# Dating Matters

Intertextuality accords with the hermeneutical rule that 'Scripture interprets Scripture". The intertextuality of the NT does not simply add a new and interesting angle to the historical-critical enterprise; it points exegetes towards a hermeneutical model in which OT and NT are "interactive (or intertexture) mediums of the word of the Lord" in the dynamic process by which the reader understands and then submits to the Bible.[1]

G.K. Beale produced one of the most comprehensive single works ever written on the subject of allusions to the OT in Revelation. He argues that while an apple in a basket of fruit has been removed from its original context, it has not lost its identity as an apple. It has simply been placed in a new context. So when NT writers quote the OT, they are placing such texts in a new context and giving them "new significance" within that new context but they are not altering what the original writer meant. Beale cites four presuppositions (Christ corporately represents Israel; history is a unified plan; the end-time has been inaugurated by Christ; Christ is the key to the OT) which he believes governed John's approach to Scripture. He then suggests that interpreters who agree with these presuppositions will conclude that John respects the original context of his allusions. Indeed, Beale opposes the 'new meaning' of the OT in Revelation. Moreover, he insists that meaning derives solely from an author's intention, not from the creative processes of readers. Furthermore, elsewhere Beale (2001:32) asserts that, while he concedes that readers can 'create' meaning, it is a meaning, implied at least by and partially derivative from authorial intent. If one goes further than this concession, then one places the reader in a sphere separated from all significant links to a text's original meaning.[2]

T. K. Beal observes that: "The basic force of intertextuality is to problematise, even spoil, textual boundaries — those lines of demarcation which allow a reader to talk about the meaning, subject, or origin of a writing. Such borders, intertextuality asserts, are never solid or stable. Texts are always spilling over into other texts. No text is an isolated island".[3]

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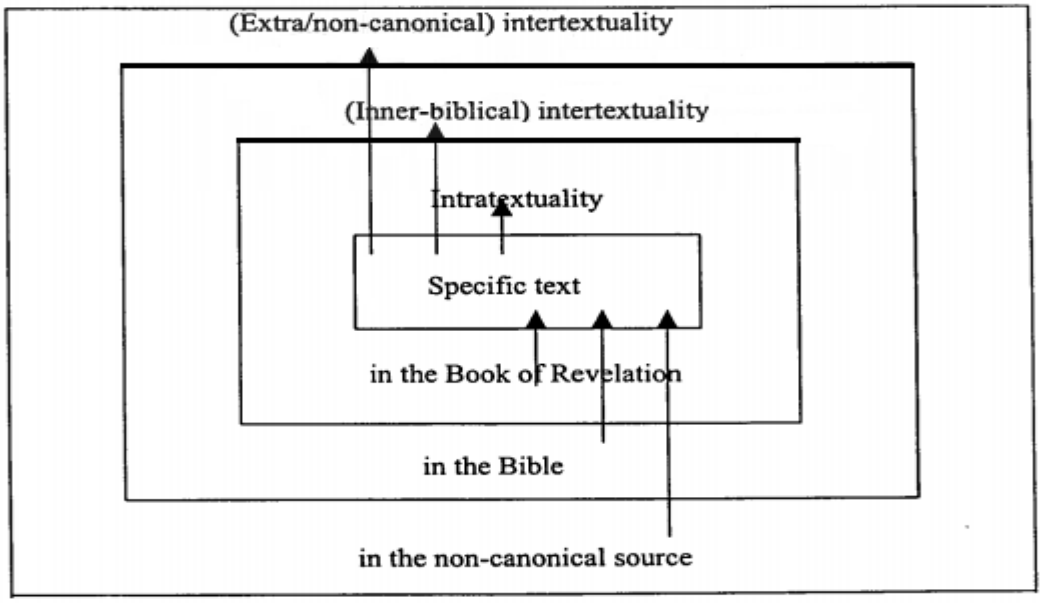
[1] WALL, R.W. 2000. Biblical intcrtcxtuality. (In Evans, C.A. & Porter, S., eds. Dictionary of New Testament background. Leichester: IVP. p. 541-551): 546-547

[2] BEALE, G.K. 1988. Revelation. (In Carson, D.A. & Williamson, H.G.M., eds. It is written: Scripture citing Scripture. Essays in honour of Barnabas Lindars. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 318-336): 51-52

[3] BEAL, T.K. 1992. Glossary. (In Fewell, D.N., ed. Reading between texts: intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible. Louisville : Westminster/John Knox Press. p. 21-24.)




The constituting/constraining criteria of intertextuality

The criteria which provide constraints for intertextual analysis can be outlined briefly as follows[4] (Keesmaat, 1994:34-35; cf. Hays, 1989:29-32; Van Wolde, 1997:432-433):

**1**. Availability: Was the proposed source of echo available to John and/or original audiences?

**2.** Volume: To what degree is there explicit repetition of words or syntactical patterns? This also involves how distinctive or prominent the precursor text is within Scripture and how much rhetorical weight the echo receives in (the Apocalypse of) John. Volume should be measured on the phraseological plane and on other levels, for example, the replication of the form, genre, setting, and plot of their precursor. If on the level of plot, for example, a character in the successor text repeats the experience of a character in the precursor, the criterion of volume is valid (cf. Brawley, 1993:437; 1995:14; Brodie, 2001:110).

**3.** Recurrence: How often does John elsewhere cite or allude to the same scriptural passage?

**4.** Thematic coherence: How well does the alleged echo fit into the line of argument John is developing? Does it c1arify or illuminate John's discussion?

[4] Constraints diagram and criteria courtesy of Young Mog Song, A Partial Preterist Understanding of Revelation 12-13 in Intertextual Perspective, (Dissertation, Rand Afrikaans University, 2003):19-20, *Op., cit.* for references.

**5.** Historical plausibility: Could John have intended the suggested meaning? Could his audiences have understood it? Or, leaving the language of intentionality aside, is the suggested meaning plausible in the light of the plots which the intertext of the culture allows?

**6.** History of interpretation: Have other readers, both critical and pre-critical, heard the same echoes?

**7.** Satisfaction: Does the proposed reading make sense? Does it illuminate the surrounding discourse? Does it produce a satisfying account of the effect of intertextual relation for the reader?

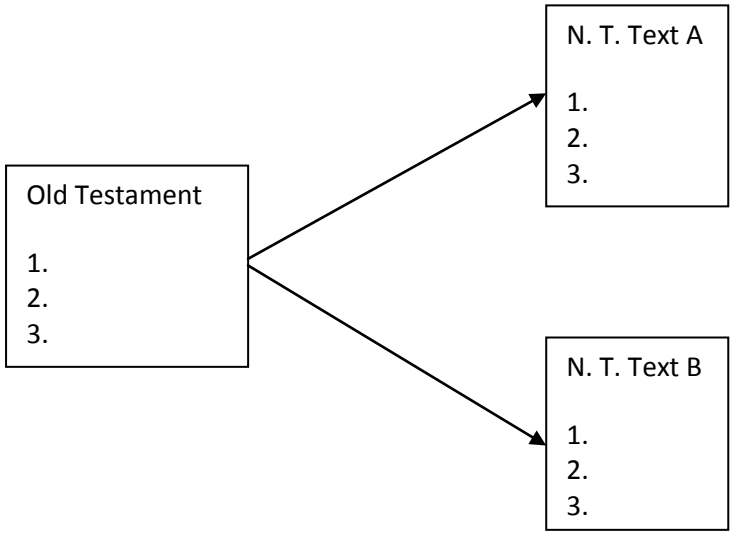
**8.** Socio-historical, cultural, and ideological setting and structure (cf. Keesmaat, 1994:33): If it were not for the study of the socio-historical setting, as Schoors (2000:45, 59) points out, the study of intertextuality would be a synchronic business which, in the end, means an ahistorical study. Such an approach does not belong to scientific discourse, but rather to homiletical discourse. A text, a phrase, or a motif that has been borrowed receives its full meaning only from the actual (social) context in which it has been adopted.

The question of direction of influence is important for establishing the relative dating of books especially if the texts in question have the same underlying inter-texts. This becomes in essence a methodological question where a number of steps need to be rigorously followed in order to establish dependence (or otherwise). The first step is to confirm the presence of allusions, types and or, echoes. These go beyond mere coincidental word connections and should demonstrate thematic and contextual similarity with the underlying subtext. Once a number of such correspondences have been established the second step is to compare the texts to determine the direction of influence. A diagrammatic representation of the possibilities follows below:

# Direction of influence

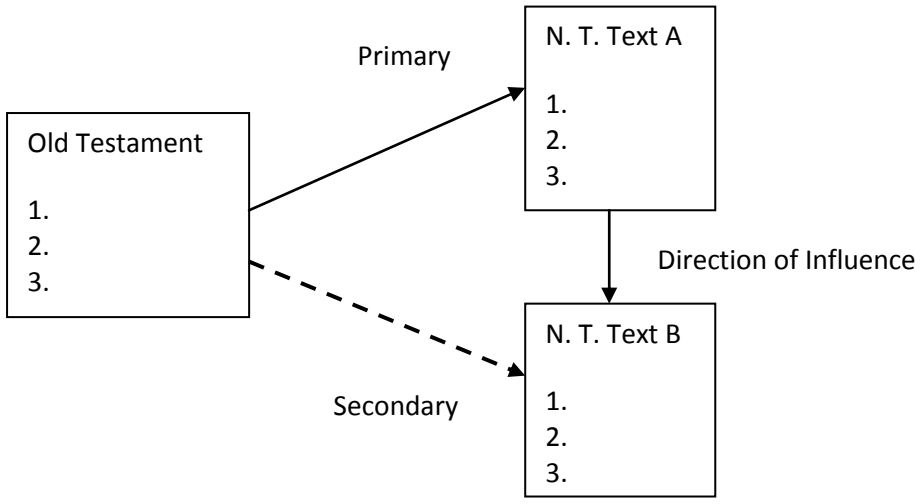
Case 1: Independent Texts

(Conclusion: Relative date of A and B cannot be established)




Case 2: Text B dependent on A

(Conclusion: A is earlier than B)



In Case 1 the authors of text A and B use exactly the same allusions etc independently of each other as they are unaware of each other. Such serendipity is not possible but could be attributed to the Spirit making author A and author B use the same allusions in the same highly creative way.

If that is the situation we have no way of dating text A and B relative to each other. However, a static view of inspiration understands author A and B as mere instruments negating their own personalities and input. The Old Testament prophets employed scripture creatively and often cited each other or alluded to previous texts there is no reason to assume that NT authors acted any differently. Case 2 and Case 3 (not shown above) are similar but with reversed priority (therefore we examine only Case 2).

In Case 2 (a dynamic view of inspiration) text A employs the Old Testament as an inter-text and text B refers to text A making text A the prior text (the reverse case, where B is primary has not been shown). However, how do we determine which text is prior? If, for example, text A has a number of allusions, types and echoes from the Old Testament spread throughout the book but text B has them concentrated in one chapter then which text is prior?

Logic dictates that text A, in which the Old Testament forms the woof and weave (this is a characteristic of text A) is the prior text and text B which concentrates a number of unique allusions found throughout text A into one chapter (thus taking reader comprehension for granted) is dependent on text A.

A matrix of intratextual, intertextual allusions and echoes permeates Revelation. G. K. Beale[5] notes; "In the book of Revelation, for example, where there are no formal quotations, the tally of allusions goes anywhere from 394 (UBS[6]) to 635 (NA26) up to 1,000.[7] The wide disparity in the calculation is due to the disparity in how scholars define an allusion".

[5] G. K. Beale ,Seeing the Old Testament in the New: Definitions of and Criteria for Discerning Old Testament Quotations and Allusions(Philadelphia, PA),3 This essay appears as "chapter 3" in A Handbook on the Use of the Old Testament in the New [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2012]

[6] These statistics are from Roger Nicole, "The New Testament Use of the Old Testament," in Right Doctrine from Wrong Texts? 13.For a different count of 401 quotations together with allusions (and a breakdown book by book) on the basis of the United Bible Societies first edition of the Greek NT, see Klyne Snodgrass, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New," in Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?35.

The article by Beale discusses criteria for identifying allusions and echoes as distinct from direct citations. As Beale observes there is sometimes considerable overlap between allusion/echo --- however, whereas an allusion can often be described as a paraphrase an echo may simply reflect the cultural milieu where similar idiom is employed in similar circumstances.[8]

However, the situation is often more complex as text B will often supplement and expand on text A by adding its own commentary and allusions thus sharing the original inter-text used by A (shown as a dashed arrow in the diagram). Most cases of appropriation develop in the direction of expansion (an expanded version and the addition of descriptors) and this complicates matters.

The table that follows presents a comparison table of 19 allusions shared between Hebrews 12 and the book of Revelation as a whole. Of these shared allusions 32% come from Rev 11 a chapter that has central themes of witnessing and the temple, with the outer court cast off (to the Gentiles) -- the same themes are central to Hebrews.

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[7] For the various statistics in Revelation in this respect, see G. K. Beale, "Revelation," in It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture. Essays in Honor of Barnabas Lindars, edited by D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 333.

[8] See, Andrew Perry, *Intertextual Study of the Hebrew Bible*, (eds. A. Perry, T. Gaston, P. Wyns, The Christadelphian Ejournal of Biblical Interpretation, Willow Publications, 2007), Vol. 1, No. 1, Jan 2007: 14-17, See the issues page@ http://www.christadelphian-ejbi.org/index.htm [accessed Oct 2016]

## A case study in direction of influence

| Hebrews 12 | Revelation |
|---|---|
| **A cloud of witnesses (v.1)** | Witness ascend in a cloud **(11.12)** |
| **Let us run with patience (v.1)** | patience and the faith of the saints **(13.10)** |
| **Jesus author and finisher of faith (v.2)** | Alpha and Omega, first and last **(1.11)** |
| **not yet resisted unto blood (v.4)** | shall overcome and kill them **(11.7 cf. 6.9)** |
| **faint not when rebuked by him (v.5)** | repent or else I will come quickly **(2.5)** |
| **subject to the Father of spirits (v.9)** | seven Spirits (churches) before throne **(1.4)** |
| **Mount Zion (v.22)** | Mount Zion **(14.1)** |
| **the living God (v.22)** | God of the Living Creatures **(4.6)** |
| **the heavenly Jerusalem (v.22)** | New Jerusalem from heaven **(21.2)** |
| **Innumerable company of angels (v.22)** | thousands of thousands of angels **(5.11)** |
| **church of the firstborn (v.23)** | Jesus first begotten of the dead **(1.5)** |
| **which are written in heaven (v.23)** | Written in the Lambs book of life **(13.8; 21.27)** |
| **God the Judge of all (v.23)** | time of the dead that they be judged **(11.8)** |
| **Spirits (v.23)** | Spirit of life from God entered them **(11.11)** |
| **Just men made perfect (v.23)** | white robes were given to them **(6.11)** |
| **Jesus mediator of new covenant (v.24)** | A lamb as it had been slain **(5.6)** |
| **and to the blood of sprinkling (v.24)** | overcame by blood of the Lamb **(12.11cf.5:9 )** |
| **him that speaks from heaven (v.25)** | heard a great voice from heaven **(11.12)** |
| **shake the earth and also heaven (v.26)** | a great earthquake **(11.3)** war in heaven **(12.7)** |
| **serve God with reverence and fear (v.28)** | remnant afraid and give glory to God **(11.3)** |

The following four texts are inter-texts:

**538–330 BCE**

**Haggai 2:6-9** [6] For thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Yet once**, it *is* a little while, and **I will shake the heavens**, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry *land*; [7] And I will **shake** all nations, and **the desire of all nations shall come**: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. [8] The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, saith the LORD of hosts. [9] **The glory** of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts. **Haggai 2:21-22** [21] Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I **will shake the heavens and the earth**; [22] And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I **will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen**; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.

**68-70 CE**

**Mark 13:23-27** [23] But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.[24] But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, [25]And the stars of heaven shall fall, **and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken**. [26] And then shall they see the Son of man **coming in the clouds** with **great power and glory**. [27] And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

**80-90 CE**

**Hebrews 12:25-28** [25]See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape*, if we turn away from him that ***speaketh* from heaven**: [26] **Whose voice then shook the earth**: but now he hath promised, saying, **Yet once more I shake** not the earth only, but also heaven. [27] And this *word*, **Yet once more**, signifieth the removing of those **things that are shaken**, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. [28] Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may **serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:**

**c. 96 CE**

**Revelation 11:12-13** [12] **And they heard a great voice from heaven** saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. [13] And the same hour was there a **great earthquake**, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the **earthquake** were slain of men seven thousand: and **the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.**

Note the dates attached to these texts are critical date ranges and are used for the sake of the argument.[9] For example many scholars suggest 66-70 (before the fall of the temple) for Hebrews and Mark is often also dated far earlier. The date 68-70 for Mark is largely influenced by the fact that many scholars do not accept an early prophecy for the fall of Jerusalem, therefore it must have been written during the war. Mark is selected for comparison as it is thought to be the earliest gospel account. Surprisingly, unlike the other NT books Revelation has no date range but is dated with precision by the critics (and accepted unquestioningly by many conservative Christians) to c.96 CE. The certainty of the date rests on a single external testimony that is itself open to alternative interpretations.[10] One wonders if critical evaluation was biased by other considerations.

## The Haggai Prophecy

The prophecy of Haggai is about the restoration of the temple, Benjamin W. Swinburnson notes:

> "The temple stands at centre stage in Haggai's prophecy as it is couched within a retrospective and prospective redemptive-historical dynamic. Retrospectively, the prophecy reaches back to the first Exodus. The exhortation to be strong and work is grounded in the promise of God in the first Exodus: "for (כִּי) I am with you…according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt" (Hag. 2:4-5). The protological shaking of the earth at Sinai (Hag. 2:6) also provides the retrospective backdrop for Haggai's projection of Israel's future possession of the nations. Furthermore, the mention of the "former glory" of the temple (Hag. 2:3, 9) links the prophecy back to the "glory days" of David and Solomon, when the temple's beauty and splendour were at their height. All of this is brought to bear upon Israel's existential present. As she contemplates her faded glory, the prophet addresses himself directly to Israel's present situation (note the doubled emphasis on עַתָּה ["now"] in 2:3, 4). She is directed not only to her glorious past, but also to the semi-eschatological down-payment of the Glory-Spirit (2:5), which is structurally central to Haggai's prophesy. In other words, as she despairingly compares the glory of the former and present temples, she is directed not only to what Yahweh will do in the future, but also to the present intrusion of that reality in her midst. Even as Israel is beckoned to continue work on the typological temple, she is also invited to look beyond its inglorious condition to the temple of the Glory-Spirit that is already invisibly present within her. Old Testament Israel already has vital contact with the life-giving Spirit of the age to come!"[11]

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[9] Scholars such as J.A.T Robinson present cogent arguments for dating the whole NT pre-70 and the Gospels in the 40-60 range. A survey of critical scholarship shows that date ranges have constantly been revised **downwards** over the last two centuries (not upwards). The consensus is therefore gradually shifting.

[10] Duncan W. McKenzie remarks, "Irenaeus, a source that should be a Rock of Gibraltar in terms of the date of Revelation, is not the sure foundation one would expect. On a date of much greater significance than that of Revelation (the age of Jesus at his death), Irenaeus is out in left field, if not totally out of the ballpark. Irenaeus asserts that Jesus was at an elder age (which he defines as "after the fortieth and fiftieth year" of life) when he died." Duncan W. McKenzie, *The Antichrist and the Second Coming*: *A Preterist Examination*, (Xulon Press, 2012), 22. See, JAT Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* for an alternative interpretation of Irenaeus' testimony.

[11] Benjamin W. Swinburnson, The Glory of the Latter Temple: A Structural and Biblical-Theological Analysis of Haggai 2:1-9 [K:NWTS 23/1 (May 2008) 28-46] http://kerux.com/doc/2301A3.asp#_ftnref18 [Accessed April 2017]

In Haggai, the word "desire" refers to gentile riches, the NetBible comments: "Though the subject here is singular (חֶמְדָּה, khemdah; "desire"), the preceding plural predicate mandates a collective subject, "desired (things)" or, better, an emendation to a plural form, חֲמֻדֹת (khamudot, "desirable [things]," hence "treasures"). Cf. ASV "the precious things"; NASB "the wealth"; NRSV "the treasure." In the OT context this has no direct reference to the coming of the Messiah". Note the Septuagint translation: "And I will shake all nations, and the choice *portions* [12] of all the nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord Almighty (Hag 2.7 LXE). The prophet Isaiah suggests that this is the correct reading; "But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: *men* shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves" (Isa.61.6). However, this is not the last word on the matter. Wayne Jackson summarises as follows:

> "Actually the word "desire" [Heb. *hemdat*] is used of persons in the Old Testament — both in its singular and plural forms. Saul was described as "the desire of Israel" (1 Samuel 9:20), and Daniel was called the "greatly beloved" [plural] in 9:23; 10:11, 19. Dr. Robert Alden notes that "such irregularities are common in OT Hebrew" (*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 586). The prophet may have been thinking of the "nations," and selected a verb to agree with that emphasis. Walter Kaiser notes that often in the Hebrew, when a verb is controlled by two nouns (e.g., "desire" and "nations" in this case), "the verb agrees with the second noun even if the verb actually belongs with the former substantive" (*Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*, p. 237). Also, the sentence structure allows for "desire" to be the object to which the nations would come (see NKJV). Such a translation answers the grammatical problem and retains the messianic import of the passage. The case cannot be settled on the basis of grammar. One scholar, who inclines **against** the messianic concept, concedes that either view is "within the realm of semantic possibilities" (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia – Revised*, Vol. IV, p. 898).There are other factors which may suggest that the "desire of the nations" was fulfilled by Christ. First, there was a longing among the Gentiles for a Teacher (cf. Matthew 2:1, 2; Luke 10:24), Plato has Socrates saying: "We must of necessity wait, till someone from Him who cares for us, shall come and instruct us how we ought to behave toward the gods and man." Again: "This law-giver must be more than man, that he may teach us the things man cannot know by his own nature" (see J. W. Monser, *An Encyclopedia on the Evidences*, p. 528). Second, the use of the word "glory" also hints of a Messianic fulfilment (see verses 7, 9). It is certain that the later temple did not possess a greater **material** glory than the former. There thus seems to be a spiritual application, especially in light of the "peace" that is promised." [13]

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[12] The word "portions" in Italics has been provided by the translators as it is absent in the Greek.
[13] Jackson, Wayne. "Haggai 2:7 -- The Desire of the Nations." *ChristianCourier.com.* Access date: April 24, 2017. https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/1129-haggai-2-7-the-desire-of-the-nations

The above comments are all valid, so why should we be forced to choose between any of these options? Scripture always has multiple applications and therefore the wording is deliberately ambiguous allowing the passage to refer to; **(1)** Gentile riches flowing to God (Gentile riches constructed the tabernacle and the first temple); **(2)** Gentile converts flowing to God; **(3)** Desire understood as messianic term with the *silver and gold that belongs to the Lord* signifying purified **faith** (gold)[14] and **redemption** (silver).[15] This allows the prophecy of Haggai a primary and a secondary realization, a fulfilment in his own day and a further application in the future.

Swinburnson observes that, "The typological connection between the Sinai theophany and the eschatological upheaval is explicit in Haggai—note the phrase "once more" (2:6). This is obviously an antecedent reference to the Exodus event mentioned in 2:5, thus clearly correlating the two events". [*Op.cit.*] The Jews of Haggai's time were reluctant in progressing with restoration, through dread of the world power, Medo-Persia, influenced by the antagonism of Samaria. Haggai assures them this and all other world powers are to fall before the Messiah, who is to be associated with this temple; therefore they need not fear. At the establishment of the Sinaitic covenant, only the earth was shaken to introduce it, but now heaven and earth and all things are to be shaken.

The MT indicates that the shaking in Hag 2.6 would happen soon, the anticipated action is imminent; thus the repetition in that verse provides emphasis.[16] This anticipates the inauguration of the temple by Zerubbabel when it would be filled with divine glory and the wealth of the nations would flow to it. In other words Zerubbabel and Joshua were promised a theophany upon completion of the temple and the divine presence would change geo-political dynamics by demonstrating to the surrounding nations (and particularly the Samaritans) that the divine will cannot be thwarted. The Jewish people would again become a national entity with a capital city and a centralised form of worship.

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[14] The sanctification or purifying of one's faith: Job 23.8-12; Psalms 66.10; Zechariah 13.9; Isaiah 48.10; Malachi 3.1-3; 1 Peter 1.3-9 and Rev 21.21: *The street of the city was pure gold*

[15] Atonement money (Exod 30.12-16), Trespass Offering (Lev 5.15-16), Sockets of silver for jointing the tabernacle (Exod 26.19-32)

[16] The expression in the MT is equivalent to "once again within a little time" I will shake, etc. and this is how the majority of translations render the Hebrew of Hag 2.26 as in the NKJ, "Once more (it *is* a little while) I will shake heaven and earth" as opposed to the LXE of Haggai (Yet once I will shake the heaven) and the Heb 12.26-27 paraphrase (Yet once more I shake NKJ). Therefore the writer of Hebrews founds his argument on the Greek rendering of the LXX of Haggai ἔτι ἅπαξ (Septuagint); *Adhuc unum modicum est* (Vulgate) and not on the Hebrew MT

## Does Jesus refer to Haggai in Mark 13.25?

Is Jesus is the first NT "exegete" who employs Haggai (a restoration prophecy) to describe the destruction of the temple (shaking) as a prelude to the coming glory (i.e., the new temple of his body which will be far greater than the "former glory" of the old temple). But first the old temple required removing and that is the "shaking" before the "new heavens" can appear.

However, the case is not straightforward as Jesus conflates Haggai (heaven shaking) with a prophecy that relates to the Son of Man coming in judgement (Dan 7) together with the casting down (Dan 8.10) of the heavenly host (powers in Mark). The shaking of the earth is intimated by his remark; "there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down" (Mark 13.2). So in a literal and a figurative sense the heavens and earth would be shaken (yet once more). However, other candidates (i.e., Isa 13.13) are possible inter-texts for Mark 13.25 (more on this anon) the case is therefore not yet clear.

## Haggai in Hebrews

Hebrews expands on the Haggai prophecy by offering a paraphrased commentary and a conflation. Hebrews conflates Hag 2.6,7 with Hag 2.21,22 thus the author of Hebrews does not differentiate between the shaking in v.6 of Haggai and the shaking in v.22 making them one and the same shaking.

It is the realization of Haggai in his own day that the writer to the Hebrews focuses on and he does so using words that suggest repetitive action as in "God has done this before and will do it again" (yet once more).[17] Hebrews is not only alluding to the shaking at Sinai but also intimating the Babylonian shaking that removed the temple and the nation. However, this is contrary to Haggai who is concerned with the restoration of the temples former glory. Therefore, the author of Hebrews reverses the sentiment of the Haggai prophecy; it is not about restoration of glory but removal of glory. Restoration of temple glory can only happen if they listen to the voice from heaven otherwise they are left in fear of the voice (cf. the giving of the Law) that made them shake at Sinai.

[17] This means that the "shaking" has applications beyond the fall of the temple in 70CE. All of these "shakings" **collectively** constitute the "Day of the Lord" which punctuates history throughout the ages until the final and last consummation (the kingdom) –forming recurrent patterns.

"Beware of him (the angel that administered the Law), and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name *is* in him" (Exod 23.21). The messiah (desire of nations) was the true temple of the age to come and he would pardon their sins and restore the glory promised to Zerubbabel, if only they would listen to his warning from heaven.[18] However, on the Mount of transfiguration, the voice from heaven was the voice of God -- "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt 17:5). The prophets and the Law had vanished and they were instructed to listen to Jesus from henceforth (And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only, Matt 17.8). Peter comments on this experience as follows:

> **2 Peter 1: 17-21** [17]For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. [18] And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. [19] We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: [20] Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. [21] For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

What is the "more sure word of prophecy", [19] that Peter refers to here and who is being compared to the holy men of God? Whoever is being compared (to Moses and Elijah) cannot be the Old Testament prophets themselves because Peter is relating to "when we were with him on the holy mount" (Mount of transfiguration). On that Mount the Law and Prophets vanished. The New Testament prophets are therefore the subject of the comparison the foremost of whom was John who received the Apocalypse from "him that speaks from heaven"[20] (Heb 12.25), which voice is now Jesus who has been granted that authority by God (listen to him) – this was not John's "private interpretation" of the Old Testament (he didn't make it up in Patmos) but rather a vision sent directly from Jesus demonstrating that the whole of Scriptures point to the coming kingdom and the "Day of the Lord".

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[18] With the implication from the Haggai inter-text that refusal to listen would see Gentile wealth flow to the messiah - - faithful Gentile converts that build the new temple. It was Paul's collections from the Diaspora including Gentiles that supported the growth of the early church.

[19] **NKJ:** And so we have the prophetic word **confirmed**

[20] John was also present on the transfiguration Mount

The voice of God instructs Peter, James and John on the Mount to listen to Jesus and now Jesus himself "speaks from heaven" (in Revelations) to his church (message to the seven churches) just like the Father did to the wilderness church at Sinai. This is the voice (the book of Revelation) of the New Covenant recast in the language and idiom of the Old Covenant because in the volume of the book (OT) it is written of him (Jesus) and all things point to the fulfilment of the old in the new (the establishment of the kingdom and rule of the messiah). According to Peter this (Revelation) was confirmation of the prophetic word (v.19 NKJ) i.e. the Apocalypse confirms the prophecies of the Old Testament.[21] Peter argues that just as the "old time" prophets were inspired so also the New Testament prophet John. The faithful of Thyatira are promised the "morning star" by Jesus (Rev 2.28) and although Peter employs slightly different phraseology (day star) the meaning is clear --- Jezebel (that false prophetess), who killed the heir along with his children and stole the vineyard is about to be punished --- when the vintage is crushed her blood will come to the height of the horses bridles (2 Kings 9.33, Rev 14.20) because the vineyard belongs to God and his son. They are about to find out that God is not an absentee Landlord as he will "shake" heaven and earth yet one more time because they refuse to listen to his son.

In his commentary on Haggai, Hebrews says that they refused him that spake on earth. This is a reference to Moses and to the defence that Stephen offered during his trial; "This Moses whom they refused" (Acts 7.35), which was a polemic against second temple Judaism. Stephen continues, "This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear"(Acts 7.37). Stephen was referring to **Deut 18.15-19**, where the Israelites were afraid to hear the voice of God (v.16); "According to all that thou desired of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not". The mountain shook and trembled and burnt with fire at the receiving of the old covenant, and Hebrews (12.21) even has Moses shaking (Moses was afraid and quaked) and the fiery theophany of Exod 19.6 is replicated in 12.29; "For our God *is* a consuming fire" (Heb 12.29). The trial of Stephen ends with him seeing Jesus in heaven (Acts 7.55-56) and Hebrews warns against not hearing the one who speaks from heaven. Moreover, Stephen asks Jesus to receive his spirit (Acts 7.59) and Hebrews refers to "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb 12.23), which also harks back to Deut 18 (used by Stephen) and the words of Deut 18.13; "Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God".

[21] For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.(Rev.19.10)

So both Hebrews 12 and Acts 7 play off Deuteronomy, but also off each other (as if they are in conversation) but Hebrews also adds the dimension of Haggai which in turn was possibly first used by Jesus in Mark (regarding the destruction of the temple system). The new element introduced by Hebrews into this matrix is the voice speaking from heaven. This is not the voice of God from Sinai (which they feared) nor is it the voice on earth (of Moses which they refused). It is not the voice of the old covenant but the voice of the new covenant (Jesus) from heaven, who gave his revelation to John. Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God to ask for the Gentiles as his inheritance (Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, Ps 2.8). They had killed his witnesses and the Jews were about to be cast off (it is given unto the Gentiles, Rev 11.2). Psalm 2 is intetextually linked with Rev 11, in fact Psalm 2 forms one of the inter-texts for Rev 11-12 and the process of Gentile inheritance began almost immediately with the conversion of Paul (the apostle to the Gentiles) -- this was the answer to Stephen's request (lay not this sin to their charge, Acts 7.60). Stephen hoped for Jewish conversion and Saul (Paul) and many of the priests did convert. However, Jewish repentance was only ever a minority and therefore the gospel was preached to the Gentiles and the temple was destroyed by the Gentiles.

## Is Revelation Prior to Hebrews?

Is Hebrews drawing on Old Testament allusions and Revelation using the same allusions independently (Case 1)? The very first allusion cloud of witnesses draws directly on one of the major themes of Revelation with Jesus Christ called the faithful witness (Rev 1.5). Now, of course, Revelation draws on the Old Testament for this:

> **Jeremiah 42:4-5** [4] Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard *you*; behold, I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, *that* whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare *it* unto you; **I will keep nothing back from you.** [5] Then they said to Jeremiah, The LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the LORD thy God shall send thee to us.

Jesus was sent as the true and faithful witness with his Revelation message (I will keep nothing back from you) indeed the Epistle to the Hebrews commences with the words, "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son" (Heb 1.2). Note Hebrew's use of last days therefore this was not during Jesus' ministry as Hebrews says that he has now been appointed heir of all things (Heb 1.2b) which means that this speaks of the resurrected Christ who is now (post-resurrection) the prince of the kings of the earth (Rev 1.5). Moreover, Hebrews makes it clear that this speaking is **from heaven** (Heb 12.25) therefore it cannot be referring to his earthly ministry.

Both Hebrews 12 and Revelation have Jesus speaking from heaven. The unique expression cloud of witnesses is an echo of the two witnesses who are called up to heaven in a cloud (Rev 11.12). Once again, the Apocalypse uses the Old Testament in a distinct way because one of the witnesses is modelled on Elijah who was caught up in a whirlwind. Moreover, 15% of the NT occurrences of the word witness (μάρτυς, martus) and 24% of the related word testimony (μαρτυρία, marturia) occur in the book of Revelation making witness/testimony one of the books major themes.[22] The witnesses of Rev 11.12 mimic their Master's ascension (Acts 1.9) but the use of the plural witnesses (but with singular nouns) and Heb 12 likening them to a cloud refers not only to their ascension but to Jesus coming with clouds (Rev 1.7) as the witnesses themselves form a cloud around Jesus as in Dan 7.13, "the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven". So, Revelation is telling us that this is a partial fulfilment of Dan 7.13 --- the Son of man coming in judgement as promised to the Sanhedrin during his trial; "Hereafter **shall ye see** the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven (Matt 26.64). This ties directly in with the theme of Hebrews, namely, that not only was Jesus now the Melchizedek high priest, he was also the new temple and his followers were citizens of a heavenly city and country (depicted in Revelation) with the old temple system about to be swept away (as Jesus had warned in the Olivet prophecy).

Returning to Mark 13 the tribulation is described as the "beginning of sorrows" (v.8), employing a Greek word that describes "birth pangs" and that is associated both in the NT and the in the Greek (LXX) OT (and even in rabbinic literature) with the "birth pangs of messiah". This birthing process occurs in heaven and the vision is shown in Rev 12[23], followed by war in heaven. This is certainly a picture of "heaven shaking" in fact; "heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places" (Rev 6.14). Heaven is rolled up like a scroll (like a torah scroll) –the old covenant was abolished and a new covenant church was born (the heavenly Jerusalem).

It is also fitting that Jesus echoes Haggai again in Revelation 11. The Greek verb "shake" (σείω, seio), now becomes the related noun "earthquake"(σεισμός, seismos) used **three times** in Rev 11, with 50% of the total NT occurrences of this word found in the book of Revelation.

[22] Only Acts has a higher percentage of witness occurrences (38%) and the Gospel of John a higher percentage of testimony occurrences (38%) as a percentage of total NT occurrences. However, **the combination** of witness and testimony is 39% in the Apocalypse. The Fourth Gospel does not use the word witness at all (0%) and Acts has testimony at only 3%. Therefore the Apocalypse has the largest ratio of testimony to witness expressed as a percentage of the total NT. (Revelation 1:0.625 Acts 1:0.078 John has no ratio)

[23] Compare Rachel who died in labour --- delivering the son of sorrow renamed the son of the right hand.

Moreover, the witnesses to the **New Covenant** in Rev 11 are typologically Moses and Elijah. They are called with a great voice (compare Sinai) to heaven//Mt. Zion (in a cloud) to form the "cloud of witnesses" that is referred to by Hebrews. Godly fear (Heb 12.28//Rev 11.13 is the reaction, rather than the terror experienced at Sinai; in other words a repentant remnant. In the end, God and the Lamb will avenge the repentant nation: "And should destroy those who destroy the earth" (Rev 11.18)//"Will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen" (Hag 2.22)

## Inter-texts for Revelation 6.12-17

| **Revelation 6.12-17** | **Isaiah 13.9-13** | **Isaiah 34.4-5,8** |
|---|---|---|
| **12** And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; | **9** Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. | |
| **13** And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. | **13** Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place | **4b**and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling *fig* from the fig tree |
| **14** And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. | **10** For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. | **4 a**And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll. |
| **15** And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; | **11** And I will punish the world for *their* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. | |
| **16** And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: | | **3b** and the mountains shall be melted with their blood |
| **17** For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? | **13b**In the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. | **8** For *it is* the day of the LORD'S vengeance, *and* the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. |
| | **17** Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them… 19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms…. 20 It shall never be inhabited | **5** For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. |

The sixth seal of Rev 6 employs Isa 13 and Isa 34 (and other texts) in a creative way. This was not a simple copy and paste exercise as words are often substituted and passages are deconstructed, with sentences inverted or conflated with other passages. The context of the selected inter-texts also has a significant role to play. It is important to examine the differences with the original inter-texts and ask why certain word choices or structures are preferred.

Rev 6.13 inverts the order of the allusion in Isa 34 by first alluding to Isa 34.4b (the stars/figs) and then in Rev 6.14a to the heavens rolling up (Isa 34.4a). The inverted order has the stars/figs fall before the heavens are rolled up. Below are the verses in the NKJ (OT Hebrew, NT Greek) and the LXE (from LXX Greek):

> NKJ **Isaiah 34:4** All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as *fruit* falling from a fig tree.

> LXE **Isaiah 34:4** And all the powers of the heavens shall melt, and the sky shall be rolled up like a scroll: and all the stars shall fall like leaves from a vine, and as leaves fall from a fig-tree.

> NKJ **Revelation 6:13-14** And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. [14] Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

Note the differences[24] – neither the Hebrew, nor the Greek versions of Isa 34.4 mention fruit falling from the tree. The NKJ has supplied the word "*fruit*" in italics and the LXX has "leaves" but Revelation has "late figs" (ὄλυνθος olunthos) found in neither passage.[25]

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[24] Some of the important vocabulary of the inter-texts---using only the root forms (rather than the constructs or aspects) and comparing NT Greek with OT LXX Greek: In Hebrews 12.26-27 two different Greek words are used for the shaking of heaven and earth (σαλεύω saleuo) in 12.27 and (σείω seio) in 12.26. Comparing with the Greek LXX Haggai 2.6 uses (σείω seio) as does Rev 6.13 (for the fig tree) and Rev 11.12-13 (for the fall off the city), Mark 13.25 uses (σαλεύω saleuo) for shaking the powers of heaven. Isaiah 13.13 uses (σείω seio) for shaking the earth and enraged/furious (θυμόω thumoō) for the heavens, Isaiah 34 does not use either word (σείω seio // σαλεύω saleuo) as the heavens are rolled up (ἑλίσσω helissō) in 34.4 and stars/figs fall down (πίπτω, piptō πέτω petō) in Rev 6.13 the stars fell (πίπτω pipto) and the figs are thrown violently or cast (βάλλω ballo). Isa 34.4 uses (ἄστρα astra) for powers (host) and Hag 2.22 (δύναμις dunamis) for power of the kings, Mark 13.25 uses (δύναμις dunamis) for the powers that are in heaven and Rev 6.13 uses (ἀστήρ aster) for the stars of heaven.

[25] In his Revelation commentary Aune notes that the term τοὺς ὀλύνθους, lit. "late figs", refers to figs produced late in the summer, which often fall off the tree before ripening, and so can be translated "unripe figs" (§ Louw-Nida 3.37). LSJ sv ὄλυνθος, understands it to refer to "the sterile summer fruit of the cultivated fig". David E. Aune, Word Biblical Commentary: Revelation 6-16, (Thomas Nelson, 1998), 385, Note 13b.The word is found in Song of Solomon 2.13 (LXE): "The fig-tree has put forth its young figs" – these are figs that are unripe (the MT has green) but in Revelation they do not "drop prematurely" but are "cast" of when the tree is shaken by a mighty wind.

Other differences with Isaiah 34 are instructive, namely something (?) falls (MT) or leaves (LXX) "fall" but in Revelation they are definitely figs (removing all uncertainty) and they are "cast" (the NKJ has translated this as "drop" but YLT/KJV and ASV has "cast" or flung denoting a more violent action than mere gravity. Rev 6.13 (unlike Isa 34.4) also supplies the cause of the forceful action -- "they are shaken of a mighty wind". The absence of this phrase from both the Hebrew and Greek texts of Isaiah 34 highlight its significance.[26]

Rev 6.13 also employs σειομένη (the normative form of the verb σείω (seio), "shake") usually associated with earthquakes (σεισμός seismos). Revelation uses the same verb to describe both the shaking of the fig tree in 6.13 and the destruction of the city by an earthquake in 11.12-13. The verb σείω (seio) is **not used in Isaiah 34** but occurs in Isa 13.13 and Hag 2.6 in relation to shaking the heavens. Isa 13.13 is a candidate for the origin of "shake" in Rev 6.13 as Isa 13 functions as an inter-text (see the above table) to Rev 6 and this would supplement the inverted order of Isaiah 34.4 b followed by 34.4a in Rev 6.13. Haggai 2.6 is also a strong candidate however neither Isa 13 nor Hag 2 refers to the heavens shaking like a fig tree. A more suitable word for wind movement is a form of the verb σαλεύω (saleuo)[27] employed in Luke 7.24b; κάλαμον ὑπὸ ἀνέμου σαλευόμενον (a reed shaken[28] with the wind).

The combination of the two motifs (darkening of the sun moon and stars and the falling of the stars) occurs only in Rev 6.12-13 and in the Synoptic Apocalypse (Mark 13.25=Matt 24.29=Luke 21.26) where it is closely associated with the distress of the Jewish nation and the fall of the temple. This textual innovation is therefore directly attributable to Jesus who combines the two biblical images into a new format:

> **Mark 13:24-25** [24] But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, [25] And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken (σαλευθήσονται saleuthEsontai).

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[26] The phrase shaken by a mighty wind (ὑπὸ ἀνέμου μεγάλου σειομένη) uses the lemmas (μέγας megas) for mighty and (ἄνεμος anemos) for wind (cf. Rev 7.1). The same terms are found in the parabolic saying in Matt 7.27 that describes the fate of those who fail to act on Jesus' words, "and the winds (ἄνεμος anemos) blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great (μέγας megas) was the fall of it". In Matthew it is the fall of the house that was "great" (μέγας megas) in Revelation it is the wind that is "mighty" (μέγας megas). In Matthew it is a house that falls and in Revelation figs are cast.

[27] **4531** σαλεύω saleuo **Meaning:** 1) a motion produced by winds, storms, waves, etc 1a) to agitate or shake 1b) to cause to totter 1c) to shake thoroughly, of a measure filled by shaking its contents together 2) to shake down, overthrow 2a) to cast down from one's (secure and happy) state 2b) to move, agitate the mind, to disturb one

[28] Swaying rather than periodic oscillation or tremors?

In the Synoptic tradition Jesus employs an aspect of σαλεύω (saleuo) for "shaken" a word that seems more suited to wind-blown trees than "shaking" (vibrating) stars[29] and in Rev 6.13 Jesus uses an aspect of the verb σείω (seio) for shaking the tree -- a word more suited to the quaking of the earth (and other planets/stars). It seems that both passages would be improved if the verbs were swapped. The choice is nonetheless deliberate as Jesus demonstrated during his ministry that he could command the winds and the sea (Mark 4.41 cf. Lk 21.25) and warned that ignoring his words would lead to a wind strong enough to destroy the house (cf. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate", Lk 13:35). The choice of σειομένη,(from σείω, seio) in Rev 6.13 for "shake" (of the tree by wind) is influenced by the need to highlight the intra-text correspondence between the quaking tree and the quaking city in Rev 11.

The writer to the Hebrews is aware of this as he uses both words. He employs (σείω seio) in Heb 12.26 and (σαλεύω saleuo) in Heb 12.27. It is obvious that the use of σείσω (seisO) in Hag 2.6 influenced the choice of Heb 12.26 and σαλευθήσονται (saleuthEsontai) in Mark 13.25 influenced his word choice in Heb 12.27. The selections made by the author of Hebrews can therefore explain his verb choices without resorting to Rev 6.13 but it does not explain why he chose the prophecy of Haggai in preference to Isa 13.13 that also uses σεισθήσεται (seisthEsetai, from σείω). Our argument is that the use of Haggai in Hebrews was inspired by Revelation.

The association of the "fig tree" (Rev 6.13) and the "city" (Rev 11.12-13) with a quake (especially as this city housed the temple cf. Rev 11.1-2) point to the Haggai prophecy, a prophecy that is also concerned with the temple and with shaking. Moreover, the eschatological witnessing of Rev 11 echoes the work of Zerubbabel and Joshua (compare their role in the restoration prophecies).[30]

The thrust of the argument in Hebrews was that the old temple, old city and old covenant was about to be removed and replaced by a better temple, city and covenant. Haggai pointed out that their livelihood had not prospered because they neglected restoring the temple. The harvest had failed and even the fig tree had not brought forth fruit, even so, God would bless them from that day forward (Hag 2.18-19) and they were vouched safe by the "shaking" ---

[29] Fluctuating light intensity can make stars seem to vibrate to the naked eye

[30] The feast of "Lights" (celebrated roughly on Dec 25th) for rededicating the temple was officially instituted by the Maccabees but is actually based on Hag 2.20 because the Jews (and temple restoration) was blessed from that day forward. The lampstands of Revelation 11 allude to this and John the Baptist (second-Elijah) is called a burning and shining lamp (John 5.25). John the Baptist was born during the Feast of Lights as he had come to dedicate a new temple – See, Chapter 17 in P. Wyns, God is Judge: A commentary on the book of Daniel (Biblaridion, 2011)

---a theophany that would demonstrate to the nations the restoration of glory (the divine presence) returning to the rebuilt temple. However, Jesus cursed the fig tree (Matt. 11.13-23) because despite his preaching there was an absence of fruit, not even "the first-ripe in the fig tree at her first time" (Hos. 9.10). As Prov. 27.18 remarks, "Whoever keeps the fig tree will eat its fruit; So he who waits on his master will be honoured." When Jesus searched the tree (because he was hungry) there were no figs. Even forty-two years later there were only immature, unripe figs only fit for rejection. The Jews had not waited for their Master; however, the faithful who waited on Christ would be honoured. So, the blessing and positive theophany (shaking) of Haggai would be transformed into a curse and a negative theophany of judgment (a different kind of shaking) in Revelation and the author of Hebrews understood the implications of Rev 6.12-17 and this gives Hebrews the confidence to reinvent the prophecy of Haggai by bringing together the shakings of Mark, Haggai and Revelation because in their negative and positive aspects they all have the same subject matter (the temple).

**The context of the original inter-texts**

As already noted, the thematic of Haggai is imminently suitable as a background to Revelation (and Hebrews) in both a negative and positive sense. In a negative sense because the "shaking" removes the former temple glory and in a positive sense as the "shaking" introduces a new temple with far greater glory: "Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail" (Rev 11.19). "I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (Rev 21.22).

However, the context of Isaiah 34 is the judgement of Edom (Idumea). How can this have anything to do with the temple? Did Jesus disregard the context when he chose Isaiah 34 as an inter-text for his Revelation message? That is definitely not the case. It was the Edomite (Idumean) Herod the Great that built the temple.[31] The early church suffered under the Herodian dynasty. Herod the Great (reigned 37-4 BCE) sought to murder the messiah and slaughtered the innocents in Bethlehem. Herod Antipater (reigned 4 BCE-39 CE) was involved in events that led to the executions of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth.

[31] It was actually a reconstruction but virtually nothing remained of the old temple, it became known as Herod's Temple and Herod was the "temple builder".

Herod Agrippa (reigned 41–44 CE) had James (the brother of John) murdered. Moreover, the prophecy of Malachi which predicts the coming of the forerunner (John the Baptist-second Elijah) commences with the words that "God hates Esau (Edom)" (Mal 1.3).[32]

What can we say of Isaiah 13 another sub-text used by Jesus in the sixth seal? There is almost a complete failure of commentaries to recognise that Babylon in this chapter refers to the Assyrian Empire and not the neo-Babylonian Empire. This is probably due to the fact that Jeremiah appropriates the language of Isaiah when he predicts the fall of Babylon.[33] This mistake is due to a failure to recognise that in ancient times the city of Nineveh and Babylon were synonymous terms[34] because they were thought to have the same legendary founder (Nimrod). Of course, the interchangeable terms caused confusion for later exegetes who therefore blithely conclude that Isaiah was a late production (either exilic or post exilic). The chapter context is the Assyrian invasions that resulted in the deportation of the ten tribes of Israel to the regions of Mesopotamia and Babylon.[35] This explains the references to *the birth pangs of the messiah*; "Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth" (Isa 13.8). A similar fate awaited Judah some 136 years later but unlike Israel they would be delivered; "Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in birth pangs. For now you shall go forth from the city, you shall dwell in the field, and to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; there the LORD will redeem you from the hand of your enemies". (Micah 4:10). Many from Judah returned from exile but Israel (the ten tribes) never returned from exile.

Allusions to messianic birth pangs are picked up in Mark 13.8, "These *are* the beginnings of sorrows", and in the related vision of Rev 12 of the woman giving birth to the man-child. The question of the identity of Babylon in the Apocalypse is beyond the remit of this article; however, the fact that Babylon/Assyria has the characteristics of the sea-beast of Rev 13 is another point in favour of the suitability of Isa 13 as an inter-text for the sixth seal.

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[32] A forthcoming exposition emphasises the importance of the Herodians in understanding the apocalyptic setting and the parallels with Malachi.

[33] On this see, Craig Davis, Dating the Old Testament, (RJ Communications,2007):246-252 http://www.datingtheoldtestament.com/

[34] This was common practice in the ANE and not limited to biblical literature, see; Stephanie Daily, Babylon as a Name for other cities including Nineveh, Proceedings of the 51 st Recontre Assriologique Internationale [2005], (eds., R. Briggs, J. Myers, M. Roth, University of Chicago,2008): 25-33. See also the excerpt taken from H.A. Whittaker's Isaiah on the resources page http://www.biblaridion.info/html/resources.html under the heading Interchangeability of Babylon/

[35] See the note by A. Perry. See also the excerpt taken from H.A. Whittaker's Isaiah

The historical context of the inter-texts (Hag 2, Isa 13 and Isa 34) is therefore appropriate for describing the fall of the nation and the removal of the temple. Subtle changes and reordering of those sub-texts allude to warnings made by Christ (during his ministry) about the unfitness of the nation and the coming judgement (shaking) a shaking that would remove the old heavens and earth (contra Haggai's intent) but also, (like Haggai) a covenant shaking that was a prelude to restoring a far greater temple glory. The one cannot occur without the other as the old needs to be removed before it can be replaced. Hebrews and many first century Christians expected a single last shaking, with the removal of the old and the return of the messiah to coincide, but that was not to be as it is a recurring pattern.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This case study has been limited to Hebrews 12 in order to demonstrate direction of influence but many other New Testament writings display the same familiarity with the book of Revelation and other examples could have been chosen.[36] It is therefore pointless to argue that perhaps Hebrews was written in ca. 100 CE, after Revelation and after the fall of the temple in 70 (making the argument in Hebrews against second temple Judaism completely pointless). The way that Hebrews uses other New Testament writings (Acts 7) and the Old Testament (Hag, Deut, Exod) are clearly secondary interactions driven by Hebrews primary interaction with Revelation. Hebrews frames its conceptual arguments about the temple and witnessing by listening to the voice from heaven (the voice of Jesus) which is the voice of the new covenant that promises a better priesthood and a better city in the Apocalypse. This framework was not conceived in isolation and the fact that the Epistle commences and ends with Jesus speaking (Heb 1.2, Heb 12.25) demonstrates that the writer of Hebrews had already received the Apocalypse.

The Jews refused to listen to the voice of Jesus but they also refused to listen to Moses; "There is *one* who accuses you -- Moses, in whom you trust. 'For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me, but if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?'" (John 5.45-47). Despite all the Old Testament evidence for the necessity of a suffering messiah who would atone for sin, despite all the types, allusions and echoes in the Old Testament the Jews ignored their own Scriptures.

[36] This would have been a much larger article had we done so. Suffice to say that for those that are willing to "listen for the voice that speaks from heaven" many allusions to Revelation can be found in early pre-70 New Testament writings. Hebrews is not the only case by a long shot. These frameworks of allusion, echoes and type cannot be explained away by insisting on the coincidental (sic) use of the same Old Testament inter-texts in exactly the same way as Revelation, nor can they be dismissed by disingenuously asserting that the "Spirit" dictated the same allusions to other NT writers.

If there is a lesson here it is that pre-conceived notions and dogmatism can harden the heart.

It is inconceivable that the first century church did not receive the book of Revelation. It is inconceivable that the Apocalypse has nothing to say about Jewish affairs and that the Jews have somehow been supplanted by the Gentile church.

If we have replaced intertextual bible study with dogma then we are no better than the Jews in our refusal to listen to the Apocalypse. The threat to censure those who honestly investigate scripture, to dampen enthusiasm for searching the word and to cling to unbiblical interpretations is the sign of a dead community --- like the Jewish nation before its final collapse, who threw anyone who professed Christ out of the Synagogue. Moreover, it leaves the community open to a "strong delusion" the kind that is able to "deceive the very elect" such as the Jews of the second century who followed the false messiah Bar Kochba in an attempt to re-establish temple worship. The overweening (unwarranted) confidence of those who misappropriate scripture in an attempt to defend tradition is no different to those unbelieving Jews who could not (would not) understand Moses. It is the reverse of contending for the faith, true contention for the faith is the freedom of hermeneutics. The words of Vangemeren are appropriate here:

> "But the Spirit of God calls on each generation to adapt anew to God's revelation. He is the power of God who applies the word of God to a new situation. He transforms human beings, interpretations, and traditions. As long as he is operating in and through the word, the community of God's people lives in the tension between stability and adaptability." [37]

This is exactly what the New Testament prophets did. They took the interpretation of the Old Testament to the "next level" demonstrating that all scripture pointed to Christ and his kingdom. Jesus had not come to destroy the Law and Prophets but to fulfil them. (Matt 5.17) Tradition of itself is a useful safeguard against malicious change but if left unchecked it becomes an end unto itself, stifling scripture and not allowing it to speak. This is what the Jews did, their traditions were more important than the "new and radical" interpretation offered by Jesus and his church. But they even went a step further --- in Babylon they "ring-fenced" the Law by adding another 2,500,000 million words of tradition – layers upon layers, precept upon precept, to protect their faith and justify their intransigence.

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[37] Willem A. Vangemeren, Prophets, the Freedom of God, and Hermeneutics, Westminster Theological Journal 52.1 (Spring 1990): 79-99,96.http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/article_god_vangemeren.html

The worship of tradition and refusal to listen to scripture is not an example that any community should follow. Samuel Johnson (talking about false patriotism) once made the famous pronouncement that patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel. The same is applicable to (false) religion - tradition is the last refuge of a scoundrel.

If we understand how the Apocalypse "worked" in the first and second centuries, how the patterns constantly reoccur, then it is possible to recognise those same patterns when they are repeated (as they surely will be) in our day. Expressed differently – a failure to recognize a partial fulfilment in the first century will result in a failure to recognize the pattern of final realization when it materializes in our day.

Our final conclusion is that Revelation is an early work, received before the fall of the temple in 70 CE and before many other NT writings. This should influence our interpretive approach. If it does not we are in danger of becoming like the Jews who refused to listen and we run the risk of repeating their mistakes.