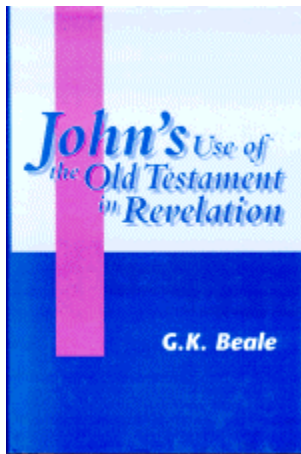


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Beale, G. K.

John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation

JSNTSup 166

Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998. Pp. 443, Cloth, \$85, ISBN 1850758948.

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The road to understanding the relationship of the book of Revelation to Old Testament texts is fraught with all manner of pitfalls. When one begins an investigation of the topic one must be very careful to clearly explain what one means by "citation", "allusion", "quotation" and the like. One must clarify what source one is claiming textually. Is the citation, quotation or allusion from the Septuagint or the Masoretic textual tradition, or some other textual tradition. And what is a textual tradition anyway when we are discussing the end of the first Common Era? Which textual families existed then? Or, did the author of the book of Revelation merely offer his own translation of the texts he cited, quoted, or alluded to (if indeed he did that at all). Further, what if the author were so steeped in the language of the Old Testament that he did not really quote at all but instead merely drew on a linguistic pool from which he drank so regularly that he needn't have even thought he was quoting, citing or alluding?

The issues are far too complex to be satisfied with an easy answer. We are not any longer in a position to say "John quoted Daniel from the Septuagint". Beyond the questions raised by authorship (who was John anyway), we have the question of what a quotation is; and is it certain that the quotation stems from Daniel and not from some lost text (such as has been discovered at the Dead Sea); and which recension of the Septuagint is the putative source of that alleged quotation.

These complex issues and more are addressed by Beale in this collection of essays. The six chapters contained herein are discreet units which can be read independently of

one another, in any order, without losing the sense of each. Chapter 1 (pp. 13-59), "Introduction: Recent Discussion and Debate about the Use of the Old Testament in Revelation" is published here for the first time. Chapter 2 (pp. 60-128), "The Various Ways John Uses the Old Testament" is a revision of an essay published in 1988 and included in the volume *Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honor of Barnabas Lindars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Chapter 3 (pp. 129-294), which consists of five subsections, is the largest chapter of the book and is titled "The Influence of the Old Testament upon the Eschatology of Revelation". Of the five subparts contained in chapter three, three have been previously published (Section A was published in *The Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997); Section B appeared in *NovT* 34 (1992); and Section E in *A Vision for the Church: Studies in Early Christian Ecclesiology in Honour of J.P.M. Sweet* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark 1997)), and two are offered here for the first time. Chapter 4 (pp. 295-317), "The Influence of the Old Testament upon the Symbolism of Revelation", also consists of two subsections, one of which has been previously published. Chapter 5 (pp. 318-355), "The Influence of the Old Testament on the Grammar of Revelation: Solecisms in Revelation as Signals for the Presence of Old Testament Allusions (A Selective Analysis of Revelations [sic!] 1-22)", has also appeared previously (in *Early Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel* (JSNTSup, 148; Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity, 5; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997). Finally, chapter 6 (pp. 356-393), "The Bearing of the Old Testament on the Interpretation of the Millennium in Revelation 20.1-7" is also newly written for this monograph.

The essays are preceded by some acknowledgments and a list of abbreviations. The collection concludes with a bibliography, and indices of references and authors.

The remainder of this review will attempt to analyze and evaluate only one portion of this monograph, the introductory chapter wherein the author discusses the history of investigation and interacts with those who set forth the ideas therein. The reason the first chapter has been selected is because for the most part the other chapters have appeared elsewhere and have been available for discussion.

Beale here discusses the contributions of a number of studies on the subject of the use of the Old Testament in Revelation. He discusses his own work, *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984). Then he turns to an examination and evaluation of the works of J.M. Vogelgesang, J. Paulien, Richard Bauckham (who receives a lot of space), and Jan Fekkes. In the second part of the essay he narrows the question a bit more and evaluates some works concerned with recent hermeneutical studies on the use of the Old Testament in Revelation. In particular he describes the contributions of J.-P. Ruiz and Steve Moyise (who receives more space than any other thinker).

Beale's evaluation of these writers is terribly evenhanded. He summarizes their approaches and offers his own slant on their correctness. The value of this essay lies in its ability to clearly offer a state of the question summary in virtually a dialogue form.

Now to the real issue: should the interested reader purchase this book? Yes. It is filled with important information and brilliant insights into one of the more interesting topics of New Testament studies.