

“BABYLON THE GREAT, MOTHER OF HARLOTS”: REVELATION 17-18
IN ITS OLD TESTAMENT CONTEXT

By

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ABSTRACT

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“Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots”: Revelation 17-18 in its Old Testament Context

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Many scholars interpret the “Harlot of Babylon” Interlude in Revelation 17-18 as a vision predicting the fall and subsequent disgrace of the Roman Empire. While there is certainly much evidence to support this assertion, a reading of this passage in light of its Jewish context also points to a strong Old Testament foundation, primarily from the Book of Isaiah. This leads to the question: Is there a fundamentally Jewish sub-meaning underlying the “Harlot” interlude in Revelation 17-18? It is important to examine this passage in light of its Jewish roots, in order to better understand the author’s message to his readers, both in the time of his writing and in the current era.

Chapter 1 introduces the background and significance of the topic, as well as initial evidence linking the “Harlot” Interlude with Isaiah 47. Chapter 2 presents an exegetical analysis of Isaiah 47:1-15, in an attempt to determine the heart and context of its original message. Chapter 3 presents an exegetical analysis of Revelation 17:1-7, 15-18; and 18:1-8 that is informed by Isaiah 47 and other relevant Jewish sources from the period. Chapter 4 evaluates the possible connection between the two passages and suggests a possible understanding of the “Harlot” passage for readers in the present time.

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THESIS PROPOSAL

“BABYLON THE GREAT, MOTHER OF HARLOTS”: REVELATION 17-18 IN ITS OLD TESTAMENT CONTEXT

Background and Statement of the Problem

The Book of Revelation is viewed by scholars as having been written in the genre of “apocalypse.” Apocalypses are similar to prophetic works in that both forms express revelation from God. However, apocalypses differ in that they are typically a first-person account from an individual who has been given revelation by a figure other than God—often, as in the case of John’s apocalypse, an angel.¹ The Book of Revelation presents a vision in which John of Patmos is transported to heaven in order to witness the cosmic struggle between good and evil at the end of time. Between the judgment scenes concluding in Revelation 16 and the victory of the Lamb in Revelation 19, one finds an interlude devoted to the “Harlot of Babylon” and her ultimate destruction.

Interpretations of this interlude are vast and varied. Most commonly, the “Harlot” is viewed as representing Rome. First, she sits upon a beast with seven heads (often taken to symbolize the seven hills upon which Rome was founded). Second, as R. H. Charles notes, although she is called “Babylon,” other sources from this time have used

¹Adela Yarbro Collins, “Apocalyptic Themes in Biblical Literature,” *Interpretation* 53, no. 2 (1999): 117.

the term “Babylon” to indicate “Rome,” and there is good reason to believe the author of Revelation did the same.² The evidence suggests that this is an accurate reading of the passage.

However, a closer reading of Revelation 17-18 (and, in truth, much of the Book of Revelation) also shows that John’s apocalyptic message seems grounded in a firm foundation of Hebrew Scripture.³ In this case, it is Isaiah 47 that seems to parallel Revelation 17-18’s image of Babylon, as a woman who has been stripped and left in degradation—a queen, but not a widow. With such close parallels found between Isaiah 47 and the “Harlot” Interlude in Revelation, it seems significant to pursue the Isaian foundation of the passage, in order to better understand John’s message and his purpose in conveying it. Might this passage contain a theological message of greater depth than “Rome will be destroyed?” That is the subject of this study.

Thesis Statement

Does a fundamentally Jewish sub-meaning, informed by Isaiah 47 and other relevant texts, underlie the “Harlot” Interlude of Revelation 17-18?

²R. H. Charles, “A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Revelation of St. John,” *The International Critical Commentary*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1966): 62.

³Jan Fekkes III, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation*, vol. 93, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994): 17.

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the text of the “Harlot” Interlude of Revelation 17-18 in light of Isaiah 47. This will require exegesis of Revelation 17:1-7, 15-18; Revelation 18:1-8; and Isaiah 47:1-15—and the writer of this thesis should not forget to take into account relevant Jewish sources from the period, to see whether they may also inform the reading of the “Harlot” passage. After these scriptural passages have been exegeted, the writer of this thesis will seek connections and correlations, in order to determine whether there is a deeper theological explanation of John’s message than a prophecy concerning Rome’s destruction.

Objectives and Significance

Through this research, the writer of this thesis will seek to accomplish four objectives. First, the thesis will reinforce the premise that the author of Revelation possessed knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures and integrated them into his apocalyptic work. Second, it will examine Isaiah 47:1-15, in order to determine an appropriate contextual reading of that passage. Third, it will examine Revelation 17:1-7, 15-18; and 18:1-8—first on its own merits, and second, in light of the possible connection to Isaiah 47. Fourth, it will provide its audience with a greater understanding of the Jewish message underlying this passage in Revelation.

Many scholars and lay people seem to view the New Testament as a whole, and Revelation in particular, as a corpus of work put together by Christians apart from any Jewish influence. It is of great value to the Christian faith to examine and embrace the Jewish roots of the Scriptures. Although the literature suggests that many scholars

observe a connection between the “Harlot” of Revelation 17-18 and the “Daughter of Babylon” in Isaiah 47, there does not yet appear to be a work that focuses specifically on the intertextuality of these two texts. The writer of this thesis seeks to bridge that gap.

Delimitations and Limitations

Although this thesis may acknowledge the preterist, historical, idealist, and futurist schools of thought concerning the interpretation of Revelation, it is not the intent of the writer to examine the Revelation texts specifically from one of these points of view. Thus, there will be no lengthy discussion pertaining to these schools of thought.

Also, this study will focus on the Revelation passages dealing specifically with the “Harlot” Interlude. Thus, it is intentional that Revelation 17:8-14 and Revelation 18:9-24 be left out of Chapter 3’s exegesis. It is not the intent of the writer to ignore these passages, but rather, to limit the scope of this work. Also, as much as is possible, this work will refrain from making specific determinations concerning “the Beast” in the “Harlot” Interlude, except as it relates specifically to the nature and purpose of the Harlot herself or to the theological interpretation of the text.

The scholarly literature reveals that there exists much evidence to support a unified Book of Isaiah, as well as much evidence to support a Second Isaiah and a Third Isaiah (written after the exile to Babylon). It is not the intent of the writer of this thesis to quibble over the date(s) or authorship of Isaiah. Insofar as it relates to the interpretation of the text, Isaiah 47 will be viewed as part of Second Isaiah.

Finally, it will be important for the writer of this thesis to consult all possible sources in the crafting of this thesis, as well as examine the variants in the manuscripts

for Isaiah 47:1-15 and Revelation 17-18. However, the writer may not have access to all textual manuscripts, given that her location is fixed in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and the expense of travel and interlibrary loans may prohibit her from being able to review all possible manuscripts. Also, having studied both Hebrew and Greek at the seminary level for only a few years, she does not wish to insinuate that her translations of the texts are of greater accuracy than seasoned scholars in the field. Rather, she hopes to remain open to those scholars' translations and observations and to regard them as relevant guides when she encounters areas of difficulty in making an accurate translation.

Definition of Terms

It is important to distinguish between the terms “eschatology” and “apocalypse,” as they relate to Revelation. Without delving into the vast discourse that surrounds these two terms, “eschatology” may be understood as a fairly developed doctrine of “the last things” that implies that a current world order will be overthrown and a new one established.⁴ “Apocalypse” may be understood as “revelations of heavenly secrets.”⁵ “Prophecy” may be distinguished from “apocalypse,” in that although it is also a revelation of the divine, it is a word given directly by God to the prophet. If it foretells

⁴Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, trans. G. W. Anderson (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954): 16-17.

⁵John J. Collins, “Apocalyptic Eschatology as the Transcendence of Death,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1974): 22.

future events, there is room for change to occur that may prevent those prophesied future events from occurring.⁶

Some key words from the Isaiah passage will be רָפֵץ (“dust”), בְּתוּלָה (“virgin”), בַּת (“daughter”), בָּבֶל (“Babylon”), עֶרְוָה (“nakedness”), אֵלְמָנָה (“widow”), and גֹּאֲלֵנוּ (“redeemer”). Some key words from the Revelation passage will be πόρνη (“harlot”), ὕδωρ (“water”), πορνεία (“prostitution”), μυστήριον (“mystery”), Βαβυλῶν (“Babylon”), ὑρημόω (“strip bare” or “make desolate”), γυμνός (“naked”), βασίλισσα (“queen”), and χήρα (“widow”). These words, and others, will be examined more closely within the context of the exegesis.

Methodology

As has been mentioned previously, the methodology for this thesis will first involve establishing a connection between Isaiah 47 and Revelation 17-18. Once this connection has been established, the writer will present exegesis of Isaiah 47:1-15 and Revelation 17:1-7, 15-18; 18:1-8. After exegeting the texts, the writer of this thesis will conclude, by evaluating the “Harlot” Interlude in light of the Isaiah passage, in terms of what a proper theological understanding of the passage might be. The writer of this thesis has been advised to use David Flusser’s article “No Temple in the City” as a guide for how one may properly exegete Scripture, in light of intertextual connections.⁷

⁶Adela Yarbro Collins, “Apocalyptic Themes in Biblical Literature,” *Interpretation* 53, no. 2 (1999): 118.

⁷David Flusser, “No Temple in the City,” in *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988): 454-465.

Presuppositions or Assumptions

First and foremost, a high view of Scripture is presupposed. The writer assumes that the Bible is inspired by God and that, although textual variants may exist, it is infallible as it relates to faith and practice. The writer also assumes that the Book of Revelation was written in the form of an “apocalypse” and should not necessarily be taken literally, unless the message of the text suggests that such was the author’s intent.

It is also assumed that Isaiah 47 is part of Second Isaiah, and that Second Isaiah was written to a sixth-century B.C. audience. As discussed in an earlier section, it is not the purpose of this work to debate the merits of one author versus three. The literature suggests that there is extensive evidence that could support either theory.⁸ As it relates to exegesis of the passage, the assumption here will be that Isaiah 40-66 was written by a sixth-century author to an audience in Babylonian captivity, rather than by the eighth-century prophet Isaiah to an independent kingdom.

Another assumption is that the author of the Book of Revelation intended that his vision reach his audience with a message relevant to his time. At the time of the submission of this Thesis Proposal, the thesis writer has not yet come to a personal conclusion as to the dating of the Book of Revelation, though it will be assumed that John was the author. By the time that the writing phase begins, the writer of this thesis will have determined her position on this matter. The writer of this thesis believes that the Book of Revelation should be studied in its historical context, before any further speculations as to its meaning are made.

⁸Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 19a (New York: Doubleday, 2002): 41-43.

Hypothesis

Isaiah 47 does inform a contextual reading of the “Harlot” Interlude of Revelation 17-18. In order to appropriately understand this passage in Revelation, one must first possess an understanding of the underlying Isaiah text. If one reads Isaiah 47 as a “song of mockery” (somewhat akin to Moses and Miriam’s song in Exodus 15). If one examines the Isaian interlude in light of the broader context in chapters 40-55, one will see that, in Isaiah, the degradation of Babylon exists to demonstrate that God is sovereign and that He will redeem His people at the expense of their enemies. Applying this passage to the broader story in Revelation, then, one also sees that God is demonstrating how He will draw His people out of a different sort of exile, punish those who kept His people in captivity, and lead His people into a “new age,” in which they may be present with Him. The “Harlot” Interlude in Revelation exists as a reminder of the past—God has redeemed His people and punished their captors in the past, and He will do it again now. Although times and circumstances may change, God remains the same.

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Books

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- Carey, Greg. "A Man's Choice: Wealth Imagery and the Two Cities of the Book of Revelation." In *A Feminist Companion to the Apocalypse of John*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, 147-158. New York: T&T Clark, 2009.
- Charles, R. H. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Revelation of St. John*. The International Critical Commentary. Vol. 2. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966.

This critically acclaimed work on Revelation discusses differences in the Revelation 17-18 manuscripts. The author provides thorough analysis of the passages in light of linguistic principles. It will be of great significance to this study.

Clifford, Richard J. "The Roots of Apocalypticism in Near Eastern Myth." In *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism*, eds. Bernard J. McGinn, John J. Collins, and Stephen J. Stein, 3-29. New York: Continuum, 2003.

Collins, Adela Yarbro. "Feminine Symbolism in the Book of Revelation." In *A Feminist Companion to the Apocalypse of John*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, 121-130. New York: T&T Clark, 2009.

The author discusses three significant female symbols in Revelation: the woman from Revelation 12, the prostitute from Revelation 17, and the bride from Revelation 19-21. These female figures are likened to goddesses from Egyptian and Hellenistic cultures. In particular, she contrasts the prostitute with the bride. She discusses the image of a woman (even a harlot) representing a city, as is found in several of the prophets. However, in the context of Revelation, she suggests that, rather than the prostitute symbolizing the Israelites, she symbolizes Rome, the seductress of all other nations. She also suggests that the prostitute may be symbolic of the "Great Mother" from Babylon's creation myth, the *Enuma Elish*.

Collins, John J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

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DiTommaso, Lorenzo. "The Apocalyptic Other." In *The "Other" in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in Honor of John J. Collins*, eds. Daniel C. Harlow, Karina Martin Hogan, Matthew Goff, and Joel S. Kaminsky, 221-246. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

Fekkes, Jan. *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and their Developments*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 93. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.

This source begins with a discussion of prophecy versus apocalypse and then transitions to the Book of Revelation. The author works chapter by chapter to identify and discuss references to the Old Testament prophets that may be found in Revelation. This work will be an extremely significant source to this study.

Fishbane, Michael. *The Exegetical Imagination: On Jewish Thought and Theology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.

The entire book provides insight into how one may examine Scripture from a rabbinic mindset. The chapter of primary interest is “The Great Dragon Battle and Talmudic Redaction.” Although it does not deal directly with Revelation 17-18, it enables the reader to better understand Babylonian mythology concerning the dragon and the rabbinic tradition that may possibly underlie Revelation 17-18.

Flusser, David. *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988.

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

Franke, Chris A. “Reversals of Fortune in the Ancient Near East: A Study of the Babylon Oracles in the Book of Isaiah.” In *New Visions of Isaiah*. Vol. 214. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Series, eds. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney, 104-123. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.

Ginzberg, Lous. *The Legends of the Jews: Bible Times and Characters from the Creation to Jacob*. Vol. 1. Translated by Henrietta Szold. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1988.

Although this will not be a primary source for Revelation 17-18, it provides insight into the rabbinic tradition concerning the creation of man and woman and the mythology of Lilith. There may possibly be a connection between the figure of Lilith and the Whore of Babylon. It will be important to examine the Lilith tradition to determine whether such a connection may be made.

Gunkel, Herman. *Israel and Babylon: The Influence of Babylon on the Religion of Israel (A Reply to Delitzsch)*. Philadelphia: John Jos McVey, 1904.

Hislop, Alexander. *The Two Babylons: or The Papal Worship: Proven to be the Worship of Nimrod and His Wife*. London: S. W. Partridge, 1929.

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Kraybill, J. Nelson. *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John's Apocalypse*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 32. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.

This work focuses on examining the text and broadening the context of Revelation 18. The author posits the thesis that although early Christians' connection to Rome might have seemed attractive, John was calling them (much as a Hebrew prophet might have done) to sever ties with an empire that claims an idolatrous allegiance to an ungodly emperor. This source will be extremely significant to this study.

Marshall, John W. "Gender and Empire: Sexualized Violence in John's Anti-Imperial Apocalypse." In *A Feminist Companion to the Apocalypse of John*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, 17-32. New York: T&T Clark, 2009.

The author examines the figures of Jezebel and Babylon in the Book of Revelation in light of postcolonial theory. The lady of Babylon personifies the goddess Roma. The author posits that sexual purity, as is highlighted in the disparity between Babylon and the bride of the Lamb, is one of John's emphases in these passages.

Mowinckel, Sigund. *He That Cometh*. Translated by G. W. Anderson. New York: Abingdon Press, 1954.

Muilenburg, James. *The Book of Isaiah: Introduction and Exegesis for Chapters 40-66*. The Interpreter's Bible. Vol. 5. Edited by Nolan B. Harmon. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956.

Newsom, Carol A. "God's Other: The Intractable Problem of the Gentile King in Judean and Early Jewish Literature." In *The "Other" in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in Honor of John J. Collins*, eds. Daniel C. Harlow, Karina Martin Hogan, Matthew Goff, and Joel S. Kaminsky, 31-48. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

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Stichele, Caroline Vander. "Re-membering the Whore: The Fate of Babylon According to Revelation 17.16." In *A Feminist Companion to the Apocalypse of John*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, 106-120. New York: T&T Clark, 2009.

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Brown, Raymond "Semitic Background of the New Testament *Mysterion*." *Biblica* 39, no. 4 (1958): 426-448.

Brueggeman, Walter. "At the Mercy of Babylon: A Subversive Rereading of the Empire." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110, no. 1 (1991): 3-22.

Callahan, Allen Dwight. "The Language of the Apocalypse." *Harvard Theological Review* 88, no. 4 (1995): 453-470.

Collins, Adela Yarbro. "Apocalyptic Themes in Biblical Literature." *Interpretation* 53, no. 2 (1999): 117-130.

Collins, John J. "Apocalyptic Eschatology as the Transcendence of Death." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 36.1 (January 1974): 21-43.

Fekkes III, Jan. "'His Bride has Prepared Herself': Revelation 19-21 and Isaian Nuptial Imagery." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109, no. 2 (1990): 269-287.

Filho, José Adriano. "The Apocalypse of John as an Account of a Visionary Experience: Notes on the Book's Structure." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 25, no. 2 (2002): 213-234.

The author argues that the Book of Revelation was written as an "eschatological exhortation for the immediate future," and that it was intended to be read during liturgical meetings of believers. He argues that the book is best understood in the context of this liturgy. Of primary focus are John's four main visions (with emphasis on "in the Spirit"). The passages relating to Babylon are indicative of God's ultimate eschatological victory over His enemies. In the end, he argues that Revelation existed to give hope to those who were suffering. This source will be valuable for its broader background on the possible meaning and focus of Revelation.

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Freedman, David Noel. "'Mistress Forever': A Note on Isaiah 47,7." *Biblica* 51, no. 4 (1970): 538.

Giblin, C. H. "Recapitulation and Literary Coherence in John's Apocalypse." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 56 no. 1 (1994): 81-95.

Glancy, Jennifer A. and Stephen D. Moore. "How Typical a Roman Prostitute is Revelation's 'Great Whore'?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, no. 3 (2011): 551-569.

The authors examine πόρνη and ἑταίρα (two Greek words for "prostitute") in the context of Roman prostitution in order to determine the sort of prostitute that the

Whore of Babylon is (common slave/streetwalker vs. courtesan). Once having defined her as πόρνη (the faithless slave/whore), they examine the paradox of a slave sitting as empress. They discuss how John's use of this figure can be viewed as an indictment of the Roman Empire itself. This article is valuable both in its historical analysis of Roman prostitution and in its conclusions likening the empress (πόρνη) specifically to Babylon.

Goldingay, John. "What Happens to Ms. Babylon in Isaiah 47, Why, and Who Says So?" *Tyndale Bulletin* 47 (1996): 215-243.

Although the title is slightly informal, this article provides specific insight into the interpretation of Isaiah 47. The author examines the figure of the lady of Babylon and discusses the image of a female representing a city. He concludes that although Lady Babylon has lost her throne and has experienced degradation, she has not been violated physically. Her nakedness is merely symbolic of her disgrace. The author then goes on to discuss why Babylon has experienced this disgrace. This work will be extremely helpful in the exegesis of Isaiah 47.

Gravett, Sandie. "Reading 'Rape' in the Hebrew Bible: A Consideration of Language." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 28, no. 3 (2004): 279-299.

Johnson, Luke T. "The New Testament's Anti-Semitic Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108, 3 (1989): 419-441.

Joosten, Jan. "Targumic Aramaic m[e]ru'a'—'Oppression' (Isa. XLVII, Hos. XI 7, Mic. VI, 3)." *Vetus Testamentum* 51, no. 4 (2001): 552-555.

Kim, Jean K. "'Uncovering Her Wickedness': An Inter(con)textual Reading of Revelation 17 from a Postcolonial Feminist Perspective." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 73 (1999): 61-81.

The author argues that the "whore" imagery is double entendre for both Rome and the colonized woman and that John's feminizing of Babylon as a "whore" is directly connected to Jewish ideology. The author also suggests that the text should be read from a deconstructionist perspective. The primary value in this work is the connections that the author makes between passages in Isaiah and the "whore" imagery in Revelation.

Korner, Ralph J. "'And I Saw . . .': An Apocalyptic Literary Convention for Structural Identification in the Apocalypse." *Novum Testamentum* 42, no. 2 (2000): 160-183.

Koester, Craig R. "Roman Slave Trade and the Critique of Babylon in Revelation 18." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 70, no. 4 (2008): 766-786.

The author views Revelation as John's commentary on slavery and examines three key areas: the contrast between Babylonian/Roman slavery and slavery to God; the similarity between the attitude towards slave traders and the attitude toward Babylon; and an analysis of inscriptions that provide information concerning the slave trade in the cities listed in Revelation. This article is valuable in understanding practices relating to slavery during the Roman Empire. It also suggests possible understandings of the theology of Revelation.

Kulik, Alexander. "Genre without a Name: Was There a Hebrew Term for 'Apocalypse'?" *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 40 (2009): 540-550.

Laato, Antti. "The Composition of Isaiah 40-55." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109, no. 2 (1990): 207-228.

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The author begins by defining "allusions" and presenting support from several current scholars for the Old Testament allusions, including "the Whore," that are found throughout Revelation. He distinguishes between "certain" allusion and "probable" allusion, in an attempt to show that not all allusions may have been intentional on John's part. He then suggests that scholarly focus should be placed on the theological significance of these allusions, rather than on the debate concerning author's intent. This source provides valuable information on the intertextuality of Revelation, and it points the reader toward several other significant sources on the subject.

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The author of this article views the Apocalypse as a "misogynist male fantasy of the end of time." She discusses the imagery of death and desire in the figure of the Whore of Babylon and contrasts the Whore with the Bride seen in heaven. While this article is significant (in that it presents a fairly standard feminist reading of Revelation), it seems to impose its meaning upon the text rather than examine the text from a high view of Scripture.

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The author examines several key theological emphases in Isaiah: the "Holy One of Israel," Yahweh alone as Lord, and the special relationship between Yahweh and Israel. In this discussion is an examination of apocalyptic elements in Isaiah. This work is valuable in that it brings to light thematic elements that are necessary for the interpretation of Isaiah.

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