

Old Testament Allusions in Revelation 1

- v. 1: Daniel 2:28-30; 45-47
 - What: Broadly patterned after this passage. The word for “revelation” appears 5 times in Daniel 2, “what must come to pass” 3 times, “made it known (sign)” twice. John also substitutes “in the last days (Daniel 2:28)” for “what must soon take place.”
 - Significance: John is communicating to us that this book will be mostly a symbolic vision, just like this part of Daniel was a symbolic vision.
- v. 4: Leviticus 4-16; 26:18-28, Genesis 1
 - What: The number 7. In the OT, it symbolizes fullness and completeness over and over again, as it will in this book (occurs 55 times in Revelation)
 - Significance: seven churches were seven real, historical churches, but probably signifies that Revelation was also intended for the complete, universal church (all churches at all times).
- v. 4: Exodus 3:14; Isaiah 41:4; 43:10; 44:6; 48:12
 - What: “the one who is, who was, and who is to come.” This is an interpretation of God’s covenant name, “Yahweh.” “the one who is” is another way of saying “I AM.”
 - Significance: This is the same God of the Old Testament, the God of the present, and the God of the future. None of his plans have failed. He is in control, he was in control, and he will be in control.
- v. 4: Zechariah 4:2-7
 - What: The seven spirits alludes to the “seven lamps” that are God’s Spirit in Zechariah 4.
 - Significance: The “seven spirits” is a reference to the one Holy Spirit, who is complete and perfect
- v. 5: Psalm 88:28, 38
 - What: “faithful witness,” “firstborn”
 - Significance: Psalm 88 is about David, who is an “anointed” king and whose descendants will be on the throne forever, ruling over his enemies. John connects that to Jesus, saying that he is the perfect king, the Son of David, whose rule and reign will result in the defeat of his enemies and will never end.
- v. 5: Exodus 24:8; Leviticus 16:14-19
 - What: “has set us free from our sins by his blood,” allusion to the OT sacrificial system.
 - Significance: Jesus has freed us from sins as the great High Priest, but he has not done it with the blood of an animal. He did it with *his* blood. He is both priest and sacrifice.
- v. 6: Exodus 19:6
 - What: “a kingdom of priests”
 - Significance: In the OT, Israel was to be a “kingdom of priests.” John has connected Israel with the church as the “new Israel,” the new covenant people of God.
- v. 7: Daniel 7:13; Zechariah 12:10
 - What: John combines these two Messianic prophecies into one.
 - Significance: These prophecies referred to the Messiah/Christ, and so Jesus is identified as God’s people’s Savior. Also, “all the tribes of Israel” is a phrase that occurs about 25 times in the OT. John has changed it to “all the tribes of the earth,” showing that the Messiah is not just for the Jews, but for all people. God’s people no longer consists of one ethnic group, and those prophecies are not just for the Jews, but for anyone who believes in Jesus.
- vv. 10-11: Ezekiel 2:2; 3:12, 14, 24; 11:1; 43:5; Exodus 19:16, 19-20; 17:14; Isaiah 30:8; Jeremiah 37:2; 39:44
 - What: Being in the Spirit, the voice like a trumpet, writing on a scroll
 - Significance: These are all things we see when God speaks to his prophets in the OT. This is communicating that this Revelation was given by God, just like all the OT prophecies. Also, every time God tells his prophets to write in a book/scroll, it was always a writing of judgment against Israel.
- v. 12: Exodus 25, 37; Numbers 8 (Generally); Zechariah 4:2-10
 - What “seven golden lampstands”

- Significance: In the OT, the lampstand in the temple was placed in front of the holy of holies. The light from the lamps on it represented God’s presence. Zechariah 4 likens the lampstand to Israel. Here, the lampstands represent the church, showing the church, as the new Israel, shining the light of God into the world.

- v. 13: Daniel 7:13

- What: one like the Son of Man
- Significance: This is how Daniel describes the Messiah in his vision of the Ancient of Days.

- vv. 13-16: Daniel 7, 10;

- What: Striking parallel with Daniel 10, with two important distinctions.
- Significance: Jesus is described in glorious terms similar to the way an angel is described in Daniel 10. 2 things are worth noting: first, the angel had a belt of gold, and Jesus had a sash of gold, similar to what the priests would’ve worn (Exodus 28:39) and what the angels who come out of the temple are wearing in Revelation 15:6. Meaning, Jesus isn’t just a glorious king, he’s also a *priest*. Next, John sees something in the vision of Jesus that Daniel didn’t see in angel, but saw on the Ancient of Days in chapter 7: hair like pure wool. The angel was glorious, but Jesus is more glorious, because he is divine. The Ancient of Days (God) and Jesus Christ are the same.

TABLE 9.5: The Descriptions of the Ones Revealed in Daniel 10 and Revelation 1

Daniel 10	Revelation 1
10:5, “clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold”	1:13, “clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest”
7:9, “the hair of his head like pure wool”	1:14a, “the hairs of his head were white, like white wool”
10:6c, “his eyes like flaming torches”	1:14b, “His eyes were like a flame of fire” (description found also in 2:18)
10:6d, “his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze”	1:15a, “his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace” (description found also in 2:18)
10:6e, “and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude”	1:15b, “and his voice was like the roar of many waters”
10:6b, “his face like the appearance of lightning”	1:16c, “and his face was like the sun shining in full strength”

James M. Hamilton Jr., *Revelation: The Spirit Speaks to the Churches*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 49 (table 3.3).

- v. 16: Isaiah 11:4; 49:2

- What: Sharp double-edged sword out of his mouth
- Significance: Aside from all the places that talk about the power of the word of the Lord, this can be seen as a direct fulfillment of the prophecy about the end-time judge in Isaiah 11 who will “strike the land with a scepter from his mouth.”

- v. 17: Daniel 10:8-20

- What: the order: vision, then falling on face, then being strengthened by a heavenly being, then receiving further revelation.
- Significance: This is the same thing that happened to Daniel in Daniel 10. This shows us again that John’s message has the same God-given prophetic authority as ones given by the OT prophets.

- v. 17: Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12

- What “I am the First and the Last”
- Significance: This is how God describes himself in Isaiah, and here Jesus is describing himself the same way, showing that he shares the identity of the one true God.

- v. 20: Book of Daniel

- What: “Mystery”
- Significance: “Mystery” with regard to the end times only appears in the OT in Daniel. This further connects the book and shows that John’s vision will show Daniel’s latter day prophecies being fulfilled.

Information gathered and summarized from:

- Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007.
- Johnson, Dennis E., Robert L. Plummer, Sam Storms, Matthew S. Harmon, Ray Van Neste, and Thomas R. Schreiner. *Hebrews–Revelation*. Edited by Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar. Vol. XII. ESV Expository Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018. Anything that wasn’t taken from