

**The Use of the Old Testament
in the Book of Revelation**
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Old and New Things in Revelation

What is new in Revelation? And how much of it is really old? Although the Book of Revelation has no direct quotations from the Old Testament, it has about 550 references to it and most of the information found in its first twenty chapters is also found in the Old Testament. Only the last two chapters deal with things totally new.

If this is true, what is the importance and contribution of Revelation? The Old Testament prophecies about the end times are scattered throughout the Books of Moses and the various Prophets and Writings. Without an additional framework, they cannot be arranged in any kind of chronological order. The value of the Book of Revelation is that it provides such framework. This is the reason for so many references to the Old Testament.

However, the material found in the last two chapters is totally new. The kingdom was the high point of Old Testament prophecy and no prophet ever saw anything beyond that. But the high point of New Testament prophecy is the eternal order, and Revelation 21 and 22 provide new information as they describe this order.

Symbols in the Book of Revelation

The Book of Revelation uses many symbols, which has led to two extremes. On the one hand, some argue that the book cannot be understood and must simply be interpreted in terms of a general conflict between good and evil or God and Satan, with the good or God winning in the end. This is how the book has suffered from its enemies.

In the second extreme, the symbols are used for unchecked speculation and sensationalism, as they are explained in terms of current events. Such speculation has resulted in date setting and far-fetched interpretations that change with the current events. Thus, the Book of Revelation has suffered at the hands of its friends.

There is a balance between the two extremes. The Bible is consistent in its usage of symbols. A specific symbol will mean the same thing throughout the Old and New Testaments in the vast majority, though not all, cases.¹ In this study, the symbols will be examined in accordance with Dr. David L. Cooper's

¹ For example, whenever the word *stone* is used symbolically, it stands for the Messiah; whenever the word *mountain* is used symbolically, it stands for a king, a kingdom, or throne; whenever the word *cloud* is used symbolically, it stands for God's glory; whenever the figure of a *flood* is used symbolically, it stands for a military invasion. There are other examples that can be given as well. Only in a minority of cases is a specific symbol used in more than one way.

Golden Rule of Interpretation.² There will be no speculation. Rather, this study will proceed on the premise that all the symbols in the Book of Revelation are explained elsewhere—either in Revelation itself or in some other part of the Bible. For example, Revelation 1:20 defines the seven stars as the seven angels of the seven churches. The usage of the word *star* as a symbol for angels is already found in the Old Testament; the New Testament simply applies the same symbolic meaning to the term.

Another clear example is the description of the beast in Revelation 13:1-10, 17 and 7-14, which is based upon the prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7. In Revelation 13:1-2 the beast comes out of the sea, which represents the Gentile world, as it does in Daniel 7. Daniel 7 summarizes prophecies about the four Gentile empires given in chapter 2 and then focuses attention on the fourth empire in its various stages, but Revelation 13 is completely focused on the fourth empire, emphasizing a particular stage of its history, namely, the Antichrist stage. The beast that John saw is the same beast that Daniel saw in chapter 7, where it was nondescript, but in Revelation the beast is given a description. In 13:1, it has ten horns and seven heads. The ten horns are also found in Daniel 7. They represent the ten kingdoms, which is one of the stages of the fourth empire. While the ten-division stage gives way to the final stage, the ten kingdoms continue to exist to the end. The difference between the two stages is that in the first, the world is divided into ten kingdoms ruled co-equally by ten men, while in the second all ten divisions are ruled by the Antichrist, with the other kings subject to him.

In Revelation 13:2, the beast has a leopard-like body, bear-like feet, and a lion-like mouth. The interpretation and explanation of this verse is found in Daniel 7:12: “And as for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.” Based on Daniel 7, it is clear that the leopard-like body represents the Hellenistic influence; the bear-like feet represent the Medo-Persian influence; and the lion-like mouth represents the Babylonian influence. Thus, while the dominion of these empires ended, their lives were prolonged.

Likewise, the symbols used in John’s letters to the seven churches (e.g., the Tree of Life, Balaam, Manna, and Jezebel, to name a few) are explained by the Old Testament. Even the promise of being given a new name in Revelation 2:17 is based upon the fact that often in Scripture a new name was given to a person who overcame certain spiritual problems. For example, Jacob was given the name Israel (Genesis 32:22-32), and Abram’s name was changed to Abraham (Genesis 17:1-8). Many other examples could be given, but because of the limitations of this article, only certain passages will be discussed.

² “When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the fact of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise.”

Revelation 7:1-17

All forms of Replacement theology try to make the 144,000 Jews in vv. 1-8 the same as the innumerable multitudes of vv. 9-17, though if taken literally, the text identifies the first group as Jews, or Israelites, and the second as Gentiles. A common approach is to claim that the 144,000 could not be the twelve tribes of Israel because the name of the tribe of Dan is missing. This is the argument of George Eldon Ladd, a Covenant Premillennialist and Posttribulationist.³

Ladd presents his view in more detail in a later work, but because of his theological presuppositions, he engages in some sloppy exegesis of Revelation 7.⁴ His statement that “the twelve tribes listed are simply not the twelve tribes of Israel” is incorrect. In fact, every tribe listed in Revelation 7 is found among the twelve tribes of Israel: Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. Are these not the familiar Old Testament names for the tribes of Israel? True, the tribe of Dan is missing, but that is hardly sufficient to claim that all the others listed are “simply not the twelve tribes.”

The text gives no reason for the omission of the tribe of Dan. A great deal of speculation has developed as a result, and particularly the idea that the Antichrist or the false prophet will come out of this tribe. However, there is nothing in the context to suggest that. The text does not explain why the tribe of Dan is left out, but the Old Testament presents a solution: it is simply to maintain the symmetry of twelve. When all tribal names are listed, the total comes to thirteen, and not twelve, because Joseph produced two tribes: Ephraim and Manasseh. In order to maintain the symmetry of twelve, one name must always be omitted.

Revelation 7 is not the only passage where this happens. In Deuteronomy 33, Moses presents his twelve tribal blessings, as Jacob did in Genesis 49. But to maintain the symmetry of twelve, Moses has to drop one tribe, the tribe of Simeon. In Ezekiel 47-48, in describing the tribal settlement in the messianic kingdom, to maintain the symmetry of twelve, Ezekiel drops the tribe of Levi, putting this tribe in a separate place and category. Just as there is no sinister reason for dropping Simeon or Levi, there is no sinister reason for dropping Dan. In all cases, it is merely to retain the symmetry of twelve.

Ladd uses the missing tribe of Dan to support his view that the church will go through the Tribulation. He argues, “We may believe that John deliberately listed the 144,000 in an irregular listing of tribes to say that here are those who are true spiritual Jews without being literal Jews: in other words, the church.” Ladd does not have a single verse that actually puts the Church into the Tribulation, so he reasons this way: since the 144,000 are clearly in the Tribulation and the 144,000 are the church, the church must be in the Tribulation.

Looking at the list of tribal names in Revelation, some have concluded that the tribe of Ephraim is left out, but this is not the case either. In place of the name

³ George Eldon Ladd, *Blessed Hope* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 126.

⁴ George Eldon Ladd, *Last Things: An Eschatology for Laymen* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 70-72.

of Ephraim there is the name of his father Joseph (v. 8), but it denotes the same tribe. Such an interchange between Joseph and Ephraim is not unusual and appears elsewhere, as in Ezekiel 37:16. Nor is there any reason to assume that “the Tribe of Manasseh is included twice,” as Ladd claims. The tribe of Joseph stands for the tribe of Ephraim while the tribe of Manasseh stands for itself. But even if Manasseh were included twice, it would not negate the fact that these are literal Jews.

In vv. 4-8, those who are sealed are clearly identified as 144,000 Jews. To make it even clearer, twelve tribes are listed with the statement that 12,000 are chosen from each of the twelve tribes. Such careful delineation indicates that these 144,000 are Jews, in spite of much speculation to the contrary. The emphasis of the passage is on the Jewishness of the 144,000.

Revelation 9:1-21

Revelation 9 describes two major demonic invasions: the first is to torment people for five months, but not to kill, and the second is to destroy one-third of humanity. The Old Testament background to this passage is Joel 1:15-2:11. After announcing the approach of the Day of Jehovah, or the Tribulation (v. 15), Joel relates its effect on the crops (vv. 16-17): little remains either for the temple (v. 16) or for sustenance (v. 17). This is followed by a depiction of the devastation of the livestock (vv. 18-20) and an account of the invasion itself (2:1-11). The alarm is sounded (v. 1) to announce the approaching army of demons, giving clear indication that the Day of Jehovah, which is characterized by gloominess, clouds, and thick darkness (v. 2a), has arrived. As dawn is sudden and spreads around a mountain, so sudden and widespread is this judgment. It is then that Joel points to the invading army (v. 3). What is related here is similar to Revelation 9, which also points to the demonic nature of the invaders.

The passage goes on to describe the demonic army's appearance (Joel 2:4), noise (v. 5), terror (vv. 5-6), speed (v. 7), discipline (v. 8), and attack (v. 9). The similarity between Joel 2 and Revelation again is striking. The results (v. 10) of this demonic invasion include convulsions of nature and a total blackout, the third one of the end time. The passage concludes by giving the reason for the invasion (v. 11): the judgment of God. The text states that the army consists of two hundred million demons, enough for God to execute the destruction of one-third of humanity.

Revelation 10:8-10

Just as a passing observation, John's experience of eating the scroll, which is sweet as honey in his mouth but bitter in his stomach, is quite similar to Ezekiel's experience of partaking of the scroll God showed him. In both cases the focus is on digesting the Word of God in preparation for proclaiming it.

Revelation 13:16–18—The Mark of the Beast

To counterfeit the seal of God on the foreheads of the saints, the false prophet will introduce his own seal, the infamous “mark of the beast” that will be placed on one’s forehead or right hand (v. 16). It will be given to all who subject themselves to the authority of the Antichrist and accept him as god and will serve as a passport for business (v. 17a). People will be unable to buy or sell anything unless they have the mark. It should be pointed out that the verse does not speak of credit cards, banking systems, or a cashless society, as is often taught. In a credit or cashless system, everyone must have a different number; in this case, everyone has the *same* number. The purpose of the mark is to serve as an identification of those who own the Antichrist as their god.

Five clues describe the mark (vv. 17b-18):

- It is the name of the beast.
- It is the number of his name.
- It is the number of the beast.
- It is the number of a man.
- The number is 666.

The number of the Beast is also the number of a man because the Antichrist will be a man who will be the last ruler of the final form of the fourth Gentile empire. Furthermore, the numerical value of the Antichrist’s name in Hebrew will be 666.⁵ There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and in the order of numerical value they are as follows: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100, 200, 300, and 400. So everyone’s name in Hebrew has a numerical value. The value of the author’s name is 966. The name of Jesus the Messiah has the numerical value of 749. In this passage, the Antichrist’s personal name will have the numerical value of 666, and this is the number that will be put on the worshipers of the Antichrist. Since several different calculations can equal 666, it is impossible to figure out the name in advance. But when the Antichrist does appear, those who are wise will be able to point him out (v. 18).

The Abomination of Desolation

Revelation 11:1-2 and 13:11-18 are clearly based upon the concepts in the Book of Daniel. The first event tied with the breaking of the covenant is the abomination of desolation in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem (Daniel 9:27). This verse reveals not only that the Tribulation will last seven years, but also that “in the middle of the week,” that is, in the middle of this seven-year period, the Antichrist will cause a cessation of the reinstituted sacrificial system. At that point, “upon the wing of abomination shall come one that makes desolate.” Exactly what the abomination of desolation consists of is not stated. However, the term *wing* refers to the pinnacle of the Temple, emphasizing the concept of “overspreading influence”: what begins here will spread elsewhere.

⁵ It is possible that 666 will be the numerical value based on the Greek alphabet, but the Jewish context argues for it being Hebrew; Latin plays no role in a biblical context.

Another passage, Daniel 12:11, affirms that the abomination of desolation will last a total of 1,290 days, a full thirty days beyond the end of the Tribulation. No reason is given as to why it is permitted to last that long, and again, this passage does not reveal exactly what the abomination of desolation will be.

Matthew 24:15-16, where this event is also mentioned, is merely a reminder of Daniel's prophecy, with no explanation as to what the abomination of desolation is. The only clue given is that it will be something "standing" (like an image or idol) in the holy place. This passage helps verify the futuristic interpretation of Daniel 12:11, for it was still considered unfulfilled at the time of the Messiah. The abomination of desolation will serve as a warning to the Jews of Israel to flee the Land.

Revelation 11:1-2 deals with the abomination of desolation, as well as connects the times of the Gentiles with the takeover of the temple and the city of Jerusalem (at least the Old City). This will be the final Gentile control of Jerusalem, and it will last 42 months, or 3½ years. It will be this takeover that will cause the cessation of the sacrifices.

What is the abomination of desolation? It has two stages, the first of which is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. In this passage, the Antichrist is described as seating himself in the temple of God, declaring to the world that he really is God. In all probability, he will sit in the very holy of holies. Thus, with his initial takeover of Jerusalem and the temple, he will set up the second religious system of the Tribulation: the worship of the Antichrist.

The second aspect of the abomination of desolation is described in Revelation 13:11-15. In this stage, the false prophet will be given the authority to perform many signs and wonders (v. 13), deceiving mankind in order to cause them to worship the Antichrist (v. 12). The great deception is climaxed when the image of the Antichrist becomes alive and men are called to worship it (vv. 14-15). The image will be set up in the holy of holies to carry on the abomination of desolation, and Jerusalem will become the religious capital of the Antichrist.

Revelation 12:1-17

This passage is very popular with those who believe in a posttribulation rapture. In order to support their view, they argue that the woman of Revelation 12 represents the church. Midtribulationists such as Buswell follow a similar line of reasoning:

It has been suggested by competent Bible students that the child should be understood as representing the true church. That being assumed, the child's being caught up to God and to His throne corresponds with the rapture of the true church. The woman, then, represents the visible or organized church, which though having lost the truly born-again individuals, still has the Christian forms, the Bible, and much of the Christian tradition. This suggestion is further borne out by the reference

to “the remnant of her children, who cherish the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus,” in verse 17 of the same chapter.⁶

Based on the Old Testament usage of the symbols found in Revelation 12, the woman should be viewed as the nation of Israel, who produced the *man-child*, Jesus the Messiah. The “rest of her seed” who have “the testimony of Jesus” should be understood as the Jewish believers, such as the 144,000. Buswell, however, follows an interpretation more consistent with his Covenant theology. He believes that the woman is “the visible or organized church,” while the child and “the rest of her seed” are “the true church.” Later, under the heading “The Remnant,” Buswell states that “the remnant” does not consist of Jewish believers but rather of Christians in general.⁷ To arrive at this conclusion, he must ignore the Old Testament usage and interpretation of the symbols found in Revelation.

Vv. 1-5 provide the Old Testament background for Satan’s hatred of the Jews and his war against them in Revelation. John saw two signs in the heavens. In the first sign (vv. 1-2), Israel is pictured as a woman, a motif taken from the Old Testament concept of Israel as the wife of Jehovah. The Old Testament background for this sign is Joseph’s dream in Genesis 37:9-11. With the help of this passage, John’s vision can easily be understood. The sun represents Jacob, who was renamed Israel (both of these names were often used to represent the entire nation, e.g., Isaiah 40:27; 49:5; Jeremiah 30:10). The moon represents Rachel, who in turn is representative of Jewish women, especially Jewish motherhood (Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:18). The twelve stars represent the twelve sons of Jacob, who fathered the twelve tribes of Israel.

Normally, whenever the word *star* is used symbolically, it refers to angels. It has been used this way several times already in Revelation, and it is used this way again in v. 4, which teaches that one-third of all angels fell with Satan. V. 1 may be the only exception to this rule, since in Joseph’s dream the twelve stars obviously represent the twelve sons of Jacob. But it may not truly be an exception. In Joseph’s dream, stars represent the sons of Jacob. When a star is used symbolically for an angel, no actual star is seen. Rather, an angel is seen but called a *star*, as in Revelation 8:11-12 and 9:1. Joseph, on the other hand, saw stars, but they represented his brothers. Clearly, then, the woman arrayed with the sun, moon, and stars is representative of Israel, not the church. In v. 2, this woman is seen in the final stages of pregnancy, about to give birth to a child. The vision, then, is of the nation of Israel just before the birth of the Messiah. A good reason why this cannot be the church is that it would be an anachronism: the church would have to give birth to the Messiah, when in fact the opposite is true.

Then John described the second sign. The “great red dragon” is Satan in all his fierceness (v. 3). The Old Testament background for this is the Leviathan of the Book of Job; the Septuagint translation of Job uses the same Greek word as Revelation—*dragon*. The seven heads and ten horns represent the final form of

⁶ J. Oliver Buswell, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963), 2:462.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:463.

the fourth Gentile world empire under Satan's control and authority. The "seven diadems" point to the concept of conquest.

In v. 4, the two signs come together. Satan brings his entire demonic host to the Land of Israel in order to murder the child about to be born. The demonic host is said to comprise one-third of the stars, or one-third of all the angels that God created. This is the only verse revealing how many angels fell with Satan in his original revolt. The initial attempt to destroy the child was the slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16-18), but throughout Jesus' life and ministry Satan attempted to destroy Him both before His proper time (Passover) and by the wrong means (stoning in place of crucifixion). There is a tremendous amount of demonic activity in the Gospels in contrast to the minimal demonic activity in the Old Testament. Following the Gospels, there is a decrease of demonic activity, as seen in the Book of Acts. V. 5 points out Satan's failure. The child, destined to rule the nations with "a rod of iron," survived until His proper time for death. After His resurrection, He ascended into heaven and is presently seated at the right hand of God the Father.

After this historical survey, John's vision moves forward to the events that will occur in the middle of the Tribulation (v. 6). Both Matthew 24:15-28 and Revelation 12:6 picture the woman in flight. But whereas Matthew states that the flight is to the mountains, Revelation says it is to the wilderness, and one place in that wilderness in particular that God prepared in advance. With Satan's attempt to destroy the child thwarted, he will turn against the nation that produced Him. Satan's perpetual hatred of Israel is based on the fact that it is through Israel that God will fulfill His program of redemption.

The next section of the chapter, vv. 7-12, gives the reason for Israel's flight. Satan is cast down and confined to earth for the next 3½ years. There are two results of this angelic war. First, there is rejoicing in heaven because the accuser of the brethren is now cast down (vv. 10-12a) and his access to heaven is removed forever. Second, there is woe for the earth, for Satan is now full of wrath and anger because his time is short (v. 12b). Vv. 7-12, then, are somewhat parenthetical, providing the reason for Israel's flight in v. 6.

The next section, vv. 13-17, takes up where v. 6 left off. V. 13 states that once Satan was cast down to earth, he "persecuted the woman," Israel. V. 13 gives further explanation for Israel's flight "into the wilderness" mentioned in v. 6. In v. 14, Israel flees "into the wilderness," where she is nourished for "a time, and times and half a time," which is the same as the 3½ years in v. 6. The figure of the "two wings of the great eagle" has provided fertile ground for speculation among "newspaper exegetes." Amazingly, "the wings of the eagle" have been identified by some as the American Air Force! After all, the eagle is a symbol of the United States, and so it would appear that the American Air Force will help the Jews escape! But other nations use the eagle as a symbol (Germany and Poland are two examples), and for some reason their air forces are ignored.

It has been stated at the very beginning of this article that every symbol in Revelation is explained either in Revelation itself or somewhere else in the Bible. The figure of the flight on the eagle's wings is found in Exodus 19:4 and

Deuteronomy 32:11 in connection with the exodus from Egypt. Israel was pursued by the Egyptian army but succeeded in escaping into the Wilderness of Sinai because of God's intervention. Thus, the flight on "the wings of the eagle" describes a successful escape due to divine intervention. In Revelation 12, Israel is also being pursued but escapes safely into another wilderness with God's help.

In v. 15, the persecution is described in terms of the waters of a river causing a flood. Whenever the figure of a flood is used symbolically, it always stands for a military invasion (e.g., Daniel 9:26). This satanic invasion of Israel is described in Daniel 11:41 and Revelation 11:1-2. The Antichrist will succeed in taking control of both Jerusalem and the temple and will commit the abomination of desolation, but he will fail to destroy the Jews (v. 16), for Israel will flee "into the wilderness" and God will destroy the pursuing army.

The passage closes (v. 17) by describing the wrath of Satan ignited by his initial failure to destroy the Jews. Satan will then make war specifically against "those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus," namely, the believing remnant among the Jews, including the 144,000. (The concept of the remnant of Israel is a major motif of the Old Testament.)

Revelation 12 is a picture of Satan's fierce persecution of the Jews. It will begin in the middle of the Tribulation, after he is cast down to earth. Now he will organize an all-out worldwide anti-Semitic campaign to destroy all the Jews once and for all. The reason is to avoid the Second Coming. While the rapture of the Church has no preconditions and can happen anytime, the Second Coming does have one condition: Israel's national salvation. Since Satan's initial attempt to destroy the Jews in the middle of the Tribulation will fail, he will make one more attempt in the War of Armageddon.

Three other points of Revelation 12 should be noted concerning its connection with Old Testament truths. First, Zechariah 3:1 points out that Satan has always had a special antagonism against the Jews. Revelation 12:1-17 is the central passage describing Satan's relationship to Israel during the Tribulation. To what extent will Satan succeed in destroying the Jews? Zechariah 13:8-9 provides the answer. Two-thirds of the Jewish population will die. This will be the largest and most intense persecution of the Jews in history.

Second, Michael the Archangel is the Chief Prince and protective angel assigned to Israel. It is Michael who will cast Satan down to the earth in Revelation 12:7-12. But the key passage defining Michael's relationship to Israel in the Tribulation is Daniel 12:1: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who stands for the children of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." The fact that Israel will survive at all is due to the ministry of the Archangel and Chief Prince Michael.

Third, Revelation 12:6 specifies that the woman will flee to a specific place prepared in advance and that there will be a city of refuge. This too is based on Old Testament teachings. Is it possible to locate the exact place where the Jews will be hiding? Up to now, three clues have been provided. First, the place of

flight and refuge is in the mountains (Matthew 24:16). Second, it must also be in the desert (Revelation 12:6). And third, this place was prepared by God in advance (Revelation 12:14).

These are the clues found in the passages examined earlier. Another passage which may have a bearing on the question is Isaiah 33:13-16. Since the context is dealing with the end time events, this passage also draws a distinction between the apostates and the faithful remnant as far as their protection and preservation is concerned. V. 16 gives the means by which protection for the remnant will be accomplished. Besides reaffirming the promise in Isaiah 41:17-20 and 65:8-16 that food and water would be provided, this passage gives some insight into the nature of the hiding place itself. First, it will be “on high,” that is, in the mountains. Second, the place of defense will be “the munitions of rocks”; that is, the very nature of the place will make it easy to defend.

This brings the total to four clues. The refuge will be

1. In the mountains
2. In the wilderness
3. A place prepared in advance
4. Very defensible

Micah 2:12, pinpoints the place exactly. The remnant is gathered together “as the sheep of Bozrah.” Since “the sheep of Bozrah” are no different from other sheep, this simply means that they are to be gathered in Bozrah. Israel is the flock of God, and this flock is to be gathered in Bozrah. The ancient city of Bozrah was located in the region of Mount Seir. Mount Seir is a rocky range of mountains, and its name means the “hairy mountains.” This fulfills the requirement of Matthew 24. It is located in the wilderness section of ancient Edom and so fulfills the requirement of Revelation 12. The nature of the chain of mountains of Mount Seir makes it quite defensible, fulfilling the requirements of Isaiah 33. Mount Seir is located in the western side of ancient Edom, extending from southeast of the Dead Sea down to the city of Akaba. It towers over the Arabah, part of the rift valley from the south shore of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Eilat. Today the area is in southern Jordan.

A fascinating issue is the exact location of Bozrah in the mountain range of Mount Seir. Two places have been suggested. One is the present Arab village of *Buseira*, which seems to retain the name of Bozrah. This is the main argument in favor of it. Another suggestion is the city now known as Petra. While both cities meet all the above requirements, this author prefers the identification with Petra.

Petra is located in a basin within Mount Seir and is totally surrounded by mountains and cliffs. The only way in and out of the city is through a narrow passageway that extends for about a mile and can only be negotiated by foot or on horseback. This makes the city easy to defend, and its surrounding high cliffs give added meaning to Isaiah 33:16. Only a few abreast can enter through this passage at any one time, giving this city even greater defensibility. The name *Bozrah* means “sheepfold.” An ancient sheepfold had a narrow entrance so that the shepherd could count his sheep. Once inside the fold, the sheep had more

room to move around. Petra is shaped like a giant sheepfold, with its narrow passage opening up to a spacious circle surrounded by cliffs, which is not true of the town of Buseira. Furthermore, by modern Petra is a site known as *Butzeira*, which retains the Hebrew *Botzrah* better than *Buseira*.

Regardless of which of the two cities is to be taken as Old Testament Bozrah, the city of refuge will be in the general area of Mount Seir. But is there any other reason this area is chosen besides its natural defensibility? There is an indication of such in Daniel 11:40-45. The passage states that while the Antichrist will conquer the whole world, three nations will escape his domination: Edom, Moab, and Ammon. These three ancient nations currently are part of the single modern kingdom of Jordan. The city of Bozrah in Mount Seir is located in ancient Edom, or southern Jordan. Since this area will escape the domination of the Antichrist, it is logical that the Jews will flee to this place.

Revelation 20:4-6

Premillennialists have often been criticized for basing their belief in the millennium entirely on one passage of Scripture, Revelation 20. Because the book has so many symbols, some say it is foolish to take “one thousand years” literally. But that is hardly a valid criticism.

First, while it is true that the Book of Revelation uses many symbols, it has already been shown that the meaning of all those symbols is explained either within the Book of Revelation itself or elsewhere in the Scriptures. The desire to spiritualize the text always places the burden of proof on the interpreter. Furthermore, years are never used in a symbolic way in this book. If they are symbolic, the symbolism is nowhere explained. The 1,260 days, 42 months, and 3½ years are all literal, not symbolic. Hence, there is no need to take the one thousand years as anything but literal years.

While it is true that the “millennium” (that is, one thousand years) is found only in Revelation 20, the belief in the messianic kingdom does not rest on this passage alone. In fact, it hardly rests on it at all. The basis for the belief in the messianic kingdom is twofold: the unfulfilled promises of the Jewish covenants and the unfulfilled prophecies of the Jewish prophets. There are four unconditional, unfulfilled covenants God made with Israel. They can only be fulfilled within the framework of a messianic, or millennial, kingdom. The first is the Abrahamic Covenant, which promised an eternal seed developing into a nation that would possess the Promised Land. While that nation—the Jews—continues to exist, never in Jewish history have they possessed all of the Promised Land. Besides, the possession of the Land was not merely promised to Abraham’s seed, but to Abraham personally when God said, “to you will I give it, and to your seed forever” (Genesis 13:15). For God to fulfill His promise to Abraham (as well as to Isaac and Jacob), there must be a future kingdom.

The second covenant is the Palestinian, or Land, Covenant, which spoke of a worldwide regathering of the Jews and repossession of the Land following their dispersion. While the dispersion has already occurred and is in effect today, the

regathering and repossession of the Land still awaits fulfillment in the future kingdom.

The Davidic Covenant is the third covenant, and it promised four eternal things: an eternal house (dynasty), an eternal throne, an eternal kingdom, and an eternal Person. The dynasty became eternal because it culminated in a person who is Himself eternal: Jesus the Messiah. For that reason the throne and kingdom will be eternal as well. But Jesus has never yet sat on the throne of David ruling over the kingdom of Israel. The reestablishment of the Davidic throne and Messiah's rule over the kingdom still awaits a future fulfillment. It requires a future kingdom. The last of these covenants is the New Covenant, which spoke of the national regeneration and salvation of Israel, encompassing each individual Jewish member of that nation. This too awaits its final fulfillment and requires a future kingdom.

The unfulfilled Old Testament prophecies also serve as the basis for belief in the millennium. These prophecies speak of the coming Messiah who will reign on David's throne over a peaceful kingdom. There is a massive amount of material in the Old Testament on the messianic kingdom. The only real contribution that the Book of Revelation makes on the subject is to disclose just how long the messianic kingdom will last. This is the one key truth concerning the kingdom that was not revealed in the Old Testament.

In light of this, it is possible to understand why so much of the book is spent on the Great Tribulation and so little on the millennium. While much of the material in Revelation 4-19 is found scattered in the pages of the Old Testament, it is impossible to place these events in a chronological sequence using only the Old Testament. The Book of Revelation provides the framework by which this can be done. A great portion of the Book of Revelation was used to accomplish this goal. On the other hand, all of the various features and facets of the messianic kingdom have already been revealed in the Old Testament. They portray the general characteristics of life in the kingdom, which do not raise the problem of an order, or sequence. Hence, there was no reason to spend a great deal of time on the messianic kingdom in the Book of Revelation.

However, there were two things about the messianic kingdom which were not revealed in the Old Testament. The first was the length of this kingdom. While the Old Testament prophets foresaw a long period of time of a peaceful messianic reign, they did not reveal just how long it would last. To answer this question, the Book of Revelation states that it will be exactly one thousand years. A second thing that was unknown was the circumstances by which the kingdom would come to an end and transition into the eternal order. This is also revealed in the Book of Revelation. These two items are all that Revelation 20 added to the knowledge of the messianic kingdom.

It is the extensive prophetic writings, as well as the four unconditional covenants, that provide the basis for the belief in a future messianic kingdom, and not merely one chapter of a highly symbolic book. To summarize, the basis for the belief in a messianic kingdom is twofold: the unfulfilled promises of the Jewish covenants, and the unfulfilled prophecies of the Jewish prophets.

Revelation 21:1-22:5

The eternal order was something unforeseen by the prophets of the Old Testament; thus, the high point of all Old Testament prophecy was the messianic kingdom while the high point of the New Testament prophecy is the eternal order. But here again, while the eternal order description is all new, many of the symbols used within this segment are derived from the Old Testament: the various stones based upon Ezekiel 28:13, the Tree of Life, the River of Life, and so on. The Appendix will help correlate some of the verses that borrow Old Testament symbols with their background.

Other Examples

The Book of Revelation also refers to the *Shechinah* Glory, the visible manifestation of God's presence, in Revelation 15:8: "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and none was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angles should be finished."

In this passage, the *Shechinah* Glory is connected with the bowl judgments, which will be the final and most severe series of judgments in the Tribulation. These judgments will bring to completion the wrath of God. In the Book of Numbers, the *Shechinah* Glory rendered judgment for sin, and it will do so again in the Great Tribulation. The *Shechinah* Glory will also be evident in the Eternal Order. Revelation 21:1-3 describes the New Jerusalem and the new presence of God in Jerusalem: "the Tabernacle of God" will be "with men" and He will dwell with men. The word "dwell" is the Greek word *skeinei*, which means "to tabernacle." As it was in the Old Testament, in the eternal order the *Shechinah* Glory will tabernacle with men, although there will be no tabernacle or temple *per se*. Jerusalem will have the glory of God because of this "tabernacling" with men, according to Revelation 21:10-11. Revelation 21:23-24 states that because the *Shechinah* Glory will be there, there will be no need of the natural light from the sun or the moon, nor the artificial light of the lamp. The *Shechinah* Glory will provide all the necessary light, and all the inhabitants will be able to walk in that light. So it will be for all eternity.

Another concept in the Old Testament is the remnant of Israel, which refers to those Israelites who believed what God had revealed through Moses and the Prophets. The existence of the remnant continues to the present age and will also continue into the prophetic future. All individual Jews who become believers during the seven years of the Tribulation are part of the remnant of Israel. This includes the 144,000 Jews (Revelation 7), those Jews of Jerusalem who become believers in the middle of the Tribulation (Revelation 11:13), and all Jews who became believers as a result of the preaching of the 144,000 or the two witnesses of Revelation 11. It also includes the remnant of Revelation 12:17 that Satan will attack in a particular way.

Conclusion

Since I had to be selective in the article, only a few examples were considered and many more could be given. The enclosed Appendix will provide a non-exhaustive list of Old Testament backgrounds to the Revelation passages. In it I listed 226 verses from Revelation and 492 Old Testament passages that provide background information for them.

Some have claimed that the Old Testament must be interpreted by the New Testament because subsequent revelation must be determined by previous revelation, and not vice versa. This is a wrong approach. Why do we Bible believers not interpret the New Testament by the *Book of Mormon* or by *The Key to the Scriptures*? Because we find that these writings claiming to be subsequent revelation are simply not consistent with what is taught in the previous revelation, and therefore, they are rejected. Thus, if the New Testament changes what the Old Testament teaches, rewrites the obvious meanings of the Old Testament statements, and contradicts the Old Testament, then the New Testament is a fraudulent document. But if the Old Testament is quoted by the New Testament, it shows not contradiction but fulfillment, not cancellations of previous promises but expansions of previous promises. Whatever new information the New Testament may give, it cannot simply contradict, change, or rewrite what was revealed previously. So whatever additional things God may choose to do for the church and whatever additional plans God may have for her, these plans cannot cancel what He already promised to Israel. A promise can only be fulfilled to the one to whom it was made. A prophecy can only be fulfilled to the one to whom it was made. So again, whatever additional promises God may make for the church, they can never cancel promises and prophecies made to Israel, which must also be literally fulfilled. This is the very essence of Dispensationalism, premillennialism, and pretribulationism.

APPENDIX

Old Testament References in the Book of Revelation

The Book of Revelation contains over five hundred references to the Old Testament. The following is a nonexhaustive list of such references. Some of these references speak of the very same things as Revelation. However, in others Revelation merely borrows a phrase or motif for the purpose of developing a new area. This distinction should be kept in mind in the study of those Old Testament references.

Revelation	1:1	Daniel 2:28-29
	1:4	Isaiah 11:2
	1:5	Genesis 49:11; Psalm 89:27
	1:6	Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 61:6
	1:7	Daniel 7:13; Zechariah 12:10-14
	1:8	Isaiah 41:4

	1:12	Exodus 25:37; 37:23
	1:13	Daniel 7:13; 10:5, 16
	1:14	Daniel 7:9; 10:6
	1:15	Ezekiel 1:7, 24; 43:2; Daniel 10:6
	1:16	Judges 5:31; Isaiah 49:2
	1:17	Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Daniel 8:17-18; 10:9, 10, 12, 15, 19
	1:18	Job 3:17; Hosea 13:14
Revelation	2:4	Jeremiah 2:2
	2:7	Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24; Proverbs 11:30; 13:12; Ezekiel 31:8 (LXX)
	2:12	Isaiah 49:2
	2:14	Numbers 25:1-3
	2:17	Exodus 16:33-34; Isaiah 62:2; 65:15
	2:18	Daniel 10:6
	2:20	1 Kings 16:31-32; 2 Kings 9:7, 22
	2:23	Psalms 7:9; 26:2; 28:4; Jeremiah 11:20; 17:10
	2:27	Psalms 2:7-9; Isaiah 30:14; Jeremiah 19:11
Revelation	3:4	Ecclesiastes 9:8
	3:5	Exodus 32:32-33
	3:7	Isaiah 22:22
	3:9	Isaiah 43:4; 49:23; 60:14
	3:12	Isaiah 62:2; Ezekiel 48:35
	3:14	Genesis 49:3; Deuteronomy 21:17
	3:18	Isaiah 55:1
	3:19	Proverbs 3:12
Revelation	4:1	Ezekiel 1:1
	4:2	Isaiah 6:1; Ezekiel 1:26-28; Daniel 7:9
	4:3	Ezekiel 1:26, 28; 10:1
	4:5	Exodus 19:16; 25:37; Isaiah 11:2; Ezekiel 1:13
	4:6	Ezekiel 1:5, 18, 22, 26; 10:1, 12
	4:7	Ezekiel 1:10; 10:14
	4:8	Isaiah 6:2-3; Ezekiel 1:18; 10:12
	4:9	Deuteronomy 32:40; Daniel 4:34; 6:26; 12:7
	4:11	Genesis 1:1
Revelation	5:1	Ezekiel 2:9-10; Daniel 12:4
	5:5	Genesis 49:9-10; Isaiah 11:1, 10
	5:6	Isaiah 11:2; Zechariah 3:8-9; 4:10
	5:8	Psalms 111:2
	5:9	Psalms 40:3; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isaiah 42:10; Daniel 5:19

	5:10	Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 61:6
	5:11	Daniel 7:10
Revelation	6:2	Zechariah 1:8; 6:3
	6:4	Zechariah 1:8; 6:2
	6:5	Zechariah 6:2
	6:8	Jeremiah 15:2-3; 24:10; 29:17; Ezekiel 14:21; Hosea 13:14; Zechariah 6:3
	6:12	Isaiah 50:3; Joel 2:10
	6:13	Isaiah 34:4
	6:14	Isaiah 34:4; Nahum 1:5
	6:15	Psalms 48:4-6; Isaiah 2:10-12, 19
	6:16	Hosea 10:8
	6:17	Psalms 76:7; Jeremiah 30:7; Nahum 1:6; Zephaniah 1:14-18; Malachi 3:2
Revelation	7:1	Isaiah 11:2; Jeremiah 49:36; Ezekiel 7:2; 37:9; Daniel 7:2; Zechariah 6:5
	7:3	Ezekiel 9:4-6
	7:4	Genesis 49:1-28
	7:9	Leviticus 23:40
	7:10	Psalms 3:8
	7:14	Genesis 49:11
	7:15	Leviticus 26:11
	7:16	Psalms 121:5-6; Isaiah 49:10
	7:17	Psalms 23:1-2; Ezekiel 34:23
Revelation	8:3	Psalms 141:2
	8:4	Psalms 141:2
	8:5	Ezekiel 10:2
	8:5-6	Exodus 19:16
	8:7	Exodus 9:23-24; Psalms 18:13; Isaiah 28:2
	8:8	Exodus 7:17-19
	8:10	Isaiah 14:12
	8:11	Jeremiah 9:15; 23:15
	8:12	Isaiah 13:10
Revelation	9:1	Isaiah 14:12-14
	9:2	Genesis 19:28; Exodus 19:8
	9:3	Exodus 10:12-15
	9:4	Ezekiel 9:4
	9:6	Job 3:21
	9:8	Joel 1:6
	9:9	Joel 2:5
	9:11	Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Psalms 88:11; Proverbs 15:11

	9:14	Genesis 15:18; Deuteronomy 1:7; Joshua 1:4
Revelation	10:1	Ezekiel 1:26-28
	10:4	Daniel 8:26; 12:4-9
	10:5	Deuteronomy 32:40; Daniel 12:7
	10:6	Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 32:40; Nehemiah 9:6; Daniel 12:17
	10:7	Amos 3:7
	10:9	Jeremiah 15:16; Ezekiel 2:8-33
	10:11	Ezekiel 37:4, 9
Revelation	11:1	Ezekiel 40:3-4; Zechariah 2:1-2
	11:2	Ezekiel 40:17-20
	11:4	Zechariah 4:1-3, 11-14
	11:5	Numbers 16:35; 2 Kings 1:10-12
	11:6	Exodus 7:19-25; 1 Kings 17:1
	11:7	Exodus 7:3, 7, 8, 21
	11:8	Isaiah 1:9-10; 3:9; Jeremiah 23:14; Ezekiel 16:49; Ezekiel 23:3, 8, 19, 27
	11:9	Psalms 79:2-3
	11:11	Ezekiel 37:9-10
	11:15	Exodus 15:18; Daniel 2:44-45; 7:13-14, 27
	11:18	Psalms 2:1-3; 46:6; 115:13
Revelation	12:1	Genesis 37:9-11
	12:2	Isaiah 26:17; 66:7; Micah 4:9-10
	12:3	Isaiah 27:1; Daniel 7:7, 20, 24
	12:4	Daniel 8:10
	12:5	Psalms 2:8-9; Isaiah 66:7
	12:7	Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1
	12:9	Genesis 3:1; Job 1:6; 2:1; Zechariah 3:1
	12:10	Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5; Zechariah 3:1
	12:14	Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:11; Isaiah 40:31; Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Hosea 2:14-15
	12:15	Hosea 15:10
	12:17	Genesis 3:15
Revelation	13:1	Daniel 7:3, 7, 8
	13:2	Daniel 7:4-6, 8
	13:3	Daniel 7:8
	13:4	Daniel 8:24
	13:5	Daniel 7:8, 11, 20, 25; 11:36
	13:7	Daniel 7:21
	13:8	Daniel 12:1
	13:10	Jeremiah 15:2; 43:11

	13:11	Daniel 8:3
	13:13	1 Kings 1:9-12
Revelation	14:1	Psalm 2:6; Ezekiel 9:4
	14:2	Ezekiel 1:24; 43:2
	14:3	Psalm 144:9
	14:7	Exodus 20:11
	14:8	Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 51:7-8
	14:10	Genesis 19:24; Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17
	14:11	Isaiah 34:10; 66:24
	14:14	Daniel 7:13
	14:18	Joel 3:13
	14:19	Isaiah 63:1-6
	14:20	Joel 3:13
Revelation	15:1	Leviticus 26:21
	15:3	Exodus 15:1-18; Deuteronomy 31:30-32:44; Psalm 92:5; Psalm 111:2; 139:14
	15:4	Psalm 86:9; Isaiah 66:23; Jeremiah 10:7
	15:5	Exodus 38:21
	15:6	Leviticus 26:21
	15:7	Jeremiah 25:15
	15:8	Exodus 40:34-35; Leviticus 26:21; 1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chronicles 5:13-14; Isaiah 6:1-4
Revelation	16:1	Psalm 79:6; Jeremiah 10:25; Ezekiel 22:31
	16:2	Exodus 9:9-11; Deuteronomy 28:35
	16:3	Exodus 7:17-25
	16:4	Exodus 7:17-21; Psalm 78:44
	16:5	Psalm 145:17
	16:6	Isaiah 49:26
	16:7	Psalm 19:9; 145:17
	16:10	Exodus 10:21-23
	16:12	Isaiah 11:15-16; 41:2, 25; 46:11; Jeremiah 51:36
	16:13	Exodus 8:6
	16:14	1 Kings 22:21-23
	16:16	Judges 5:19; 2 Kings 23:29-30; 2 Chronicles 35:22; Zechariah 12:11
	16:19	Jeremiah 25:15
	16:21	Exodus 9:18-25
Revelation	17:1	Jeremiah 51:13; Nahum 3:4
	17:2	Isaiah 23:17
	17:3	Daniel 7:7
	17:4	Jeremiah 51:7; Ezekiel 28:13

17:8 Exodus 32:32-33; Daniel 12:1
 17:12 Daniel 7:24-25
 17:16 Leviticus 21:9

Revelation 18:1 Ezekiel 43:2
 18:2 Isaiah 21:9; 34:13-15; Jeremiah 50:30; 51:37
 18:3 Jeremiah 51:7
 18:4 Isaiah 52:11; Jeremiah 50:8; 51:6, 45
 18:5 Jeremiah 41:9
 18:6 Psalm 137:8; Jeremiah 50:15, 29
 18:7 Isaiah 47:7-8; Zephaniah 2:15
 18:8 Isaiah 47:9; Jeremiah 50:31-32
 18:9-19 Ezekiel 26:16-18; 27:26-31
 18:9 Jeremiah 50:46
 18:10 Isaiah 13:1
 18:12 Ezekiel 27:12-25
 18:20 Jeremiah 51:48
 18:21 Jeremiah 51:63-64
 18:22 Isaiah 24:8; Jeremiah 25:10; Ezekiel 26:13
 18:23 Jeremiah 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; Nahum 3:4

Revelation 19:2 Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 119:137; Jeremiah 51:48
 19:3 Isaiah 34:9-10; Jeremiah 51:48
 19:5 Psalm 22:23; 134:1; 135:1
 19:6 Psalm 93:1; 97:1; Ezekiel 1:24; 43:2; Daniel 10:6
 19:11 Psalm 18:10; 45:3-4; Isaiah 11:4-5; Ezekiel 1:1
 19:13 Isaiah 63:3
 19:15 Psalm 2:8-9; Isaiah 11:4; 63:3-6
 19:16 Deuteronomy 10:17
 19:17 Isaiah 34:6-7; Ezekiel 39:17
 19:18 Isaiah 34:6-7; Ezekiel 39:18
 19:19 Psalm 2:2; Joel 3:9-11
 19:20 Isaiah 30:33; Daniel 7:11
 19:21 Ezekiel 39:19-20
 20:2 Genesis 3:1, 13-14; Isaiah 24:21-22
 20:4 Daniel 7:9, 22, 27; 12:2
 20:5 Isaiah 26:14
 20:6 Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 26:19
 20:8 Ezekiel 38:2; 39:1, 6
 20:9 Deuteronomy 23:14; 2 Kings 1:9-12; Ezekiel 38:22; 39:6
 20:11 Daniel 2:35
 20:12 Exodus 32:32-33; Psalm 62:12; 69:28; Daniel 7:10
 20:15 Exodus 32:32-33; Daniel 12:1

Revelation	21:1	Isaiah 65:17; 66:22
	21:3	Leviticus 26:11-12; Ezekiel 37:27
	21:4	Isaiah 25:8; 35:10; 51:11; 65:19
	21:9	Leviticus 26:21
	21:10	Ezekiel 40:2
	21:11	Isaiah 60:1-2; Ezekiel 43:2
	21:12-13	Ezekiel 48:31-34
	21:15	Ezekiel 40:3, 5
	21:19-20	Exodus 28:17-20; Isaiah 54:11-12
	21:23	Isaiah 60:19-20
	21:24	Isaiah 60:3-5, 16
	21:25	Isaiah 60:11; Zechariah 14:7
	21:26	Isaiah 60:5, 16
	21:27	Isaiah 52:1; Ezekiel 44:9; Zechariah 14:21
Revelation	22:1	Psalms 46:4; Ezekiel 47:1; Zechariah 14:8
	22:2	Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24; Ezekiel 47:12
	22:3	Genesis 3:17-19; Zechariah 14:11
	22:4	Psalms 17:15; Ezekiel 9:4
	22:5	Isaiah 60:19; Daniel 7:18, 22, 27; Zechariah 14:7
	22:10	Daniel 8:26; 12:4, 9
	22:11	Ezekiel 3:27; Daniel 12:10
	22:12	Psalms 62:12; Isaiah 40:10; 62:11
	22:13	Isaiah 44:6
	22:14	Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24; Proverbs 11:30
	22:15	Deuteronomy 23:18
	22:18-19	Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32
	22:19	Deuteronomy 29:19-20

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