo-Babylonian empire in 539 B.C.E.²⁵⁵ The source for all these interpreters is the ancient work of the Greek historians Herodotus and Xenophon. Herodotus outlines the fall of Babylon by noting that Cyrus engaged the Babylonians for some time in a siege of the city. At the beginning the Babylonians advanced to meet him and his army but then retreated and locked

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 257.

²⁵¹ Jon Paulien, *Armageddon at the Door* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2008), 107.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ According to R.E. Clements, *Jeremiah*, IBC (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), 261, “the theological significance of these prophecies requires fuller and deeper reflection than has often been accorded, since they reflect upon a number of central issues regarding biblical prophecy as a whole. Their intensely political nature is obvious, as is their undoubted delight in the strong conviction that retribution will soon be inflicted upon Babylon for all the misery and suffering it heaped on other nations.... A sense of purpose strongly animates these prophecies and is the outworking of the belief that God’s power is ultimately assured to achieve its purpose in human history.”

²⁵⁵ André Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel*, translated by David Pellauer (London: SPCK, 1979), 93; C.L. Seow, *Daniel*, Westminster Bible Companion (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 76; Paul L. Redditt, *Daniel*, NCBC (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 99; W. Sibley Towner, *Daniel*, IBC (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984), 70; Ernest C. Lucas, *Daniel*, AOTC 20 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 140.

themselves in their city. Eventually Cyrus diverted the Euphrates river so that his troops could cross the shallow water with the demise and downfall of the city taking place while a festival was being held.²⁵⁶

Xenophon mentions the deflecting of a river which flowed through Babylon, which from Herodotus' account we can confer is a reference to the Εὐφράτην ποταμὸν. According to him, while the Babylonians were celebrating a festival, Cyrus turned aside the course of the river and entered the city, unhindered, seemingly undetected and conquered the Babylonian empire.²⁵⁷ According to Edward Young, Cyrus also states in the Cyrus Cylinder "that he entered Babylon without encounter or battle."²⁵⁸ Thus Daniel 5 is being introduced at the allusive level in this part of the narrative and is alluded to once more in Rev. 9.21 to conclude the passage about the sixth trumpet. Daniel 5 is being used as one of the key intertextual constituents introducing and concluding the passage about the sixth trumpet. This intertextual assessment suggests that the imagery of the Εὐφράτην ποταμὸν in Rev. 9.13 would bring connotations and associations from the narrative history of the OT and that the strong parallels in this enterprise would be that of Jer 50-51 and Dan 5 which both portray the fall of the Babylon empire.

Further, the mention of the Εὐφράτην ποταμὸν in this text (9.13) probably sets the framework for comprehending the other references to Babylon in the passages to follow (Rev 14.8; 16.19; 17.5; 18.2, 10, 21) and in particular Rev 16.12.²⁵⁹ Revelation 16.12 reads: "The sixth angel poured his bowl on the great river Euphrates (τὸν ποταμὸν τὸν μέγαν τὸν Εὐφράτην), and its water was dried up (καὶ ἐξηράνθη τὸ ὕδωρ αὐτοῦ) in order to prepare the way for the kings from the east."

The mention of the Εὐφράτην ποταμὸν here in the bowl plagues reinforces the importance of this imagery in the sixth trumpet judgment. The first four trumpet judgments as well as the first four bowl plagues portray strong affinity to the Exodus tradition, while the symbol of darkness in both the fifth trumpet judgment and the fifth bowl plague depict

²⁵⁶ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1.190-191

²⁵⁷ Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, 7.1-36

²⁵⁸ Edward Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 128.

²⁵⁹ For a discussion around these verses and their relationship to Babylon see Kenneth Mulzac, "The "Fall of Babylon" Motif in the Book of Jeremiah and Revelation," *JATS* 8 (1997): 137-49. Beale, *Revelation*, 507, maintains that the reference to the Euphrates in verse 14 anticipates the battle of the sixth bowl in 16.12-16. Cf. Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 313. According to Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 237, in a view I endorse, "the sixth trumpet and the sixth bowl seem to depict the same event from different viewpoints."

intertextual relations with the ninth Egyptian plague. The symbol marker of Εὐφράτην ποταμὸν found in both the passage about the sixth trumpet and the sixth bowl plague points to the fall of the Babylonian empire, which serves as a typological foreshadowing of the fall of the new Babylon, the Roman empire.²⁶⁰

This trumpet judgment is directed against a third of humankind, who are killed by the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates. While the identity of these four angels is not made explicit, the fact that they have been tied up and later released at an intentional time to carry out their work of destruction, points to their demonic nature.²⁶¹ The breastplates worn by the mounted troops were fiery red, dark blue and yellow as sulphur (cf. 9.17). Out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulphur. This notion of devastation coming from the mouth through the three elements of fire, smoke and sulphur evoke the three demons coming from the mouth of Satan and his minions in the battle of Armageddon (cf. Rev 16.13-14). In the OT the combination of fire and brimstone, sometimes with smoke refers to a devastating judgment (cf. Deut 29.23; Isa 34.9-10; Ezek 38.22).

Ezekiel 38. 22 has been adduced as a probable allusion in relation to the first trumpet judgment.²⁶² This conclusion is based on the high volume represented by the three symbol markers of blood, hail and fire. In relation to 9.17, however, it is only the symbol marker of sulphur that is evoked in Ezek 38.22. Thematic coherence is adequately fulfilled as Yahweh is involved in judgment against an enemy of his people, namely, Gog, in Ezek. 38. The same can be said of the eschatological judgment of the fifth trumpet judgment. The low volume, however, between these texts leads to the conclusion that Ezek 38.22 is an echo in relation to Rev 9.17. The value of this echo is that it recalls the earlier probable allusion in Rev 8.7. Ezekiel 38.22 therefore functions as a probable allusion in the passage about the first trumpet and as an echo in the passage about the sixth trumpet.

²⁶⁰ For an analysis of the fall of historical Babylon and the importance of its typological fulfillment see Hans LaRondelle, *Chariots of Salvation: The Biblical Drama of Salvation* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1987), 95-107. For a discussion of the typological understanding of the OT see G. von Rad, *Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament*, Essays on Old Testament Interpretation (London: SCM Press, 1963), 17-39.

²⁶¹ Boxall, *Revelation*, 147, suggests a “striking parallel” between the release of these four angels and the release of Satan in 20.7-8. However, this is probably a case of parallelomania. The parallel only focuses on the concept of “release,” other than that, in 9.14 it is four angels, while in 20.7 it is Satan. The outcome of the release in 20.7 is deception of the nations while in 9.14 the outcome of the release results in the killing of a third of humankind.

²⁶² See p. 101.

This Ezekielian text therefore becomes another important OT echo to understand the trumpet judgments.²⁶³ It will be recalled that the “the old text brings with it connotations and associations that influence the new setting” and hence the literary and thematic background of Ezekiel 38-39 is of consequence.²⁶⁴ Recurrence is admirably met as this Ezekielian text is also utilized in Rev 20.7-10. Specifically, Ezek 38.22 is in the context of judgment against Gog, whose identity has stirred a bewildering number of different interpretations.²⁶⁵ The echo of Ezek 38.22, while it refers to war in its broader Ezekielian context of chapter 38-39, is recontextualized to point to the cosmic conflict in the focus text. This Ezekielian text is therefore evoked to introduce the Gog and Magog tradition which is expanded on later in Rev 19.17-21 and 20.7-10.²⁶⁶

The allusion most recognized by interpreters in relation to Rev 9.17 is Gen 19.24.²⁶⁷ The high status of the history of interpretation guideline contrasted by the low volume between these texts suggest that the Genesis text is an echo. Once again the value of this echo is that it recalls the fifth trumpet judgment where Gen 19.28 is alluded to in relation to Rev. 9.2. The story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is therefore drawn on as an allusion in the fifth trumpet judgment but as an echo in the sixth trumpet judgment. On two occasions therefore the implied author draws on earlier OT tradition (Ezek 38.22 and Gen 19.24, 28) that has been used in the focus text to reinforce and recast the significance of an earlier allusion by making use of an echo to that same tradition.

The symbol marker of snake found in 9.19 (ὄφις) needs to be investigated. This marker is only used in 12.9, 14-15 and 20.2. Scholars generally suggest that its use in Rev.

²⁶³ See Caird, *A Commentary on Revelation*, 122.

²⁶⁴ Cf. n. 203. With respect to Ezek 38-39, Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2007), 1099, writes: “Chapters 38-39 are really a unit and their division into two chapters is artificial.”

²⁶⁵ For a review of various theories about the identification of Gog and Magog see the following pertinent studies: R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament; With a Comprehensive Review of Old Testament Studies and a Special Supplement on the Apocrypha* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 842-43; B. Otzen, *TDOT*, Vol. 2.421-22; H.H. Rowley, *Relevance of Apocalyptic: A Study of Jewish and Christian Apocalypses from Daniel to Revelation*, 3rd edition (London: Lutterworth Press, 1963), 35-7; Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 432-36; D.S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic: 200 B.C.-A.D.100* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 191-93.

²⁶⁶ See Sverre Bøe, *Gog and Magog: Ezekiel 38-39 as Pre-text for Revelation 19.17-21 and 20.7-10*, WUNT 2. Reihe 135 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).

²⁶⁷ Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 321, writes: “The text as a whole cannot but remind of the catastrophe of Sodom and Gomorrah, on which rained down fire and sulphur (brimstone) and from which arises smoke like smoke of a furnace (Gen. 19.24-28). It is therefore a divine punishment modeled on the one that struck those cities, which were symbols of worldly idolatry.” Cf. Smalley, *Revelation to John*, 240; Beale, *Revelation*, 511.

12.9 and 20.2-3 refer to the creation tradition and this is likely the possibility in relation to its first use here in 9.19 as well.²⁶⁸ Since Hays' criteria are not substantially fulfilled, the marker of snake in 9.19 echoes Gen. 3.13, which reads: "Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."'" There are a number of places in the OT where the snake is used figuratively for evil nations and people (Ps 58.4; 140.4; Deut 32.33; Isa 14.29; Jer 8.17) or for danger (Ps 91.13).²⁶⁹ In *Syb. Or.* 5.29 Nero is identified as a snake.

Further, according to Fretheim, snakes were worshipped as symbols in Canaanite religious practise.²⁷⁰ Since Israelites were often tempted to turn from Yahweh to participate in Canaanite worship, the seduction of the Israelites in Genesis would thus appear to refer to their seduction by the pagan deities around them.²⁷¹ This notion of seduction and deception in Genesis is certainly part of the underlying plot of the focus text, where the authorial audience is being seduced into following the dictates of Greco-Roman culture.

I turn now to appraise the applicability of Ps 115.4-7 in relation to Rev 9.20 as it is claimed by some scholars.²⁷² Revelation 9.20 reads:

The rest (οἱ λοιποὶ) of mankind that were not killed (ἀπεκτάνθησαν) by these plagues (πληγαῖς) still did not repent of the work of their hands (ἔργων τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν); they did not stop worshiping demons (δαίμονια), and idols of gold (εἰδωλα τὰ χρυσα), silver (ἀργυρᾶ), bronze (χαλκα), stone (λίθινα) and wood (ξύλινα) -- idols that cannot see (οὔτε βλέπειν) or hear (οὔτε ἀκούειν) or walk (οὔτε περιπατεῖν).

According to Steve Moyise, the phrase ἔργων τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν (works of their human hands) and the sequence βλέπειν δύνανται οὔτε ἀκούειν οὔτε περιπατεῖν (see, hear, walk) point to Ps 115.4-7. It reads: "But their idols (εἰδωλα) are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see (καὶ οὐκ ὄψονται); they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands (χεῖρας), but

²⁶⁸ Blount, *Revelation*, 234; Caird, *Revelation*, 156; Boxall, *Revelation*, 182.

²⁶⁹ See Elaine A. Phillips, "Serpent Intertexts: Tantalizing Twists in the Tales," *BBR* 10 (2000): 233-45, for an intertextual analysis of the snake in Scripture.

²⁷⁰ Terence E. Fretheim, *Creation, Fall and Flood: Studies in Genesis 1-11* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1969), 81-2.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 82.

²⁷² Osborne, *Revelation*, 386; Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 543.

cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats.” To strengthen his argument Moyise believes this Psalm is used in Rev 11.18 as well.²⁷³

However, all of his points can be contested. Firstly, the Psalms are not used at all in Rev 8 or 9. My assumptions about the inadequate nature of this text as a reliable allusion are justified when compared with the history of interpretation criterion where some scholars only see Ps 115.4-7 as a remote parallel.²⁷⁴ While thematic coherence fits the thought of the author’s text sufficiently, particularly in the sequence of “see, hear, walk,” this text fails Hays other criteria and so I suggest it may be an echo at best. Rather, Dan 5 is been drawn on in light of the fall of Babylon motif in 9.13 and the culmination of its use in 9.20, serving to introduce and conclude the passage about the sixth trumpet.²⁷⁵

The next symbol marker to be assessed is that of idol (εἰδῶλα) which refers to an “image of a deity.”²⁷⁶ In the LXX the term is used polemically to apply to the gods and as a denunciation of paganism.²⁷⁷ Denunciations of idolatry, including a list of materials of which pagan deities are made are quite extensive in the Second Temple literature and at Qumran.²⁷⁸ In addition, denunciations of idolatry specifically are common in the OT where often the influences of pagan worship within the land of Israel is regarded as a threat to the worship of Yahweh. Beyond these cultural aspects the word is found on ten occasions in the NT (Acts 7.41; 15.20; Rom 2.22; 1 Cor 8.4, 7; 10.19; 12.1; 2 Cor 6.16; 1 Thess 1.9; 1 John 5.21).²⁷⁹

Of the NT texts mentioned the evocation of Acts 15.20 would be most notable based on the symbol markers of εἰδῶλων and πορνείας. It reads: “Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols (εἰδῶλων), from sexual immorality (πορνείας), from the meat of strangled animals and from blood (αἷματος).” Volume between this text and Rev 9.20-21 is reasonable as both texts have εἰδῶλων and πορνείας in common

²⁷³ Steve Moyise, “The Psalms in Revelation,” in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, eds. Steve Moyise & Maarten J. J. Menken (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 212.

²⁷⁴ Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 152; Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 543, on the other hand states that it is probably an allusion.

²⁷⁵ This position may be underscored by an examination of the Jewish apocalyptic tradition. For example, in *Sib.Or.* 5. 143, 159, just as Babylon appears to be to be evil, practises sorcery, is lawless, full of adulteries and has a murderous heart and pious spirit, so Rome too has these qualities as Babylon is used as a codename for Rome.

²⁷⁶ H. Hübner, *EDNT*, Vol. 1, 386.

²⁷⁷ F. Büchsel, *TDNT*, Vol. 2, 377.

²⁷⁸ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 542.

²⁷⁹ For a biblical assessment of the concept of idolatry see G.K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008).

which immediately separates this text from the others listed. Admittedly, recurrence is low as the book of Acts is not engaged in any way in Revelation. Thematic coherence is interesting as the audience addressed in Acts is Gentile. In Revelation it is probably also Gentiles who are struggling with issues of food offered to idols and sexual immorality in the authorial audience.²⁸⁰ There is an echo of Acts 15.20 in Rev 9.20-21 that raises the importance of the issues of food polluted by idols and sexual immorality in the authorial audience.²⁸¹

The intersection of Rev 9.20-21 and Acts 15.20 highlights the value of Hollander's construct of the cave of resonant signification once more. While the intratextual dynamics of Rev 9.20-21 may have brought Rev 2.14, 20-21 to the forefront of discussion on the basis of similar language and ideas, it is through the deployment of the cave of resonant significant that the intratextual dynamics of Rev 2.14, 20-21 are highlighted in a more winsome manner because of the implications of Acts 15.20. Throughout the intertexture analysis there has been no direct or even implicit mention of the authorial audience of Rev 2 and 3, except here at the conclusion of the passage about the sixth trumpet.

The last symbol marker to be assessed is πορνεία in 9.21. The intratextual dynamics of this word point to its use in relation to John's opponents in 2.14, 20-21. Its use however is especially notable in the section of the Revelation narrative that points most explicitly to Babylon (17.1-19.10). It is used in three different ways on seven occasions (17.2 (x2), 4; 18.3 (x2), 9; 19.2) in this section of text. Whether the implied author's use of this word on seven occasions is meant to convey completeness, as on other occasions, is not certain.

Firstly, the word πορνεία is used in relation to a sexual act committed by the kings of the earth (17.2; 18.3, 9). Secondly, it is used in relation to the intoxicated state of the inhabitants of the earth (17.2; 18.3). Thirdly, the word is used to describe the condition or state of this adultery, namely, it is abominable and filthy (17.4). The use of the word πορνεία therefore points to the adulterous influence of the Roman empire. The implied author, as "the intuitive apprehension of a completed artistic whole," is portraying the damaging aspects of

²⁸⁰ Cf. Paul Duff, *Who Rides the Beast? Prophetic Rivalry and the Rhetoric of Crisis in the Churches of the Apocalypse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 48-60, has a useful discussion on the issues of εἰδώλων and πορνείας and how they were effecting the authorial audience through the influence of Jezebel and other teachers in the churches.

²⁸¹ Cf. Ajith Fernando, *Acts*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 418-20; John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990), 248-50.

πορνεία to the implied reader and the consequences of the illicit relationship between the inhabitants of the earth and Babylon.²⁸²

i. Analysis of the Seventh Trumpet

The passage about the seventh trumpet is found in Rev 11.15-18 and is the culmination of the entire focus text. A number of scholars have recognized 11.15-18 as an early Christian hymn.²⁸³ The place and use of hymns in the first-century world is an interesting exercise in assessing the cultural intertextual context of this concept. A hymn, in Greek usage, was simply a sung prayer.²⁸⁴ According to J. M. Bremer, it became normal practise, at least in the Hellenistic and Roman period, for city authorities to manage their religious traditions and their hymnody.²⁸⁵ In several cities choral societies existed. These societies were trained to sing the hymns correctly and often performed on important festival days in honour of local gods.²⁸⁶ Bremer also traces the development of choral singing and the use of hymns into the second century C.E. He cites an inscription from Stratonicea toward the end of the second century C.E. The town council decides that a boys' chorus will honour Zeus Panamarus and Hecate, gods of that era. Bremer concludes by stating that "hymn-singing in honour of both gods and deified men was a regular feature at religious festivals."²⁸⁷

Further, the sounding of the seventh trumpet appropriately announces the arrival of God's kingdom as "trumpets were normally blown at the accession of a king to his throne (1

²⁸² Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 73-4.

²⁸³ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 635; Keener, *Revelation*, 305; Resseguie, *Revelation*, 167, identifies it as a "canticle of praise; Witherington, *Revelation*, 160, calls it a "song of praise." According to J. L. Wu and S.C. Pearson, "Hymns, Songs," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, eds. Ralph P. Martin & Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997): 524-25, "in view of the reader's predicament under imperial persecution, the writer's inclusion of these praise hymns into his vision narratives serves not only to present an exalted view of God and Christ in Christian worship but more specifically to provide a coherent message of comfort to the readers. God, who is the Creator of the universe, is still in sovereign control despite the hardships they are experiencing." J. M. Ford, "The Christological Function of the Hymns in the Apocalypse of John," *AUSS* 36 (1998): 207-229 (211), maintains that all the major events in Revelation are accompanied by hymns. These hymns occur at key moments in the plot of Revelation. Further, she maintains that the hymns provide a window through which to understand important eschatological figures in the Second Temple period. She suggests that Rev 11.15-19 points to the Lamb, who is Christ, as Co-Regent with God Almighty. *Ibid.*, 221.

²⁸⁴ J. M. Bremer, "Greek Hymns," in *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World*, ed. H. S. Versnel (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 193.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 200.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 203.

Kings 1.34-41; 2 Kings 9.13; 11.14).”²⁸⁸ Attention will firstly be turned to Rev 11.15 which points to the definitive arrival of the kingdom of God in the implied author’s use of the verb ἐγένοντο. Revelation 11.15 reads: “The seventh angel sounded his trumpet (Καὶ ὁ ἕβδομος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν), and there were loud voices (φωναὶ μεγάλαι) in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world (βασιλεία τοῦ κόσμου) has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.” The combination of the symbol markers and similar ideas could lead to the comprehension of Zech 14.9 as an allusion. It reads: “The Lord will be king over the whole earth (καὶ ἔσται κύριος εἰς βασιλέα ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν). On that day (ἡμέρα) there will be one Lord, and his name (ὄνομα) the only name.”

There is low volume between the precursor and successor text. Recurrence is strong because of the allusions to Zechariah in Rev 11.1-4.²⁸⁹ Thematic coherence is fulfilled as the precursor texts’ images of kingship, territorial domination and specific time are cogently amplified and universalized in the successor text. Whereas Zechariah points to the Lord being king over the earth, the implied author depicts the Lord’s kingship over the cosmos. The history of interpretation criterion is high.²⁹⁰ The weight of the cumulative evidence of the use of the Zecharian text in Rev. 11 and the fulfillment of Hays’ guidelines make this text a probable allusion.

Moreover, while the OT points to Yahweh’s kingship as an on-going, continuous reality,²⁹¹ Zech 14.9 is the only text that specifically points to the eschatological moment when Yahweh’s kingship is realized and made tangible on earth.²⁹² Because Rev 11.15 is the climax of the focus text it is appropriate to isolate the kingship of God as a major motif to conclude the series of judgments. Zechariah 14.9 also similarly comes at the end of the Zecharian narrative and it seems befitting to refer to the kingship of Yahweh there as well.

Another tentative allusion with respect to 11.15 is Ps 2.1-2, which reads: “Why do the nations (ἔθνη) conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings (βασιλεῖς) of the earth take

²⁸⁸ Keener, *Revelation*, 304.

²⁸⁹ Jauhainen, *The Use of Zechariah in Revelation*, 118. See also Keener, *Revelation*, 289; Talbert, *Apocalypse*, 44; Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 324; Caird, *The Revelation*, 130; Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, 597; Kenneth Strand, “The Two Witnesses of Revelation 11,” 134-35; Idem., “The Two Olive Trees of Zechariah 4 and Revelation 11,” *AUSS* 20 (1982): 259-61.

²⁹⁰ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 639; Osborne, *Revelation*, 443 and Smalley, *Revelation to John*, 289; Mounce, *Revelation*, revised, 226, all have the Zecharian text as a reference.

²⁹¹ Cf. Exod. 15.18; Ps. 10.16, 29.10, 66.7, 146.10; Isa. 52.7; Jer. 10.10.

²⁹² Jauhainen, *The Use of Zechariah in Revelation*, 124.

their stand and the rulers (ἄρχοντες) gather together against the LORD (κατὰ τοῦ κυρίου) and against his Anointed One.” The Psalms have not been used in the focus text up to this point. Hence, it is surprising that volume is met as there are uniquely traceable word patterns between 11.15 and Ps. 2.2, which include, kingship, rulership and opposition. The concept of opposition to the establishment of this kingdom is implicit in the focus text but more explicit in Ps 2.

With the sounding of the seventh trumpet comes the announcement that, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign (βασιλεύσει) forever and ever” (11.15).²⁹³ A few verses later (11.18), the twenty-four elders praise God for his victory, stating that the “nations raged” (ἔθνη ὠργίσθησαν). These two ideas, the “rage of the nations” and “the Lord and his Christ” are traceable concepts that stem from Ps 2.1-2.²⁹⁴ Recurrence focuses on the enlistment of the allusion elsewhere in the successor text to validate its use in the text under consideration. While there are no other references to Ps 2.1-2 in the focus text, there is ample use of Ps. 2 in Revelation which meets the guideline of recurrence and the history of interpretation criteria.²⁹⁵

Thematic coherence points to the precursor texts imaging, ideas, words and original context fitting systematically into the successor text.²⁹⁶ The notions of destruction, rulership and authority are present in both Ps 2.1-2 and Rev 11.15, 18. According to Moyise it would appear that Ps 2 contains the seemingly contradictory themes of (1) the nations being destroyed by the Messiah; and (2) the Messiah ruling over them as his inheritance.²⁹⁷ Psalm 2 adds, not just substance and depth to the intertextual dynamics of this text, but

²⁹³ Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, 161, suggests that this verb (βασιλεύσει) is in the past tense and so is used in a proleptic sense of an event in the near future. This is doubtful however on the basis of the implied author’s use of ἐγένοντο to emphatically declare the transference of the kingdom ruled by Satan to the Lord and his Christ as a *fait accompli*. Cf. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 638, states: “Although ἐγένετο is an aorist and therefore refers to God’s assumption of kingship as a fact of the *past*, the context makes it clear that ἐγένετο is used proleptically, like the *perfectum propheticum*, “prophetic perfect,” of a future event that prophetic certainty speaks of as an event of the past...”

²⁹⁴ Keener, *Revelation*, 305. Cf. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 643, suggests John has used the more common verb ὀργίζω perhaps through the influence of Exod. 15.14.

²⁹⁵ See Michael W. Wheeler, *An Intertextual Study of Psalm 2 in the Book of Revelation* (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2005); Moyise, “The Psalms in the Book of Revelation,” 231-46; Farrer, *The Revelation of St John the Divine*, 137; Morris, *Revelation*, 149; Kraft, *Offenbarung*, 161 and Mounce, *Revelation*, revised, 226.

²⁹⁶ Liwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts*, 61.

²⁹⁷ Moyise, “The Psalms in the Book of Revelation,” 238 (his emphasis).

simultaneously illumines its meaning in the context of the seventh trumpet judgment and is therefore a clear allusion.

When the seventh angel blows the trumpet in 11.15, the text depicts the victory of the Lord and his anointed and the rage of the nations. The unusual expression *καὶ ἐβασίλευσας καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ὠργίσθησαν* (11.17b and 18a) is commonly thought to be an allusion to Ps 99.1 (*ὁ κύριος ἐβασίλευσεν ὀργιζέσθωσαν λαοί*).²⁹⁸ While this text has high volume and recurrence, the history of interpretation guideline is weak.²⁹⁹ Despite this, the adequate satisfaction of the other criteria make Ps 99.1 a probable allusion in relation to Rev 11.17-18. It would appear the implied author has used from Ps 99.1 the twin ideas of “God’s reign” and the “rage of the nations” but finds in Psalm 2 the particular mention of “the Lord and his anointed.”

The intertextual relationship between Ps 115.13 and Rev 11.18 is appraised as it is attested by some.³⁰⁰ Psalm 115.13 reads: “he will bless those who fear the Lord - small and great alike.” The implied author refers to God’s servants as “those who fear him” and adds “both small and great” (Rev. 11.18; cf. 6.15; 13.16; 19.5; 20.12). Now *μικρὸς* (small) and *μεγάλη* (great) occur together some 67 times in the LXX but there are only five texts where this is combined with some form of *φόβω* (fear), namely, 2 Kgs 25.26; Est 1.1; Judg 16.16; Ps115:13; Jer 49. Only Ps 115.13 bears any contextual similarity to Rev 11.18.

Thus, the implied author found in Ps 115 a blessing for those who fear God, small and great alike. This verse is an echo since the history of interpretation guideline and volume is low. The two earlier Psalms (2 and 99) both speak of the rage of the nations, adding the thought that God has taken up his reign, while Ps 115.13 supplies the blessing of God on those both small and great. The use of these Psalms would allow the implied reader to appropriate meaning in relation to the judgment of the idolatrous nations, contrasted by images of salvation for the people of God.

In chapter 2, in the table on repetitive texture, I mentioned the use of the word *ὄνομα*. It was suggested that the word *ὄνομα* in 9.11 is used to identify the king of the abyss as Abaddon in Hebrew and Apollyon in Greek as well as the initial use of the word *ὄνομα* in

²⁹⁸ Thompson, *Revelation*, 129.

²⁹⁹ Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 363; Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 642.

³⁰⁰ Mounce, revised, *Revelation*, 228; Osborne, *Revelation*, 447, suggests that Ps 115.13 is an echo; Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 645, has a brief comment in relation to Ps 115.13.

8.11 where the star Wormwood is identified. The use of ὄνομα had been to identify powers that seem opposed to God and his people. The implied author's final use of the word ὄνομα occurs only at the end (11.18) of the focus text in relation to reverence for God's name. A pattern of usage can be seen in the employment of the word ὄνομα to identify powers antagonistic to God in the early part of the focus text. Its final use in 11.18 demonstrates whose name has ultimate authority, not Domitian, depicted as the locust king of 9.11, nor the star Wormwood in 8.11, but God. This reference to the seventh trumpet then has a special significance in highlighting one of the central burdens of the entire series of trumpet plagues, namely, issues related to the sovereignty and authority of God. This has come into sharp focus here in the seventh trumpet plague.

According to Robbins the apocalyptic rhetorolect is focused on God's transformative ability with respect to "special people like Jesus, believers and unbelievers, the world and time itself."³⁰¹ In the passage about the seventh trumpet plague God's transformation is seen as the world becomes the world of God and possibly time itself is transformed as well. The authorial audience have nothing to do with what God accomplishes in the passage about the seventh trumpet plague. Neither their repentance and obedience nor their abilities or efforts at self-transformation – it is entirely the work and accomplishment of God.³⁰²

j. Summary

The textual interplay developed between the various intertexts and intratexts, as well as the implied author and implied reader over the last two chapters has sharpened the direction given on all levels for the realization of the text. Moreover, the dominant image of trumpet has set the tone for the focus text. The use of the trumpet motif in liturgy, battle and eschatological judgment in the literature review of chapter 1 provides the overall context of the focus text.

If the interpreter reads Revelation without paying attention to the intertextual and intratextual dynamics of this enigmatic book, then she/he is in danger of constraining the meaning of the narrative. In fact, a recognition of these dynamics opens up new vitality for

³⁰¹ Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 343.

³⁰² Ibid.

the narrative and deepens its meaning potentiality.³⁰³ As a result, I have demonstrated that the OT and the Second Temple literature, and to a lesser extent the Greco-Roman literature, are formative for a responsible interpretation of the trumpet judgments.

A table follows with the allusions and echoes that have emerged in this analysis:

Table 6			
Allusions and Echoes			
Trumpet	Clear Allusions	Probable Allusions	Echoes
One	Exod 9.24	Ezek 38.22; Joel 2.30	Zech 13.8-9; Ezek 5.2; Isa 30.30; <i>Syb. Or.</i> 5.377-78; <i>Wis.</i> 16.16-24
Two	Jer 51.25	Exod 7.20; <i>Syb.Or.</i> 5.518; <i>1 Enoch</i> 18.13; 108.4-5	
Three		Exod 7.20; Jer 9.15; 23.15	Isa 14.12; Luke 10.18; <i>1 En.</i> 86.1; 21.3-6; <i>Syb. Or.</i> 2.202; 8.190-193
Four		Ezek 32.7-8; Joel 2.10; <i>4 Ezra</i> 5.4-5; 6.45; <i>Syb. Or.</i> 3.801; 5.346-349	Exod. 10.21; <i>1 Enoch</i> 80.4-6
Five	Joel 1.6; 2.4-5	Exod 19.18	Rom 10.7; Luke 8.31; Gen 19.28; Exod 12.23; Job 3.21b; Exod 10.12
Six	Jer 51.25		Ezek 38.22; Gen 19.24; Acts 15.20
Seven	Ps 2.1-2	Ps 99.1; Zech 14.9	Ps 115.13

³⁰³ Brawley, *Text to Text Pours Forth Speech*, 130.

Firstly, the construct of implied author and implied reader has provided a reasonable level of controlled analysis of the focus text, since the implied reader is “an entity evoked and continually nurtured by the text.”³⁰⁴ For example, I only admit one clear allusion in the second trumpet judgment, namely Jer 51.25, while Paulien has two clear allusions, namely Exod 7.19-21 and Jer 51.25, 41-42.³⁰⁵ The clear allusion to Exod 9.24 sets the tone for the Exodus background of the entire focus text. The last clear allusion to Exod 19.18 in the passage about the fifth trumpet continues to demonstrate the importance of this tradition, while the two probable allusions to Exod 7.20 and 10.21 in the passages about the second and fourth trumpet respectively, reinforce the importance of this tradition.

Moreover, the clear allusion to the Jeremiah tradition introduces Babylon in the second trumpet judgment. This in turn leads to the portrayal of Satan in the depiction of the “great star” in the third trumpet judgment. Beale and Paulien weaken the effect of the allusion to the Jeremiah tradition by including Exod 7.19-21 as a clear allusion in the second trumpet judgment.³⁰⁶ From an analysis of the scholarly literature it is evident that other scholars have on occasion seen more allusions than the present work, and at other times fewer, indicating the partial effectiveness of the construct of implied author and implied reader for controlling exegesis and the ongoing subjectivities of the interpreter.³⁰⁷ The inability to correctly assess the level of intertextuality in the focus text obviously then affects one’s interpretation.

Secondly, the categories of clear and probable allusion has been helpful in clarifying matters of interpretational substance. While Robbins did make the distinction between allusion and echo, he failed to classify allusions. This distinction has been significant in

³⁰⁴ Staley, *The Print’s First Kiss*, 33.

³⁰⁵ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 384.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*; Beale, *Revelation*, 473. Cf. Blount, *Revelation*, 168, mentions Exod. 7.17-21 but does not classify the allusions.

³⁰⁷ A sampling of the scholarly literature follows. The difficulty in accomplishing a good comparison with my taxonomy of clear allusion, probable allusion and echo, is because it is not employed by other scholars. Cf. Mounce, *Revelation*, revised, 178, has three OT texts and one NT text (Exod 9.23; Joel 2.31; Zech 13. 8-9 and Luke 21.25-6) and one Jewish text (*Syb. Or.* 5.377-78) that could be classified as allusions in relation to 8.7, while I have one clear allusion and four probable allusions with two echoes. Beale, *Revelation*, 473-75 has two OT allusions (Exod. 9.22-25; Ezek. 5.2, 12) and two echoes (Ezek. 38.22; Zech. 13.8-9). While Beale has fewer allusions, we both have the same number of echoes, although they are different. In relation to the sixth trumpet plague, Smalley, *Revelation to John*, 236-44, has the following potential allusions (my categories) (Exod 30.2, 10; 27.2 Dan 7.2; Zech 6.5-8; Isa 8.5-8) and potential references or echoes (my categories) (1 Kgs 1.50-1; 2.28-9; Isa 14.31; Jer 10.22; Ezek 39.2; Joel 2.1-1). On the other hand I only have Jer 51.25 as a certain allusion and Gen. 19.24; Ezek. 38.22 and Acts 15.20 as echoes. I have also suggested that Dan 5 and Jer 51 are parallel passages with respect to the passage about the sixth trumpet.

relation to the interpretation of each of the trumpet judgments. Interestingly, no clear allusions have been identified in relation to the third trumpet judgment and yet Satan or his involvement is to be identified in the depiction of the great star. The two echoes (Isa 14.21; Luke 10.18) extrapolated in the course of my analysis led to this conclusion.

The third significant point in this conclusion is that echoes have proven an essential exegetical weapon in the implied author's arsenal in the focus text. Hays' criteria have been formative for establishing the credibility of allusions. On the other hand, echoes have proved compelling, not solely on the basis of Hays' criteria, but rather on the basis of the intersection and interpenetration of two echoes in a particular text in the focus text. Not only is this evident in the passage about the third trumpet, but also in relation to the heavenly throne room scene (Rev 8.2-6). There I pointed to the importance of the echoes of Exod 40.26 and Ezek 10.2 . In addition, echoes have served to reinforce a particular OT tradition as in Rev 8.7, where Ezek 38.22 is identified as a probable allusion, and then the same text is identified as an echo in Rev 9.17.

Fourth, a substantial point of difference for this work is the utilization of Hays' criteria in relation to the Jewish apocalyptic literature as well. Even though I have assumed greater importance for the OT in the interpretational exercise, I have nonetheless applied Hays' constructs equally to both the OT and Second Temple literature.³⁰⁸ While Paulien does mention the categories of verbal and thematic parallels in relation to the Jewish apocalyptic literature, he provides no analysis of this literature with his constructs.³⁰⁹ Neither does Beale use his categories of clear and probable allusions in relation to the Jewish apocalyptic literature.³¹⁰

Fifth, the symbol markers also deepen the understanding of the focus text. There are three symbol markers that point to a particular enemy of God in the focus text. These are the great star (8.10), the great burning mountain (8.8) and the Euphrates river (9.13) which all depict the OT tradition regarding Babylon, or aspects of the tradition about Babylon, especially from the book of Isaiah and Jeremiah. The symbols depicting Babylon are used as

³⁰⁸ See also who Osborne, *Revelation*, 350, who states that John draws his imagery from both Jewish and Hellenistic sources.

³⁰⁹ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 406.

³¹⁰ Beale, *Revelation*, 595; he simply states "allusion" in relation to *1 Macc.* 7.10-30 and Daniel.

a filter through which the implied author is able to portray the contemporary antagonist of God's people in the Roman empire.

Six, as each trumpet is sounded the narrative plot intensifies and deepens. As an example, a table outlines the intensification strategy of the implied author in relation to the fifth and sixth trumpet judgment.

Intensification between the Fifth Trumpet and the Sixth Trumpet	
Torment humans for five months (9.5b, 10b)	Kill a third of humanity (9.15b)
Noising wings (9.9b)	200 000 mounted troops (9.16)
Lion teeth in their mouths (9.8b)	Fire, smoke and sulphur out of their mouths (9.17c)
Scorpion tails (9.10a)	Snakeheads as tails (9.19b)
Scorpions sting and torment (9.10b)	Snakeheads inflict deadly injury (9.19c)

The trumpet judgments intensify until a resolution is reached at the blowing of the seventh trumpet judgment when the empire of the world becomes the empire of God and his Christ.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TEXTURE

John's language – its shape, its genre, the vision it transmits – communicates a message, and that communication is a social act that takes place in the social order.¹

This texture provides an analysis of the encoding of the social and cultural elements in the focus text together with the earlier textures and how together this may affect social change as the implied reader and authorial audience encounter the text and its layers of texture. In this texture the concept of *social marker* is reintroduced.² A social marker is a marker that is embedded in the text of Revelation which has distinctly social overtures and features. It is a marker that points specifically to social occurrences, social practices and happenings within society or to positions and rank within the infrastructure of first-century society. In fact, Bauckham believes that the symbols in Revelation are not vague or impressionistic but that “they are capable of considerable precision of meaning and of compressing a wealth of meaning into a brief space by evoking a range of associations.”³

The social marker does not point to prior literature but rather, because of its ability to “compress a wealth of meaning into a brief space,” focuses the attention of the reader on the first-century world. Social markers comprise four categories: 1) social role (e.g. soldier, slave); 2) social institution (e.g. empire, synagogue) ; 3) social code (e.g. honour, hospitality) and 4) social relationship (e.g. patron, friend).⁴ As meaning began to be articulated in the context of the symbol markers in the inter-relationship between the precursor and successor text in the previous chapter, so in this chapter, it is the interpenetration of the symbol markers and the social markers that add another layer to the meaning-making exercise.⁵

¹ Thompson, *The Book of Revelation*, 95.

² See p. 52.

³ Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 93.

⁴ I have adapted Robbins, *Exploring*, 62, who has these categories in social intertexture.

⁵ Craig Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 15, has also made an appreciable contribution to Johannine scholarship by demonstrating the need to examine symbols in their literary, social and cultural context. In regards to the latter, he states that “the symbols in John's Gospel are conveyed in language that was an integral part of a cultural context, and understanding the symbolism means entering into that context.” Given the range of elements involved in analyzing symbols he contends that there needs to be a distinction between core and supporting symbols which I would disagree with. Perhaps this is possible in John's gospel. I assume the equal importance of the symbol marker in intertexture and the social marker in social and cultural texture.

After an analysis of the social markers the sociological and anthropological categories, as developed by Robbins, are applied to the focus text in an attempt to broaden the meaning potentiality of the text. Thirdly, an approximation of the general social and cultural norms, attitudes, and modes of interaction which are known by everyone in first-century society is made. Fourth, I explore how these common social and cultural topics establish themselves in comparison with the dominant cultural system as either partaking in its dispositions, ideals and attitudes, at some level or by rejecting these attitudes, values, and dispositions.

1. Social Markers

Social markers indicate the social practise and life setting of the first-century audience. These social markers indicate how the authorial audience would have responded to, and what meaning they would have associated with, the use of these markers in light of their social experience. In Rev 8.3 the text evokes the social markers of altar (θυσιαστηρίον) and prayer (προσευχᾶς). Altars and prayer were all part and parcel of life in the first-century world.⁶ In chapter 2 I suggested the altar is a symbol marker but now I'm suggesting it is also a social marker.⁷

What this means is that the altar points the implied reader to antecedent literature as well as evoking meaning in relation to the experiences of the audience in the first-century world. The markers being identifying are not to be restricted to one texture only, but from time to time there are exceptions, where the text evokes an image that is both a symbol marker and a social marker or perhaps an ideological marker. This is in keeping with the realities of the first-century world as there was a blurred distinction between the social, religious and political world.

It has been concluded that the symbol marker of altar (θυσιαστηρίον) and trumpet blast symbolically point to the sacrifice of Christ.⁸ The benefits of identifying the altar as a social marker heighten, not just the social dynamics of the altar, but also the spiritual implications as well. In the first-century world altars would have been used primarily in the worship and

⁶ John Scheid, "Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors," in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. Jörg Rüpke (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 263.

⁷ See pp. 87-91.

⁸ See pp. 91-2.

homage of the Greek and Roman gods.⁹ The altar, as a social marker, possibly points to the fact that all the other sacrifices undertaken in the first-century world failed to compare in significance to the sacrifice of Christ.

Prayer or communion with a god or goddess was an essential part of life in the first-century world.¹⁰ In the first-century world prayer was often an attempt to coerce the forces of nature. It commenced with an invocation and a reminder to the god of his or her ability to perform that which was being asked. The person praying would also offer to do something for the god in return. This notion of reciprocity, built into the fabric of Greek culture and continuing on, with variations, during the Roman era, “regulated the relationship between worshippers and their gods.”¹¹ Further, Pliny the Elder records an interesting story of the origin of “thunderbolts being either caused by or vouchsafed in answer to certain rites and prayers,” which is particularly meaningful in Rev 8.3-5. He mentions an old story, which the authorial audience may well have been familiar with, of king Porsina praying for a portent called Olta which came upon the city of Bolsena and devastated it.¹²

By contrast, the function of prayer in Jewish apocalyptic is often a catalyst for setting in motion God’s will on earth. In *1 En.* 9.1-4; 10.1-3 it is the cries for vengeance, mediated by angels, that serve to occasion the divine intervention. In *1 En.* 47.1-4 it is the prayers of the angels carried to God that produces judgment and in *1 En.* 97.5, it is only after prayer is offered that judgment is meted out. The War Scroll also portrays “eschatological prayer” in the context of the conflict between good and evil, represented on each side by forces that comprise both supernatural and human beings. It depicts the two armies, those of the Sons of

⁹ Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, translated by John Raffan (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 87-8; BDAG, 463, suggests that the primary meaning of the word is “to make a cultic offering.”

¹⁰ John Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970), 99.

¹¹ David E. Aune, “Prayer in the Greco-Roman World,” in *Into God’s Presence: Prayer in the New Testament*, ed. R. N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 23-42 (26). Aune suggests that there are two main categories of prayer, ritual and private prayer. However, Rev 8.3 refers to collective prayer, an aspect of prayer that Aune has omitted. See also R. M. Ogilvie, *The Romans and Their Gods* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1986), 24-40. According to James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 90, prayer was of such great importance that even a misspoken word or syllable could seriously jeopardize the effectiveness of the prayer. He quotes Pliny, *Nat.*, 23.10: “The highest officials pray in fixed forms of words, and to make sure that not a word is omitted or spoken in the wrong place, a prompter read the text before them, another person is appointed to watch over it, yet another to command silence, and the flute-player plays to mask all the other sounds.”

¹² Pliny, *Nat.*, II, LIV, 277.

Light and their enemies, the Sons of Darkness, and their respective fates.¹³ Victory is assured for the Sons of Light and comes about through God's intervention. The prayer is apparently intended for the day of victory in which the triumphant warriors bless God and curse Belial. After reciting this prayer, the victors sing the hymn of the return and re-enter their camp (1QM XIV.2).

In Rev 8.3 it is particular prayer, the prayers of the saints, that occasion the judgment of God.¹⁴ Boxall maintains that the phrase "saints" is borrowed from Judaism and "describes all those who worship God and keep the witness of Jesus..."¹⁵ I argued earlier on that the prayers of the saints parallel the prayers of the martyrs in 6.10-11.¹⁶ It follows therefore that the prayers of the saints are particularly prayers for justice to be done.¹⁷ These effective prayers reach God and results in the blowing of the trumpets.¹⁸

Fire is the third social marker. It is used in the temple in service to the gods and may also have been understood as a god in the first-century world.¹⁹ The term trees (δένδρων) is the fourth social marker. The trees are possibly to be taken as fruit trees since they are so important in the maintenance of life in the first-century world. Hence, the destruction of the trees means shortages of fruit, including indispensable staples like olives, figs and most likely grapes.²⁰ Further, in the first-century world a tree would have evoked the sanctuary or temple in which the gods were worshipped. Burkert suggests that trees were a central feature of the temple in the ancient world with most temples having a special tree. For example, in Athens, the carefully tended olive tree stands on the Acropolis in the sanctuary of the Dew

¹³ Maxwell J. Davidson, *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1-36, 72-108 and Sectarian writings from Qumran*, JSPSup 11 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 216.

¹⁴ For a general discussion of prayer in Revelation see Richard Bauckham, "Prayer in the Book of Revelation," *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament*, ed. R. N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 252-71 and Eugene H. Peterson, *Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John and the Praying Imagination* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).

¹⁵ Boxall, *The Revelation to Saint John*, 133.

¹⁶ Contra Michaels, *Revelation*, 118 who seems to suggest that the prayers of the saints is only representative of one group of Christians. In 8.3 all the saints "widens the application." It appears he sees a relationship between 6.10-11 and 8.3 but perhaps not as close as I propose.

¹⁷ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 512-13, states: "It is assumed that these prayers are prayers for divine vengeance on their opponents since the officiating angel mixes the prayers with incense on the heavenly altar and then throws fire down upon the earth with catastrophic effects (v 5)."

¹⁸ In relation to prayer Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 151, states: "...God has willed that the prayers of his people should be part of the process by which the kingdom comes."

¹⁹ BDAG, 898.

²⁰ Mounce, *Revelation*, revised, 179; Keener, *Revelation*, 256.

goddess, Pandrosos.²¹ Grass is the next social marker and its destruction would mean the impending death of sheep, goats and cattle – hence critical shortages of milk and meat.²² The green grass signifies “a highly prosperous condition of things amongst the inhabitants of the empire generally.”²³ The trees and grass are the first social markers that highlight the economic consequences that the judgment brings.

The sixth social marker is found in Rev 8.9 and points to ships (πλοίων). According to Danker, the word here refers to a rather large sea-faring merchant ship.²⁴ Ships would symbolically portray the ability of a nation to procure wealth through commerce and trade and depict a nation’s ability at self-advancement.²⁵ In the first-century world, ships carried large quantities of luxury items, especially grain.²⁶ Ordinary citizens were provided with grain by the empire and so would have valued these shipping merchants in maintaining their day to day existence.²⁷ The Roman empire, especially the elite, spent large amounts of money to purchase exotic goods from the other nations brought by the shipping industry. Shipping also provided a forum for guilds where business and social relationships were advanced. In addition, guilds also had a “religious character,” often centering “on the patron gods or goddesses of the association.”²⁸ The significant commercial benefits of shipping have led Kraybill to write: “The imperial government had more interest in the shipping industry than in any other commercial enterprise.”²⁹

Moreover, the intertextual relations in the passage about the second trumpet judgment have, in an explicit manner, evoked the “great burning mountain” as the Roman empire with its allusion to the destruction of Babylon in the Jeremiah tradition. The destruction of the

²¹ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 85. Pliny, *Nat.*, XII, II, 5, also states: “Once upon a time trees were the temples of the deities, and in conformity with primitive ritual simple country places even now dedicate a tree of exceptional height to a god; nor do we pay greater worship to images shining with gold and ivory than to the forests...”

²² Keener, *Revelation*, 256.

²³ Walter Scott, *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 4th edition (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, n.d.), 186.

²⁴ BDAG, 830.

²⁵ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets*, 262-3.

²⁶ Cf. Rev 18.12-13. For a full discussion on the importance of grain and travel see Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John’s Apocalypse*, 102-09.

²⁷ Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce*, 107, suggests that “200, 000 families in Rome received from the government a regular ‘dole’ of free grain.”

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 117.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

ships is therefore God's judgment against Rome for her self-serving interests.³⁰ Closely connected to this social marker is another, that of sea. This social marker also has strong economic implications since the Roman empire relied heavily on the sea for her trade.³¹ The destruction of the ships in 8.8 denote therefore "a partial but serious hindrance to maritime commerce and a grave limitation of formerly rich economic resources."³²

The eighth and ninth social marker is locusts (ἀκρίδες) and scorpions (σκορπίος) in 9.3. According to BDAG, locusts were eaten in certain parts of the ancient world, especially by the poor.³³ Since the Mediterranean world is essentially agrarian, locusts would have played a pivotal part in the success or failure of a crop in any given year. Interestingly, in the passages about the first, third and fifth trumpet judgments the text evokes social markers (trees, grass, sea, ships and locusts) that are of economic consequence. The social marker of scorpion would have been familiar to the authorial audience as they appeared as religious symbols on amulets, magical tablets, seals and boundary stones. Scorpions are also one of the twelve signs of the Zodiac and were associated with evil persons.³⁴

The tenth social marker is found in Rev 9.4 and is a reference to the seal (σφραγίδα). The concept refers to the "impression of a seal in clay or wax; since seals could be attached to people, they can be confused with tattoos or brands."³⁵ If it is understood in relation to branding or tattooing it is used in at least five ways in the ancient world. Firstly, as a barbarian custom pointing to tribal identity and a mark of ownership; secondly, as punishment for slaves and criminals by the Greeks and Romans; thirdly, as a mark of ownership in the Roman empire; fourth, as a sacral rite in some cults and fifth as a term for Christian baptism or the rite that followed baptism that culminated in the reception of the

³⁰ Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, 98 writes: "In Revelation, ships are associated with riches that the ungodly accumulate by trafficking with "Babylon," the symbol of greed, arrogance and bloodshed (18.15-20). Thus the loss of ships means economic loss."

³¹ Babylon is often connected with the sea (cf. Rev. 18.17-21). In this regard Barbara R. Rossing, *The Choice Between Two Cities: Whore, Bride, and Empire in the Apocalypse*, Harvard Theological Studies (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 145, contends that the reference to "no more sea" in Rev 21.1 means that "the New Jerusalem will have no shipping economy. Long-distance maritime trade in luxury goods, which was so prominent in Babylon's economy, comes to an end in the New Jerusalem."

³² Ibid.

³³ BDAG, 39.

³⁴ Gary R. Mullen and Lance A. Durden, eds., *Medical and Veterinary Entomology*, 2nd edition (London: Academic Press, 2009), 388; BDAG, 931.

³⁵ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 457.

Holy Spirit.³⁶ The word seal (σφραγιδα) refers to the provision of security and also is a means of identification.³⁷ The fact that it is the seal of God refers to ownership and secondly, that because those who have this mark are not harmed, means in context, it also points to security.

Social markers pointing to the social institution of the army include horses in 9.7, breastplates and chariots in 9.9 and army in 9.16. These social markers point the authorial audience to the Roman army that dominated their lives and the empire in a significant manner. The implications of this marker are worked out in detail in the section on ideological texture.³⁸ The last social marker of snake (ὄφις) found in 9.19 needs to be investigated. As a symbol marker it pointed to antecedent literature and suggested notions of seduction and deception. As a social marker, the authorial audience would have been familiar with this symbol as it is used in the three major cults of Asclepius, Dionysus and Zeus at Pergamum and is also the symbol of the cult of Isis and the rites of the Phrygian Sabazious.³⁹ In the work on the snake as a symbol marker it was suggested that the snake was used to portray the Canaanite gods who sought to seduce the Israelites. Similarly, the social marker of snake would indicate pagan divinity in the area of Asia Minor.

The sixteen social markers of altar, prayer, trees, fire, grass, ships, sea, locusts, scorpions, seal, horses, breastplates, chariots, army, lions and snakes each have a different emphasis. The first two have a spiritual focus, pointing to the fact that the issues in the focus text are indeed of a spiritual nature. These social markers underscore the fact that the trumpet judgments are a response to something overtly spiritual, namely, the prayers of the saints. Furthermore, the spiritual aspect of these social markers corresponds to the liturgical nature of the trumpet blasts. The social markers of trees, grass, sea, ships and locusts have a distinctly economic aspect to them which is explored in the next chapter. In addition, the social markers of altar, prayer and ships also point to Roman power.

The social marker of seal (σφραγιδα) points to the fact that questions of ownership and allegiance is also significant. In the work on intertexture it was discovered that the cosmic conflict is a significant background to the focus text. The two sides, namely, the

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ BDAG, 980.

³⁸ See p. 181.

³⁹ Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 195. Bauckham also suggests that certain coins of Pergamum, Laodicea, Thyatira and Philadelphia used snakes to portray the cult of Asclepius.

inhabitants of the earth (8.13) and those with the seal of God (9.4), are challenged by the implied author. The fact that those with the seal of God will not be harmed would be an incentive to repent from the idolatry and wickedness mentioned in 9.20-21. The social markers involving the army, lions and fire further underscore the notion of conflict and battle, while the marker of snakes deepens the plot of the conflict by focusing attention on local deities. The social markers have provided opportunity to examine the text and have brought forward two key areas for future development and consideration, namely, the spiritual and economic aspects.

2. Specific Social Topics

This section is concerned with how the language of the focus text engages the world. Here I build on previous work with the application of the constructs of conversionist, revolutionist, introversionist, gnostic-manipulationist, thaumaturgical, reformist and utopian rhetoric to the focus text.⁴⁰ I will, through a process of dialogue and elimination, seek to establish which, if any, of these constructs is evoked by the focus text.

In Rev 8.2-6 it was argued that the trumpet blast and the altar, based on insights from the Mishnah and the interesting intertext of Heb 13.10, point to the death of Christ. It may be tempting to suggest that this section of text comprises conversionist social rhetoric by pointing to the objective agency of Christ's death that alone is able to bring about a profound change. This kind of rhetoric "perceives the world as corrupt because people are corrupt. If individuals can be changed, then the world can be changed as well."⁴¹ Further, in relation to this rhetoric, it is not through any objective agency that salvation is available but only by an acute change of the individual. There is no change in the world but a new orientation to the world itself will be salvific.⁴² This notion of the supernaturally conditioned "transformation of the self" hinders the application of conversionist social rhetoric to 8.2-6 as these elements are not evident in this text.⁴³

The phrase "the prayers of all the saints" (ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων πάντων) at 8.3 may possibly focus on "the individual's concern for relief from present and specific ills by

⁴⁰ See pp. 50-2.

⁴¹ Robbins, *Exploring*, 72.

⁴² Cf. www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/Robbins/SRI/defns/c_defns.html#conversionist. Accessed on 10 January, 2009.

⁴³ Robbins, *Exploring*, 72.

special dispensations.”⁴⁴ This introduction to the seven trumpet judgments may therefore comprise thaumaturgical social rhetoric. Aspects of this rhetoric is about the request for personal and local supernatural help. “Salvation is immediate but has no general application beyond the given case and others like it.”⁴⁵ The “prayers of the saints” meets the aspects of thaumaturgical social rhetoric that focus on a concern for relief from present and specific ills. However, it fails with regard to the other criteria of this construct, namely, special dispensation and that salvation is immediate. The “prayers of the saints” is only answered in 20.4, making salvation attainable, not immediately, but only at the end of the narrative. However, in regards to the operation of the help being magical in this rhetoric, incense mentioned in Rev 8.3, played an important part in Greek religion. In fact, in Greek magical papyri incense is “often prescribed as part of the magical procedure.”⁴⁶ Therefore, Rev 8.2-5 does not contain conversionist social rhetoric, but does contain aspects of thaumaturgical social rhetoric.

Revelation 8.5 reads: “Then the angel took the censer (τὸν λιβανωτὸν), filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth (καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν γῆν); and there came peals of thunder (βρονταὶ), rumblings (φωναί), flashes of lightning (ἀστραπαί) and an earthquake (σεισμός).” The text portrays destruction and judgment, especially in the notion of earthquake, and suggests that revolutionist social rhetoric is operative here. This rhetoric declares “that only the destruction of the world - the natural, but more specifically the social order - will be sufficient to save people.”⁴⁷ The early warning signs of destruction are evident in 8.5 where the implied author announces an earthquake. It is likely then that Rev 8.5 has elements of revolutionist social rhetoric.

The fact that these trumpet judgments emerge from the throne of God (8.3) underscores the fact that supernatural powers perform the destruction graphically outlined in the focus text. In 8.7, hail and fire is mixed with blood and fall on the earth. The result is that a third of the earth and trees are all burnt up, while all the green grass is burnt up. In 8.8 something like a great mountain, burning with fire, is thrown into the sea, resulting in the sea becoming blood, a third of the sea creatures dying and also a third of the ships being

⁴⁴ Ibid., 73

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 514.

⁴⁷ Robbins, *Exploring*, 72.

destroyed. Revolutionist social rhetoric is most evident in the de-creation motif evident especially in Rev 8.7-13. Each of the eschatological trumpet blasts brings destruction to a part of the cosmos.⁴⁸

In the passage about the fifth trumpet (9.1-11) three symbol markers which included star (ἀστέρα), abyss (ἀβύσσου) and great burning furnace (καπνὸς καμίνου μεγάλης) were highlighted. The identity of these symbol markers is based on the strong cultural features encoded in them. Moreover, the role and involvement of Satan is amplified in this passage about the fifth trumpet judgment as this power is initially identified in 9.1. This conclusion is sustained particularly on the basis of the initial verbal action under the third trumpet – “great star fell” (ἔπεσεν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀστὴρ μέγας) – being close to “a star had fallen” (ἀστέρα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεπτωκότα) under the fifth trumpet. This suggests that the difference in verbal form indicates that the implied author desired to communicate the progression in the activity of the same agent.⁴⁹

In addition, on the basis of the echoes of Isa 14.12 and Luke 10.18 and the analysis of 8.10, Satan or an aspect of Satan is the great star of 8.10 as well as the fallen angel of 9.1. The formulation of the identity of Satan in 9.1 laid the foundation for the rest of the interpretation of the passage about the fifth trumpet. The echo of Gen 19.18 in the καπνὸς καμίνου μεγάλης reflects the judgment as being against the inhabitants of the earth as it is likewise against the enemies of God’s people in Gen 19.18.

It can now be concluded that the first, second, third, fourth and fifth trumpet judgments all exhibit the features of revolutionist social rhetoric. Revolutionist social rhetoric declares that “only the destruction of the world - the natural, but more specifically the social order - will be sufficient to save people.”⁵⁰ The destruction of the social order is witnessed from 8.7 onwards where the earthquake destroys the land. “This destruction must be accomplished by supernatural powers because people lack the power, if not to destroy the world, then certainly to re-create it.”⁵¹ Because there are similar features embedded in the

⁴⁸ Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 137, writes: “...the collapse of the created order is very much in view here, with the burning of two features associated with the separation of earth and sea on the third day of creation...”

⁴⁹ Tonstad, *Saving God’s Reputation*, 113.

⁵⁰ Robbins, *Exploring*, 72.

⁵¹ Definition taken from www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/Robbins/SRI/defns/c_defns.html#revolutionist. Accessed on 11 January, 2009.

passage about the sixth trumpet (9.12-21), like the judgment depicted through the imagery of the Euphrates river and the fall of Babylon in the intertextual allusions to Dan. 5, revolutionist social rhetoric is present here as well.

Revelation 11.15 states: “The seventh angel sounded his trumpet (ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν), and there were loud voices (φωναὶ μεγάλαι) in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world (βασιλεία τοῦ κόσμου) has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ (κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ), and he will reign for ever and ever (αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων).” This text presents the striking reality of two empires in opposition to each other. The empire of the world is transformed into the empire of our Lord and his Christ.⁵² The implied author makes reference to the change of empires only at the seventh trumpet judgment, as if pointing to the climax of the tension embedded in the focus text. The climax is the resolution of the battle between good and evil when the empire of the world becomes the empire of our Lord and his Christ.

The use of the word βασιλεύσει in 11.15 and the word ἐβασίλευσας in 11.17 point to the concept of the reign of God and Christ. Jesus Christ is the greatest personified agent who assists God in the establishment of divine rule over everything that exists. In the apocalyptic rhetorolect God authorizes Jesus Christ to rule over all earthly powers and authorities, until they are under his control.⁵³ The implication is that their reign had been under siege all through the focus text, but now at the end there is a resolution of this tension. The tension is evident for the implied reader in the future tense of the word in 11.15 and the aorist tense in 11.17. The immediate effect of being able to reign is accomplished by God’s δυνάμιν τὴν μεγάλην. After being passively engaged in the narrative, in 11.17, God finally takes action. Revelation 11.15-18 therefore contains elements of revolutionist social rhetoric “that seeks the destruction of the world in eschatological judgment and that only this will be sufficient to

⁵² Swete, *Commentary on Revelation*, 142, suggests the words of verse 15 point to “the vision of a world-empire, once dominated by an usurping power, which has now at length passed into the hands of its true Owner and Imperator.”

⁵³ Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 344. I disagree with Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 345, where he states that for the early Christians the power of God is beyond even the powers of Jesus Christ. In my view, the early Christians equated Jesus with God and hence of having the same qualities and attributes as God. Cf. Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998).

save people.”⁵⁴ I conclude that Rev 8.5-9.21 and 11.15-11.18 comprises revolutionist social rhetoric.

However, before settling for a uniform social rhetoric the focus text needs to be reassessed to see what other rhetorical features may be embedded in it. Revelation 8.7-12 has a high level of allusive reference to the Exodus tradition. The implied author draws on the allusions and echoes of Exod 7.20, 9.24, 10.21 and 19.18 to portray the Roman empire as an enemy of God through the filter of the Exodus story. Further, there are three symbol markers that point to another enemy of God in the focus text. These are the great star (8.10), the great burning mountain (8.8) and the Euphrates river (9.13) which all depict the OT tradition regarding Babylon, or aspects of the tradition about Babylon. Both of these enemies had a strong social agenda that was opposed to the principles and ways of Yahweh.⁵⁵

Reformist social rhetoric is operative in 8.7-12 as this section of text allusively evokes a world that is corrupt because its social structures are corrupt. In this rhetoric evil may be dealt with by supernatural insights about the world and its social structures.⁵⁶ These supernatural insights are brought to the attention of the authorial audience through the OT allusions and echoes that have been enlisted by the implied author. The social structures that are mentioned in reformist social rhetoric can only be uncovered at the allusive level of the text. The primary enemies of God that are portrayed at an allusive level in 8.7-12 are Egypt Assyria and Babylon. What is appealing about this rhetoric is that the implied author, drawing on the OT and Second Temple literature, is able to provide crucial insights on the world and its structures, and its need for transformation. The amendment of the social structures and the specific alterations needed will be under God’s directive. However, how exactly this is to be undertaken is not mentioned in reformist social rhetoric.⁵⁷ Revelation 8.2-5 contains aspects of thaumaturgical social rhetoric, Rev 8.7-12 comprises both revolutionist and reformist social rhetoric, while the remainder of the focus text exhibits only

⁵⁴ Robbins, *Exploring*, 72.

⁵⁵ See Reynolds, *The Egypt/Sodom/Babylon Motif*, 71-178. After a thorough thematic examination of the OT texts that discuss Egypt, Sodom and Babylon, Reynolds, *The Sodom/Egypt Babylon Motif*, 189, states: “The semantic history of Sodom, Egypt and Babylon for John’s readers and hearers was replete with the record of pride, arrogance, rebellion, immorality, worship of false gods, sorcery, inhospitality, and oppression of others with special attention to their treatment of God’s people.”

⁵⁶ Robbins, *Exploring*, 73.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

revolutionist social rhetoric. The implications of these seemingly dialectical approaches to the social rhetoric of the focus text will be engaged with later.

3. Common Social and Cultural Topics

The social and cultural values, patterns, or codes prevalent in first-century culture will now be examined.⁵⁸ I will not be engaged in establishing allusions or echoes and so Hays' criteria will not be enlisted. Once again, however, the intratextual dynamics of Revelation will be explored. The intratextual link between Rev 8.3 and Rev 6.9-10 is a reminder that all that takes place in the focus text must be understood against the secondary backdrop of the cry for justice and vindication of God's people.⁵⁹ In 6.9-10 the honour of God's servants has been trampled on and God's honour has been violated in their persons. The primary mythic milieu for the trumpet judgments is the cosmic conflict between God and Satan. In the focus text the honour of God is at stake as the inhabitants of the earth are invited to repent of their sins because of the trumpet plagues that are to befall them as is evident from 9.20-21. The Lamb has purchased salvation for the authorial audience through his sacrificial death and this entitles him to interact in specific ways with the audience.

Honour is the public admission of one's social standing. One could possess either *ascribed* honour which is inherited from one's family, or alternately *acquired* honour which is normally conferred on the basis of virtuous deeds.⁶⁰ In addition, honour is a claim to worth along with the social acknowledgement of worth. It serves as "social rating that entitles a person to interact in specific ways with his or her equals, superiors, and subordinates, according to the prescribed cultural cues of the society."⁶¹

On the other hand, the implied author is calling on the authorial audience to shun Satan, the archenemy of God's people. The implied author points to Satan from the third trumpet judgment onward and ultimately makes him responsible for the destruction of creation in the first four trumpet judgments. Satan is also portrayed allusively in 9.1 and 9.11. Shame, according to Malina, "involves a loss of repute and worth in the eyes of others,

⁵⁸ Definition taken from www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/Robbins/SRI/defns/c_defns.html#common. Accessed on 12 January, 2009.

⁵⁹ Pattermore, *The People of God*, 90.

⁶⁰ Halvor Moxnes, "Honor and Shame," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard Rohrbaugh (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 20.

⁶¹ Robbins, *Exploring*, 76.

especially one's peers. It results from a public exposure of a man's weakness or cowardice or pretension or foolishness."⁶² In the focus text, in the context of the first-century world, the Roman empire is exposed for what it is – a replica of God's enemies in the OT through whom Satan is able to work. The heuristic values of honour and shame emerge in the focus text at the allusive level and magnify the complexity of this apocalyptic text and the issues at stake for the authorial audience.⁶³

God is portrayed as the universal patron in 11.17 who is worthy of worship and who has taken his great power and begun to reign.⁶⁴ Boring also argues that in the Greco-Roman world of the first-century, a three-fold formulation, like the two-fold one found in 11.17 (which follows on from the three-fold formulation in 4.8), is an acceptable manner for a deity to celebrate immutability and eternity. This concept is now being contrasted with God being depicted as universal patron.⁶⁵

One of the most impressive societal values of the first-century C.E. context is that of patronage. Roman culture of the first-century was well-defined with clear boundaries separating and delimiting the lower class from the upper class (senators, equestrians and decurions) by means of wealth and social status.⁶⁶ Most importantly, it is a voluntary relationship of loyalty and commitment entered into by two individuals of unequal status. It involves the reciprocal exchange of goods and services that are of value to each participant. The patron (*patronus, patrona*) uses his/her influence to protect and assist the other person who is the patron's client (*cliens*).⁶⁷

⁶² Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, eds., *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning: A Handbook* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993), 96-7.

⁶³ Even though honour and shame have emerged in my discussion, there certainly were other important values in the Greco-Roman world as well. For further discussion see Douglas J. Davies, "Purity, Spirit and Reciprocity in the Acts of the Apostles," in *Anthropology and Biblical Studies: Avenues of Approach*, eds. Louise J. Lawrence and Mario I. Aguilar (Leiderdorp: Deo, 2004), 259-80 and David Arthur deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, SBLDS 152 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 11-23.

⁶⁴ For a discussion of Roman patronage see Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce*, 78-80.

⁶⁵ See Boring, *Revelation*, 75, where he states "It was said, for example, that "Zeus was, Zeus is, Zeus will be" (Pausanias)." This argument is also made by Seal, "Shouting in the Apocalypse," 339-52.

⁶⁶ Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce*, 72. For background information and a discussion of several salient characteristics of this system see John H. Elliot, "Patronage and Clientage," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard Rohrbaugh (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 144-56 and Wes Howard-Brook and Anthony Gwyther, *Unveiling Empire: Reading Revelation Then and Now* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999), 95.

⁶⁷ Elliot, "Patronage and Clientage," 148.

Earlier in 11.15 the implied author has portrayed the clash of empires (the empire of the world and the empire of our Lord and his Christ) and the victory of the empire of God. While no immediate beneficia are mentioned in relation to the reign of God in 11.15-17, the literary connection to 4.11 where honour and worship are rendered to God as universal patron on account of his creation of all things may be drawn on.⁶⁸ The realization of God as the universal patron in 11.17 would contrast with the imagery that depicted Domitian in 9.11 as a supposed king. In fact, the decreation motif present in the focus text could now be correctly attributed to him, Domitian, the destroyer of creation. The authorial audience would perceive here the true nature of both Domitian and God. The empire's depiction of the emperor as the benefactor of humanity is misleading and, in fact, fallacious.⁶⁹

Furthermore, the text elicits the following three social markers that address the issues and concerns of purity, namely, αἷματι (blood) at 8.7-8, εἰδωλα (idols) at 9.20, and πορνείας (sexual immorality) at 9.21, at the beginning of the focus text and at the end of the passage about the sixth trumpet respectively. The authorial audience would have identified αἷματι as a social marker because it belonged to a social institution, that of the temple or altar. Rituals, involving blood, were at the core of worship in the first-century and were fundamental to community life.⁷⁰ I pointed out earlier that the symbol marker of αἷματι in 8.7-9 is used as a symbol of destruction, but strikingly, is also used by the implied author earlier on in the narrative to symbolize the death of Christ in 5.9. What is now efficacious for redemption and freedom from sin is this blood of the Lamb, demonstrating what a potent symbol it becomes for the implied author.

Purity derives from what the Lamb has done, not what the audience has done. In Revelation the Lamb's blood becomes a metaphor of purification when the saints and "the Word of God" wash their robes in it. In the implied author's description washing one's garments in blood becomes a symbol of either purification and belonging (7.14) or

⁶⁸ David A. deSilva, "Toward a Socio-Rhetorical Taxonomy of Divine Intervention," in *Fabrics of Discourse, Essays in Honor of Vernon K Robbins*, eds. David B. Gowler, L. Gregory Bloomquist, and Duane F. Watson (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 309.

⁶⁹ According to A. E. Harvey, *A Companion to the New Testament*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 806, "the god Apollo was normally beneficent, but was occasionally thought to be an agent of pestilence and destruction." This historical depiction adds further weight to the duplicitous nature of the emperor brought out in my discussion.

⁷⁰ Steven J. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John: Reading Revelation in the Ruins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 195.

empowerment (19.13; cf. 12.11). The implied author adds further dimensions to the understanding of blood in Rev 19.1-2, which reads: “After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants.” The social marker of blood is used as a means of judgment on the empire.⁷¹

The second social marker is the concept of εἰδωλα (9.20). Aune points out that the term is found only twice in Revelation, here and in 22.15, while specific forms of idolatry are found in 2.14, 20. I have already pointed out its value as a symbol marker in the chapter on intertexture and the meaning-making associations it would have engendered. It will be recalled that both the symbol markers of εἰδωλα and πορνείας were discovered in Acts 15.20. The thematic context of Acts 15 pointed to the conflict between the Jewish and Gentile Christians.

The insertion of this echo in 9.20 draws on the complexities of the intra-Christian conflict in the authorial audience that has one aspect in common with the conflict in Acts.⁷² While the concern in 9.20 is εἰδωλα the seemingly very different matter in 2.14, 20 is that of εἰδωλόθυτα. Even so, the heart of the issue is that of rendering allegiance and loyalty to these εἰδωλα whether in eating or worship. The primary concern, in both Acts 15.20 and Rev 2.14 and 20, is the issue of eating meat offered to idols and sexual immorality.

The third social marker that needs further explication is πορνεία.⁷³ In the social context of the first-century world this word would have been associated with a woman’s unfaithfulness to her husband. This understanding would have been based on the metaphorical notion in the OT that the covenant represents a marriage between God and Israel (Hos 1.2; Ezek 16.23). Later Jewish writers continued to associate the Gentiles with the unfaithful as they were outside of the covenant. Πορνεία came to constitute a boundary marker, distinguishing and separating those who were clean from those who were unclean. Hence πορνεία is a social marker that refers to the whole enterprise of absorption into the

⁷¹ Mounce, *Revelation*, revised, 178, maintains that “the blood refers to the color of the storm rather than the fire and destruction that the lightning would cause.”

⁷² Cf. Duff, *Who Rides the Beast?*, 31-47; Thomas B. Slater, “On the Social Setting of the Revelation to John,” *NTS* 44 (1998): 232-56 and David A. deSilva, “The Social Setting of the Revelation to John: Conflict Within, Fears Without,” *WTJ* 54 (1992): 273-302.

⁷³ For the NT background to this word see G. Fitzler, *EDNT*, Vol. 3, 137-39.

Greco-Roman world. Such assimilation involves placing allegiance and loyalty with the empire, which is unthinkable. The implications for the construct of purity in relation to the three aforementioned concepts emerge in the context of defilement.

The centrality of the notion of purity and defilement in the first-century world is seen in the work of Josephus. People are said to be pure from or innocent of sin (*A. J.* 19.315), murder (*A. J.* 6.307), bribery (*Vita* 79.5) and wickedness (*A. J.* 1.75). Josephus also maintains the distinctions of ritual purity: lepers were μὴ καθαρὰς (*A. J.* 9.74); Saul eats his food in purity and he assumes that David does the same (*A. J.* 6.236) and meat should be ritually pure (σάρκας ποιῆσαι καθαρὰς, *A. J.* 6.120). This brief foray into Josephus' works demonstrate that purity was central to Jewish thinking in the first-century.⁷⁴

The message from the use of these social markers is that the authorial audience will be defiled by accommodation to the dictates of Greco-Roman culture and the influence of teachers who were opposed to the message of Revelation. Hence, even though Revelation enlists symbolic language to convey its message and lacks the intentional univocal referentiality of the gospels or epistles, concepts of honour, shame and purity are embedded in the focus text.

4. **Final Cultural Categories**

Countercultural rhetoric is an essential rejection of the overt and fluctuating characteristics of the dominant rhetoric. Furthermore, counterculture rhetoric or alternative culture rhetoric is

a culturally heretical rhetoric that evokes “a new future,” not an alien rhetoric that evokes the preservation of an “old culture (real or imagined).” ... Counterculture rhetoric evokes the creation of “a better society, but not by legislative reform or by violent opposition to the dominant culture.” The theory of reform manifest in its rhetoric provides an alternative and hopes “that the dominant society will ‘see the light’ and adopt a more ‘humanistic’ way of life.” In other words, “social reform is not a preoccupation” of counterculture rhetoric. It evokes a willingness to live one’s own life and let the members of dominant society go on

⁷⁴ In relation to Revelation, according to David deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2000), 301-02, “John makes extensive use of purity language in Revelation, much of which serves the purpose of reinforcing the boundary between the Christian group and the dominant culture at a time when the boundary threatens to become porous on account of the preaching of the Nicolaitans and local prophets like “Jezebel” (Rev 2.6, 14-15, 20), in whose eyes participation in dinners involving idolatry is not a betrayal of their Christian calling.” Purity is a dominant value in the first-century C.E. context as is attested in the issues and debates of its importance in the NT literature. The literature is vast but the following provide an entry point to the discussion. Cf. John H. Elliot, “The Epistle of James in Rhetorical and Social Scientific Perspective: Holiness-Wholeness and Patterns of Replication,” *BTB* 23 (1993), 71-81; Jerome H. Neyrey, “The Idea of Purity in Mark’s Gospel,” *Semeia* 35 (1986): 91-128.

with their “madness.” ... Fully developed counterculture rhetoric expresses a constructive image of a better way of life.⁷⁵

In the chapter on intertexture it was discovered that the eschatological judgment of the focus text is against the Roman empire. This empire - the dominant culture that “presents a system of attitudes, values, dispositions and norms” invested with power – has usurped the prerogatives and insignia of God and will rightfully encounter the wrath of God. An important question that needs to be addressed is how exactly does the dominant culture represent and legitimize itself? In turn what is the response of the authorial audience to this representation and legitimization?

A brief three-fold sketch of the ideological dimensions involved in the narrative of Revelation will now be outlined to portray the demonstration and legitimization of the dominant culture and attempt an answer to the first question raised earlier.⁷⁶ Since the textures interpenetrate, it is fitting to address ideological concerns in the context of the social and cultural texture. In harmony with Warren Carter and Craig Koester, three key areas of imperial ideological legitimation, namely, sovereignty and political domination, presence and imperial cult, and well-being and economic networks, will be examined.⁷⁷ Domitian is made reference to because he emerges in the intratextual dynamics of Rev 1.16, 9.1 and 9.11.⁷⁸

The dominant culture - that of the Roman empire – firstly exerted her power and prestige through political domination and sovereignty. It is patently evident that state propoganda and historical sources of the late first-century and early second-century C.E. point in the direction of Domitian’s desire for divine status.⁷⁹ According to Nelson Kraybill, after sponsoring the Secular Games of 88 C.E. Domitian struck a series of coins “celebrating both the games and the advent of a new golden century, the Flavian era.”⁸⁰ He suggests that Domitian is depicted as larger than life on the representation of the coin. Three people are

⁷⁵ Partial definition found on www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/c_defns.html. Accessed on 9 June, 2009.

⁷⁶ Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John*, 203, also has a brief discussion on legitimacy and raises a number of similar questions to mine.

⁷⁷ Warren Carter, “Toward an Imperial-Critical Reading of Matthew’s Gospel,” *SBL Seminar Papers* (1998): 296-324. Carter engages in a fourth called “human agency” which I have omitted. Cf. Craig Koester, “Revelation’s Visionary Challenge to Ordinary Empire,” *Int* 63 (2009):5-19.

⁷⁸ See pp. 128-32.

⁷⁹ See the references in Carter, *Toward an Imperial Critical Reading*, 305. *Contra*, Thompson, *The Book of Revelation*, 104-15.

⁸⁰ Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John’s Apocalypse*, 62-3.

kneeling, evidently in homage to Domitian.⁸¹ This argument must be kept in balance with the earlier position put forward, namely, that even though Domitian did not enforce the state-wide persecution of Christians he was still the most powerful figure in the empire.

The second thread that articulates ideological legitimation is that of presence. The overwhelming presence of the empire is legitimated and realized primarily through the institution of the imperial cult.⁸² While the roots of emperor worship lay deep in ANE cultures, the Roman empire made its own contribution by organizing and refining it into a unifying political force.⁸³ This is one of the central features of the Roman empire that the implied author castigates in chapter 13 in particular.⁸⁴ The legitimacy, depth and influence of the imperial cult on the authorial audience is evidenced in the first-century by an imperial temple being built in Smyrna (45 C.E.), in Philadelphia (55 C.E.) and in Sardis (56 C.E.).⁸⁵ In my view, the erection of the imperial temples in Laodicea (87 C.E.) and Ephesus (89 C.E.) became the catalytic spark that necessitated the implied author's belligerent attack on Rome.⁸⁶

A second manner in which the empire, and in particular Domitian, legitimated the reality of presence is through the images (coins, buildings and monuments) that pervaded and

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² The literature on the subject of imperial cult is substantial. Cf. Brian W. Jones, *The Emperor Domitian* (London: Routledge, 1992) and Idem., *The Emperor Titus* (Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1984), 152-57. For further sources see Larry J. Kreitzer, *Striking New Images: Roman Imperial Coinage and the New Testament World*, JSNTSup 134 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 69-70.

⁸³ Kreitzer, *Striking New Images*, 96.

⁸⁴ The landmark presentation of the view that the priesthood of the imperial cult is the second beast of Rev 13.11-18 is by Charles, *Commentary*, 1, 345-67. For a discussion that situates Revelation on "the plane of first century imperial history," see Ian Boxall, *Revelation: Vision and Insight* (London: SPCK, 2002), 39-42.

⁸⁵ The extent and influence of the imperial cult cannot be overstated. Price, *Rituals and Power*, 134, states that there were eighty imperial temples in sixty cities in Asia Minor. In addition, according to Price, *Rituals and Power*, 109, the cult was celebrated not only in temples, but also in the major civic centres, councils, theatres, stadiums and gymnasiums.

⁸⁶ Interestingly, Price, *Rituals and Power*, 197-98 and Court, *Myths*, 100, support my idea. Price believes it was the dedication of the temple to Domitian and his relatives that prompted the writing of Revelation. For weighty evidence, which includes primarily inscriptions, for the establishment of the imperial cult in Ephesus under Domitian's rule see S. J. Friesen, *Twice Neokoros: Ephesus, Asia and the Cult of the Flavian Imperial Family* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 41-49. He states that "the inscriptions reveal that the provincial cult of the Sebastoi in Ephesus occasioned concerns about the relationships among the cities of Asia. The free cities and the others used the opportunity of the temple dedication to make a statement about their role in the cult, their reverence for the emperor and their relationship to Ephesus." Giancarlo Biguzzi, "Ephesus, Its Artemis, Its Temple to the Flavian Emperors, and Idolatry in Revelation," *NovT* 40 (1998): 276-90, suggests that it is exactly this explosion of Flavian devotion in Ephesus that may have led to an intensification of emperor worship for the early Christians.

indeed dominated the everyday life of the authorial audience.⁸⁷ In fact, Zanker states that “the physical setting of the cult of the emperor was usually in the middle of the city.”⁸⁸ The use of coins in implanting the ideas of sovereignty in the empire in the first strand points to the fact that these strands cannot be seen in isolation but rather interpenetrate each other. Certainly the coins that were struck under Domitian’s reign emphasized the present nature of the desire and persuance of the insignia and prerogatives of divinity in the Flavian dynasty.⁸⁹ Janzen contends that it is this “ever-escalating numismatic propoganda of the imperium” that could have been a direct factor in shaping John’s response to the empire.⁹⁰ Furthermore, Scott suggests that temples and coins associate Domitian with the divine powers of the gods.⁹¹

Strikingly, Carradice observes about two hundred and eleven coin types relating to Domitian’s reign. On the basis of his observations he concludes:

Not only does Domitian himself appear on an unprecedented quantity of the designs, but the deities which appear most commonly also had in contemporary legend the most intimate associations with him. Domitian even appears on one reverse type holding a divine attribute (the thunderbolt of Jupiter) and the regular use of the aegis on the obverse portrait adds to the impression that the coinage was being employed to protect an ideological message related to the Emperor’s aspirations to divinity.⁹²

The final strand to be explored is that of well-being. At the heart of the concept of well-being is the pervasive system of patronage that dominated the ordinary relationships that constituted Greco-Roman culture. Imperial ideology contended that the well-being of the world depended on the emperor and submission to him. An intricate and sustained network of relationships existed between the emperor all the way down to the freedman or slave in relation to the *beneficia* that emanated from the emperor. In turn a steady flow of *gratia* proceeded to the higher social classes in loyalty and honour. It is well documented that from

⁸⁷ Larry J. Kreitzer, *Striking New Images: Roman Imperial Coinage and the New Testament World*, JSNTSup 134 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 76.

⁸⁸ Paul Zanker, “The Power of Images,” in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 73.

⁸⁹ Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John’s Apocalypse*, 63.

⁹⁰ E.P. Janzen, “The Jesus of the Apocalypse Wears the Emperor’s Clothes,” in *SBL Seminar Papers*, ed. E.H. Lovering, Jr. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 656-657.

⁹¹ Scott, *Imperial Cult*, 126-32, cited in Carter, *Toward Imperial Critical Reading*, 306.

⁹² I. Carradice, *Coinage and Finances in the Reign of Domitian, A.D. 81-96*, BAR International Series 178 (Oxford: B.A.R., 1983), 170. Other arguments for Domitian seeking divinity can be found in Janzen, “The Jesus of the Apocalypse Wears the Emperor’s Clothes,” 645.

the time of Augustus and subsequent emperors, *beneficia* is showered upon loyal clients in Asia Minor in particular.⁹³

A direct response to the three strands dominant in an imperial ideology now follows. The first strand concerns sovereignty over human history. As pointed out, imperial ideology asserts that history is under the Flavians, and in particular Domitian, as viceregent to rule over human affairs. The main question to be addressed is, “to whom does the sovereignty of the world belong?” Essentially, who is in charge of human affairs?⁹⁴ The implied author is unequivocal in the position that it is God who is sovereign. It is God who takes his great power and begins to reign (11.17) making the empire of this world the empire of God and his Christ. The reign of God is inaugurated with the victory of the slain Lamb.

While not overtly mentioned in the focus text, the opening sequence (Rev 8.2-6) alluded to the death of Christ in the altar and trumpet blast. Hence, the focus text points to the death of Christ as the means by which God judges the world and carries out his justice. At the cross-section of faith and accommodation, obedience and assimilation, God and Domitian, whatever the claims of Jezebel and Balaam, there is no ambivalence or ambiguity in the narrative. Therefore, while “the emperor cannot be ignored, he does not define ultimate reality. Caesar has power, but God is sovereign.”⁹⁵

The second thread to be explored is that of divine presence. Imperial ideology claims that Domitian manifests the presence of the gods, in particular, that of Apollo. The presence of God is depicted as the narrative begins in 8.2-6 and also as the narrative concludes in 11.15-18. The presence of God is also seen in the divine passives littered throughout the focus text. By contrasting the singular symbol marker to the person of Domitian in 9.11 with the multiple references to God in the focus text the implied author demonstrates who in this visionary narrative has the more dominating presence, it is clearly God and not Domitian. By this the implied author seeks to alert the authorial audience to the reality of the presence of God, not only in the narrative but active in their midst as well.

⁹³ Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John's Apocalypse*, 79. This is probably the case because Asia Minor had been given as a gift by King Attalus to Augustus in 133 B.C.E.

⁹⁴ Carter, *Toward an Imperial-Critical Reading*, 317.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 318.

Moreover, presence is also highlighted in the images, coinage and monuments that Domitian erected, distributed and built.⁹⁶ In the focus text, particularly the passage about the fifth and sixth trumpet, the implied author has compiled one of the most concentrated sections of allusion, echo and image than anywhere else in this narrative. As Domitian dominates the landscape and horizon of the authorial audience, so the implied author dominates the focus text with an array of markers and images. The implied author invites the audience to a visual and auditory feast, a feast of noise with angelic trumpet blasts, heavenly voices and eschatological eagles shouting and a feast for the eyes with provocative imagery and suggestive markers, what Robbins calls “image-descriptive structuring.”⁹⁷ The implied author does this to “purge and refurbish the Christian imagination.”⁹⁸ This apocalyptic text seeks to unmask the construction of domination by the empire and seeks to provide a different way of perceiving the world and leading the authorial audience to resist and challenge the effects of the dominant ideology.⁹⁹

Furthermore, Robbins argues that early Christian apocalyptic rhetorlect emphasizes the role of the eye. This rhetorlect does not consider it helpful to look at the created world to understand the way God works in the world. The world, on the basis of the special topics considered earlier, is in dire need of reform and transformation. To understand God’s dealings with humanity “a person needs to gain a vision of heaven.”¹⁰⁰ This vision of heaven is obtained by means of the implied author. Only by seeing what is happening in heaven can a person see and comprehend how God is presently transforming the world and how he will do so in the future. This heavenly perspective is what is supplied to the authorial audience in the focus text. The need for the implied author’s perspective is further required because culture, when it is in the service of empire, “will not allow for a serious discussion of alternatives.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ According to D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, Vol. I (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 578, Domitian sponsored numerous projects at Laodicea, Smyrna and Ephesus. Cf. S. J. Friesen, *Twice Neokoros: Ephesus, Asia and the Cult of the Flavian Imperial Family*, 41-9. Christopher A. Frilingos, *Spectacles of Empire: Monsters, Martyrs, and the Book of Revelation* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) provides further insightful analysis on the power of images, spectacles and theatricality under the Roman empire.

⁹⁷ Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 335.

⁹⁸ Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, 159-60.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 346.

¹⁰¹ Howard-Brook and Gwyther, *Unveiling Empire*, 101.

Imperial ideology asserts a third claim, that the well-being of the world depends on Domitian and submission to him. For participants in the dominant culture, the gods through Domitian have gifted the necessities of life to them, even though this comes at the social and economic expense of the authorial audience, who were by an large subjugated and marginalized.¹⁰² Therefore, it is this very notion that the implied author is seeking to disentangle those in the community who were embracing the virtues and values of the empire of the world from. The audience, including the inhabitants of the earth, is being challenged not to embrace the dictates and norms of this worldly empire, but rather to live as an alternate culture, imitating Jesus who gave his life for others.

5. Summary

From the analysis of the social and cultural texture it has become clear that the implied author has sought the transformation of the authorial audience, to orientate and re-orientate their perspective and ethos from one particular standpoint to another, that embraces a different worldview and position. The implied author's primary aim has been "the shaping of the life of the Christian communities."¹⁰³ The implied author offers the text as an alternative way to perceive reality, thus challenging the self-understanding of the authorial audience and in particular the inhabitants of the earth.¹⁰⁴ Between the shaping of the text and the appropriation of the text by the authorial audience "a creative tension develops which calls for the affirmation of the status quo or for the openness and courage to accept a new self-understanding."¹⁰⁵

Hence, the constructs of inner texture and intertexture have *exposed* the underlying reality of the contemporary situation the audience face, and secondly, the implied author has sought to *persuade* the audience toward appropriating a new way of thinking and living in the first-century milieu. The heuristic constructs of inner texture and intertexture have demonstrated the potentiality of the focus text to bring about change "in ways that can productively transform horizons, attitudes, criteria of relevance or even communities and

¹⁰² Carter, *Toward an Imperial Critical Reading*, 320-21.

¹⁰³ Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians*, 12.

¹⁰⁴ See Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 349-50, for a useful discussion with respect to different views of reality and the role of evil in perceiving reality.

¹⁰⁵ B. C. Latagan, "Hermeneutics" in *ABD*, D. N. Freedman, editor, Vol. 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 149-154 (154).

inter-personal situations”... This process of engagement and dialogue for the authorial audience leads to a re-ranking of expectations, assumptions and goals. In actualizing the text the boundaries of the audience have been extended.¹⁰⁶

One of the means by which the shaping and transformation of the audience has taken place is through the appropriation of the symbol markers enlisted in the previous chapter and the social markers in the present chapter. Social markers come from an institution (altar and hence the temple, army), represent social codes (honor, purity and shame), a social relationship (patron) and also the social world (trees, ships, grass, locusts and scorpions). I pointed out that there were a range of symbol markers that pointed to the enemies of God. Drawing on the deep reservoir of the OT and Jewish apocalyptic, the implied author depicts the nations of Egypt (8.7-12), Babylon (8.8; 9.14) and the city of Sodom (9.2, 17) through allusion and echo. These nations were the enemies of God and his people in the OT.¹⁰⁷ It should come as no surprise then that the social and cultural texture portrays revolutionist social rhetoric which seeks the destruction of the world.

The contemporary antagonist of God and his people, the Roman empire, is seen through the filter of allusion and echo that the symbol markers direct the implied reader to. The implied author is seeking to persuade the authorial audience toward an apposite way of thinking and living in the first-century world. The symbol markers point therefore to the enemies of God in the context of the cosmic conflict, which depicts the role of Satan, while the social markers point to spiritual and economic matters in the context of both reformist and revolutionist social rhetoric.

Like David Barr, I do not wish to spell out what exactly the economic and spiritual matters are.¹⁰⁸ The rhetorical force of the focus text is to teach the authorial audience to see the world from the perspective of the implied author. The text is constructed and the narrative

¹⁰⁶ Anthony Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 6-8 cf. 1-54. Similarly, David L. Barr, “The Apocalypse as a Symbolic Transformation of the World: A Literary Analysis,” *Int* 38 (1984): 49, writes that the reader who allowed themselves to be drawn into the symbolic world of the book of Revelation “would be transformed, and so would the world they live in for they would understand that world differently... This is just what the Apocalypse does. This is no ephemeral experience. The hearers are decisively changed. They now live in another world.”

¹⁰⁷ According to Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 341, the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the ten plagues of Egypt are two points of the apocalyptic storyline used by the writers of the NT. Robbins has four other points to the storyline which do not explicitly feature in this work.

¹⁰⁸ David L. Barr. “Who Says? Who Hears? The Narrative Rhetoric of John’s Apocalypse.” www.wright.edu/~david.barr/rhet.htm. Accessed on 11 February 2010.

plot unfolds in the focus text to see the power and hegemony of the Roman empire. The implied author is trying to teach the audience that they are not Roman subjects but rather followers of the Lamb. Revelation persuades

its audience to despise Rome and resist Roman power and culture. *It would lead me much too far afield to try to spell out what this would have meant in first-century Roman Asia Minor* when any participation in culture involved participation in religion—whether family or state, from education to employment, from sport to theater, from bathing to eating meat sold in the market--all involved some token recognition of divinity” [my emphasis].¹⁰⁹

These issues will be explored further in the ideology embedded in the focus text.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. [my emphasis]

CHAPTER 5

IDEOLOGICAL TEXTURE

Texts don't allow us to apprehend "real" history directly, but that needn't disallow interest in the events surrounding texts and their production.The realities of power and authority – as well as the resistances offered by men, woman and social movements to institutions, authorities and orthodoxies – are the realities that make texts possible, that deliver them to their readers, that solicit the attention of critics.¹

In this chapter I seek to explore how the text evokes "the realities of power and authority" as inscribed within this apocalyptic text and how the author portrays resistance to the "institutions, authorities and orthodoxies" to the authorial audience. Ideology may be understood as "an integrated system of beliefs, assumptions, and values" that reflects "the needs and interests of a group or class at a particular time in history."² Moreover, ideology is an integrated system that begins with an individual or group attempting to interpret and understand self and others and hence to establish their place and position in the community and world. One's ideology is shaped by specific views of reality shared by individuals and groups – specific perspectives on what constitutes the world, community and persons and the limitations and potentialities of humankind.³

I would like to re-introduce a new marker in this section of work, called an *ideological marker*.⁴ An ideological marker is a marker that is implanted in the text of Revelation which has distinctly ideological characteristics. While social markers are concerned with the social happenings, social experience and the social interactions of the first-century world, ideological markers are determined by issues of dominance, agency and legitimacy. These markers are indicated in the text by referencing positions, places, concepts, things and people which relate to matters of power, sovereignty and authority.

In addition, the ideological marker is not concerned with prior literature, but rather with the issues and structures that challenge and demoralize the belief system and values of the authorial audience. Ideological markers reveal the hidden intricacy behind the text. The

¹ Edward Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 4-5.

² Davis, (1975), 14, cited in Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 96. For a discussion on ideology and attempts at definition see Ricki E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 34 ff.

³ John Elliot, *A Home for the Homeless: A Social-Scientific Criticism of 1 Peter: Its Situation and Strategy*, reprint (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1990), 268, cited in Robbins, *Exploring*, 96.

⁴ See initial discussion on p. 52.

following ideological markers are analysed in this chapter: throne, water, sun, moon, stars, key, power, war, worship and kingdom. In addressing the ideological markers embedded in the focus text I aim also to attempt a deeper probe of the rhetorical nature of the ideology within the whole of the focus text. In fact, Bloomquist contends that this is a weakness in Robbins approach to ideological texture.⁵

1. Ideological Markers

No matter what texture or construct is being enlisted to study the text, the interpreter can never stray far from the intratextual and intertextual nature of Revelation in order to provide responsible interpretation. Hence, in examining the ideological markers, the density of the text must be kept in mind. In addition, however, because I am not attempting to establish allusions and echoes, Hays' criteria will not be deployed.

While the ideological marker of throne (θρόνος) appears in 8.3, it's first mention of consequence in relation to 8.3 is in Rev. 4.2.⁶ The use of the image of trumpet at 4.1, with its extensive usage in the focus text, as well as the seismic phenomena at 4.5 and 8.5, helps to underscore the intratextual link between 8.3 and 4.2. In the introduction of this ideological marker of throne in Rev. 4, the implied author draws on imagery that locates the throne of God in opposition to the throne of the emperor, demonstrating the sovereignty of God, particularly over this empire.⁷

According to Aune, many features of the worship scene in Rev 4 derive from pagan worship and the imperial cult.⁸ The emperor utilized a movable throne which he would take with him on his travels and he would be surrounded by officials. Apparently, Domitian had

⁵ L. Gregory Bloomquist, "Paul's Inclusive Language: The Ideological Texture of Romans 1," in *Fabrics of Discourse*, 165-193 (172).

⁶ The throne is first mentioned in Rev 1.6.

⁷ I think this comparison and contrast of God's throne and the emperor's throne is further justified on the basis that God's throne in the OT "takes its imagery from the earthly throne." See the discussion by Schmitz, *TDNT*, Vol. 3, 162.

⁸ Cf. David E. Aune, "The Influence of Roman Imperial Court Ceremonial on the Apocalypse of John," *BR* 28 (1983): 5-26. Further, David Marshall, *Apocalypse! Has the Countdown Begun?* (Lincolnshire: Autumn House, 2000), 60 writes: "Just as the Roman emperor was depicted as surrounded by his friends and advisers when dispensing justice, so is God here seen surrounded by hosts of the exalted angelic order and the representation of the redeemed humanity." Marshall is probably indebted to Charles, *Revelation*, 1. 129; Caird, *Revelation*, 63; and Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, 498-99, who suggest the idea of "exalted angelic order." For a balanced assessment of both the OT and Greco-Roman imagery in Rev 4 see Russell Morton, "Glory to God and to the Lamb: John's Use of Jewish and Hellenistic/Roman Themes in Formatting His Theology in Revelation 4-5," *JSNT* 83 (2001): 89-109. For a perspective that leans toward Jewish insights see L. W. Hurtado, "Revelation 4-5 in the Light of Jewish Apocalyptic Analogies," *JSNT* 25 (1985): 105-24.

24 officials that would serve as his travelling entourage (cf. Rev 4.4).⁹ Interestingly, the implied author refers to elders in Rev 4.4, while in the OT it was only the priests who could enter God's presence. Elders normally came out to greet the Emperor upon his arrival at their city. The use of the word elders, following first-century practise, could lead the authorial audience to comprehend this role and function for the term.¹⁰

The implied author, in polemical fashion, intentionally desires to contrast the vision of the throne of God with that of the emperor.¹¹ One of the ways the implied author does this is by enlisting wealth imagery for both the throne of God and the throne of the emperor. Revelation 4.3 refers to God's person as being like jasper and carnelian while the rainbow around the throne is like an emerald. The jasper may refer to a diamond and is possibly enlisted to portray the divine glory of God as it is the only stone used in Rev 21 to demonstrate the glory of God.¹² All three stones were regarded in antiquity as being precious stones.¹³ In verse 4 the twenty four elders are wearing crowns of gold. This leads Royalty to conclude that "God wears jewels and God's throne shines with jewels..."¹⁴ The evocation of the throne of God in 8.3 would bring the associations and connotations of Rev 4 to bear in understanding the term in the focus text.

The second ideological marker is that of water found in 8.11 (ὕδατων). In fact, from the passage about the second trumpet onward there are numerous references to aspects of water, namely, the sea and rivers. Since ideology is concerned with a system of beliefs,

⁹ Beale, *Revelation*, 323-26, provides six interpretational options and defends the 24 elders as 12 representing the OT tribes and 12 pointing to the NT apostles; Bousset, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, 289-92, argues that the 24 elders are heavenly representatives of the community of faith, combining the 12 OT patriarchs with the 12 NT apostles. Contra Charles, *Revelation*, 1.128-33, who contends that they must be an order of angels. For a brief recount of the perspective of the early Christian commentators on the meaning of the 24 elders see Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 228. He also contends that the 24 elders point to the authors of the OT. Idem, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 229. In a similar vein, Keener, *Revelation*, 172, believes they are the 24 courses of priests in the OT and Boring, *Revelation*, 106, understands them to be the heavenly representatives of the church.

¹⁰ I. Howard Marshall, Stephen Travis, Ian Paul, *Exploring the New Testament*, Vol. 2, The Letters and Revelation (London: SPCK, 2002), 315-16.

¹¹ The imagery used to depict the throne of God in Rev 4, according to Osborne, *Revelation*, 227, could have been drawn on from Ezek. 28.13 where the king of Tyre is mentioned.

¹² Mounce, *Revelation*, revised, 120; Beale, *Revelation*, 321.

¹³ Mounce, *Revelation*, revised, 120. For an OT cultural perspective on these stones see Prigent, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 226.

¹⁴ Robert M. Royalty, Jr., *The Streets of Heaven: The Ideology of Wealth in the Apocalypse of John* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 48.

assumptions, and values, the authorial audience would engage the focus text against the backdrop of the dominant ideology, that of the Roman empire.

The authorial audience may see in the marker of water the Greek god of the water, Poseidon. This ideological reading is justified, for firstly, just as Yahweh engaged in warfare against the Egyptian gods in the Exodus tradition, which is an important OT reference in Rev 8.7-12, so here in the focus text, God symbolically engages in warfare against the Greco-Roman gods as well.¹⁵ In fact, the Nile was personified and worshipped as a god in Egypt, further strengthening the ideological implications of the marker of water.¹⁶ Secondly, this ideological reading of the focus text is supported as in Rev 12 the implied author employs Greek mythology to depict the combat myth at the allusive level.¹⁷ Thirdly, symbols in Revelation are “regularly subjected to shifting symbolization; that is, a particular referent is symbolized in different ways at different points.”¹⁸ This being the case, water can possibly be understood as referring to a Greco-Roman god and further strengthens my ideological reading.

Those in the authorial audience who were from a Greek background may understand Poseidon as the god of water in general, but also of rivers, springs and underground water.. According to H. J. Rose, Poseidon is also the god of horses, sometimes taking the shape of a horse. However, once the followers of Poseidon became acquainted with the sea, this was Poseidon’s “chief province.”¹⁹ Contrastingly, those in the audience who were of Roman origin, may have seen in the imagery deployed by the implied author a depiction of Neptune, the Roman god of the water and also of horses. Most interestingly, horses are enlisted by the implied author in 9.16-17 to depict the army of two hundred million. The heads of these horses were like the heads of lions (cf. 9.17), reinforcing the idea that these horses were indeed a symbolic depiction of a Greco-Roman god.²⁰ Pliny the Elder talks about the horse of

¹⁵ Cf. J. P. Hyatt, *Exodus*, NCBC, revised (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 99, “The story of the plagues is the account of a confrontation between Yahweh, God of the Hebrews, and the gods of Egypt – and Pharaoh himself was considered a god by his subjects.” So also James K. Bruckner, *Exodus*, NIBC (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 72, who states that the Egyptians believed Pharaoh was divine.

¹⁶ Enns, *Exodus*, 200, 205.

¹⁷ Keener, *Revelation*, 323.

¹⁸ Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John*, 187. He provides a number of examples of this phenomenon.

¹⁹ H. J. Rose, *Religion in Greece and Rome*, reprint (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), 56.

²⁰ According to Pierre Grimal, *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, translated by A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 389, Poseidon was also the progenitor of many mythical genealogies.

Caesar the Dictator, whose horse did not let anyone else mount it and that it had feet like those of a man. Apparently there was a statue of this horse in front of the Temple of Venus Genetrix. Further, the late Augustus also made “a funeral mound for a horse,” indicating that the horse symbolism could have taken on an ideological meaning for the authorial audience.²¹

Out of the mouths of these horses came three plagues, fire, smoke and brimstone that destroyed a third of humankind (cf. 9.17). Apparently, it was the power in these horses, specifically in their tails and mouths, that brought about the death of a third of humankind. The tails on these horses look like serpents, which once more suggests the implied author is drawing on the myth of Poseidon, since he was represented as riding a chariot drawn by monstrous animals, half-horse and half-serpent.²²

The third ideological marker is sun (ἡλίου) depicted in Rev 8.12. Commentators generally examine the intertextual dynamics of this word as well as joining the ideas of sun, moon and stars in their analysis and fail to scrutinize the ideological implications of these concepts.²³ The ideological implications of the word sun (ἡλίου) for the authorial audience would involve issues of loyalty, in the context of worship, and sovereignty. In an influential monograph, Gaston Halsberghe presented persuasive evidence to suggest that up until the end of the first-century C.E. the Romans “worshipped and prayed to Sol as one of their Di indigites (i.e. native or autochthonous gods).”²⁴ Beginning from the second-century C.E. the Eastern cult of Sol Invictus penetrated into Rome in two ways. Firstly, the cult gained

There is the myth about a horse in connection with the love affair between Poseidon and Demeter which produced a daughter, Adratus. It was forbidden to mention her name. The horse Areion, which Adratus apparently rode in an expedition of the Seven against Thebes, is associated with their love affair.

²¹ Pliny, *Nat.*, VIII, LXIV, 109.

²² Ibid.

²³ See Beale, *Revelation*, 482-85; Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 522-23; Mounce, *Revelation*, revised, 181, discusses the impact of the darkness, rather than the image of sun. While Beale examines the OT and Jewish implications of the use of sun, Aune studies the Greek background. Neither of these scholars looks at the ideological ramifications of the use of this imagery.

²⁴ Gaston H. Halsberghe, *The Cult of Sol Invictus* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 26-37. Significant evidence submitted by Halsberghe that attests the existence of sun worship in Rome already prior to 100 C.E. includes: A calendar of the time of Augustus (the Fasti of Philocalus date before 27 B.C.E.) where besides the date of August 9th it reads: “Soli indigitti in colle Quirinal – to the native Sun on Quirinali hill”...; two obelisks sent to Rome by Augustus after the conquest of Egypt (31 B.C.E) which were “dedicated to the Sun – Soli donum dedit” in the Circus Maximus and in Mars Field to thank the Sun-god for the victory. Another item of interest is the famous “Colossus Neronis” erected by Nero at the highest point of the Velia, which represented the sun with his own features and with seven long rays around his head.

momentum on a private scale through the cult of Sol Invictus Mithra and secondly, the cult gained momentum on a public scale through the cult of Sol Invictus Elagabal.²⁵

While the imagery of sun would have also brought to mind the dangers of worshipping the heavenly bodies (cf. Deut 4.19), the OT writers nevertheless regarded the heavenly bodies as subordinate to the worship of Yahweh (cf. Ps 19.1-6; 104.19). Perhaps for this reason Yahweh himself could be portrayed as the sun (cf. Ps 84.11) and in Revelation Christ is said to have a face shining like the sun (cf. Rev 1.16).²⁶ Even though the noun sun (ἡλίου) is used in 8.12, and these OT texts are part of the cultural world evoked by the use of the word sun, ideologically, I would like to suggest that the mention of this word would have brought the connotations and associations of sun worship to the authorial audience and refers to issues of sovereignty and authority. Further, the Romans also worshipped the god Apollo as the Sun god.²⁷ In Rev 8.12 the fourth trumpet is blown under the sovereign plan of God. As a result, at the sounding of the fourth trumpet the sun is darkened. The authorial audience would understand this as implying that the sun god, Sol, evoked in 8.12, is under the purposes and direction of God.

The fourth ideological marker is the heavenly image of moon (σελήνη) used in 8.12. Here again, this image would evoke the Roman god Luna or Diana for the authorial audience. The moon god was called Luna by the Romans but Selene or Artemis by the Greeks. The twin sister of Apollo, who I mentioned earlier, was Artemis or Diana, hence the mention of the sun and moon together in 8.12 is all the more plausible.²⁸ The moon god had three aspects, Diana in the heavens, Luna on earth and Hecate, goddess of witchcraft or possessor of keys, in the underworld.²⁹ In the literary context of 8.12 it is more likely that Diana is being portrayed. Once again the authorial audience would understand this as implying that the moon god, Diana, evoked in 8.12, is under the authority and supervision of God.

²⁵ Ibid., 46-55.

²⁶ John M. Court, *Myth and History in the Book of Revelation* (London: SPCK, 1979), 108.

²⁷ See www.roman-colosseum.info/roman-gods/apollo.htm. Accessed on 12 April, 2010.

²⁸ For a discussion on Apollo see Talfourd Ely, *The Gods of Greece and Rome* (New York: Dover Publications, 2003), 103-27. For a discussion of Artemis and Diana see also, Idem., *The Gods of Greece and Rome*, 128-48.

²⁹ Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 104

Another Greek god that emerges in this ideological reading is Ouranos (οὐρανός), the god of the sky.³⁰ In my work in inner texture, I pointed out that the word “heaven” is used on four occasions in the focus text, namely at 8.10, 13; 9.1 and 11.15.³¹ While the implied author has not used the Greek word for sky, the similarity between the words may alert the authorial audience to the ideological reading I am putting forward here. Most interestingly, 8.10 and 9.1 are pivotal texts for my argument for Satan or an aspect of Satan’s involvement in the focus text. This ideological reading therefore highlights the cosmic conflict from another perspective altogether, that of God engaged in symbolic battle against the gods of the Greeks and Romans who would have been well-known to the authorial audience.

The sixth marker found in 8.12 is stars (ἀστέρων). In the work completed in the chapter on intertexture I demonstrated the intertextual dynamics of the word star. Stars were thought of as gods or heavenly beings in the first-century world. While the sun and moon refer to specific gods, the stars are the place where the gods reside. Once again, the image of star in 8.12 demonstrates the superior power of God over, not only the gods of the first-century world, but also the place where the gods supposedly reside. The implied author is demonstrating the impotency of the Roman gods as the trumpets are deployed to portray the power of God to accomplish his own ends.

The seventh ideological marker is key found at Rev 9.1 (κλεῖς). The key is under the sovereignty of God as it “was given” (ἐδόθη) to the fifth angel.³² The implied author has already introduced the concept of the key in Rev 1.18. It reads: I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. Jesus Christ is the one who holds and controls the key of death and Hades. Blount maintains that

the implication is that the child of humanity, who was exiled to the abyss by way of the crucifixion, had laid claim to the key and used it to open the door and set himself free. According to 3.7, the child of humanity also possesses the key of David, a key that symbolizes the Son’s ability to open the eschatological realm of salvation, understood as a heavenly, Davidic reign.³³

The key functions to legitimate the rule of God and serves ideologically to demonstrate the sovereignty and authority of God.

³⁰ For information on this Greek god see Grimal, *Classical Mythology*, 463.

³¹ See pp. 61-2 for repetitive texture table.

³² See the discussion in Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 80.

³³ Blount, *Revelation*, 174.

The ideological marker of πόλεμον is used on only two occasions (Rev 9.7, 9) in the focus text and both of these are in the passage about the fifth trumpet. However, it is found on seven other occasions in Revelation (Rev 11.7; 12.7; 13.7; 16.14; 19.19; 20.8) and its lexical variation πόλεμέω is found six times (Rev 2.16; 12.7; 13.4; 17.14; 19.11).³⁴ The ideological value of this marker is that it had recently dominated the landscape of the audience in the Jewish war from 66-70 C.E. which had resulted in the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. In addition, the imagery in this trumpet, particularly depicting long hair in 9.8, possibly portrayed the feared Parthian invasion.³⁵ The reality of πόλεμον is certainly evident in these varied contexts. In addition, the implied author understood the Roman empire as having a corrupting influence on the people of the empire and that this influence came about because of Rome's military power. According to Bauckham,

the city of Rome grew great through military conquest, which brought wealth and power to the city, and its economic and cultural influence spread through the world in the wake of the imperial armies.³⁶

Thus the notion of war pervaded the reality of the authorial audience. The πόλεμον in Revelation is directed against the two witnesses (11.7), against the community of faith (12.7; 13.7), against the Lamb (17.14) and against the rider on the white horse (19.19) and finally against the city of God (20.8 ff.)³⁷ This ideological marker serves to draw attention to the implications of the cosmic conflict, which deepen as the narrative unfolds.

The ninth ideological marker is the idea of worship found in verbal form at 9.20 (προσκυνέω). From the work that was completed in the chapter on repetitive texture I deduced that the verb προσκυνέω occurred on two occasions in the focus text (9.20; 11.16).³⁸ One of the prevailing features of Revelation, both in form and in essence, is undoubtedly the

³⁴ Köstenberger and Bouchoc, *The Book Study Concordance*, 1507.

³⁵ Keener, *Revelation*, 268.

³⁶ Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 343.

³⁷ Bauernfeind, *TDNT*, Vol.6.514. For a complete discussion including the Greek and OT background see p. 502-15.

³⁸ The concept of worship had not been sufficiently studied until the landmark article by O. Piper, "The Apocalypse of John and the Liturgy of the Ancient Church," *CH* 20 (1951): 10-22, in which he criticized scholars for the lack of substantial discussion on the motif of worship in Revelation. Since that criticism however, the nature and extent of the concept of worship has been extensively discussed in the scholarly community. Cf. J.A. Draper, "The Heavenly Feast of Tabernacles," *JSNT* 19 (1983): 133-147; H. Ulfsgard, *Feast and Future: Revelation 7.9-17 and the Feast of Tabernacles* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1989). For a serious reflection on the hymns in Revelation see Michael A. Harris, *The Literary Functions of Hymns in the Apocalypse of John* (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1988) and Kendra Haloviak, *The Hymns in the Book of Revelation* (Ph.D. diss., Graduate Theological Union, 2002).

liturgical. Indeed, the language of worship dominates the book. Terms such as εὐχαριστίαν in 4.9 and 7.12, ἕδουσιν in 5.9, 14.3 and 15.3, εὐχαριστοῦμέν in 11.17, αἰνεῖτε in 19.5, δοξάσει in 15.4, 18.7 and δόξαν in 4.9, 11, 5.12, 11.13, 14.7, 16.9 and 19.7 demonstrate the importance of worship. Moreover, not only do the first (1.3) and the last (22.6) chapters evidently imply a liturgical setting but it is also the fact that the experience of the author takes place “on the Lord's day” (1.10).³⁹ It is therefore understandable when Leonard Thompson contends that “the language of worship plays an important role in unifying the book, that is, in making it a coherent apocalypse in form and content.”⁴⁰

In Revelation worship involves adoration of God's being and is evident in Rev 4.8 where the four living creatures acknowledge God's sovereignty as they refer to him as κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ.⁴¹ This compound name occurs seven times in Revelation (1.8; 4.8; 11.17; 15.3; 16.7; 19.6; 21.22). Of particular interest is the use of the term in 11.17. The use of the divine name here points to God employing his power to exercise his rulership over the cosmos. However “it is not the normal exercise of divine power, but that final and overwhelming display to which all prophecy points.”⁴²

Interestingly the use of the phrase κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ is always accompanied by the phrase ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος in 1.8; 4.8 and 11.17 but not in 15.3; 16.7; 19.6 and 21.22. Rather in 15.3 and 16.7 the implied author focuses on the justness and truthfulness of God's judgments as if a significant turning point has been reached in the narrative after 11.17. The phrase ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος serves, according to Beale, as a merism (indicating the totality of polarity) with a middle element “inserted to intensify the figurative significance of all-inclusiveness.”⁴³ The text points to God being deserving of

³⁹ Other liturgical aspects in the book include the baptismal formula (1:5-6), the concluding prayer “Come Lord Jesus” (22.20), the blessing of the final verse (22.21) as well as the numerous hymns, especially from ch. 4 onwards (4.8-11; 5.9-10) and doxologies (1.6; 5.13; 7.12).

⁴⁰ Thompson, *The Book of Revelation*, 53. One of the reasons for the extensive use of liturgical elements in the narrative may be attributed to the use of the Psalms in the book. See the helpful contribution by Moyise, “The Psalms in the Book of Revelation,” 231-46.

⁴¹ Mazie Nakhro, “The Meaning of Worship According to the Book of Revelation,” *Bib Sac* 158 (2001):75-85.

⁴² Swete, *Revelation*, 143.

⁴³ Beale, *John's Use*, 185. He writes: “In functioning as a heightened merism the phrase emphasizes, not a chronology of God's obvious existence, but His transcendence and sovereignty over all events throughout history. A middle element is added to these formulae to emphasize the present reality of God's sovereign transcendence. He acts in and rules over all history, including, and especially, the present: God was not only present and sovereign at the beginning of world history, and he will not only be sovereign and present at the end of history, but also he is sovereign and present at all points between the beginning and the end.”

worship because of who he is. The supposed turning point I hinted at earlier in the different phrases used in 15.3 and 16.7 can probably be attributed to the fact that in 11.17 the last part of the verse, ὁ ἐρχόμενος, is omitted as the end has arrived and it is now the time of judgment.⁴⁴ Hence, the focus on the justness and truthfulness of that judgment in 15.3 and 16.7.⁴⁵

Furthermore, the ideological features of this marker is found in the differing systems of worship the authorial audience would be challenged to respond to. Pagan religions pervaded virtually all spheres of civic life. Economic life is often connected with pagan religion, particularly the trade guilds for artisans, whose meetings often involved sacrifices to a god.⁴⁶ Attending the theatre, dining with a pagan family or friend, participating in a city festival, associating with a guild - all these facets of city life are meaningfully and intricately connected with pagan religiosity. Thus, worship plays a central role in both the cultural and social life of the city.

As the narrative of Revelation builds the characters and plot of the text deepens and intensifies as in Rev 13.11-18 the implied author presents the second beast, which probably represents the functionaries of the imperial cult (13.11-18), seeking to lead the whole world to worship the image of the sea-beast (13.12) who represents the imperial power in the context of the first-century world.⁴⁷ The implied author depicts the intensification of the battle between God and Satan with worship being a crucial issue for the authorial audience.

The tenth ideological marker is that of the empire of God, found at the end of the focus text.⁴⁸ This ideological marker points to the reality of two empires, the empire of God

⁴⁴ For a discussion of the background of the phrase ὁ ἐρχόμενος see Sean M. McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos: Rev. 1.4 in its Hellenistic and Early Jewish Setting*, WUNT 2., Reihe 107 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 214-17.

⁴⁵ According to Snyder, *The Combat Myth and the Day of the Lord*, 93, “the author of Revelation characteristically has a full expression, which is shortened or modified in other references. For example, “the word of God and the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 1.2, 9) becomes the “testimony of Jesus” (Rev. 12.17; 19.10), and even “testimony” (Rev. 6.9; 11.7; 12.11). The more complete expression “the smoke of their torment goes up for ever and ever” (Rev. 14.11) becomes “the smoke from her goes up for ever and ever” (Rev. 19.3)” and of course Rev. 11.17 would fit her categorization as well.

⁴⁶ Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce*, 110-32. See Lucian III, LCL, With an English translation by A. M. Harmon, reprint (London: Harvard University Press, 1969), 155-71, for a discussion of sacrifices to the gods.

⁴⁷ Richard J. Bauckham, “The Worship of Jesus in Apocalyptic Christianity,” *NTS* 27 (1981): 329, is correct when he asserts that in Revelation “the conflict between God and Satan takes historical form in the conflict of human allegiances manifest in worship.”

⁴⁸ I use the term “empire” here, following Howard-Brook and Gwyther, *Unveiling Empire*, 42. They have a useful discussion on the myth of empire and the counter-myth of the empire of God in *Unveiling Empire*, 224-25. Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 337, also uses the term “empire.”

(βασιλεία ... τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ) and the empire of the world (βασιλεία τοῦ κόσμου) (11.15) and it suggests that the issues and concerns addressed by the focus text is built on the premise of there being these two empires. The initial usage of the term king in 9.11 does indeed highlight the fact that Apollyon has an empire.

This empire would coincide with the empire of the world. On the basis of the two empires that are portrayed in 11.15 it is demonstrably evident that the cosmic conflict between God and Satan is being highlighted once more. Moreover, the notion of two opposing empires is not something found exclusively in the focus text but is indeed a dominating theme found across Revelation. A table follows that outlines the notion of the two conflicting empires in Revelation:

Table 8	
Empires in Collision	
God's Empire	Satan's Empire
The Divine Trinity: Father, Son and Spirit	The Evil Triad: Dragon, Sea-beast and Land-beast
The Almighty, who is, who was and who is to come (1.8)	The Beast, who is, who was and who is to come (17.8)
Michael (12.7)	Who is like the beast (13.4)
Throne of God (8.3)	Throne of Satan (2.13)
The Woman in heaven (12.1)	The Prostitute (17.1-4)
Wrath of the Lamb (6.16)	Wrath of the devil (12.12)
Stars in heaven (12.1)	Fallen stars (6.13; 8.10)
Marriage supper of the Lamb (19.9)	Babylon the great whore (17.5)
New Jerusalem (21.1)	Lake of Fire (20.15)

Each of the aforementioned concepts that pertain to God is found to have a counterpart in the anti-empire. In fact, the language of empire/kingdom is not anything pioneering but is rather a standard apocalyptic designation.⁴⁹ The coming of the empire in

⁴⁹ See Russell, *Method and Message*, 286.

Revelation, as in other apocalyptic works, designates the final climax of history and offers a solution to the mystery of God's dealings with his people. Since the idea of empire expresses the sovereignty of God, irrespective of what the anti-empire may copy or replicate, ultimately God is still sovereign.

The text seeks to draw on the imaginative power of the authorial audience, demonstrating in the ideological markers the reality of the conflict between the two empires.⁵⁰ In fact, in the letters to the seven churches, from which an understanding of the authorial audience is developed, the themes of false teachings, tribulation and apostasy are evident. God's empire has dominion over the empire of the world and in fact this anti-empire will eventually be destroyed. The authorial audience would see the throne as an ideological marker depicting, like the kingdom of God, the sovereignty of God. These two empires portray different systems of beliefs, assumptions, and values.

Most importantly, the manifestation of the empire in the larger narrative context of Revelation is the city of God, the New Jerusalem. One of the central features of the New Jerusalem vision is the chronicling and amplification of its wealth and opulence. In Rev. 21.10-14, the implied author has only one line with the attribution of wealth. It reads:

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

In fact, each of the elements in 21.10 draws on the earlier use of these elements in Rev 4.1-11. The elements include glory (4.9, 11); jasper (4.3) and crystal (4.6).

The implied author next focusses on the wealth of the city in Rev. 21.18-21 which reads:

The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.

⁵⁰ Edwin K. Broadhead, "Sacred Imagination and Social Protest," *Review and Expositor* 98 (2001): 77-85 (80), argues that imagination has a sacred dimension that the author employs and that it is this sacred dimension that depicts the final end of evil in the vision of a new reality offered by text. According to Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 283, "The apocalyptic revolution is a revolution of the *imagination*. It entails a challenge to view the world in a way that is radically different to the common perception. The revolutionary potential of such imagination should not be underestimated, as it can foster dissatisfaction with the present and generate visions of what might be"⁵⁰ [my emphasis]. Cf. Barr, *Tales of the End*, 9.

The empire of God is then portrayed in language that reflects a concern for wealth in the meticulous care with which the implied author mentions the various precious metals that comprise the city. Part of the persuasive strategy of the implied author is to entice the authorial audience into an acknowledgment of the wealth of God in contradistinction to the wealth of the Roman empire. Hence, both the ideological markers, throne of God and empire of God, are depicted in terms of wealth. The throne of God is used by the implied author to lead the implied reader to the significance of Rev 4, while the ideological marker of empire of God highlights not only the cosmic conflict but also leads the implied reader to Rev 21. The ideological markers hence draw on the entire narrative of Revelation.

The ideological marker of magic arts (φαρμάκων) in 9.20 is probably meant to heighten the complexity of the day to day issues faced by the authorial audience in the context of the cosmic conflict.⁵¹ The appearance of the magical arts in this vice list is significant “because magicians played an important role in the popular piety of the eastern Mediterranean region (Acts 19.18-19).”⁵² Elsewhere in Revelation, for example, Rev 1.18; 21.6 22.13, 20, the implied author has used “techniques, formulas and motifs from the world of pagan magical practise” to actually deny their magical and religious assumptions.⁵³ The implied author therefore demonstrates a strong anti-magic polemic with the inclusion of φαρμάκων in the vice list of 9.20.

2. Trumpets as Instruments of Power and Destruction

The ideology of the focus text, which in part is concerned with systems of power, is demonstrated particularly by the use of the trumpet on over fifteen occasions. In the earlier research into the background and significance of the trumpet, scholars focused on the battle, liturgical and eschatological aspects of this concept. The use of the trumpet as an instrument of destruction and power has been a glaring omission even though these categories are used in the focus text.

⁵¹ For a discussion on sorcery and magic in the NT see: Philip F. Esler, *The First Christians in their Social Worlds: Social Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 1994), 131-46; Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic*, SNTSM 63 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and J. Neyrey, “Bewitched in Galatia: Paul and Cultural Anthropology,” *CBQ* 50 (1988): 72-100.

⁵² Roloff, *Revelation*, 119-20.

⁵³ David E. Aune, “The Apocalypse of John and Graeco-Roman Revelatory Magic,” *NTS* 33 (1987): 481-501 (494). Ladd, *Revelation*, 138, maintains that “here it designates the use of magic portions and charms in incantations and degraded religious practices.”

The work in inner texture highlighted Rev 9.1-11 as the heart of the chiasm of the focus text. According to Lund, “*the centre is always the turning point. At the centre there is often a change in the trend of thought...*”⁵⁴ On the other hand, Blomberg contends that “the center of the chiasm should be a passage worthy of that position in light of its theological or ethical significance.”⁵⁵ In the passage about the fifth trumpet the notion of power is introduced in 9.3 and 10. Revelation 9.3 reads: “And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given (ἐδόθη) power like that of scorpions of the earth.” Revelation 9.10 reads: “They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months.” The fact that this notion is in the chiasm highlights the centrality of this idea in the interpretation of the focus text. The power mentioned in these verses has its origin in God, indicated by the divine passive mentioned in 9.3. Further, the power is mediated through or derived from the sounding of the trumpets. It is the blowing of the fifth trumpet that releases the locusts and scorpions with their power.⁵⁶

The sounding of each trumpet also unleashes devastation and havoc. The sounding of the first four trumpets affected the trees, grass, ships, the sun, the star and the sea, while the sounding of the last three trumpets saw humankind seriously affected by what resulted. Moreover, the trumpet judgments are God’s means of responding to the prayers of his people. Since they emanate from the throne of God (8.3), it may seem appropriate to state that God is ultimately responsible for the destruction meted out by these trumpets.

On the other hand, Rev 9.19 states: “For the power of the horses is in their mouth and in their tails: for their tails are like serpents, having heads, and they inflict injury with them.” Beale contends that the comparison in v. 19 is “to emphasize the lethal power of the horses by comparing them to the serpents.”⁵⁷ In addition, he suggests that the mention of the mouth intensifies the means by which deception takes place in this plague. He writes:

The tacit mention is to identify the beastly horses with Satan himself, who is known in the Apocalypse as “the Serpent.” Elsewhere in the Apocalypse, *ophis* (“serpent”) is used only of Satan, and in each instance Satan is engaged in the activity of deception (12.9, 14-15; 20.2; cf. 2 Cor. 11.3).⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament*, 40 (his emphasis).

⁵⁵ Blomberg, “The Structure of 2 Corinthians 1-7,” 6

⁵⁶ For a discussion of power in Pauline literature see Petrus J. Gräbe, *The Power of God in Paul’s Letters*, WUNT 2. Reihe 123 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

⁵⁷ Beale, *Revelation*, 514.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

The point I want to make is that the notion of power at times belongs to God and at other times it is referenced as belonging to Satan. More often than not the concept of power is attributed to God by implication, while it is attributed to Satan, as in 9.19, in a more direct manner. I have argued all along that the primary mythic background to understand the focus text is the cosmic conflict. In this conflict the lines are blurred between good and evil, between the activity of God and that of Satan.⁵⁹

Further, the implied author has extended the application of the trumpet motif from its earlier uses as outlined in chapter 1.⁶⁰ The notions of power and destruction have been used, particularly because of the nature and characteristics of the Roman empire. I have argued earlier on that one of the reasons Rome was to experience the judgment of God was because of her moral and spiritual destruction of God's people. Rome had become what Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Sodom and Gomorrah had become to God's people in the OT. It appears then that an ideological conundrum emerges in that God is now punishing Rome for something that he is also responsible for, namely, destruction.

In responding, I would firstly contend that the destruction meted out by the trumpets is redemptive in purpose. In fact, Aune suggests that the motif of repentance appears in the focus text rather suddenly. While the purpose of the trumpet judgments is not explicitly mentioned in the text, it is here in 9.20 that the implied author introduces a clear purpose – repentance - as it is a formal motif in the Exodus plague tradition.⁶¹ That repentance is the desired response of the implied author is evident from the stylized manner in which the focus text strips away the authorial audience's "sense of security."⁶²

Firstly, the focus text portrays judgment that afflicts the earth, sea and sky while human beings are exempt from these initial judgments. The audience is hemmed in as the

⁵⁹ According, Marius Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment: The Eschatological Proclamation in Its Jewish Context*, translated by Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 272, we usually think of God as the active agent behind the divine passive. However, the "preference for passive formulations especially in eschatological statements and descriptions is apparently motivated by the fact that in this form the agent can remain indeterminate." Statements in apocalyptic works, containing the divine passive, are not at all concerned with the agent, who is always ultimately God. "What is decisive is that all this will happen; how and through whom it will come about, the prophet of the end time events is happy to leave open." This statement serves to highlight the complexity of identifying the actors on the cosmic stage.

⁶⁰ In chapter 1, the trumpet was used in the context of worship, battle, liturgy and for royal and eschatological purposes.

⁶¹ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 541. Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 331, claims: "One purpose of the trumpets is to lead to repentance." In a similar vein, Müller, *Microstructural Analysis of Revelation 4-11*, 351, says: "Obviously the intention of the sixth trumpet judgment was to lead the remaining people to repentance."

⁶² Koester, *The End of All Things*, 98.

first judgment unleashes fire and hail which leads to a loss of vegetation on earth (8.7), while the second judgment (8.8) turns the sea into blood with the loss of sea creatures and ships. The third and fourth trumpet judgment poison water and enclose the world in darkness respectively. According to Koester, the mounting threats demonstrate that “it is an illusion to think that one can find security apart from God and the Lamb.”⁶³

Secondly, the focus text shifts direction and force as the alarming screech of an eagle declares three woes in 8.13. In the fifth and sixth trumpet judgments humanity is also afflicted with the judgments. In the first four trumpet judgments the disasters struck the earth, sea and sky but now danger comes from beneath the earth itself as if the noose were being tightened for the audience. The audience’s sense of security is progressively stripped away as the full nightmarish character of the focus text is revealed. Only those who have the seal of God are exempt from the impact of these judgments.⁶⁴

A second important point to consider in relation to the trumpets as instruments of power and destruction is that the trumpet motif is partly drawn on from the OT passages that discuss the *Yom Yahweh*. The *Yom Yahweh* is both a day of destruction and a day of salvation for Israel. In the Joel tradition especially, the destruction of Yahweh’s enemies and the vindication of Israel are closely intertwined. The *Yom Yahweh* reaches its climax in the fulfillment of covenant blessing of those who are penitent.⁶⁵ The destruction that is witnessed in the focus text must be understood against the backdrop of this OT motif – it is a destruction that leads to vindication for those in the authorial audience who follow the counsel of the implied author and have the seal of God and destruction for the inhabitants of the earth.

Third, the use of the trumpet to portray the devastation and destruction that is witnessed in the focus text mimics the dominant ideology. While the text creates a new culture of power, it is not a power bent on self-advancement or self-preservation. At the blowing of the seventh trumpet, Rev 11.17 states that God has taken his great power and begun to reign. It is a reign of redemption. This is confirmed by recognizing that the trumpets also commence with an allusive reference to the death of Christ depicted in Rev 8.3. The death of Christ is what therefore pervades and illumines the entire outworking of the seven

⁶³ Ibid., 98-99.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Martens, “The Day of the Lord,” 148.

trumpet judgments. Further, revolutionist social rhetoric calls for the destruction of the world so that there may be salvation. And so, while the use of the trumpet mimics the dominant ideology in the judgments it unleashes and the destruction it causes, the destruction allowed by God in the focus text is not a destruction that is evil in its intent, but rather redemptive.⁶⁶

Fourth, the focus text mimics the dominant ideology in an attempt to provide the resources to resist the empire. Edward Said suggested that ideology is concerned with the resistance offered by people to the dominant authority structures that seek to overpower, exploit and manipulate them.⁶⁷ The focus text mimics aspects of the dominant ideology as a form of protest and resistance.⁶⁸ The authorial audience is a minority that lived on the margins of society, most comprising the labour classes in the first-century world.⁶⁹

The implied author recognises that some in the audience have a marginal identity and so advocates that the entire community live as an alternate culture.⁷⁰ Marginal groups live an “ambivalent existence,” existing simultaneously in the larger cultural context and at the same time in their faith community.⁷¹ The author desires the audience to live in opposition to the wider Greco-Roman society because of the different values and commitments he understands them having.

⁶⁶ According to Blount, *Revelation*, 171, “The visions are intended to produce more than shock and awe; their purpose is to encourage the kind of behaviour that leads to an enduring eschatological relationship with God...” Further, according to Schüssler Fiorenza, *Vision of a Just World*, 70, cited in Blount, *Revelation*, 172, “These damaging judgments are “God’s just and liberating” involvement in the world. “Just as God had inflicted the Egyptian plagues in order to make possible the exodus of Israel from Egypt, so the cosmic plagues of the trumpet series...execute the judgment of God over the cosmos, enabling the liberation of the the Christian community from the oppression of Babylon / Rome.”

⁶⁷ See p. 174 for quote.

⁶⁸ It was Adela Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 47, who first claimed that the language of Revelation is “a kind of protest against the higher forms of Hellenistic culture. It would have been an act of cultural pride of a Jewish Semite. Such an act fits well with the type of message expressed in Revelation...;” John Hurtgen, *Anti-Language in the Apocalypse of John* (Lewiston: Mellen Biblical Press, 1993) drew on the work of socio-linguist Michael Halliday. Hurtgen, *Anti-Language in the Apocalypse of John*, 51, contends that anti-language is language that supports and enhances social resistance, functioning to convey and avow the social structure. Cf. Allan A. Boesak, *Comfort and Protest: Reflections on the Apocalypse of John of Patmos* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1987).

⁶⁹ Duff, *Who Rides the Beast?*, 17-30. He writes: “First-century Christians were, for the most part, merchants and craftspersons, many of whom were probably ex-slaves.” Further, even though some in the churches did experience upward social and economic mobility there were still many who were poor. Idem., *Who Rides the Beast?*, 29.

⁷⁰ See summary of previous chapter.

⁷¹ Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Socio-Political and Religious Reading*, JSNTSup 204 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 43-9.

In light of this assumption, it now seems appropriate to draw on the resources of postcolonial theory to further unpack the ideological texture.⁷² Mimicry, hybridity and parody are aspects of postcolonial theory that are helpful in analysing the ideological ramifications of the focus text. Essentially, mimicry describes the ambivalent relationship between the authorial audience and the dominant ideology. Since the implied author mimics the dominant ideology in the focus text, through the enlistment of language and images that portray violence and destruction, it may appear that the implied author is calling on the authorial audience to adopt the values, habits and assumptions of the dominant ideology, but instead the implied author has located “a crack in the certainty” of dominance exuded by the Roman empire.⁷³ The implied author is therefore not protesting in an outright and blatant manner, but rather is employing the focus text as overt resistance, by suggesting an alternate culture, that is “almost the same, but not quite.”⁷⁴ By copying the dominant culture’s behaviour and values in the focus text, in terms of destruction and violence, the implied

⁷² Postcolonial criticism emerged in the Third world with its theoretical underpinnings being sketched out in the work of cultural critics Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978); idem, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993); Gayatri C. Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Methuen, 1987) and Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994). For the application of postcolonial theory to Revelation see the following: Jean Pierre Ruiz, “A Postcolonial Reading of Revelation 13,” in *Reading the Book of Revelation*, ed. David Barr (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature), 119-135; Carey, *Elusive Apocalypse*, 69-76; Catherine Keller, *Apocalypse Now and Then: A Feminist Guide to the End of the World* (Boston: Beacon, 1996), also employs postcolonial criticism, though in a limited sense and Jean K. Kim, “Uncovering Her Wickedness: An Inter (con)textual Reading of Revelation 17 From a Postcolonial Feminist Perspective,” *JSNT* 73 (1999): 61-81. In relation to biblical studies, R. S. Sugitharajah, *The Postcolonial Bible*, ed. R. S. Sugitharajah (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 93, champions an oppositional reading involved in critiquing the totalizing forms of Eurocentric thinking and is an attempt to reshape dominant Western meanings in texts. Furthermore, R. S. Sugitharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 79, 84, believes that a postcolonial reading of biblical texts endeavors to scrutinize the ideologies texts embody and that are entrenched in them. Because of its oppositional nature a postcolonial reading is alert to the covert ways the marginalized protest, whether through subversion, silence or sabotage and how this emerges in the text. On the other hand, Fernando F. Segovia, “Reading-Across: Intercultural Criticism and Textual Posture,” in *Interpreting Beyond Borders*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 59-83, asserts that looking at the biblical texts as poetic, cultural and ideological products or constructs of a socio-religious and politico-cultural reality – the reality of empire/imperialism/colonialism in what he terms “intercultural criticism.” Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John*, 16-17, argues that postcolonial studies is not entirely applicable to NT or Roman studies because postcolonial studies has been circumvented by academia in that its initial tirade against Euro-centric thinking and Western bias, is now being used by the same typically Western academics to possibly subvert and neutralize it. He also laments the inapplicability of postcolonial studies to “the dynamics of culture.” The work of Sugitharajah and Segovia, however, nullify Friesen’s concerns as they both demonstrate the applicability of postcolonial studies to the biblical text.

⁷³ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2000), 139.

⁷⁴ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 86 cited in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 140.

author is mocking the dominant ideology. In this sense mimicry is at once both resemblance and menace.⁷⁵

Hybridity is evident in the implied author's use of images from "two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor."⁷⁶ The focus text has exhibited images drawn from the Greco-Roman world as well as the OT and NT tradition. The construct of hybridity is also applicable to 9.11 where the king of the locusts has a name that is given in both Hebrew and Greek. Parody functions on numerous levels in the focus text. Its images parody the Roman empire's pretensions to grandeur and glory. In the grotesque locusts of 9.7-11 a possible parody of the cult of Domitian is seen, whose deity was Apollo and for whom locusts were a symbol.⁷⁷

The implied author has drawn on the image of trumpet to maintain the most striking rhetorical feature of the focus text, namely, its repetitiveness. On seven occasions the phrase *Καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν* is used to amplify and elucidate a movement from one trumpet to the next trumpet. Each trumpet judgment moves inexorably toward the seventh trumpet judgment, when God's empire is consummated. In the process of that movement, while the text is littered with divine passives that demonstrate the involvement of God in the unfolding drama, subtle hints of Satan's involvement in the outworking of the trumpet judgments is evident as well. This ambiguity, this tension, is what the implied author has purposefully intended and is not meant to be resolved.⁷⁸

3. Summary:

I have sought to uncover the ideology in the focus text from the perspective of the authorial audience, which is constructed by the implied author and is not a direct reflection of the real

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Michail Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Slavic Series, ed. Michael Holquist, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 304-5. I am following Bakhtin here and not Homi Bhabha, who has a different conception of hybridity. Bhabha contends that all cultural systems and affirmations are constructed in a space he identifies as the "third space of enunciation." This third space is an ambivalent and contradictory space which makes cultural claims of superiority or purity untenable. Idem., *The Location of Culture*, 37.

⁷⁷ Fiorenza, *Vision of a Just World*, 71-2.

⁷⁸ According to Greg Carey, "Symptoms of Resistance in the Book of Revelation," in *The Reality of Apocalypse: Rhetoric and Politics in the Book of Revelation*, ed. David L. Barr (Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 173, "resistance and postcolonial perspectives are far more effective in teasing out ambiguity and disrupting certitude than in assuring resolution."

historical audience. It can be assumed, however, that there is a fair degree of congruence between the authorial audience and the historical audience, otherwise the implied author's rhetoric would not be persuasive.⁷⁹ The work on ideological texture yielded a number of interesting insights on the issues of power, authority and loyalty encoded in the focus text. Eight ideological markers have been discovered in this texture, namely, throne, sun, moon, stars, key, power, war, worship and kingdom. The ideological markers of throne and kingdom have once more highlighted wealth as a primary concern for the authorial audience. The combination of the social markers and ideological markers that focus on wealth strengthen the position that this issue was of serious concern to the authorial audience and its interpretational importance can now be addressed to a limited extent.

The implied author has contrasted the wealth of the Roman empire with the wealth of the empire of God and is once more attempting to persuade the audience to follow the way of the Lamb and reap the rewards of the New Jerusalem. In the attack on the wealth of the Roman empire, the implied author "takes the view from above."⁸⁰ God, the universal patron, Christ, God's agent, the New Jerusalem and the implied author occupy a higher status position, while the Roman empire and Domitian occupy a lower status position.⁸¹ This lower status position is brought about in the focus text by the portrayal of Domitian as responsible for the destruction of creation, and further, that ultimately Satan is responsible for the release of the demonic hordes in the passage about the fifth trumpet.

According to Royalty, the function of wealth in Revelation parallels the function of wealth in maintaining or increasing status in Greco-Roman culture. The use of wealth at the allusive level in the focus text mimics the way wealth supported the dominant culture that the implied author attacks. The social markers and ideological markers that zone in on wealth or the issues pertaining to wealth in the focus text seek to contrast the wealth offered by God with the wealth offered by the Roman empire.⁸²

Further, the authorial audience is by no means uniform. For example, Craig Koester identifies Ephesus (Rev 2.1-7), Pergamum (Rev 2.12-17) and Thyatira (Rev 2.18-29) as having trouble with assimilation, Smyrna (Rev 2.8-11) and Philadelphia (Rev 3.7-13) as

⁷⁹ Steven J. Friesen, "Satan's Throne, Imperial Cults and the Social Settings of Revelation," *JSNT* 27 (2005): 351-373 (353).

⁸⁰ Royalty, *The Streets of Heaven*, 245.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

having complications with persecution and Sardis (Rev. 3.1-6) and Laodicea (Rev. 3.14-22) as having challenges with complacency.⁸³ Steven Friesen, on the other hand, contends for a different social and cultural situation in each of the seven congregations. He contends that scholars have generally adopted a uniform position in relation to the social setting of Revelation and have done so by discarding the reality of there being seven churches in Rev 2 and 3 with peculiar circumstances and issues that relate directly and at times solely to them. It is on this very point then that Friesen contends for several social settings.⁸⁴ I agree with the position taken by scholars like Koester, de Silva, Friesen and Collins who see a deeper complexity in the social setting of Revelation and that the text does indeed address “a representative variety of contexts.”⁸⁵ Further, it is most fitting to briefly address the authorial audience in this conclusion as the audience were indirectly drawn on based on my analysis of the echo of Acts 15.20 in Rev 9.20-21.

Since the situation of the authorial audience varied, their responses to the focus text would have probably varied as well. Those in the audience who were facing the threat of persecution may find the message of the focus text reassuring since it culminates in the empire of God.⁸⁶ As the text unfolds there are numerous references to the role of God as “hidden actor” through the use of the divine passive which may have assured the audience of God’s sovereign plan and purposes being fulfilled.⁸⁷

Those in the audience who were seeking to accommodate to Greco-Roman culture would probably have been uneasy with the message of the focus text, for if God reigns, then their accommodation has been pointless and in vain. The social markers of trees and ships have shown the loss of economic security. The audiences “potential pride in wealth and prestige is

⁸³ Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, 57-69. A deeper probe of the issues of wealth and how this would have impacted the authorial audience is beyond the purview of this study. Cf. Duff, *Who Rides the Beast?*, 61-70; Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 338-83 and Nelson Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce*.

⁸⁴ Friesen, “Satan’s Throne, Imperial Cults and the Social Settings of Revelation,” 352. This sort of approach to the text of Revelation has only been tackled by Adela Yarbro Collins in her pathbreaking monograph *Crisis and Catharsis*. A recent analysis, enlisting the resources of rhetorical criticism, of the reception of Rev 2-3 by the authorial audience is made by David. A. deSilva, “The Strategic Arousal of Emotions in the Apocalypse of John: A Rhetorical-Critical Investigation of the Oracles to the Seven Churches,” *NTS* 54 (2008): 90-114.

⁸⁵ Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation: New Testament Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 16.

⁸⁶ Notions of persecution can be found in the seven letters. For example, Ephesus has patient endurance (2.3); Smyrna has tribulation, suffering and the threat of death (2.9-10); Antipas has been killed in Pergamum (2.13).

⁸⁷ Boring, *Revelation*, 154. Cf. Rev 8.7, 8, 9; 9.2-3.

therefore an act of self-deception.”⁸⁸ The focus text exhibits a tension in the dimensions of its social rhetoric.

On the one hand, reformist social rhetoric is about transforming the social structures of the world by divine means. On the other hand, revolutionist social rhetoric is about the destruction of the world. The only place in the focus text that potentially addresses the intra-authorial conflict in Rev 2 and 3, and the implications for the focus text, is the echo of Acts 15.20 in relation to 9.20. The potential of that echo to impact the interpretation of the focus text is now given renewed impetus by the two dimensions of social rhetoric evident in the focus text.

The opponents of the author within the narrative of Revelation, people like Jezebel, could possibly have championed reformist social rhetoric. Jezebel “advocated a conciliatory stance toward Greco-Roman society” and may have readily admitted that the empire needed changing because of its corruption and debauchery.⁸⁹ However, she could argue, this change could be accomplished by slowly transforming the attitudes and manner of thinking of the empire.⁹⁰ Jezebel could easily argue that the economic issues the audience were experiencing were indeed brought on by the audience’s disobedience. The focus text therefore exhibits a tension in its social rhetoric that is not meant to be resolved. It highlights the complexities of the intra-authorial conflict and the ability of the text to address the multiplicity of contexts found therein.

The social marker of seal can be compared and contrasted with the ideological marker of key. Both of these markers point to matters of ownership and loyalty. The authorial audience, those with the seal of God and the inhabitants of the world, have a choice to make. While the seal is used with respect to the followers of God in the focus text (9.4), the key is placed in the hand of the enemy of God (9.1). Despite this God is still sovereign. Irrespective of the choices the audience make, nothing will derail the realization of the empire of God. Reformist social rhetoric called for the radical transformation of the world and for the

⁸⁸ Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, 76.

⁸⁹ See the discussion in Paul Duff, “Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing: Literary Opposition and Social Tension in the Revelation of John,” in *Reading the Book of Revelation: A Resource for Students*, ed. David Barr (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 65-79 (77). Duff develops a winsome argument that the author contrasts Jezebel with the woman of Rev. 12. Jezebel is John’s primary opponent according to Duff.

⁹⁰ Nestor Paulo Friedrich, “Adapt or Resist? A Socio-Political Reading of Revelation 2.18-29,” *JSNT* 25 (2002): 185-211.

implied author this would be accomplished as an alternate culture living under God's vision for the world.⁹¹

The issues and ramifications of the cosmic conflict take on a different approach in this texture. Instead of focusing on the role of Satan, in this texture attention is focused on the first-century Greco-Roman gods. The authorial audience would have understood the polemic against these Greco-Roman gods in the focus text and would have discerned the ideological implications. One of the key implications is that the activity and function of worship incorporated the economic and spiritual aspects of the markers I have been discussing. In fact, the focus text culminates at the end of the passage about the sixth trumpet in 9.20-21 with strong attention on the issue of worship. The inhabitants of the earth refuse to repent, but rather desire to continue in false worship. The various markers, with their distinctive emphases, intersect at the cross-section of worship and therefore point to this issue as central to the message of the focus text.

⁹¹ According to L. Gregory Bloomquist, "Paul's Inclusive Language: The Ideological Texture of Romans 1," in *Fabrics of Discourse*, 165-193 (172), "that ideological texture is manifest in the rhetorical goal of texts, namely, where authors attempt to get an audience, real or fictive, to do or understand something, and that not just negatively or for reasons of coercive power."

CHAPTER 6

SACRED TEXTURE

In this final texture all the previous textures findings and insights are drawn on and placed into the context of the theology of this texture. The individual textures are threaded into a wholistic tapestry of the apocalyptic rhetorolect on the seven trumpet plagues. An important way of ascertaining the meaning and meaning-effects of the sacred texture is through an investigation and elucidation of the previous textures in the context of understanding its sacred texture.¹ In unfolding the sacred texture insights on God, the meaning of the trumpets and the value of the symbol, social and ideological markers is addressed.

1. The Role of Divine Beings

The focus text begins with a strong emphasis on the role and activity of God. Revelation 8.2 reads: “And I saw (Καὶ εἶδον) the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets (ἑπτὰ σάλπιγγες).” The seven angels with their trumpets emerge from the presence of God. Whatever follows in the focus text must be understood from this basic standpoint – the trumpet plague judgments proceed from God. On the basis of the work completed in inner texture it was concluded that God is explicitly mentioned eight times (8.2, 4; 9.4, 13; 11.15; 16, 17) in the focus text.²

Arguments will now be put forward to garner support for the conviction that God is portrayed as Judge over the creation and empire and Warrior in creation and against empire and suggest that these aspects of God’s involvement cannot be understood apart from the tradition of the exodus plagues, the Parthian invasion, the fall of Babylon and the OT reference to the Yom Yahweh.

a. God as Judge over Creation and Empire

The picture of God as judge emerges already in the transition passage to the focus text, namely, Rev 8.1, and is strengthened by the symbolism in the heavenly throne room scene in 8.2-6. In the heavenly throne room scene of Rev 8.2-6 God is the one who ultimately unleashes the trumpet plagues in response to the prayers of the saints. The reference in 8.5 to

¹ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 130.

² See p. 61. I have five in bold, but the texts indicate it is eight times.

the atmospheric and seismic phenomena strengthen the sense of God's involvement in the text.

In addition, the reference to the hurling down of the fire in 8.5 demonstrated the intertextual dynamics that emerged with respect to Greco-Roman gods, in particular Jupiter, who similarly hurled fire. The focus text therefore begins with the implied author subtly depicting who the judgment will be against – the Roman empire – and for what reason – the persecution of God's people. The notion of persecution emerges from the intratextual relations of 8.3-5 with 6.9-10. This initial background to the focus text suggests that these trumpet judgments are to be comprehended as eschatological judgments which discriminate between the righteous and the wicked.

Inasmuch as there is only a single text referring to judgment (κρίνω) in the focus text found in Rev. 11.18, the entire focus text is saturated with the themes and motives of judgment. “Not surprisingly,” writes Jan Fekkes, “the subject of judgment is the single most dominant interest in Revelation...”³ In chapter 1 I traced the development of the trumpet motif from the OT writings through the Second Temple period and into the time of the NT writings. There I concluded that the trumpet motif became increasingly associated with the theme of judgment in the time prior to the composition of Revelation.⁴ The focus text evokes a strong emphasis on judgment as creation is undone in the first four trumpet judgments. Since God is the originator of the trumpet judgments the sounding of each trumpet demonstrates God's involvement as judge.⁵

The intertextual echo κριθῆναι at the end of the focus text reinforces Rev 11.18 as the “springboard text” that looks ahead in the narrative landscape of Revelation where the continuing overriding theme is the eschatological judgment of God. Theologically, judgment in the focus text fulfills two important functions. Firstly, it functions in the form of vindication of the witnesses of Rev 6.9. This cry for vindication is seen in the only prayer for supplication in Revelation in 6.10, which I demonstrated is linked to 8.3. This prayer should

³ Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions*, 78.

⁴ See p. 32.

⁵ Bauckham, *Theology*, 20, claims that the trumpet and bowls “form a high schematized literary pattern which itself conveys meaning...The point is not to predict a sequence of events. The point is to evoke and to explore the meaning of the divine judgment which is impending on the sinful world.”

not be construed as either unhallowed malice or a sub-Christian plea.⁶ The saints in Revelation appear repeatedly as a people unjustly persecuted by the agents of the Dragon (13.7, 10; 15.2) and yet also “the objects of divine love (3.9; 20.9).”⁷ Beale points out that within the saint’s petition “is a desire that God demonstrate before the whole world that they were in the right and their persecutors in the wrong.”⁸

Secondly, the functionality of judgment is evident in the focus text in a redemptive sense. The redemptive aspect of judgment is noticeable in humanity consistently resisting repentance (cf. 9.20-21). This obduracy in the face of God’s judgment implies that the opportunity for repentance is available for some period, for example under the sixth trumpet plague (cf. 9.20), but then is eventually exhausted by the time of the seventh trumpet judgment.

b. God as Warrior in Creation and against Empire

The depiction of God as Warrior emerges in the context of the cosmic conflict and the use of the Exodus tradition.⁹ The battle imagery intensifies as the text unfolds, climaxing in the

⁶ Charles, *Revelation*, 1, 175. Cf. Hubert Ritt, *Offenbarung des Johannes*, Die Neue Echter Bibel, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament mit der Einheitsübersetzung (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1986), 46, suggests that this question is about having a “hunger for righteousness and pursuing the victory of truth...” Their question could be rephrased “Who will enforce the eschatological salvation plan of God?”

⁷ Osborne, “Theodicy in the Apocalypse,” 73.

⁸ Beale, *Revelation*, 393.

⁹ The earliest notion of God as a warrior is found in Exod. 15.3 which reads: “The LORD is a warrior (πολέμους); the LORD is his name (ὄνομα).” This text comes after God’s demolition of the forces of Egypt in the Red Sea. The implied author has drawn on this tradition to inform and shape the focus text. According to Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, *Put on the Armour of God: The Divine Warrior from Isaiah to Ephesians*, JSNTSup 140 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 10-20, Yahweh uses the following inventory of divine weaponry: In Exod 15 it is floods, right hand, fire, breath and wind; in Deut. 32 it is arrows, hunger, heat, pestilence, sword, vengeance and requital; in Ps 18.8-15 it is smoke, fire, darkness, brightness, cherub, wind, arrows, lightning and breath and in Hab 3 it is plague, horses, chariots and spear. Some of these weapons are used by the implied author in the portrayal of God as Warrior in the focus text. Important works on the subject of the divine warrior are those of F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 79-111. Cross argues for the primacy of the Canaanite mythic pattern of theophany as being formative for understanding the divine warrior myth. He suggests that this myth needs to be understood on the basis of the following: “the battle of the divine warrior against chaos, convulsion of nature in response to the warrior, the return of the warrior to his mountain to claim his kingship and the revival of nature at the sound of the warrior’s voice from the temple,” Idem., *Canaanite Myth*, 162-63. Contra, Norman Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 212-219, who proposes that the depiction of the divine warrior in Revelation is a myth found in Zoroastrianism. See also the work of P. D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel*, HSM 5 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973) and P. D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 292-324. Warrior imagery is used of Yahweh as he comes to deliver his people in 1 QM 12.10-14; 19.2-8 and in Jewish literature in *Wis.* 5.16-23; *Sir.* 35.22-36.17 and *As. Mos.* 10.

passage about the sixth trumpet plague. The use of the Exodus tradition predominates through allusions in the passage Rev 8.7-12, while the Parthian invasion and fall of Babylon tradition dominate the passage Rev 9.1-21 through allusions and echoes. Importantly however, there is overlap between these traditions and the manner in which the implied author has drawn on them. For example, the darkness of 8.12 is also seen in 9.1.

To understand the importance of the Exodus plagues one needs to understand the full significance of the context in which this tradition unfolds.¹⁰ It is now demonstrably significant to draw on the entire OT context, in this case that of the Exodus plagues, as formative for understanding Rev. 8.7-12.¹¹ When one does so, one is struck by the strong resonances of the involvement and participation of Yahweh in the narrative that unfolds in Exodus.¹²

In the Exodus plagues the confrontation between Yahweh and Egypt is scripted out as a battle between Yahweh and the gods of Egypt that manifests itself on the historical plane as a confrontation between God's representative Moses and Pharaoh. John Davis has suggested that the Egyptian plagues were directed against the gods of Egypt and finds support in Exod.12.12 and 18.11 for this stance.¹³ Similarly the confrontation of the impending eschatological Yom Yahweh in the focus text is played out between God and the Roman empire within the narrative of Revelation.

This argument is sustained when one notices the reference to the judgment of the Roman empire in 8.7. In 8.8 the Exodus imagery is maintained on the basis of a probable allusion but now the imagery of a great mountain is introduced. I argued in the chapter on intertexture that the great mountain is a reference to Babylon based on the clear allusion to Jer 51.25. In this OT passage Yahweh's participation in the destruction of Babylon is unequivocal and decisive. These two examples could be multiplied, but the central point being made is that inasmuch as the clear mention of God in the throne room scene (8.2-6) and the strong theophanic reference in 8.5 are brought to the fore in the focus text, this in no way undermines the role of God as the focus text unfolds. Rather, God's activity is to be seen

¹⁰ Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 341, identifies the Exodus tradition as a pivotal part of the early Christian apocalyptic story-line.

¹¹ Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, xi.

¹² OT scholars often identify this as the "theology of presence" in the Exodus narrative. Cf. Cole, *Exodus*, 39.

¹³ John J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971), 86-8.

at the allusive level in the symbolic world and traditions, or references in Robbins words, that the text points to.

Furthermore, the role of God is also evident in the use of the divine passive in 8.3, 8.5, 8.7, 8.8. Most interestingly, the divine passive is not mentioned in the third trumpet plague (8.10-11) whereas it is mentioned in the above mentioned texts as well as the passage about the fifth and sixth trumpet plague. Why is this glaring omission made on the part of the author? I have already contended that the third trumpet plague is a reference to the beginning stages of the involvement of Satan in the focus text. The concept of a great star falling from heaven, burning like a torch, alerts the reader to Isa. 14.12-15. The passage about the third trumpet plague marks a shift in God's role and demonstrates who exactly God is engaged in battle with.

In addition, the passage about the third trumpet highlights the reality that behind the hegemonic influence of the Roman empire is actually the schemes of Satan. At the allusive level this is seen in the conflation of the imagery of "great star" with "burning mountain," the great star alluding to Satan and the burning mountain alluding to Babylon. The intensity of the approaching battle is seen in the darkening of the heavenly luminaries in the fourth trumpet judgment. Previously the earth, the sea and the grass had been scourged and devastated, now it is the heavenly luminaries that are affected. I contended that the same star was being depicted in both 8.10 and 9.1 in my work in the chapter on intertexture. That being the case, the enlistment of the divine passive on six occasions (9.1, 3, 4, 5) demonstrates the heightened activity and role of God particularly in this trumpet judgment. Moreover, on two occasions the word "war" is used in this trumpet judgment as well.

Finally, the passage about the fifth trumpet ends at 9.11 where the demonic king is identified with the names in Hebrew of Abaddon, and in Greek, Appollyon. Most important for my purposes is the fact that the implied author does not provide the Greek translation of the Hebrew word Abaddon and the Greek word Apollyon but provides a variation of the term. This variation is similar to the name "Apollo," the ancient Greek god who was often linked in ancient Greek writings with destruction.¹⁴

One of the symbols used by Apollo is the locust, among others (cf. 9.7). The likeliest avenue of meaning potentiality for the implied reader, I contested, would be the identification

¹⁴ See Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 535, for references.

of Appollyon with the Emperor Domitian, who liked to claim that he is the living embodiment of Apollo.¹⁵ The implied author is inviting the implied reader and audience to see who is working behind the corrosive power of the Roman empire. Further, if the use of the noun “sun” in 8.12 pointed to the sun god, and Apollo is also identified with the sun god, then the implied author is demonstrating the power of God over the Greco-Roman gods.

The identification of Satan in 9.1 with the falling star, combined with the same conclusion about Apollyon’s identity in 9.11, addresses the reality of Satan working behind and through the Roman empire to attempt to accomplish his own schemes. However, while Satan is portrayed as the implacable enemy of God and his people in the focus text, he is in a certain sense used by God to accomplish God’s own purposes.¹⁶ There is ample biblical evidence to support the notion that Satan is always under the control of God and is indeed God’s servant.¹⁷ This may be a possible solution to the ambiguity and tension exhibited in the focus text that I argued for earlier.¹⁸

It is of serious note then, that ultimately Satan is given the name of Destroyer in 9.11 in both Hebrew and Greek. What is exactly being destroyed? As already stated, it is at this point in particular that there is overlap and interpenetration of the categories I have outlined above. One cannot distinguish between Rev 8.7-12 and Rev 9.1-21 as having exclusive traditions or themes. In other words, Satan is depicted in 9.11 as destroying creation, but the de-creation motif is evident in 8.7-12, hence the interpenetration of the categories I have outlined. This also provides further evidence to support my argument for Satan’s involvement from 8.10 specifically.¹⁹

The implied author, engaging in “the purposefulness inferred from the entire text’s discourse,” suggests that it is the creation that is gradually being ruined by Satan.²⁰ Each

¹⁵ Caird, *Revelation*, 120.

¹⁶ This notion of Satan as the servant of God is explored in Walter Wink, *Unmasking the Powers* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1993), 11-22 and Sydney H.T. Page, “Satan:God’s Servant,” *JETS* 50 (2007): 449-65.

¹⁷ According to Page, “Satan:God’s Servant,” *JETS* 50 (2007): 449, “one need not be consciously devoted to someone to serve them.” He cites the examples of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus being portrayed as Yahweh’s servants in Jer. 25.6; 43.10 and Isa. 44.28; 45.1, 13 respectively. He concludes this segment of his argument by stating that “neither Nebuchadnezzar nor Cyrus intentionally served Yahweh, but the biblical authors represent them as instruments through which he accomplished his will nonetheless.”

¹⁸ See p. 207.

¹⁹ According to Thompson, *The Book of Revelation*, 81, while “the seer marks his boundaries well – often as battle lines – those boundaries between good and evil are not hard and impenetrable borders separating the two into separate, limited spheres. Even here distinctions are blurred and soft.”

²⁰ Staley, *The Print’s First Kiss*, 29.

trumpet plague judgment refers to a feature that corresponds to a day of the creation week: 1) earth; 2) sea; 3) rivers and springs of water; 4) sun, moon and stars; 5) locusts; 6) man and 7) kingdom. One can categorically deduce that the trumpet plague judgments affect all the days of creation. At the end of the focus text (11.18) the implied author informs the implied reader that God will destroy those who have aligned themselves with Satan, in wanting to destroy the earth. It is against this backdrop of destruction of the creation that one needs to understand God as Warrior.²¹

In Rev 9.4-6 the implied author has juxtaposed the concepts of the seal of God and war as these two concepts become central features of Revelation as it unfolds and provide a further expansion of the role of God as Warrior.²² The passage about the fifth trumpet has within it therefore the constitutive elements of the cosmic conflict tradition and highlights the early identification in this project of this trumpet judgment as central to the meaning-making endeavor. In fact, the implied author makes a sharp distinction in the focus text between the inhabitants of the earth who experience the brunt of the judgments and those that bear the seal of God, who are not harmed (9.4). Clearly there are two opposing sides in the focus text – those aligned with the inhabitants of the earth and those whose allegiance is with God. In this context, God is therefore depicted as the one who engages in the cosmic battle on behalf of his people.

Furthermore, the context of battle is seen in 9.19 with the implied author using the image of “mouth” (στόμα). The στόμα is a symbol in Revelation of a powerful weapon in the cosmic conflict that is, in fact, utilized by both Christ and Satan. For example in Rev 1.16 a sharp two-edged sword is seen coming out of the mouth of Christ. This symbol is not explained or even utilized in the narrative except at the end, in 19.15, 21. From the context of Rev. 19, it seems evident that it is an instrument with which Christ makes war against the unrepentant. Not only is the symbol of στόμα used for Christ, but strikingly, it is also used as a symbol for Satan. From the στόμα of the dragon proceeds water to destroy the woman, presumably the church (cf. 12.15) and with his mouth the dragon blasphemes heaven (cf.

²¹ The notion of God as warrior is by no means limited to the focus text but indeed appears in other parts of Revelation and the NT as well. Cf. Tremper Longman III, “The Divine Warrior: The New Testament Use of an Old Testament Motif,” *WTJ* 44 (1982): 290-307.

²² See Resseguie, *The Revelation of John*, 179-92; Blount, *Revelation*, 243-63.

13.6). In preparation for the battle of Armageddon, unclean spirits emerge from the στόμα of the dragon, the στόμα of the beast and the στόμα of the false prophet (cf. 16.13-14).²³

A parallel can be seen in the innumerable multitude that wages war against the Messiah in the vision of 4 Ezra. In this Jewish apocalyptic text it indicates that “he neither lifted his hand nor held a spear or any weapon of war” (4 Ezra 13.9). The Messiah is portrayed as defeating his enemies with a stream of fire from his mouth. The text repeats on three occasions the parallel phrases “from his mouth a stream of fire,” “from his lips a flaming breath,” and “from his tongue a storm of sparks” to destroy his opponents (4 Ezra 13.10).²⁴

The role of Satan engaged in conflict in the first four trumpet plagues is further corroborated when the intratextual relationships in Revelation are exploited. The intratextual connection is evident in the similar language enlisted in Rev. 12.9, 12 where it is said that “the great dragon was hurled down-- that ancient serpent (ὄφις) called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled (ἐβλήθη) to the earth, and his angels with him. But woe to the earth (γῆν) and the sea (θάλασσαν), because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.” Similarly, the sea (θάλασσαν) and the earth (γῆν) are repeatedly the focus of the plagues in 8.7-11.²⁵ The battle imagery and Exodus tradition therefore serve to strengthen the position of seeing God as Warrior.

2. The Cosmic Conflict Tradition

The implied author views the current situation that necessitated the composition of the focus text and hence the narrative, as a cosmic conflict between God and that “ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world” (Rev. 12.9).²⁶ The notion of a

²³ Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 310.

²⁴ Charlesworth, “From Jewish Messianology to Christian Christology: Some Caveats and Perspectives,” in *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, eds. Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green and Ernest S. Frerichs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 225-264 (245). In fact, according to Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 207, the slaying of “his enemies with the breadth of his mouth is a standard messianic motif.”

²⁵ Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, 395 and Beale, *Revelation*, 482-83.

²⁶ According to Adela Yarbro Collins, “The Book of Revelation,” in *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism*, eds. Bernard McGinn, John J. Collins, Stephen J. Stein (New York: Continuum, 2003), 205, “John’s thinking was dualistic in the sense that he perceived the situation in which he lived as characterized by a cosmic struggle between two diametrically opposed powers and their allies. God and Satan, along with their agents and

cosmic battle between God and the forces of evil has its roots in the OT, which in turn developed its ideas on warfare from the surrounding culture and literature.²⁷ The identification of Satan as the adversary or rival of God was a late development in Judaism.²⁸ It is only in the NT literature that the battle between God and the forces of evil is intentionally portrayed as a battle between God and Satan, which I term the cosmic conflict tradition.

This cosmic conflict is scripted out in the narrative world as a “sharp social polarization” between the Roman empire and the authorial audience that allows for no accommodation to the dictates of Greco-Roman society nor compromise with the ideology of the imperial cult.²⁹ While the Roman empire is the sea-beast that “makes war on the saints” (Rev.13.7), the great harlot “drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus (Rev.17.3),” Rome secures her illicit powers from the dragon, Satan.

The narrative world of Revelation has a sense of eschatological urgency. The implied author refers to Christ repeatedly, assuring the seven churches that he is coming soon (Rev. 1.7, 22.19, 22) and that the existing order of things is therefore insubstantial. In contrast to the status quo of Roman hegemony, Revelation “manifests a deep underlying confidence in the moral orderliness of the universe.” This is a fundamental concern of the apocalyptic genre, “which is deeply engaged with the issues of *theodicy*, with the problem of who finally has dominion over the world.”³⁰

Central to the ideological viewpoint of the implied author is the urgent need to disclose the truth about the world from God’s perspective and thereby to remake and re-envision the authorial audience’s understanding of reality. Hays writes:

spokespeople, were engaged in a struggle for the allegiance of the inhabitants of the earth.” In a similar vein Warren Carter, “Vulnerable Power: The Roman Empire Challenged by the Early Christians,” in *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches*, eds. Anthony J. Blasi, Jean Duhaime, Paul-Andre Turcotte (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2002), 484, writes “Revelation discerns its much larger context in a cosmic struggle between God and Satan.”

²⁷ For a discussion of the theme of warfare and cosmic battle in the OT see the following: Boyd, *God At War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict*, 9-167.

²⁸ See Elaine Pagels, *The Origin of Satan* (New York: Random House, 1995), 35-62, in which she traces the development of the notion of Satan from the OT to the NT. For a stimulating discussion of the various roles of Satan in both the OT and NT see Walter Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, Vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 9-40.

²⁹ Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation. A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 181.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 182. For the idea of theodicy in Jewish apocalyptic, see Alden Lloyd Thompson, *Responsibility for Evil in the Theodicy of IV Ezra*, SBLDS 29 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977).

In order to break Satan's power of illusion, Revelation must reimagine the world; and so it does. The book's imaginative power annihilates the plausibility structure on which the status quo rests and replaces it with the vision of a new world. The authority of the Roman empire (and more importantly Satan) is thereby delegitimated, and the way is prepared for the community to receive the truth about God's coming order.³¹

In my work on intertexture I pointed out the intratextual dynamics of Rev 8.3-5 in relation to Rev 6.9-11. It was pointed out that the focus text is to be understood as the divine response to the prayers of the souls under the altar in the fifth seal and is therefore to be comprehended against the backdrop of the fifth seal.³² The cry "how long," which is the central burden of the fifth seal, has a rich and variegated background in the OT. The phrase reflects there the desperation of Yahweh's people in response to the seeming slowness with which he fulfills his promises to deliver them from their oppressors. In fact the cry "how long" summarizes in two words humankind's age-old complaint against God, "If you are so good, why does evil reign? How long will you permit injustice to continue?"³³ It is not a cry for revenge "but for the vindication of their faith in God and in the cause of Christ for which they had died."³⁴

In fact, evil seems to intensify and escalate particularly in the passage about the fifth and sixth trumpet. According to Robbins, apocalyptists believe that evil is not something that is limited to a specific region or time, but rather that God's entire universe has been comprehensively corrupted by it.³⁵ In the passage about the seventh trumpet the implied author states that "your wrath has come..." in 11.18. The wrath of God notifies the authorial audience, comprised of those who have the seal of God and the inhabitants of the world, that God takes evil seriously. God's wrath reveals the detestable nature of evil on the one hand and God's aversion to it on the other. Evil is incompatible with God's holiness (cf. Rev 4.11). Holiness distinguishes God from every other form of existence and it is this quality and characteristic of God that justifies the embeddedness of revolutionist social rhetoric in the focus text. The wrath of God demonstrates that He is deeply and personally involved in the

³¹ Ibid., 183. Words in parenthesis are mine.

³² See pp. 91-2, 95.

³³ LaRondelle, *End-Time Prophecies*, 171.

³⁴ Ibid. According to Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 342, "One of the goals of early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect is to answer the question: "How was evil able to invade the fabric of God's good world with such force and power that God could decide at a future time to destroy everything he created, except some righteous people? The schemes of Satan become one resource for answering this question."

³⁵ Ibid., 328.

struggle with evil and that He is capable of reacting in the strongest possible way.³⁶ To deny the wrath of God is to paralyze God's rulership: a surrender of God to the powers of evil who aim at the destruction of God's creation. The implied author points to the moral justification of God in destroying the unrepentant (11.18) as they similarly sought to destroy the earth.

Further, an awareness of the wrath of God creates a new appreciation of God's love demonstrated through the allusive constituents of the altar and the trumpet blast, which taken together, portray the death of Christ. The authorial audience would comprehend that the intratextual relations with 6.9-11 are intertwined with the trumpet blast and the altar, hence portraying Christ as the consummate martyr. The death of Christ becomes then a symbol of victory even before the commencement of the focus text and the issues it addresses. The authorial audience would readily admit that evil had placed humankind in opposition to God. They had failed in terms of what the implied author believed God expected of them. There was complacency among the churches, accommodation with Greco-Roman culture and idolatrous worship that had captivated them.

Strikingly, the focus text reveals God's mercy in a unique literary twist in spite of the failings of the audience and the recalcitrance of the inhabitants of the earth. The mercy of God is initially seen in the first four trumpet judgments only destroying a third of the earth, sea and sky. Even in the passage about the fifth and sixth trumpet respectively, God's mercy is seen in the limited amount of time the locusts have to attempt to destroy humanity.³⁷ The mention of the "third" to categorize the destruction of the earth (8.7), the sea (8.8), the living creatures and the ships (8.9), while pointing to Satanic involvement on the basis of the literary connection to 12.3, in fact turns out furthermore to be a reference to the mercy of God. This literary twist portrays the ingenious manner in which the implied author points the implied reader, "who moves towards the implied author's goals," to the sovereignty of God

³⁶ Leon Morris, *New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 63. Further he claims that God's wrath is his hostility to every form of evil.

³⁷ Bruce M. Metzger, *Breaking the Code: Understanding the Book of Revelation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 66, writes: "Dire though the imagery is, the overall intention of the sounding of the seven trumpets is not to inflict vengeance but to bring people to repentance. Although nothing is done to minimize the gravity of sin and rebellion against God, there is great emphasis on God's patience and mercy. Instead of total destruction, only a third (9.18) or some other fraction of the whole is affected. The fraction is symbolic of the mercy of God." Cf. Wall, *Revelation*, 129.

over the forces of evil – an image that points to Satanic involvement is the very means through which the implied author depicts the mercy of God.³⁸

3. The Value of the Markers

In the summary of chapter 2 I hinted that the enemies of God were brought to the foreground in the symbol markers enlisted in the focus text. It will be recalled that the symbol marker alerts the reader to an antecedent text. The symbol marker is found in both the precursor and successor text and constitutes the primary symbol for beginning to articulate and determine meaning. For example, the symbol markers *χάλαζαν*, *πῦρ*, *αἷματι* and *ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς* in Rev. 8.7 depicting the Exodus tradition brought the nation of Egypt to the foreground, while the symbol marker *ὄρος μέγα πυρι* in Rev. 8.8 pointed to the fall of Babylon tradition and finally the symbol marker of “the great smoking furnace” pointed to Sodom. These three nations or city states comprised the primary enemies of Yahweh and his people in the OT.³⁹ Each of these nations were judged by God because of their wickedness. Most of the evil qualities these nations exhibited are those outlined in 9.20-21, the very qualities the inhabitants of the earth are being challenged to repent of. In addition these nations were judged because of their greed and economic exploitation.

The social markers of altar and prayer pointed to the spiritual dynamics inherent in the beginning of the trumpet plagues, while those of trees, grass, ships and locusts pointed to the economic consequences in the cosmic conflict. The social marker of seal pointed to issues of ownership and security. The economic aspects of the cosmic conflict are presented in the ideological markers of throne of God and empire of God, while the ideological issues in the cosmic conflict are depicted in the ideological markers of power and worship. It is at the cross-section of the economic features of the social and ideological markers and the enemies of God and his people depicted in the symbol markers that brings the issue of wealth to the fore more definitively.

The central point the implied author desires to drive home, by contrasting the wealth of the empire through the ideological markers of throne and kingdom with the the wealth of God’s throne and God’s city, is that true wealth comes from God. In the social and cultural

³⁸ Staley, *The Print’s First Kiss*, 33.

³⁹ For a discussion on these three nations see Reynolds, *The Sodom /Egypt /Babylon Motif*, 71-174.

texture, I argued that the implied author was challenging the audience to become an alternate culture. An attractive method of persuasion is utilized by the implied author and that is to focus on the wealth available to those who follow God and choose to live in his empire.⁴⁰

The implied author, through the enlistment of the symbol, social and ideological markers portrays the Roman empire with the language and symbols of the OT enemies of Yahweh's people and also attacks Roman wealth and power. The author uses traditional motifs of heavenly wealth versus the corrupt earthly wealth of Rome, particularly in relation to the social and ideological markers. The deliberate rhetorical contrast between God's empire and the empire of the world, God's throne and the throne of the empire and the fall of Babylon and the rise of the New Jerusalem in the context of the cosmic conflict is crucial for understanding the social and ideological implications of the language. The implied author strips Babylon of any status its wealth might suggest by portraying the city as a mercantile power bent on destruction, as seen, for example, in the decreation motif in 8.7-12. The author's rhetorical strategies have acute religious and ideological ramifications.⁴¹

First, the imagery of wealth found in the social and ideological markers and at the allusive level through the symbol markers functions "to legitimate the power of God and Christ against the Roman empire."⁴² Second, the rhetoric of wealth utilized by the implied author legitimates the author's authority within the authorial audience. The battle ground for the cosmic conflict is indeed the authorial audience in the day to day realities of life in Western Asia Minor in the first-century C.E

⁴⁰ My conclusions are similar to Royalty, *The Streets of Heaven*, 245, who writes: "In conclusion this study has shown that opposition to the dominant culture in the Apocalypse, is not an attempt to redeem that culture but rather to replace it with a Christianized version of the same thing. The powerful combination of the imagery of wealth and its effects on status from Greco-Roman culture expressed in Revelation entangles the text in that culture. The text creates a new culture of power that mimics the dominant ideology; only the names and labels are changed."

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁴² *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The original contribution this thesis makes to scholarship is the methodologically innovative use of SRI to interpret Revelation 8.2-9.21 and 11.15-18. No other research, that I am aware of, has used SRI in an extended and detailed interpretation of Revelation. Ten essential points will follow that outline the discoveries of this study.

1) The work on the various textures highlighted the text being “a thick matrix of interwoven networks of meaning and meaning-effects.”¹ The interpretive analytic I have used in this thesis better enables the interpreter to capture or analyse and describe the rhetorical clues presented by the text. Further, since Revelation is such an intricate text with a high level of both intratextuality and intertextuality the various textures provide for the interpreter a simple yet trenchant basis for interpreting the different layers in Revelation. The fact that there are layers of meaning in Revelation corresponds perfectly with the layers of meaning that are extrapolated as each texture is executed.

2) My use of inner texture provided initial glimpses into the ebb and flow of the text in its use of words and phrases. Important words, like abyss and star, opened up avenues of thought that I was able to explore in subsequent textures. While progressive texture highlighted the downward motif in the text that eventually led to the demonic locusts emerging from the abyss in Rev 9.1, narrational texture pointed to significant places in the focus text where attributed speech became important in directing the flow of the text.

3) The categories of intertexture and intratexture in chapter 3 yielded substantial interpretational returns. Most scholars engage in analysis and interpretation of Revelation using aspects of this texture. I attempted to provide greater coherence to this section of SRI by providing guidelines and the classification of allusions and echoes. In this regard Robbins development of intertexture was inadequate. My use of the implied author and implied reader in this chapter provided a reading of the text that it is hoped expands, deepens, questions and perhaps even surpasses (at certain points at least) the reading and analysis of previous

¹ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 20. According to Alan Bandy, “The Layers of the Apocalypse: An Integrative Approach to Revelation’s Macrostructure,” *JSNT* 31 (2009): 469-499 (471), “anatomy books often contain illustrations with transparent overlays of the skeletal, circulatory and muscular systems that demonstrate how each component plays a role in the structure of the human body. Each individual acetate layer reveals features unique to the systems illustrated, but does not represent the complete form of the human body. Likewise, by examining Revelation from a multi-layered viewpoint one may be able to comprehend more clearly.”

research. I could not simply make the text say what I wanted as the implied reader is “denoted in the temporal quality of narrative” and is connected to the language and the form of narration.² A modest assertion of this work is that the rhetorical features of the text can best be uncovered by means of the textual constructs of the implied author and implied reader.

A major breakthrough in chapter 3 was the deployment of the construct of symbol marker. In fact, it was Robbins insistence that an allusion or echo is the product of culture that prodded my thinking. In birthing the construct of symbol marker I was therefore cognizant that an allusion or echo had a cultural component that needed to be explored and its ramifications fully explicated in the interpretational exercise. The symbol marker was most useful in identifying, clarifying and expanding the OT and Second Temple texts that were evoked by the text of Revelation.

The question that then emerged was how would the allusions and echoes that were encoded in the text be actualized and appropriated. The work of Richard Hays, and to a lesser degree Michael Thompson, was helpful here in providing the categories needed to unravel the layers of tradition, references, allusions and echoes embedded in the focus text. As the work unfolded in chapter 3 the interconnectedness of the traditions of the OT and the Second Temple became evident.

Important conclusions in chapter 3 include the following:

a) Upon an examination of the intratextual relationship between Rev 6.9-10 and that of Rev 8.3-5, as well as the inhabitants of the earth mentioned in both 6.10 and 8.13, it was asserted that the focus text is God's response to the prayers of the saints for vengeance on those who have persecuted and martyred them.

b) Christological implications in the heavenly throne-room scene of Rev 8.2-6 include the connection between the altar of 8.3 and the trumpet blast of 8.7, signifying an indirect reference to the death of Christ. In this section of text it was argued that the angel of 8.5 was Michael. The mediatorial and judgment role of the angel in Rev 8.3-5 provided the contextual argument.

c) The OT and Second Temple allusions and echoes all pointed to the enemies of God and his people in the OT. God's enemies were highlighted from as early as 8.7 and deepened

² Staley, *The Print's First Kiss*, 35.

as the narrative unfolded. These enemies included Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Sodom and Gomorrah. In fact, this should have come as no surprise as the silence of 8.1, which drew on the tradition of the *Yom Yahweh*, the introduction of the symbol of trumpet in 8.2 and the images of fire and earthquake in 8.3-5 already set the tone of judgment for the focus text.

d) The identification of Satan or Satanic involvement is made in relation to the passage about the third (8.10-11) and fifth trumpet judgment (9.1-11) respectively. While I argued for the presence of the divine passive in each of the trumpet judgments, its use in both the precursor and successor text (Isa 14.12 and Rev 8.10) as well as the conspicuous omission of a clear allusion in the passage about the third trumpet judgment, suggested that something of unusual significance was going on here. I contended that it was indeed the introduction of Satan and his participation at the allusive level. The darkness of the fourth trumpet judgment which was also found in the passage about the fifth trumpet further underscores the connection between the third and fifth trumpet judgment. Further, the role of Domitian was traced in allusive references to him in Rev 1.16; 4.6 and 9.11.

e) Once the biblical concept of evil had emerged in the reality of Satan in the aforementioned trumpet judgments I needed to determine the exact mythic background to address this reality. While some scholars argue for the combat myth as the overarching backdrop to Revelation, the cosmic conflict was pursued based on the literary dynamics in the focus text. The notion of the cosmic conflict was introduced through the intertextual dynamics of Isa 14.12 and Luke 10.18. These echoes were critical in arriving at this conclusion. This highlights the fact that the implied author could place the interpretational weight on an allusion at times, while at other times the implied author could place the emphasis on an echo, which is more often the case in this study. Other features of the cosmic conflict include the language of battle used in the passage about the fifth trumpet, the intensification of evil as the judgments unfold, the subtle use of two opposing sides in the focus text, namely, the inhabitants of the earth (8.13) and those with the seal of God (9.4) and an agent of God who appears as co-regent in establishing a new order (11.15).

f) Another discovery was the realization that the new text in Revelation and the precursor text, from say for example the Exodus tradition, “hang on each other holistically in a synchronic relationship.”³ This “intertextual recasting” of meaning fits into the larger

³ Brawley, *Text to Text Pours Forth Speech*, 6.

aspect of the relationship between successor and precursor texts demonstrating that the implied author mixes the old thematic context and the new thematic context in the focus text.⁴ This complex interplay can be viewed most beneficially from the perspective of the successor text. The successor text is signified by the symbol marker. It is the symbol marker that facilitates the precursor and successor text “hanging on” to each other. However, it is the thematic context of the precursor text that impacts and influences the thematic context of the successor text.

4) In chapter 4, I pursued a course of research that attempted to open up new vistas on the social and cultural dynamics of the focus text. The principal consideration here was the kind of local culture Christianity was creating in the cities of Western Asia Minor as the recipients of Revelation engaged its message.⁵ After discussing each of the decades that followed the death of Christ, Robbins finally focuses on the seventh decade (90-100 C.E.). He correctly sees this decade as exhibiting a “highly pitched revolutionist countercultural version of Christian belief in Asia Minor.”⁶ His monograph offers no insight on this claim and it is in this respect that the present work provides the textual support and argumentation.

Rather than simply attempting to apply Robbins categories to the text, which would be reductionistic, then led me to develop the idea of a social marker. The social marker helps to improve the interpretive act and provides the textual support. A social marker paid attention to markers in the text which point to life in the first-century world – its happenings, infrastructure and social setting. Sixteen social markers were identified in chapter 4, namely, altar, prayer, trees, grass, fire, ships, locusts, scorpions, seal, serpent, chariots, army, horse, breastplates, lion and magic arts. These social markers pointed to the economic and spiritual aspects involved in the cosmic conflict. After this work was completed Robbins’ categories were applied and it was discovered that the focus text had revolutionist social rhetoric and reformist social rhetoric embedded in it. In specific social topics it was suggested that the honour of God was at stake as the inhabitants of the earth are invited to repent of their sins because of the trumpet plagues that were to befall them as is evident from 9.20-21. The implied author was calling on the implied reader and audience to shun Satan, the archenemy of God’s people.

⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁵ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 5.

⁶ Ibid., 243.

5) Chapter five examined the ideological texture of the focus text. The concept of ideological marker, the marker concerned with issues of power, authority and sovereignty in the first-century world and encoded in the text was introduced. I argued that the implied author used eight of these markers, namely, sun, moon, stars, key, throne, kingdom, worship and power. These ideological markers also amplified the cosmic conflict once more as two systems of power, two empires and two thrones became evident as the focus text was seen wholistically within Revelation. Hence, the ideological features of these markers could only be intratextually examined and verified. The dimensions of the cosmic conflict were extended in the ideological texture, as God was symbolically portrayed in battle against the Greco-Roman gods. In this texture I drew on the constructs of postcolonial theory in a more definitive way and developed arguments for mimicry, hybridity and parody.

6) The sacred texture consolidated the findings of the earlier textures. In this texture I concentrated on the role of God and contrasted this with the involvement of Satan. Satan's involvement become particularly evident in the passage about the third trumpet judgment. One aspect of Satan's involvement was the de-creation motif that became evident as the elements of nature were slowly destroyed as each trumpet plague unfolded. Thus, in the sacred texture God was portrayed as Judge and Warrior. The work in this texture also brought together the insights from my use of the symbol, social and ideological markers. The interpenetration of these markers brought the issues of spiritual and economic consequence to the fore once more.

7) In his latest publication, Robbins contends that the apocalyptic rhetorolect comprises six "moments" from the OT that create and shape the apocalyptic story of God's world. These include: 1) the successful tempting of Adam and Eve by Satan, 2) God taking Enoch to heaven and his oversight of the flood and the redemption of Noah, 3) God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, 4) the ten plagues against the Egyptians, 5) God's empowerment of the son of man and 6) God's development of a process of resurrection and the translation of his people into "an environment of eternal well-being."⁷

The contribution of this thesis to the conceptualization and definition of SRI is in the need to include the fall of Babylon motif in the early Christian apocalyptic story-line developed by Robbins. This omission does not give full credence to the significance of the

⁷ Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 341.

Babylon tradition in the trajectory of this apocalyptic story-line. The focus text has drawn on the Sodom and Gomorrah tradition in the passage about the fifth trumpet as well as the ten Egyptian plagues in the passages about the first four trumpet judgments. While the notion of the resurrection of the dead is absent from the focus text, the concept of transference from one kingdom to another kingdom is present in the passage about the seventh trumpet. Even though the destruction of the world by means of a flood is also not explicitly mentioned in the focus text, the de-creation motif is implicitly found in the passages about the first four trumpet judgments. The focus text only exhibits two “moments” from the OT in the apocalyptic story according to Robbins and subtly points to aspects of the other four “moments” mentioned above.

8) To come to grips with widespread evil, apocalyptists attempt to understand the world by addressing four areas. The first is the angels-spirits God created in heaven, the second is Adam as depicted in the Genesis tradition, third is in relation to humans who tried to build a tower into the heavens and fourth is with regards to the nations that have tried or are currently trying to exert their power and authority over everyone on earth.⁸ The implied author in the focus text has addressed point 1, arguing that Satan is the chief antagonist of God and point 4, that the nations of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Sodom and Gomorrah have been used to expose the contemporary empire of Rome.

9) The interpenetration of the various textures is at the heart of the ethos of SRI. For example, in the chapter on ideological texture the ideological markers of throne and kingdom were examined. Both of these markers pointed to the status of wealth that the implied author was castigating in the Roman empire. Similarly, the social markers of trees, grass, ships and locust also had economic features. The interpenetration of these social and ideological markers brought the notions of wealth to the foreground in an even stronger fashion. The interpenetration of the textures is reinforced as the social marker of seal and the ideological marker of key also depict the magnitude of loyalty in the cosmic conflict. Further, while ideological texture brought the notion of the Greco-Roman gods to the forefront, I had already made such a discovery in the chapter on intertexture in relation to Rev 8.5 and the earthquake accompanied by lightning, as something that the Greek god Zeus was depicted as doing.

⁸ Ibid., 329.

Each texture in SRI has opened up new windows for understanding, deepening and expanding the contours and ramifications of this cosmic conflict. The symbol, social and ideological markers clarified and crystallized the issues in the conflict. These issues were primarily spiritual and economic. The implied author, using rhetoric and persuasion, sought to depict the empire of God as a place where true wealth and power resides. Meanwhile, God, as universal patron, is deserving of true worship. The passage about the seventh trumpet assured the authorial audience that God's empire would triumph and that God would reign in justice.

10) The core argument of this thesis, through the deployment of SRI, has been the development of an argument that places the cosmic conflict as the primary mythic background to the seven trumpet judgments. The governing image of trumpet set the tone and direction for this work since it was used in contexts of battle, judgment, eschatology and worship. The cosmic conflict has been portrayed as the conflict between God and Satan, played out in the choices and issues faced by the authorial audience in the first-century world. The Roman empire is portrayed through the filter of OT and Second Temple allusion and echo as the antagonist of God and his people, seeking to lure and entice them to surrender their loyalty and allegiance. It is hoped that the interpretive analytic developed in this thesis will stimulate further research into the apocalyptic rhetorlect.

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