

MARKO JAUHIAINEN

The Use of Zechariah in Revelation

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2.Reihe
199*

Mohr Siebeck

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament · 2. Reihe

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199



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MARKO JAUHIAINEN, born 1967; 1993 M.Sc. Tampere University; 2000 M.C.S Regent College; 2004 Ph.D. Cambridge University; currently Systems Analyst at Tampere Polytechnic.

ISBN 3-16-148663-3 978-3-16-157412-2 Unveränderte eBook-Ausgabe 2019
ISSN 0340-9570 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe)

Die Deutsche Bibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the Internet at <http://dnb.ddb.de>.

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The book was printed by Druckpartner Rübelmann GmbH in Hemsbach on non-aging paper and bound by Buchbinderei Schaumann in Darmstadt.

Printed in Germany.

Preface

This book is a revised version of my doctoral thesis, “‘Behold, I Am Coming’: The Use of Zechariah in Revelation”, submitted to the University of Cambridge for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in July 2003. The revision consists primarily of addressing and clarifying some of the issues raised by my doctoral examiners, Drs. James Carlton-Paget and Steve Moyise. Their constructive comments were valuable, even at points where I have chosen to follow a different path. I am sincerely thankful to Prof. Jörg Frey, editor of WUNT 2, who deemed the manuscript worthy of being published in the series. I wish also to thank Sandi Mäki-Soini, who proofread the final manuscript — all remaining mistakes are mine — and Tanja Mix of Mohr Siebeck, who patiently guided me through the challenging process of producing a camera-ready copy.

Studying Revelation has been both a pleasure and a privilege. At least partly responsible for selection of the topic was my grandfather Vesa Jauhiainen, whose love for the Apocalypse I have inherited. Supportive throughout my entire life, and in many ways instrumental in my career change, he went to be with his Lord and Master halfway through the writing of the original dissertation. He is deeply missed, yet I know the separation is only temporary.

This project was made possible by relatives and friends who supported Merja and me (and our growing family) during our stay in the U.K., both financially and in prayer. We were well received, and in many ways supported and spiritually nourished, by the congregations of King’s Church, Amersham; City Church, Cambridge; and Cambridge Vineyard Church. I am also grateful for significant financial contributions made by The Finnish Cultural Foundation and by the Cambridge European Trust.

During my first year of research, I enjoyed the supervision of Dr. John Sweet, who believed in my topic even when I had doubts. An added extra was a constant supply of apples from his garden, which found their way into many a delicious pudding prepared by Merja. Even when no longer required to do so, Dr. Sweet continued to take an active interest in my work and provided helpful feedback, which was greatly appreciated. He was succeeded by Dr. Andrew Chester, who skilfully guided me especially

in the final and most difficult stages of the study, and to whom I am also grateful.

Working and living at Tyndale House for almost three years was yet another privilege. I benefited from the resources at the library and the family as a whole enjoyed being part of the lovely community of scholars and, where applicable, their spouses and families. For the latter opportunity, we are extremely grateful to Rev. Dr. Bruce Winter, the Warden and shepherd of the Tyndale community, who miraculously and wonderfully met our need for accommodation when we first arrived. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the always-helpful librarian Dr. Elizabeth Magba; to my former fellow students Dr. Gai Ferdon, Dr. Charles Echols III and Dr. James K. Palmer; and to Dr. David Instone-Brewer, who together with a number of readers at Tyndale House provided plenty of opportunities for me to exercise my IT skills.

Writing a Ph.D. dissertation may have been demanding at times, but all the real work was done by my wonderful teammate Merja, to whom this work is dedicated. We arrived in Cambridge with three little players: a Finn, Meiju, and two Canucks, Miki and Miriam, and in my last year our volleyball team was completed by Max. Though our children have been a constant source of joy, I frequently escaped to the library, leaving Merja to do the coaching and bear the burden of keeping the training facilities operational. Her reward will be far greater than mine.

Yet the ultimate glory and honour belong to our God, who was faithful to us in the midst of all the struggles and challenges we experienced in the course of my studies. I never thought I would make it, but He again and again removed the privative prefix from the word “impossible”. This study is a testimony of His mercy, goodness and power in my life.

Tampere, March 2005

Marko Jauhiainen

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Introduction

The use of the OT in the NT has received increasing attention in recent years. There is a steady flow of articles and monographs seeking to explore the way the NT authors utilized earlier biblical texts, with no sign that this will dry up at all soon.¹ As part of this, the book of Revelation has at last received considerable scholarly attention, so that, in contrast to the situation only just over a decade ago, it is now properly represented within this field of research.² At least four different types of studies have been undertaken: those examining John's use of the OT in general,³ those examining the OT background of one or more passages,⁴ those examining the OT background of a motif appearing in Revelation,⁵ and those examining John's use of a specific OT book.⁶

It has been suggested that the earlier relative dearth of attention was due to the allusive nature of John's use of the OT and the lack of proper criteria for discerning those allusions.⁷ While it is difficult to judge the extent to which these may have contributed to the scarcity of the "OT in Revelation" studies, most of the recent works have nevertheless adopted or proposed a set of criteria that they follow in order to base their analysis of John's use of the OT on a more objective basis. It was Paulien who gave most attention to the lack of suitable criteria and in his dissertation he laid a strong emphasis on developing a methodology for the study of the book of Revelation. A testimony to Paulien's influence is the fact that a number of subsequent authors have either followed his criteria or taken them as the starting point of their own approaches. Thus, one recent study is able to conclude that although "disagreement exists regarding the details, ... it is

¹ For an extensive list, see the partially annotated select bibliography in Beale (1994), 405–14. In addition to those listed there, one may add Moyise (2000), and idem (*The Old Testament*, 2001), which contains further references to relevant works.

² Beale (1988), 318.

³ E.g., Beale (1998); and Moyise (1995).

⁴ E.g., Paulien (1987); Paul (2000); Hultberg (2001); Mathewson (2003).

⁵ E.g., Adamsen (2001); Bøe (2001).

⁶ E.g., Beale (1984); Vogelgesang (1985); Ruiz (1989); Fekkes (1994).

⁷ Beale (1984), 1; Mathewson (2003), 2.

fair to say that a methodology for identifying allusions ... has been developed".⁸

However, already before any scientific methodologies had been developed, John's indebtedness to certain OT books was recognized. Indeed, the monographs on John's use of Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel were at least partly prompted by the fact that while John was obviously drawing on them, no thorough examination of his use of these OT books had yet been undertaken. Similarly, the present study was originally inspired by the observation that no monograph or study had been written on the use of Zechariah in Revelation, yet the need for such a study was recognized almost three-quarters of a century ago by Philip Carrington: "From the Four Horsemen in chapter v. [*sic*] to the New Jerusalem in chapter xxii., traces of *Zechariah* appear; next to *Ezekiel* it has influenced St. John most. ... A study of *Zechariah* and its relation to our apocalypse would, however, be a study in itself."⁹

This appraisal of Zechariah as an important book for John appears to be supported by UBS⁴ and NA²⁷, according to which Revelation contains allusions to, and/or verbal parallels with, about one-fifth of Zechariah, or forty verses. If these figures were accurate, Zechariah would be the OT book that, in proportion to its size, is alluded to by John most frequently. Yet figures that are even more remarkable can be derived by examining the proposed allusions to Zechariah found in scholarly literature. If an allusion to a vision or oracle is understood to invoke the immediate context as well as the specific verse or sentence explicitly alluded to (and if these scholars are correct), then Revelation alludes to more than three-quarters of Zechariah.¹⁰ The need for a thorough critical examination of the use of Zechariah in Revelation is further underscored by the fact that in the passion narratives of the Gospels, explicit quotations establish Zech 9–14 as the most quoted section of the OT prophets. If this is the case in the Gospels, then surely Zechariah, the form and content of which are much closer to those of Revelation, will have provided John with a wealth of material from which to draw?

This question and other related issues will be dealt with by the present study, the primary purpose of which is to fill an obvious gap in scholarly literature by undertaking a thorough examination of the links between the book of Zechariah and the book of Revelation.¹¹ However, while the focus

⁸ Adamsen (2001), 31.

⁹ Carrington (1931), 271 (emphasis original); cf. Farrer (1949), who similarly sees Rev 6–22 as drawing directly from Zechariah's visions and oracles.

¹⁰ See Table 1, 100, and Table 2, 130.

¹¹ More than two thirds of this study had been completed when I became aware of a recently submitted PhD dissertation (Rogers [2002]) that focuses on the analysis of the

is on how John has used one specific OT book, it also offers perspectives on the issues and questions relating to John's use of the OT in general. The question of John's sources, for example, is largely considered settled, while there is an intense ongoing debate concerning John's respect – or lack of respect – for the OT context of his allusions. Consequently, a secondary purpose of this study is to contribute to the discussion of some of these general issues.

The primary aim of this study, then, is to provide a thorough account of the use of Zechariah in Revelation. Though other types of connections between the two books will be explored to a certain extent as well, the emphasis of the study is on those instances where Revelation alludes to Zechariah specifically. However, before allusions to Zechariah can be ascertained and their contribution to John's story analysed, two preliminary steps are required.

The first step is the definition of 'allusion' and other related terms that are relevant to our study. One would expect adequate definitions to exist and to be in use already, especially given the fact that the quest for developing objective criteria for discerning and labelling allusions has been going on for more than a decade now and has been taken up by many scholars. However, as our survey of previous research will make obvious, this is not the case, yet suitable definitions are indeed required, especially for the term 'allusion' which is at the centre of a study such as this. We will not venture to propose a new definition, however, but rather adopt an existing definition from the field of allusion studies. This definition, together with an account of how an allusion is actualised by the reader,¹² comes from Z. Ben-Porat and has recently been applied by more than one scholar to the study of the use of the OT in the NT.

Our survey of significant recent studies that have wrestled with the question of allusions will also reveal that the conclusion cited earlier regarding the current mature state of methodology is somewhat over-optimistic. Indeed, it will be seen that there are significant problems with the quest for the scientific and objective criteria for discerning OT allusions in the book of Revelation. We will not join the quest by offering yet another set of criteria, or attempting to make improvement to an

use of Zechariah in the book of Revelation. However, it turned out that our surveys of previous literature are completely different and that there is very little overlap, if any, in our respective methodological discussions. Some overlap in the selection of passages was clearly inevitable, but our analyses almost always diverge. Not surprisingly, our studies produce different results as well (see the comparison in 6.1 below). This suggests the gap was still there even after Rogers's dissertation.

¹² Of course, the vast majority of the original "readers" of Revelation were probably "hearers". We will mostly use terms "reader" and "audience".

existing set. Rather, we will challenge the validity of the quest itself. In so far as our challenge is successful, it may also be considered a significant contribution to the study of the use of the OT (or other writings) in Revelation.

The second preliminary step that is required before the contribution of allusions to Zechariah in Revelation can be analysed is a brief analysis of the book of Zechariah itself. This is warranted by at least three facts: the obscure nature of this minor prophet is acknowledged by all; there is some debate as to what the best reading strategy for the book is; and very different interpretations exist with regard to many of its details. Since an allusion typically activates more than just the word or phrase that links the two texts together, it is very important to pay adequate attention to the wider context as well. We will therefore offer a reading of Zechariah, arguing that in its present form it tells a consistent story, addressing the question of when and how Yahweh's manifest kingship will be established on earth and his people restored as promised by the former prophets. We will further argue that the evidence in the Gospels – and indeed in Revelation – suggests that this may well be how John and other early Christians understood it. While this kind of holistic approach is not usually followed in “John's use of the OT” studies, our study endeavours to do full justice to Zechariah as well as to Revelation.

Having taken the necessary preliminary steps, we will proceed to analyse the plethora of proposed allusions to Zechariah, as well as some that have not previously been proposed. To bring clarity to this inquiry, the proposals will be analysed in two groups: allusions to Zech 1–8 and allusions to Zech 9–14. With each proposal, our task is first to evaluate whether the allusion does indeed exist. If it seems that it does, we attempt to offer an explanation of its function in its context. We will make other observations as well, but the emphasis at this stage is in sifting the data and ascertaining allusions to Zechariah.

Undertaking a close examination of proposals will produce both positive and negative results. On the one hand, the statistics cited above, and several other claims regarding John's use of Zechariah, will be challenged. Indeed, it will be shown that John's direct indebtedness to Zechariah has been somewhat exaggerated. On the other hand, even these negative conclusions will be beneficial. Thus, in some instances, demonstrating John's non-dependence on Zechariah will free the exegete to pursue other possibilities, which may then lead to a more fruitful explanation of a problematic phrase or vision in Revelation.¹³ In other instances, showing

¹³ See, e.g., our discussions of the eschatological battle(s) and “Armageddon” (5.2.5 and 5.2.7 below).

the reason behind a false identification of an allusion hopefully promotes a more nuanced and rigorous approach to discerning allusions to the OT in Revelation.¹⁴

Once we have a list of allusions we are able to proceed to have a look at the larger picture, both in terms of John's use of Zechariah specifically and in terms of its possible implications to John's use of the OT in general. Thus we will analyse and compare our results and methodologies with those of others and make some suggestions regarding future studies in the area of John's use of the OT. We will also revisit the issue of John's sources and the "John's respect for the OT context" debate in light of our approach to Zechariah. Most importantly, however, we will be able to analyse the contribution of allusions to Zechariah in Revelation and see how and to what extent John uses the story of Zechariah to tell his own story. It will be seen that all John's allusions to Zechariah are related to the wider theme of the restoration of God's people. John's concern to address this Jewish expectation is further underscored by the observation that he both explicitly and implicitly brings closure to unfulfilled prophecies and promises of restoration found in Zechariah as well as in other OT prophets. In contrast to Zechariah, John offers the final word on the issue of restoration, showing that the process has already been set in motion and that this time it will not be postponed.

This study is divided into six chapters, which will be presented as follows: Chapter 1 first looks briefly at some preliminary issues related to the study of Revelation and the assumptions and limitations of our present study. It then introduces the question of John's sources and the hermeneutical issue of John's use of the OT, including the "respect for context" debate, which is familiar from elsewhere in the NT¹⁵ but has its own peculiar flavour in Revelation.

Chapter 2 focuses on the definition of 'allusion' and other related terms, and on the quest for objective criteria for determining and discerning OT allusions. We will begin with a survey and evaluation of significant past contributions and then proceed to make new proposals. More specifically, we will adopt a definition of allusion, together with an accompanying account of how an allusion is actualised by the reader, from Ben-Porat. This will be followed by a brief discussion of the role of authorial intention in the study of allusions. Next, we will look at the quest for objective criteria and explain why it should be laid to rest. Before concluding the

¹⁴ See our methodological reflections in 6.1 below.

¹⁵ See further Beale (1994).

chapter, we will make some comments on the practice of classifying allusions.

If Revelation is the book in the NT that is the most obscure and most indebted to earlier traditions, then Zechariah is its OT counterpart. In chapter 3, we will try to make sense of Zechariah as a whole, for before we can analyse with confidence John's use of Zechariah, we need to have an idea of what Zechariah itself is about. We will first briefly argue for a specific reading strategy and explain Zechariah's setting, and then proceed to offer our reading of the book. We will have a two-fold focus: on the one hand, we will examine in more detail those sections and passages of Zechariah to which John appears to be alluding, and on the other hand, we will try to make a case for a specific emphasis in the book as a whole, namely, the question of the restoration of the people of God. This is then followed by a cursory look at Malachi, Ezra–Nehemiah and the Gospels, the testimony of which appears to corroborate our proposed reading of Zechariah.

Building on chapters 2 and 3, chapters 4 and 5 provide an exegetical analysis of proposed allusions to Zechariah in scholarly literature. Chapter 4 examines allusions to Zech 1–8 and chapter 5 allusions to Zech 9–14. Proposals have been collected together into appropriate groups that deal with the same topic or motif and where the alluding text or the text alluded to is usually the same. The groups themselves have been ordered by the text alluded to in Zechariah, chapter 4 beginning with a proposed allusion to Zech 1, and chapter 5 finishing with a proposed allusion to Zech 14. The emphasis of the analyses in these two chapters is on identifying allusions to Zechariah and giving an account of each allusion's function in its context. The data are then tabulated and used as the basis for further analysis and evaluation in chapter 6.

The various threads of the study are finally drawn together in chapter 6. It first analyses the impact of the methodological decisions in chapter 2 in light of the results from chapters 4 and 5. Next, it revisits the issues of John's sources and the "respect for the OT context" debate from chapter 1. The bulk of the chapter is spent evaluating the contribution of allusions to Zechariah in Revelation. This is followed by a look at the way John fulfils various Zecharian prophecies both explicitly and implicitly. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Zechariah, John, and the question of the restoration of God's people.

Chapter 1

Questions and Issues

1.1 Introduction

There are certain questions that present themselves to every student of the use of the OT in Revelation. What are the implications, if any, of the fact that the author claims that most of the contents of the book was given to him in a vision? Or, how does our knowledge of John's audience, or the lack thereof, affect our study of the references to the OT proposed by modern scholars? More importantly, how can we study John's use of the OT if we do not know what texts he used, if any? What do we mean by "John's use of the OT" anyway, and what is the significance of the related hermeneutical questions to our study? Finally, what are allusions and related literary devices, and how do we go about discerning and analysing them? We will save the last two questions for the next chapter, but consider briefly all the other issues, some of which will be picked up again in chapter 6 once we have completed our exegetical analysis in chapters 4 and 5.

1.2 Revelation as a Vision?

There seem to be two ways of approaching the question of the visionary nature of Revelation. One is to ignore the claims of the author and treat the document as a purely literary composition in the sense that the author had full control over every aspect of his "visions". This enables the interpreter to speak about how, for example, John "took" horses from Zech 1 and 6 and then "reshaped" that material in order to weave it into his portrayal of the six seals in Rev 6. Another possibility is to accept that the book is in some way based on a real experience. If this is the case, then it would seem that regardless of how he received his visions (i.e., whether they were given by the Spirit as John claims; in some sense self-induced, whether through meditation or by other means; or a combination of the two), he did not have full control over every aspect of his composition. In other words, while he is still responsible for the way he has presented his visions (i.e., the exact wording, order, possible explanatory comments, and so forth, using the language and imagery of the cultural forms available to him, of

which the Scriptures were among the most important¹), he was not at liberty to alter their essential contents. Thus, the four horses in ch. 6, for example, had to remain horses and could not be turned into cows, eagles, chariots or something else.

One methodological implication of the second possibility is that while it is still perfectly possible to investigate the links between Zechariah and Revelation, it would be, strictly speaking, slightly misleading to talk about how *John* “takes the horses in Zechariah” and “reshapes the traditional material he found”. On the other hand, if we take John’s claims seriously, then the ultimate responsibility for the essential contents of John’s visions lies with God or the Spirit (1:1, 10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10), to whom some of John’s predecessors also attributed their visions.² It is therefore possible, regardless of the approach chosen by the interpreter (i.e., whether the visions are seen as purely literary products or as essentially given or inspired by God and/or his Spirit), to talk in a meaningful sense about an author, who is “alluding” to Zechariah and who has “used” earlier material. For the purposes of the present study, this author is called “John”.³

1.3 John’s Audience

Another potential obstacle for the present investigation is the question of the biblical knowledge and abilities (or the lack thereof) of John’s audience. It may be fine for modern scholars with all their tools to investigate John’s use of the OT, but how much would the original recipients of John’s prophetic letter have understood and appreciated of John’s alleged references to the OT? Are we perhaps merely *allusionating*, thinking we are seeing allusions where there are none?

While absolute certainty escapes us with regard to these questions, they do not jeopardize our present project. On the one hand, Beale has made a strong case for the presence of competent readers among the recipients of John’s prophetic letter.⁴ The fact that John most likely knew his audience makes it probable that they shared a common set of linguistic, social and anthropological conventions and assumptions, without which his letter could not be adequately understood. Moreover, continuing study and repeated readings of Revelation, together with teaching and preaching,

¹ Russell (1964), 158–73; Himmelfarb (1993), 96–114; Decock (1999), 393; Stone (2003), 179.

² E.g., Ezek 11:24; 37:1; Jer 24:1; Zech 1:20; 3:1.

³ For discussions of the authorship of Revelation, see, e.g., Beale (*Revelation*, 1999), 34–36; and Aune (1997), xlvii–lvi.

⁴ For the full argument, see Beale (*Revelation*, 1999), 82–83.

would have contributed towards an increased understanding and appreciation of the document among the seven churches. On the other hand, if we are examining the use of the OT by the author of Revelation, our primary concern should surely be the data at hand – the author’s product and the phenomena therein – and not our conception of what John’s immediate audience was capable of.⁵ The text itself would seem to indicate that John’s *ideal reader* is familiar with the OT.⁶ Thus, though we do not have as much data regarding the original recipients of John’s composition as we would like, it seems safe to assume that at least some in his audience were capable of understanding and appreciating the way the OT is alluded to. Consequently, it is possible for the present investigation to proceed on the basis of the text and offer interpretations that could have been shared – at least in theory – by some among John’s original audience.

We referred above to the “continuing study and repeated readings of Revelation, together with teaching and preaching”. This was undoubtedly no less a reality in the early church than it is in the churches today, but it also complicates the present study by introducing elements which affect the audience’s perception of Revelation but over which we have very little or no control.⁷ We therefore make the assumption that the reader is coming to Revelation for the first time, without already “knowing” the meaning of its various symbols, regardless of whether this knowledge would have been derived from repeated readings of the book or from exposition by those in charge of the teaching ministry in the congregation.

1.4 John’s Sources

Connected to the issue of John’s audience is the question of John’s sources. Even if we can be reasonably sure of the text of Revelation,⁸ the lack of formal quotations decreases somewhat the level of certainty when we attempt to identify the OT text(s) to which John is alluding. There are at least eight possibilities:⁹ John could have used (1) a Hebrew text as reflected in the MT; (2) a different Hebrew text¹⁰; (3) a Greek text as reflected in Rahlfs’s or the Göttingen Septuagint Project’s LXX; (4) a

⁵ Porter (1997), 93, 95.

⁶ While there is a certain amount of circularity in this kind of argument, most scholars would agree that without knowledge of the OT, Revelation would make much less sense.

⁷ See further 6.5.3 below.

⁸ Metzger (1994, 662–91) lists eighteen {C} readings and one {D} reading for Revelation; cf. Aune (1997, clix–clx), who departs from NA²⁷ readings forty times.

⁹ Cf. Moyise (*The Old Testament*, 2001), 16–18.

¹⁰ See 12n25 below.

different Greek text¹¹; or (5) an Aramaic paraphrase of Hebrew. It is also possible that (6) he had access to a Christian collection or translation of important OT texts¹²; (7) he was alluding to the OT from memory; or that (8) his sources consist of a combination of two or more of these options. Though some of the first seven possibilities are more likely than others when considered alone, the eighth alternative cautions us not to overlook any of them. All this makes the studying of allusions complicated and the results of such studies rather tentative.

Most scholars have followed options (1), (3) or (4), or a combination of them.¹³ Focusing on the perceived similarities between Revelation and the LXX, Swete concluded that the author was generally dependent on the LXX, occasionally followed a reading found in Theodotion, and never used the Hebrew OT directly, though he knew Hebrew.¹⁴ Highlighting the differences between Revelation and the LXX, Charles came to an almost completely opposite conclusion: the author translated directly from the Hebrew OT, though he was often “influenced in his renderings” by the LXX and a proto-Theodonic Greek version.¹⁵ According to Moyise, the current scholarly consensus considers Semitic sources to be primary, though it is not denied that John also used Greek texts.¹⁶ Beale, the scholar perhaps most sensitive to John’s use of the OT, takes the middle ground, arguing that John most likely “draws from both Semitic and Greek biblical sources and often modifies both”.¹⁷ In practice, Beale treats the MT, LXX and θ' as John’s sources, though he would acknowledge that John and his audience could only have had access to “proto-Theodotion”, or *Ur-*

¹¹ A possible example of such a text is 8HevXII gr, for the writing of which we have a *terminus ad quem* of circa A.D. 135 but which most experts would date, on the basis of paleographic evidence, to the first century B.C. (see the discussion in Tov [1990], 22–26).

¹² For a recent study on early Christian *testimonia* collections, see Albl (1999).

¹³ For a recent summary of the views of various scholars regarding John’s source(s), see J. Paulien (“Criteria”, 2001), 113–5; and the more extended discussion in Moyise (“Language”, 1999).

¹⁴ Swete (1906), cl–cli.

¹⁵ Charles (1920), 1:lxvi.

¹⁶ Moyise (“Language”, 1999), 108.

¹⁷ Beale (*Revelation*, 1999), 78. Three recent dissertations perhaps best demonstrate the current state of affairs: Mathewson (2003) operates on the basis of the primacy of Hebrew, though he acknowledges that there appear to be times when John is drawing on the LXX as well; Rogers (2002) assumes John’s preference for the MT but thinks that John shows willingness to use the LXX as well if it better suits his purpose (though in his exegetical summary Rogers says John is “using the MT [only]”, 125); and Adamsen (2001) adopts the approach of Beale, considering both the Greek versions and the Hebrew OT as texts that John may have used.

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