

ALLUSIONS, EXEGETICAL METHOD, AND THE INTERPRETATION OF
REVELATION 8:7-12

Author and Degree: **Jon Paulien, Ph.D.**

Date When Dissertation Completed: February 1987.

Adviser: Kenneth A. Strand.

(Jon Paulien is currently a professor in the New Testament Department of the S.D.A. Theological Seminary of Andrews University.)

This dissertation attempts to overcome some of the major obstacles to the development of a comprehensive exegetical method that can enable an interpreter to unlock the meaning of such difficult apocalyptic passages as Rev 8:7-12.

The first chapter utilizes a survey of previous research to explore four issues whose resolution is vital to the interpretation of the book of Revelation: (1) the sources of the Apocalypse, (2) how the Revelator used them, (3) the language and text tradition of the OT that he used, and (4) the nature and location of his allusions to earlier literature. The literature survey indicates that the major obstacle to the accurate interpretation of Revelation is the lack of an objective method for evaluating the allusions to prior literature that characterize the book.

Chap. 2 opens with a brief outline of a comprehensive exegetical method for the study of the Apocalypse. The bulk of the chapter focuses on a proposed method that can enable interpreters to evaluate more objectively the allusions in Revelation. Through a painstaking analysis of the verbal, thematic, and structural parallels to the OT in Rev 8:7-12, the process of evaluating proposed allusions to the OT is clearly demonstrated. The results of that analysis proved to have implications for many of the issues raised by the literature survey of chap. 1.

Chap. 3 offers an interpretation of Rev 8:7-12 in the light of the comprehensive method outlined at the beginning of chap. 2. The imagery of the passage is compared to its context, to the author's sources, and to the overall structure of the Apocalypse. Relevant insights from the first two chapters are incorporated. The resulting interpretations illuminate to an unprecedented degree the basic meaning structures of the first four trumpets.