The song of Moses in the book of Revelation: allusions, memories, and identity.

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DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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SUMMARY

This research aims to trace the exodus motif in the book of Revelation in general and Rev. 12-20 in particular, and to examine the socio-rhetorical function of the use of the exodus motif. Our hypothesis is that Rev. 12-20 constitutes a coherent unit in terms of narratology and that the exodus motif plays a significant role in forming the structure and the message of the book of Revelation, specifically of Revelation 12-20. Significantly, the song of Moses and the Lamb in Rev. 15 plays a pivotal role in the development of the thread of the chapter 12-20 as a plot.

In the chapter 2, an overview of the history of interpretation of Revelation is provided and also the limitation of current studies of the song of Moses is highlighted. In addition, a new approach to the song of Moses in Revelation is suggested.

The main goal of the chapter 3 is to examine Rev. 12-20 according to four narrative elements and from which Rev 12-20 can be deduced as a discrete literary unit constituting a plot. It will be argued that Rev. 12-20, as a plot, is highly stylized in the chiastic structure which has the song of Moses and the Lamb at the centre.

Chapter 4 investigates Exod. 1-15 as a coherent story and explains how the author of Revelation adopts the exodus motifs in forming both the theme and the structure of Revelation. Moreover, it will be argued that the exodus motif generated certain socio-rhetorical meanings to the audiences or the readers who were assimilated into the Roman Empire. For understanding the socio-rhetorical meanings, we examine the socio-rhetorical context, namely Asia Minor as part of the Roman Empire, and deal with the socio-rhetorical role of the exodus motif in the book of Revelation.

In the chapter 5, firstly, drawing on the theoretical assumptions from social psychology, we build up a framework in which we can deal with Rev. 12-20 in terms of identity issues. Then, the covenantal identity based on the covenant in the book of Exodus will be suggested as an alternative identity. Thus, the exodus motif in Rev. 12-20 challenges the assimilated identity of the audiences or the readers to be renewed in the covenantal identity, so that they may be holy apart from the culture and the structure of the Roman Empire. The song of Moses and the Lamb reinforces the covenantal identity.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie navorsing ondersoek die gebruik van die eksodus-motief in Openbaring in die algemeen en in Op 12-12 in die besonder, terwyl dit ook die sosio-retoriese funksie van hierdie motief bestudeer. Die hipotese is dat Op 12-20 in terme van narratologiese analise ‘n koherente eenheid beslaan, en dat die eksodus-motief ‘n betekenisvolle rol speel in die struktuur en boodskap van Openabring, en Op 12-20 in besonder. Verder is dit betekenisvol dat die Lied van Moses en die Lam in Op 15 ‘n kernrol speel in die deurlopende lyn van Op 12-20 as plot.

In hoofstuk 2 word ‘n oorsig oor die interpretasiegeskiedenis van Openbaring aangebied en beperkinge ten opsigte van huidige studies oor die Lied van Moses beklemtoon. In aanvulling daarby word ‘n nuwe benadering ten opsigte van die Lied van Moses in Openbaring voorgestel.

Die hoofdoel van hoofstuk 3 is om Op 12-20 aan die hand van vier naratiewe elemente te ondersoek. As resultaat kan Op 12-20 as diskrete literêre eenheid sowel as die plot van Openbaring beskou word. As plot vertoon Op 12-20 ‘n noukeurige styl, met chiastiese strukture waarvan die Lied van Moses en die Lam die middelpunt vorm.

Hoofstuk 4 ondersoek Eks 1-15 as koherente narratief en verduidelik hoe die outeur van Openbaring die eksodus-motief in die vorming van beide die tema en struktuur van die boek ingespan het. Die eksodus motief sou ook sekere sosio-retoriese betekenisse onder die gehore of lesers wat met die Romeinse Ryk geassimileer was, gegenereer het. Twv die beter verstaan van sulke sosio-retoriese betekenisse, word die sosio-historiese konteks naamlik Klein-Asië as deel van die Romeinse Ryk bestudeer. Vervolgens word die sosio-retoriese rol van die eksodus-motief in die boek van Openbaring behandel.

In hoofstuk 5 word eerstens van teoretiese uitgangspunte binne die sosiale sielkunde gebruik te maak vir die konstruering van ‘n raamwerk om identiteitsake in Opn 12-20 te hanteer. Vervolgens word verbondsidentiteit soos dit voortvloei uit die verbond in Eksodus as alternatiewe identiteit voorgestel. Die eksodus motief in Op 12-20 daag die gehore of lesers van die boek uit om hul verbondsidentiteit te hernu, sodat hulle heilig en dus anders as die kultuur en strukture van die Romeinse Ryk kan wees. Die Lied van Moses en die Lam

versterk Openbaring se gehore of lesers se verbondsidentiteit.

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The start of this thesis goes back to a time when I was in a mission school in 2006 and was reading a passage of Revelation. Through a verse in Revelation 18, God impressed upon me to devote myself to a ministry of freeing God's people from the secularized world like the Roman Empire, so that they may live out God's calling as the covenantal people. The impression was embodied in this study and I came to have a biblical foundation for my church ministry in South Korea. I would like to thank the Lord for guiding me here and giving me a good supervisor and supporters. Now I am looking forward to how He will lead and use me in my future.

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ABBREVIATIONS

1QM	1 QWar Scroll
1 Cor	1 Corinthians
1 Chr	1 Chronicles
1 En	1Enoch
1 Bar	1 Baruch
2 Bar	2 Baruch
2 Chr	2 Chronicles
4 Esdr	4 Esdra
1 Kgs	1 Kings
2 Kgs	2 Kings
1 Pet	1 Peter
Apoc. Ab	Apocalypse of Abraham
Dan	Daniel
Deut	Deuteronomy
Eph	Ephesians
Exod	Exodus
Ezek	Ezekiel
Gal	Galatians
Gen	Genesis
Hab	Habakkuk
Heb	Hebrews
Hos	Hosea
KTU	M. Dietrich, O. Loretz and J. Sanmartin. *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit: Einschliesslich der keilaphabetischen. Texte ausserhalb Ugarits. Teil 1. Transkription.* AOAT 24/1. Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976.
Isa	Isaiah
Jer	Jeremiah
Judg	Judges
Lev	Leviticus
Lk	Luke

LXX	Septuagint
Macc	Maccabees
Matt	Matthew
Mic	Micah
Mk	Mark
Nah	Nahum
Neh	Nehemiah
Nestle-Aland^{27}	*Novum Testamentum Graece*, 1993. ed. by B. Aland, K. Aland, J Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, and B. M. Metzer. 27th edition. Stuttgart: deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
Num	Numbers
OT	Old Testament
Ps	Psalms
Rev	Revelation
Sib. Or	Sybilline Oracles
Targ. Jon. Zech	Targum Jonathan to Zechariah
Zech	Zechariah

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Problem statement

Many scholars who have investigated the use of the Old Testament in the book of Revelation have focused largely on the criteria for assessing the validity of the Old Testament allusions, and on the source in the Old Testament from which the author of Revelation borrowed.

In his book titled "Isaiah and prophetic traditions in the book of Revelation: visionary antecedent and their development," Fekkes (1994:279-281) divides allusions in Revelation into the following categories: certain/virtually certain; probable/possible; and unlikely/doubtful. Beale (1998:62) suggests a different system of classification that is clear allusion, probable allusion, and possible allusion. Moyise (2001:5-6) classified the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament into three categories: quotations, allusions, and echoes. However, there have been few who have focused on the literary role and function of quotations and allusions in Revelation.

When it comes to the source from which the author of Revelation borrowed, many scholars have suggested different views. A. Vanhoye has suggested that Ezekiel is a dominant influence, and Austin Farrer and John Sweet have proposed in a general way that Daniel is the essential key to an understanding of the Apocalypse (cf. Beale 1984). However, there have been few articles or proposals on the influence of the Exodus motifs on the book of Revelation.

Steve Moyise[1] and G.K. Beale,[2] who are quite famous authors concerning this topic of the use of the Old Testament in the New, did not deal with the influence of Exodus on Revelation in their books, but significantly with that of prophetic books (Moyise 2001:117). This seems to mean that scholars tend to focus on apocalyptic books such as Daniel and Ezekiel as well

[1] Moyise (2001:117) says, "John's favourite books are Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the Psalms, with compar atively few from the narrative portions of the OT".
[2] In relation to the Old Testament references in Revelation, Beale (1998:60-1) weighs up prophetic books, such as Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, more than the book of Exodus. He evaluates Daniel as most influential in terms of theology and structure (Beale 1984:413-23).

as other prophetic books, without paying enough attention to the book of Exodus, which actually provides the prototype of the main theme of apocalyptic books, as well as Revelation.

For the mythical language in Rev. 12-20, many scholars[3], such as Schüssler Fiorenza (1991:131) and Collins (1983:85), depend on the myth of the queen of heaven which appears in Babylonia, Egypt, Greece, Asia Minor, and in the texts about astral religion, and also on the primeval myth of the two monsters as well as the Roman imperial cult, and thus, tend to overlook the exodus motif.

As regards the song of Moses in Rev 15:2-4, which is used in close concert with the song of the Lamb (Rev 15:3),[4] there have recently been a number of attempts to investigate the hermeneutical significance of pointing readers or hearers to the song in which the words bear little resemblance to either Exod. 15 or Deut. 32. In his recent book, "Evoking Scripture" (2008), Steve Moyise dealt with the song of Moses in a separate chapter, where he introduced various views on the song of Moses in Revelation in terms of intertextuality. However, Moyise did not deal with the song of Moses in a wider context, unlike Beale who puts the song of Moses in the judgment context of Rev. 14-16 (Beale 1999:799). It would be more appropriate to understand the song in relation to its wider literary context.

In regard to the New Testament's use of the Old Testament, lately there have also been scholarly studies (cf. e.g., Hays 1989; 2001; Keesmaat 1999) that look into intertextual functions through which the author communicates with the audiences or the readers and imposes certain identities on them. In contrast to the advances in other books of the New Testament, the intertextual functions in socio-rhetorical environment in relation to the book of Revelation have not received much attention, though most scholars[5] recognize the importance of the background when examining the book of Revelation.

[3] See Aune (1998:667-74) who summarizes the ancient near eastern sources geographically.
[4] In this thesis, the emphasis will be on "the song of Moses" (Rev. 15:3) while staying alert to its juxtaposition with "the song of the Lamb", since the image of Moses and the image of the Lamb are overlapped terminologically in Rev. 12-20, pointing to one thematic framework (refer to chapter 3.3.1.4).
[5] Thus, most scholars deal significantly with the first three chapters of Revelation as a framework on the basis of which we may understand the mysterious visions in Revelation (Koester 2001:42). Bauckham (1993:338-83), in his book titled "The climax of the prophecy", deals with the economic system under Roman rule in relation to Rev. 18.

1.2 Hypothesis

To interpret the book of Revelation accurately, a proper understanding of the use of the Old Testament is crucial (Beale 1998:61). It is also important to note that intertextuality is not simply a literary and theological phenomenon (Moyise 2008:2), but also a socio-rhetorical dynamic (Robbins 1996:40-70).

Revelation is a literary work, composed with astonishing care and skill. As a complex literary creation, dense with meaning and allusions, it must be understood as being qualitatively different from the spontaneous orality of most early Christian prophecy (Bauckham 1993a:3-4). Sometimes, some segments of the Old Testament are used as literary prototype. For instance, Beale (1984:413-23) argued in some depth that broad patterns from Dan. 2 and 7 have been followed in Rev. 1, 4-5, 13, and 17. The influence of Daniel may even extend to the structure of the whole book of Revelation, since the same Dan. 2:28-29 allusion punctuates the book at major divisional transitions (Rev. 1:1; 1:19; 4:1; 22:6) (Beale 1998:75).

However, I shall argue that the exodus motif plays a significant role in forming the structure and the message of the book of Revelation, specifically of Rev. 12-20. This particular section of Rev. 12-20 may be understood as one large unit constituting a plot which is the idea of a cause-and-effect connection between events in a sequence (Barr 2003:12).

For the argument of this thesis, it would be critical to note that the opening portent in Rev. 12 may have been intended to evoke a framework for understanding the rest of the book in the light of the exodus motif – like '3D glasses' – which helps to see the mythical drama through the lens of the covenant. This covenantal relationship culminated in Rev. 21, specifically in the statement of God: "Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children" (Exod. 6:7; 20:1).

It will be also argued that the song of Moses significantly influences the development of the thread of the chapter 12-20 as a plot (Barr 2003:15)[6] and even anticipates the ultimate vision in the chapter 21 that the author of the book of Revelation tried to deliver to the churches: the

[6] Barr (2003:15-9), in his book, divides Revelation into three plots, namely 1-3, 4-11, and 12-22, but I would think that in the third plot the last chapter is more related to the first chapter.

New Jerusalem on the high mountain.

Significantly, the song of Moses and the Lamb plays a pivotal role in Rev. 12-20 as a coherent story, in terms of both theme and structure. In the plot, a red dragon pursues a woman (Rev. 12) but is eventually defeated by a cosmic warrior (Rev. 19-20), resulting in the establishment of a wholly new cosmic order (Rev. 21) (Barr 2003:15).

There are three points significantly presupposed in this thesis that are essential for the argument of this thesis:

Firstly, the exodus motif, specifically the song of Moses in Rev. 15, plays a significant role in forming the structure and the message of the book of Revelation 12-20 constituting a plot.

Secondly, the opening portent in Rev. 12 may have been intended to evoke a framework for understanding the rest of the book in the light of the exodus motif.

Lastly, in Rev. 12-20, the song of Moses and the Lamb plays a pivotal role in terms of both in theme and in structure. This cosmic battle story is developed around the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Intertextuality also operates in terms of a community identity. Hays preeminently studied the intertextual functions in Paul's use of the Old Testament. After a careful consideration of 1 Corinthians, Hays (2005:6) presents the formulation of two major theses: (1) Paul was trying to teach the Corinthian church to think eschatologically; (2) Paul was trying to teach the Corinthian church to reshape its identity in light of Israel's Scripture. These two theses may be applied to the book of Revelation in the same way.

Moreover, the use of allusive language that outsiders do not understand gives people something very important in common and so helps cement their communal bonds. Thus, the allusive language can be a way of drawing group boundaries and reinforcing feelings of group membership (Allison 2000:7). In this sense, the exodus motif in Revelation may play a significant role in forming a social identity as God's people on the basis of the covenantal relationship with God.

In sum, we shall examine the use of the song of Moses and the Lamb in terms of its literary function in a wider context, namely Rev. 12-20, and also in terms of its socio-rhetorical function in the Roman Empire.

1.3 Methodology

One of the essential issues of this thesis is how the exodus motif functions in Revelation in general and Rev. 12-20 in particular. Moreover, the focus is on how the allusion to the exodus motif evokes essential memories which lead to creating a new identity in a community situated in Asia Minor as part of the Roman Empire.

To examine the interrelation between allusions, memories, and an identity in Revelation, we should firstly deal with intertextual concepts. In her well-examined book titled "Paul and his story," Keesmaat dealt with the issue of interpreting the Exodus tradition in Pauline epistles. Keesmaat (1999:48) defines intertextuality as a term used by literary theorists to designate the "structural relations" among two or more texts, and it also relates to how the textual expressions of a tradition are alluded to and echoed in later texts. Moreover, it is a literary dynamic by which tradition is transmitted and reappropriated. The dynamic was evident in the interpretation of Israel's scripture, both within the Bible itself and in post-biblical Second Temple Judaism (Keesmaat 1999:33) as well as in New Testament.

Intertextuality involves not simply interactions between texts in terms of a literary dynamic; it is also closely related to forming group identities in terms of a social dynamic. Thus, in his methodology called socio-rhetorical criticism, Robbins (1996:62-3) includes social intertexture in the category of intertexture. Suffice it to note that he deals with social and cultural texture in a separate chapter.

"Socio-rhetorical criticism is an approach to literature that focuses on values, convictions, and beliefs both in the texts we read and in the world" from which the texts derive (Robbins 1996:1). The approach not only invites the researcher to the text itself; it also moves interactively into the world of the people who wrote the texts and the texts as literary units. Thus, socio-rhetorical criticism integrates the ways people use language with the ways they

live in the world (Robbins 1996:1). In this respect, the socio-rhetorical approach is appropriate to the study of the song of Moses and the Lamb in terms of its literary as well as socio-rhetorical function.

Robbins' methodology is so comprehensive as to cover the dynamics of various kinds of textual interaction: (1) inner texture; (2) intertexture; (3) social and cultural texture; (4) ideological texture; and (5) sacred texture. Although tracing the identity involves almost every texture, the second and third approach, namely intertexture and social and cultural texture, will be significantly considered in this analysis of the song of Moses in Revelation 15.

Robbins (1996:40-70) divides intertexture into four substructures: oral-scribal intertexture, cultural intertexture, social intertexture, and historical intertexture. He deals with reference, allusion, and echo in terms of cultural intertexture which appears in word and concept patterns and configurations; values, scripts, codes, or systems (e.g., purity, law, covenant); and myths (e.g., wisdom, Oedipus, Hermes). When it comes to identity, he deals with it in terms of social intertexture as well as in the chapter 3 titled "Social and cultural texture."

In the chapter on social and cultural texture, Robbins (1996:71) rightly claims that "analysis of the social and cultural texture of a text takes interpreters into sociological and anthropological theory." The social and cultural texture relates not simply to the intertexture of a text but also to its social and cultural nature as a text. Thus, "specific social topics, common social and cultural topics, and final cultural categories exhibit the social and cultural texture of a text and reveal the potential of the text to encourage its readers to adopt certain social and cultural locations and attitudes rather than others" (Robbins 1996:72). In this sense, the analysis of a text in terms of the social and cultural texture is essential to the recognition of the new identity the author of Revelation tried to evoke.

With this comprehensive view[7] as a foundation framework, we shall examine how allusion

[7] Along with the methodology of Robbins, another rhetorical analysis may be considered in parallel fashion. It is presented by Schüssler Fiorenza in her book, "Revelation: vision of a just world" (1991). By rhetorical she does not mean either "mere rhetoric" in a stylistic or propagandistic sense or "rhetorical figure" that does not correspond to fact or truth. Rather, she employs rhetoric in the classical sense as the art and power of persuasion. Rhetorical analysis seeks to explore the persuasive power of Revelation's symbolic language within the book's overall structure of meaning as well as within the rhetorical situation that is inscribed in the text and rooted in a particular socio-historical matrix (Schüssler Fiorenza 1991:20-37). Therefore, Schüssler Fiorenza's approach, focused on the rhetorical aspects of the text of Revelation, may complement Robbins' socio-rhetorical approach.

works in a text and the kind of effects it brings about.

Although socio-rhetorical criticism will be used as the main methodology in a broad sense, in each chapter, we shall draw on supplementary methodologies such as narrative criticism and social psychology. Since the socio-rhetorical approach not only requires detailed attention to the text itself, but also considers the world of the people who wrote the texts (Robbins 1996:1), narrative criticism as a tool for the detailed observation of the text will support the socio-rhetorical criticism.

1.4 Aim and Delimitation

1.4.1 Aim

In this study, my ultimate goal is firstly to trace the exodus motif in the book of Revelation in general and Rev. 12-20 in particular, and specifically to examine how the song of Moses is used in Rev. 12-20 which may be thought of as a coherent literary unit, constituting a plot. Moreover, Rev. 21 will also be dealt with in line with Rev. 12-20.

This study, however, aims to proceed beyond finding the exodus motif in Revelation as well as in the literary analysis of the text. It will attempt to go further investigating also the identity that the author wanted to stimulate in the minds of the original readers. When it comes to the rhetorical intention of Revelation, various aspects would deserve attention. However, the writer will discuss it briefly in relation to the identity of God's people.

1.4.2 Delimitation

In this thesis, the writer shall examine Rev. 12-20 and the song of Moses in Rev. 15. However, we shall concentrate on explaining that Rev. 12-20 constitutes a coherent story, namely a plot, and how Exod. 1-15, as a literary unit, influences Rev. 12-20 in terms of both theme and structure.

Thus, as regards Rev. 12-20, we shall focus more on Rev. 12, which is the beginning part of

the unit, and also single out some part out of Rev. 12-20 in order to prove that Rev. 12-20 forms a unit. As far as Exod. 1-15 is concerned, the writer shall analyze it only in terms of plot since the goal of this study is not to examine Exod. 1-15 in detail, but to investigate the influence of Exodus on Rev. 12-20.

As regards the socio-rhetorical intention that we will ultimately pursue in this study, the author shall borrow key concepts from social psychology. However, it would be beyond the scope of this study to develop a complete theoretical framework. Thus, we shall build a brief framework in terms of allusions, memories, and identities, so that we may examine a social identity of a community in a socio-rhetorical environment.

When it comes to the socio-rhetorical situation, the Roman Empire will be investigated only in relation to Asia Minor. It would be a huge task to draw a complete picture of the whole empire in every aspect. Thus, the writer shall provide only a brief overview of the political system in relation to Asia Minor and the imperial cult which was pervasive in the region at that time.

1.5 Outline

The thesis consists of six chapters in total, focused on clarifying the influence of the exodus motif on Rev. 12-20 as a coherent story and on investigating the identity of the churches in Asia Minor.

The first chapter is an introduction to the whole thesis, where the problem statement, the hypothesis, the methodology for this research, the aim, and the delimitation are described. Moreover, all the contents are outlined in this chapter.

In the second chapter, an overview of the history of interpretation of Revelation is offered and also the limitation of current studies of the song of Moses is highlighted. In addition, a new approach to the song of Moses in Revelation is suggested.

In the third chapter, Revelation 12-20 as a coherent story is examined on the basis of four narrative elements: setting; character, point of view; and plot. Firstly, the meaning of the

narratological approach to Rev. 12-20 is determined and then Rev. 12-20 is analysed on the basis of narratology. In this process, it is clarified that Rev. 12-20 forms a plot and is outlined in a chiastic structure with the song of Moses at the centre.

In the fourth chapter, intertextual investigations are conducted in relation to the sources from which the author of Revelation borrowed. Firstly, the combat myth that was widespread around the Mediterranean during the first century is examined, and secondly the exodus motif which is the main theme of this chapter. It is argued that Exod. 1-15 constitutes a coherent story and influences Rev. 12-20 in terms of both theme and structure. Moreover, how the theme and the structure fit into Rev. 12-20 is explained. The socio-rhetorical environment, namely Asia Minor under the rule of the Roman Empire, will also be explored, and its socio-rhetorical function of the exodus motif in Rev. 12-20 is examined.

In the fifth chapter, it will be argued that the intertextual adoption not only leads to specific messages to the audiences or the readers, but also it may evoke a new identity, drawing a boundary between God's people and those who were assimilated into the Roman Empire. Thus, firstly, a brief framework that explains the interaction between allusions, memories, and identities is developed in the light of social psychological theories. Then, as a suggested identity, the writer shall explore the covenantal identity. On the basis of the covenantal identity, the writer shall argue that the ultimate goal of the allusive language of the exodus motif is to shape a new identity in the minds of the original readers or audiences, so that they may be holy apart from the culture and the system of the Roman Empire.

The last chapter provides the summary and conclusion of the thesis.

Chapter 2
A history of the study of Revelation and the song of Moses in Rev 15

2.1 Introduction

Exploring the past would be a prelude to the task of seeking faithful ways to approach Revelation in the present. Thus, in this chapter, the writer shall offer a brief history of the study of Revelation and the song of Moses in Rev. 15:2-4 in particular. In this process, the writer shall provide an overview of the history of interpretation of Revelation and shall highlight the limitation of the current studies of the song of Moses at the present. In addition, the researcher will suggest a new approach to the song of Moses in Revelation.

2.2 A brief history of the study on the book of Revelation

Searching for a history of the study of any book in the bible would show how context shapes the interpretative process. In his book, "Cultural Interpretation", Blount undertakes a sociolinguistic analysis of various authors who have investigated the text of the trial scenes in the Gospel of Mark and shows how in each case context shaped the interpretative process: the existentialist work of Rudolf Bultmann; the Gospel in Solentiname, Negro spirituals; and black church in the United Sates (Blount 1995:27-86). The importance of the interpretative context would also be the case with the history of interpreting Revelation through the church's history.

2.2.1 The history of the study of Revelation before historical criticism

The first controversy over the book of Revelation was how to interpret the millennial kingdom of Rev. 20:4-6, the visions involving the binding of Satan for a thousand years and the reigning of the participants in the first resurrection for a thousand years with Christ (Collins 1992:706). There were two groups concerning the interpretation of a millennial period, one of which took it literally, and the other of which took it spiritually or allegorically. Most Christian writers in the Western Church before the reign of Constantine, such as Justin

Martyr, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Victorinus, read Revelation in a literal, chiliastic[8] sense, expecting the judgment against the Roman Empire and the earthly reign of Christ to follow his second coming (Koester 2001:2-5) (Collins 1992:706). However, amidst the decline of the Roman Empire, writers such as Jerome and Augustine of Hippo understood Revelation spiritually because Rome and a Roman emperor could no longer be regarded by the Church as the beast of Revelation and Antichrist. Augustine's use of Tyconius' interpretation[9] of Revelation (Swete 1907:ccx), together with Jerome's edited version of Victorinus' commentary[10], made "a timeless and spiritualized" reading of Revelation the dominant view point for centuries to come (Koester 2001:8). It may be called an "immanent" reading, as opposed to the older "imminent" reading in which the Roman Empire was expected to be judged and to fall down (McGinn 1987:523-541). Augustine[11] adopted the immanent or spiritual reading and his authority lasted for seven hundred years. During this period, Revelation was read as a resource for moral teaching against vice and error in the Church.

At the end of the millennial period, a general social unrest and fear seized society, since it was thought that Satan who had been bound was about to be set free for the last great conflict. However, although the critical period passed, no events occurred in the church or the world in which Christians could see their expectations and fears realized. This time of expected crisis brought about a change of view regarding the meaning of the millennial kingdom (Beckwith 1967:327).

In the 12th century, Joachim of Floris (died 1201) made a new departure in the interpretation of the Apocalypse that read the book as a revelation of the entire world-historical process, that is, past, present, and future. He divided world history into three periods: that of the Father, the time of the Law; that of the Son, the age of the Gospel, still continuing in Joachim's time; that of the Holy Spirit soon to come, the age of peace and glory (Beckwith

[8] The doctrine stating that Jesus will reign on earth for 1,000 years (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/chiliasm).
[9] The Donatist Tyconius (died ca. 400) proposed that the thousand-year reign of Christ and the saints had already begun with Christ's first coming and that the millennial kingdom was not a future hope, but a present reality (Koester 2001:7).
[10] Victorinus of Pettau (died ca. 304) is the author of the oldest extant commentary in which he pointed out that Babylon symbolized Rome and Revelation's portrayal of the beast included traits of Nero. In addition, he is the first to have proposed the theory of 'recapitulation' (Koester 2001:9). This recapitulation theory has also gained a wide following in recent interpretation of Revelation. Together with Victorinus, Tyconius also held the 'recapitulation' theory (Court 1979:5).
[11] Several generations before his time, a similar approach emerged among Christians at Alexandria and Caesarea, like Origen (ca. 185-254) and Dionysius (died ca. 264) (Koester 2001:6). Tyconius trod in the steps of Origen rather than of Victorinus (Swete 1907:ccx).

1967:328). The last stage would follow the defeat of the Antichrist and was to be the culmination of history. Thus, the thousand years was once again interpreted as a future and not already begun in a literal sense (Beckwith 1967:328).

Martin Luther held the view that the millennium should be understood symbolically as the time of the Church within this world and history (Collins 1992:706-7). It is interesting to note how his view on Revelation itself had changed through his life.

In 1522, Luther published a preface to his German translation of Revelation that declared it to be "neither apostolic nor prophetic," and that he could in no way "detect that the Holy Spirit produced it." Not only did Revelation's visionary language confuse readers, but Luther also declared that it neither teaches us about Christ nor reveal him to us. Thus, he advised people to concentrate on the biblical books that present Christ clearly.

In 1530, he published a second preface to Revelation that dealt with the book as a map of history between Christ's first and second comings. Luther tried to decode Revelation in the light of political events of his own time, and attempted to identify the beasts in Rev 13 and the harlot in Rev 17 with the papal empire and the papacy itself respectively.

However, Luther later shifted from decoding Revelation to asking about how the book conveys a message of warning and comfort to readers. The concluding paragraphs of the preface actually developed a third way of reading, as Luther considers Revelation in terms of his dialectic between warning and promise. "Where Luther's first preface finds little evidence of Christ in Revelation, the final sentence of the second preface finds Christ at the center of the book's message" (Koester 2000:110).

John Calvin remained silent about Revelation, writing commentaries on every book in the New Testament except Revelation. Others in the reformed tradition followed two distinctive tendencies. The first tendency was called "premillennialism" in which one anticipates that the kingdom of God would arrive through tribulation and cataclysmic change (Koester 2001:12). The modern revival of millenarian readings of Revelation was carried out by the radical Puritan strain in England in the 17th century. Puritan academics expected a literal return of Christ to bind Satan and to reign with the saints (Collins 1992:706-7).

The second tendency was called "postmillennialism"[12] in which one expects that the kingdom of God would come more evolutionarily through "evangelism and social reform" (Koester 2001:13). In the 18th century, Daniel Whitby and others introduced the postmillennial view. This position held that the 2nd Coming cannot occur until the evils of the earth has been eliminated through the binding of Satan and the expansion of the kingdom of God, so that a new golden age would come. At the end of this new and better age, Christ returns. This perspective had an influence on the first great American commentator, Jonathan Edwards, and on "the Social Gospel" leaders, like Walter Rauschenbusch and Martin Luther King.

2.2.2 The study of Revelation in historical criticism

At the end of the 18th century, the Enlightenment and its principles pervaded every area of the society in Europe: the autonomy of the historian; the principle of analogy; the principle of criticism (Collins 2005:5-6).[13] Thus, "where medieval culture had celebrated belief as a virtue and regarded doubt as sin, the modern critical mentality regards doubt as a necessary step in the testing of knowledge and the will to believe as a threat to rational thought" (Collins 2005:5). Historical-critical scholarship is the method that arose in an effort to free biblical studies from the kind of doctrinal disputes that were prominent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Koester 2000). The "critical, scientific, and historical" method was thought to make it possible to evaluate evidences and reach reasonable conclusions, without taking any theory or dogmatic presuppositions for granted (Neil & Wright [1964] 1988:26).

As regards the beginning of modern biblical criticism, Thiselton (1995:10) traces it to Johann Salomo Semler (1725-1791) and introduces Semler's intellectual background as well as his desire to free all historical inquiry from issues of theology and doctrine. Against those who sought to manipulate biblical material to support their own ecclesial interests, Semler, like

[12] The term "postmillennial" refers to the doctrine that Christ will return after the thousand years. The term "premillennial" is used to refer to the dogma that Christ will return to earth before the reign of a thousand years. The term "amillennial" is used to refer to those theological traditions that do not take the reign of a thousand years literally (Collins 1992:707).

[13] The principles were articulated most insightfully by the German theologian and sociologist of religion Ernst Troeltsch (cf. Collins 2005:5-6).

contemporary scholars,[14] stressed the role of the New Testament as a witness to its own time and not primarily as intended for today's reader (Thiselton 1995:12). Moreover, Semler emphasized that a very important hermeneutical skill is to know the linguistic range of the Bible quite well and also to distinguish and reconstruct the historical circumstances of a biblical discourse (Thiselton 1995:12).

James Barr insisted that historical criticism is "a loose umbrella" which describes a range of methods – source criticism, form criticism, redaction criticism, tradition historical criticism, literary criticism, history of religions, sociological criticism, and so forth – that became dominant in Old and New Testament studies (Barr 2000:32-58; cf. also Smit 1998:293).
In this historical-critical approach, the authority and the unity of the Bible, which was the central conviction of the Reformation, was rejected, and the attention was no longer on the unity but on the detail (Smit 1998:293).

The period from ca. 1875 to 1925 was the heyday of historical criticism. During this time, more source-critical analyses of Revelation have been put forward than for any other New Testament book (Aune 1997:cvi). With their self-confidence at an all time high, scholars like W. Bousset and R. H. Charles, tried to dissect biblical composition into constituent sources.

In his three-volume commentary on Revelation, Aune (1997-1999) summarizes major source-critical theories, ranging from 1906-1988, that are classified into three groups: compilation theories; revision theories; fragmentary theories (Aune 1997:cx-cxviii). This classification would be very helpful to review the historical-study on Revelation until recent times.

However, when it comes to the study of Revelation after the Second World War, a few comprehensive analyses of the sources of Revelation have been attempted, though many source-critical theories have been proposed for the Fourth Gospel (Aune 1997:cvi). Schüssler Fiorenza (1985:12) also observed through her research on the study of the book of Revelation that critical scholarship has not focused on the book of Revelation in the research period

[14] Johann August Ernesti (1707-81) was one of the scholars who also believed in freedom of historical inquiry and in the importance of liberating NT origins and exegesis from eighteenth-century ecclesial assumptions. Semler's historical approach was critically confirmed and consolidated in Johann David Michaelis (1717-91) and Johann Jakob Griesbach (1745-1812) (Thiselton 1995: 13-4).

1945–1979. Although a variety of commentaries[15] appeared during this period, no comprehensive and scientific commentary has been written that was methodologically sufficient (Schüssler Fiorenza 1985:12).

Meanwhile, form-critical and tradition-historical as well as history of religions analyses have focused primarily on the liturgical-hymnic materials and motifs, and traced their '*Sitz im Leben'* in Jewish and early Christian liturgy. Most of these form-critical studies, though, are limited and selective (Schüssler Fiorenza 1985:17).

2.2.3 Recent trends in the study on Revelation

It is generally agreed that there were recognizable shifts on the landscape of biblical scholarship in the second half of the twentieth century (Rogerson 2006:6; Mitchell 2006:615). This period is called the post-modern era (Brueggemann 1997:61; Collins 2005:11-12).[16] Suffice it to note that postmodernism, which is "an even larger umbrella term" than historical criticism, includes a wide range of approaches and methods: poststructuralism; reader-response criticism; feminist criticism; liberationism; deconstructionism; ideological criticism; postcolonialism (Collins 2005:12-25). One of the most important assumptions of postmodernists is "a rejection of objectivity" that characterized biblical scholarship before the Second World War (Collins 2005:11-12).[17] Scientific methods were no longer regarded as neutral or objective, but as "sociologically and linguistically restrictive and ideological" (Blount 1995:3). In this new pluralistic context, the perspectives of the marginalized members of society are not excluded. Rather, it was recognized that when those perspectives are included, biblical interpretation can have a new meaning and impact in both the academic and ecclesiastical arenas (Blount 1995:3).

In the 1970s, biblical scholarship experienced 'a sociological turn'. Gerd Teissen published a pioneering article, "The wandering Radicals" in 1973, in which he examined Early Christianity in terms of sociological perspectives (Schottroff 1995:3). He drew on sociological theory to present the historical and textual data in a new light. His assertions

[15] See Aune 1997:cv-cvi and Schüssler Fiorenza 1985:26-32. Both of them maintain that during this period the studies on Revelation were not comprehensive and satisfactory (Aune 1997:cvi).
[16] Although they divide the period as before and after the Second World War, they call the "new sociopolitical-interpretive situation" postmodern.
[17] Collins did not define the period.

prevailed in the biblical scholarship (Schottroff 1995:3; Morgan 2006:40). Responding to his assertions, scholars published books as well as essays using sociological perspectives. Others[18] have taken social-scientific approaches further.

However, a move towards a modern literary analysis of the biblical narratives signalled the most radical shift away from historical-criticism. In her book, "The book of Revelation", Schüssler Fiorenza (1985:20) argues that, as far as research on Revelation is concerned, source-critical approaches gave way to the scholarly opinion that Revelation is the theological work of a single author. Scholars generally agree that the book of Revelation is a complex and definite literary composition (Schüssler Fiorenza 1985:21; Bauckham 1993a:1).[19] This interpretative atmosphere stems from a new trend in biblical scholarship developed in the 1970s and 1980s. In this period, another type of 'literary-critical' study of the Bible emerged and became pervasive as biblical scholars responded to what they regarded as "the atomistic excesses of those literary procedures of form and source criticism" (Mitchell 2006:626). Mitchell defines the movement succinctly as follows:

> The movement to understand the Bible as literature drew many to seek to read the 'final form' of the text as a single, unitary piece of literary art, and to see how it created a 'story world' which the reader could enter and understand 'on its own terms'. … Reading the Bible as literature meant paying careful attention to things that matter to its internal life, such as its plot, character, internal tensions, and poetic and metaphorical forms (Mitchell 2006:626-27).

With the methodological pluralism in biblical studies, there has been a proliferation of new literary approaches – composition criticism, narrative criticism, discourse criticism, rhetorical criticism, and so on – in biblical scholarship (Morgan 2006:49; Mitchell 2006:626-29). Moreover, N.R. Petersen , in his recent work titled "Rediscovering Paul" (2008), tried to integrate historical, literary, and social-scientific perspectives to interpret Paul's narrative world. Richard B. Hays also contributed to the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament. His work, "Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul" (1989), utilizes literary

[18] See Malina ([1981] 1993); Pilch (1993); Elliot (1981); Esler (1998, 2003).
[19] Although Aune approaches Revelation in terms of source criticism, he (1997:cvi-cx) also admits that the current atmosphere presupposing the unity of the literary texts has been pervasive and examines the unity and homogeneity of Revelation in terms of the linguistic and structural unity.

theory in an attempt to understand the role or function of Scripture in the New Testament. Instead of seeing quotations and allusions as ancillary means to Paul's main arguments, Hays sees letters like Romans, Galatians and Corinthians as an ongoing conversation with Scripture.

In addition, the inter-textual study has been recognized as one of the most important interpretive keys for the study of Revelation. Many scholars have recognized the necessity of the inter-textual approach to Revelation. One century ago, Swete already tried to compare Revelation with "the apocalyptic portions of the Old Testament, especially with the book of Daniel" (Swete 1907:ccxvii).

As regards the book of Revelation, much has been written recently from literary, social-historical, sociological, liberationist, and reception-historical perspectives. A recent revival of the interest in the book of Revelation would be attributed to the new millennium.

2.3 The study on the use of the Old Testament in Revelation

No other New Testament book is as permeated by the Old Testament as is Revelation. Although its author seldom quotes the Old Testament directly, allusions and echoes are found in almost every verse of the book. However, it was not until the mid-1980s that the New Testament use of the Old Testament came to the fore in the study on Revelation.

In his book, "John's use of the Old Testament in Revelation," G. K. Beale (1998:13-4) succinctly arranged recent studies on this topic, and introduced six significant books and a dissertation written on the topic: Beale (1984); Vogelgesang (1985); Paulien (1988); Ruiz (1989); Bauckham (1993a); Fekkes (1994); Moyise (1995). Moreover, during the same approximately ten-year period a number of articles on the same subject were published: Beale (1988); Böe (1992); McComiskey (1993) (Beale 1998:14-5).

Beale & McDonough (2007:1082) enumerate substantive books on the topic that appeared after the late-1990s: Aune (1997-1999); Beale (1999); Osborne (2002); Mathewson (2003b). In addition, during that same period a number of articles were published.[20]

[20] See Beale & McDonough (2007:1082).

Recently, the study of how the New Testament authors read and interpreted Scripture has blossomed. Moyise (2008) presents three reasons why the inter-textual approach has been so widely used in biblical scholarship as well as Revelation. One of the reasons[21] is a growing interest in literary theory – narrative theory, ancient and modern rhetoric, and relevance theory and speech-act theory – to understand the role or function of Scripture[22] in the New Testament (Moyise 2008:1-2). Thus, it is clear that "Scriptural quotations and allusions are now seen as a literary as well as a theological phenomenon in the New Testament" (Moyise 2008:2).

2.4 A summary of the study of the song of Moses in Rev 15

2.4.1 Relevant remaining problems in Rev 15

Although it is generally recognized that there is no formal quotation from the Old Testament or extra-biblical sources, reference is made to "the song of Moses" in Revelation 15:2-4. However, this foregrounds several controversial issues: the relation of Revelation 15:2-4 to the immediate context, that is, 15:1 and 5-8; the interpretation of 'a sea of glass mixed with fire'; the sources from which the contents derive. In relation to these problems, the opinions of scholars differ. Scholars approaching Revelation from the perspective of source criticism regard the song of Moses as redactional (Charles 1920:35; Aune 1998: 673). However, considering the current consensus of a single authorship of Revelation, a redactional approach to the song of Moses would be unconvincing. When it comes to the sources from which the contents derive, scholars have been suggesting different sources according to their own perspectives. In the next section, the perspectives of some scholars who have recently published on Revelation and the song of Moses in Rev 15 will be introduced.

[21] As the other two reasons, Moyise (2008:1-2) proposes a renewed interest in the Septuagint and the development of theological or canonical interpretation.
[22] Scholars, like Hays (1989:1), Allison (2000:7-8), and Moyise (2008:1), tend to call the Old Testament 'Scripture' as the authoritative canon of Israel in terms of intertextuality.

2.4.2 Scholars' viewpoints

2.4.2.1 Richard Bauckham (1993a)

Bauckham is one of the scholars who believe that Revelation was extraordinarily structured as a complex literary composition. In his book, "The climax of prophecy" (1993), Bauckham deals, in the first chapter, with 'structure and composition' which shows his emphasis on Revelation's literary unity.

He argues that the vision of the song of Moses is the end of the preceding narrative of the woman and the dragon, and also functions as a bridge connecting the narrative in the chapter 12 and the series of seven bowls which is "a sequence of judgments which continues and completes the two previous sequences of seven judgments" (Bauckham 1993a:16). Bauckham sees the song of Moses in the context of chapters 12-15 and in its relation to a wider context. The image of the new exodus, Bauckham argues, is one of the dominant symbolic motifs of Revelation (Bauckham 1993a:296).

Suffice it to note that Bauckham does not deal with 'a sea of glass mixed with fire' in detail but explains it briefly, with the sea of glass referring to the floor of heaven and the fire to judgment (Bauckham 1993a:296-297).

When it comes to the sources of the Old Testament, he argues that the song of Moses in Rev. 15 is based thematically on that of Exod. 15 but verbally on Exod. 15:11 as well as three other texts: Pss. 86:8-10; 98:1-2; Jer. 10:7. According to Bauckham, many scholars falsely claim that there is no literary connection between the two passages. Contrary to such a claim, he maintains that "the literary connection is made beneath the surface of the text by John's expert and subtle use of current Jewish exegetical method" (Bauckham 1993a:300).

Bauckham develops his arguments in three ways. Firstly, he observes that John's style of the use of the Old Testament is not unknown in the Jewish literature of the New Testament period. As a major example, he presents the Biblical Antiquities of Pseudo-Philo chapter 32, whose opening words introduce the song of Deborah; however, what follows is not the song of Deborah attested in Judges 5:2-31. According to him, it alludes to the words of Judges 5:2-31

only occasionally and briefly. He also presents another example in Isaiah 12 which draws on Psalm 105 as well as Exodus 15. Bauckham (1993a:300) notes that "the verbal links between Exodus 15 and Psalm 105 are not visible in the text of Isaiah12 and that they occur in parts of the text of Exodus 15 and of Psalm 105 which are not quoted in Isaiah 12". This, Bauckham says, is a kind of implicit "*gezera sawa*"[23] which is common in Jewish and Jewish Christian literature (Bauckham 1993a:300).

Secondly, Bauckham (1993a:301-2) presents five important points that John would have found in his reading of the song in Exodus15 and connects those with Revelation 15:2-4. Bauckham attributes John's interpretation of Exod. 15:1-18 to the skilled use of *gezera sawa*. According to Bauckham, the author of Revelation, following his contemporary traditions,[24] draws on the song eschatologically in terms of the new exodus of the future (Bauckham 1993a:300).

Thirdly, comparing the Hebrew text with the Septuagint (LXX), Bauckham (1993a:302) examines how John alludes to the three sources (Jer. 10:6-7; Pss. 86:8-10; 98:1-2) from the Old Testament which are connected with Exod. 15, especially 15:11, by *gezera sawa*. Bauckham argues that "John's version of the song takes as its starting point the key verse Exodus 15:11, which is taken for granted, without being quoted, because it is the common denominator which links the passages to which allusion is made" (Bauckham 1993a:305). For instance, he argues that the phrase 'you alone are holy' is following Ps. 86:8-10, but the phrase 'you alone are God' is confusing, since the Psalm has already asserted that there is 'none like you among the gods (v.8). Thus, noting that the LXX found the reference to God puzzling and changed it to 'great', and that 'holy' is an appropriate translation because it characterizes "God as the only true God", Bauckham suggests that John would have changed 'God' to 'holy'. In conclusion, Bauckham emphasizes that the controlling motif of the three sources in the Old Testament is "the incomparability of God" presented in his wondrous acts of deliverance.

More than anything, the study of the Jewish tradition is the strength of Bauckham's argument.

[23] It is the later rabbinic exegetical terminology: passages in which the same words and phrases occur can be used to interpret each other (Bauckham 1993:299).
[24] Hays (20005:6) argues that Paul also tried to teach the Corinthian church to think eschatologically in light of Israel's Scripture and to reshape their identity.

One of the most important features of his argument regarding the song of Moses is that John's version of the song stems from a careful interpretation of the song in Exod. 15.

His application of the five themes of Exod. 15:1-18 to understand the song of Moses in Rev 15 and his interpretation of the song in a wider context, such as Rev 12-16, is very appropriate and insightful. However, he did not analyze, in a wider context, Exod. 15:1-18 which would be linked to the whole structure of the book of Exodus, but only the passage itself. Moreover, he did not present the thematic or literal connection of the song of Moses to a wider context in detail.

2.4.1.2 D. E. Aune (1998)

As mentioned above, Aune approaches Rev. 15:1-4 from the perspective of source criticism. He sees Rev 15:1-16:21 as a literary unit, but argues that much of 15:1-16:21 was formulated at a late stage in the composition of the entire book (Aune 1998:863). The song of Moses, according to Aune, is a later insertion, for in content it shows no connection with v. 1 or with vv. 5-8. The phrase 'another sign' in Rev 15:1 that is used twice in Rev 12:1, 3, is "a literary device to connect 15:1-16:21 with the previous narrative and functions as a title or superscription for the text unit" (Aune 1998:863).

When it comes to the interpretation of 'a sea of glass mixed with fire' (NRSV), scholars agree that 'the sea of glass' stands for the heavenly sea above which the throne of God is set (Aune 1998:870). However, the vexing problem is how 'mixed with fire' should be interpreted. Presenting various sources including extra-biblical texts, like *1 Enoch* and *3 Enoch,* Aune argues that 'a sea of glass mixed with fire' combines the motifs of a celestial sea above which the throne of God is set and the river of fire that flows forth from his throne. The mention of four fiery rivers in 3 Enoch 19:4, contends Aune, is an allusion to Gen 2:10-14.

> The phrase 'mixed with fire' is included to symbolize impending judgment. Though this is, of course, a heavenly reality, the corresponding cosmic counterpart is the lake of fire (Rev 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8) (Aune 1998: 871).

Aune shows that it is possible to expand the range of the song of Moses to the final judgment

in Rev 20-21. Noting that nowhere else do we learn of a song sung by the Lamb, Aune argues that the phrase "the song of the Lamb" means "the song about the Lamb" and that the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb are actually a single hymn. However, he agrees with Wellhausen that the phrase "the song of the Lamb" is an editorial addition to an earlier form of the text (Aune 1998:873). Compare the following observation in this regard:

> The insertion of references to the Lamb in Revelation is part of the author's task of editorial homogenization, in which themes and motifs belonging to later strata of material are added to earlier material in order to tie the entire composition more closely together (Aune 1998:873).

As regards the sources from which the song of Moses is composed, Aune claims that Exodus 15:1-18 is more appropriate than Deut 31:30-32:43, though there is no literal connection with Exodus 15:1-8. In fact, some commentators argue that the song of Moses in Rev 15 refers to Deut 31:30-32:43 (Beckwith 1967:677; Ford 1975:247). Aune (1998:874) contends that the content in Rev 15:3b-4 is composed of "a pastiche of stereotypical hymnic phrases gathered primarily from the Psalms". The following table is the sources that Aune contends:

Great and amazing are your deeds (3b)	Deut 10:21, 32:4, LXX Job 42:3, Pss 111:2, 139:14, 145:17
King of the nations! Lord (3c)	Jer 10:7, Ps 47:8, Ps 22:28, 1 Chr 16:31, Ps 96
Lord, who will not fear and glorify your name (4a)	Jer 10:7
For you alone are holy.	Ps 86:9-10, 2 Kgs 19:15,19, Neh 9:6, Ps 72:18,83:18,86:10, 136:4, Isa 2:11,17, 26:13, 37:16,20, 1 Esdr 8:25, 4 Ezra 8:7, 2 Macc 1:24-25
All nations will come and worship before you (4b)	Isa 2:2-4, 14:1-2, 45:14, 60:1-3, 66:18, Jer 16:19, Zech 8:20-23
for your judgments have been revealed (4c)	Ps 86:9-10, 1 Kgs 3:28, 2 Chr 6:35

Aune uses a wide range of sources from antiquity to explain features of Revelation and the song of Moses in particular, which would be one of the strong points of his commentary. There is an inspiring argument of Aune that shows a possibility of expanding the range of the

song of Moses to the final judgment in Rev. 20-21.

2.4.1.3 G. K. Beale (1999)

In his verse-by-verse commentary, Beale deals with the song of Moses in detail, and provides new insights on the song. Beale agrees with A. Y. Collins that Rev 15:2-4 is the last out of seven visions having been presented since the beginning of the series in 12:1. He regards the song of Moses as having an "interlocking" function, literarily as well as thematically, with respect to the preceding and following sections, concluding 12:1-14:20 and introducing the bowls (Beale 1999:784).

As regards the phrase "a sea of glass mixed with fire", Beale argues that "a sea of glass" reflects in part the laver in Solomon's temple and alludes to the heavenly splendour of God's holy separateness, but "uppermost is the heavenly analogue to the Red Sea in connection with the new exodus" (Beale 1999:789). He also notes that the Red Sea was depicted as a sea of glass in the Jewish exegetical tradition and that the exodus atmosphere is discernible in the song of Moses as well as the following bowl plagues. In addition, Beale examines the 'sea' which, in the Old Testament, connotes cosmic evil, and states that the Red Sea is also the abode of the evil sea monster and the Egyptian king is metaphorically recognized as the sea monster (Isa 51:9-11; Ps 74:12-15; Ezek 32:2). Beale, different from other scholars, notes that the image of the sea with fire has already been implied by 4:5-6, where there are seven torches of fire being burned before the throne. More importantly, Beale alludes to Dan 7:10 which pictures a 'river of fire' in heaven before the divine throne and which indicates God's decision to judge "the beast" and give his body to be burned with fire. In Revelation, fire and sea are always images of judgment and evil respectively (Beale 1999:789). Thus, Beale understands the song of the Moses in the judgment context of Rev 14-16.

Concerning the sources of the song's content, Beale (1999:794) argues that "the actual contents of the song itself come not from Exodus 15 but from passages throughout the Old Testament extolling God's character (Deut 28:59-60; 32:4; Jer 10:7; Ps 86:9-10; 98:2)". However, he also contends that the use of the Old Testament in Rev 15:3-4 is not the result of random selection but is guided by the theme of the first exodus and the development of that theme later in the Old Testament (Beale 1999:799). According to Beale, "the later OT

passages are the interpretations of the first exodus to explain the new exodus which has happened on a grander scale than the first" (Beale 1999:794). Moreover, Beale suggests that more attention needs to be devoted to Deut. 32. He concludes that John, in Revelation, interprets both Deut. 32 and Exod. 15 and thus the main point of the song of Moses in Rev. 15 is the adoration of God and the Lamb's incomparable act of redemption and judgment (Beale 1999:794).

Beale's arguments are very insightful and balanced. As regards the structure of the song of Moses, he sees the song of Moses in the interlocking structure, which is very insightful. Moreover, one of his arguments that we should take note of is that the song of Moses in Exod. 15 functions as a framework to understand subsequent interpretations in the Old Testament. According to him, the writer had in his mind the framework of the Exod. 15 song of Moses. The argument of Beale allows for the possibility of seeing a section of Revelation, including the song of Moses, in the framework of the song of Moses in Exod. 15.

2.4.1.4 Steve Moyise (2008)

Steve Moyise is one of the scholars who have been studying the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament. In his book, "The Old Testament in the New: An Introduction" (2001), Moyise only focused on significant citations in the New Testament, and for Revelation he examined only selected passages, with the song of Moses in Rev 15:2-4 not being dealt with. However, in his recent book, "Evoking Scripture" (2008), Moyise, in each chapter, deals with quotations as not just subsidiary to the argument of a book but as scriptural frameworks for understanding the book: chapter 2 – evoking a scriptural framework for understanding Jesus; chapter 3 – evoking a legal framework in order to undermine it?; chapter 4 – evoking an Isaiah framework for understanding Romans?; chapter 5 – evoking a hermeneutical principle for interpreting Romans?; chapter 6 – evoking a false legal framework; chapter 7 – evoking a theory of prophecy. It should be mentioned that for the next two chapters about Revelation, Moyise examines the use of the Old Testament in Revelation in terms of a complementary manner.

In chapter 9, Moyise deals with the song of Moses, focusing on whether the content is from Deut 32 or from Exod. 15. Firstly, he starts by raising an issue about the content of the song

of Moses in Rev 15 and argues that the song bears little resemblance to either Exod. 15 or Deut. 32. Secondly, he identifies and suggests various sources from the Old Testament. Lastly, Moyise introduces and analyzes various views from other scholars, which is insightful. In conclusion, Moyise takes a balanced position between two opposite views, acknowledging that allusions in Revelation are elusive. Compare the following remark in this regard:

> Narrative theory offers insights into how readers may experience the text but as Ben-Porat points out, allusions are elusive. They do not 'pester' the reader into particular interpretations but allow 'space' for creative involvement. It is surely of some significance that the only quotation formula to be found in Revelation remains enigmatic (Moyise 2001:124).

Although Moyise did not approach the song of Moses in Rev. 15 in terms of a framework for understanding the wider context of Revelation, he shows a good possibility of seeing a section of Revelation including the song of Moses in the framework of the song of Moses of Exod. 15.

2.5 The limitation of the study of the Moses' song and a suggestion

I have offered a brief history of the study of Revelation and the song of Moses in Rev. 15:2-4 in terms of a sociological perspective. In addition, I have highlighted the limitation of the current study of the song of Moses and suggested the necessity of an approach to the song of Moses that will engage the wider context of Revelation. The author's version of the song stemmed from a careful interpretation of the song in Exod. 15 and the author had the framework of the Exodus song of Moses in his mind.

I suggest that we should see the song of Moses in the context of Rev. 12-20 and that the song of Moses in Rev. 15 controls the atmosphere of the latter part of Revelation, i.e. Rev. 12-21. Thus, in the following chapter, the writer shall discuss Rev. 12-20 as a coherent story. Moreover, the writer shall examine the significant role the song of Moses plays in Rev 12-20 and how the author applies the framework of the Exodus song of Moses to Rev. 12-20 which revolves around the song of Moses in Rev. 15:2-4.

Chapter 3
Narratological analysis of the song of Moses in the wider context of Rev. 12-20

3.1 Introduction

In the foregoing chapter, the writer has dealt with the history of the study on the song of Moses and the limitation, and suggested that we should examine the song in a wider context, namely Rev. 12-20.

The main goal of this chapter is to discuss Rev. 12-20 as a literary unit and as constituting a plot according to a narratological framework. The narratological study of Rev. 12-20 will be the foundation on which we proceed to examine the role or function of the song of Moses in terms of a socio-rhetorical perspective in the following chapters. Thus, in this chapter, the writer shall firstly search for the meaning of the literary approach to Rev. 12-20 and then conduct the literary analysis of Rev. 12-20 in terms of narrative criticism.

3.2 The meaning of the literary approach to Rev. 12-20

To understand the message of Revelation properly, it is crucial to recognize its 'genre' first. 'Genre' is a term used to refer to the type or category of a piece of literature. However, the recognition of genre in the study of texts, in fact, is a relatively recent phenomenon. Then, we can ask whether or not the ancient readers and authors would have been aware of the difference of each text in terms of genre. McKenzie (2005:14) argues that "ancient readers and authors were certainly aware that they were using or producing different kinds of texts and documents". According to McKenzie, genre recognition is a cultural phenomenon; people automatically recognize the genre of a work produced within their culture. Moreover, genre provides a literary frame of reference within which the readers interpret a text (McKenzie 2005:13). However, genre categories are not firm or fixed but are fluid and flexible, so a literary work can incorporate different genres (McKenzie 2005:13-14), just as

Revelation incorporates epistle, doxology, victory song, and blessing.

It is agreed that Revelation is categorized as an apocalypse. Apocalypse is a term related to literary genre and is distinguished from apocalyptic eschatology as a religious perspective, and also from apocalypticism as a movement embodying an apocalyptic perspective (Hanson 1992:280). The apocalyptic literature has its primary roots in Hebrew prophecy. Prophetic books like Isaiah and Micah include sections that look forward to the restoration of the nation of Israel. The last part of Isaiah, namely chapters 56-66,[25] is often described as 'protoapocalyptic' (McKenzie 2005:122) because it contends that God's intervention will bring a complete transformation of the world, though it is not full blown apocalyptic, like Daniel 7-12 or Revelation. Nevertheless, it represents a stage in the development from prophecy to apocalyptic (McKenzie 2005:121).[26] When the book of Revelation was written, there were already several older Jewish apocalypses in existence including Dan. 7-12.

Apocalyptic literature has two important traits, one of which is the idea of the catastrophic end of the world caused by either divine or human activity, and the other of which is the existence of the supernatural world and its influence on human history. In 1979, the 'Apocalyptic group' led by J. J. Collins (1998:5) defined the apocalypse in terms of these two dimensions, viz. temporal and spatial:

> Apocalypse is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.

According to the aforementioned definition, 'apocalypse' is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, which means that we need to take into consideration the features of a narrative framework in approaching Revelation and both temporal and spatial realities. As regards the features of a narrative framework, there seems to be a broad consensus among scholars in terms of taxonomic aspects.

Delineating the history of the study of the Bible as literature from the period of the Old

[25] Biblical scholars (Seitz 1993:2; Barker 2003:489) seem to agree that Isaiah is composed of three parts, viz. Isaiah 1-39, Isaiah 40-55 and Isaiah 56-66.

[26] The apocalyptic genre flourished from about 200 BCE to about 200 CE (McKenzie 2005:121).

Testament to the recent trends called the new pluralism, Ryken (1993:65) suggests five critical concepts which are more helpful for examining narrative stories in the Bible than sophisticated theories. The five concepts are as follows: plot, character, setting, point of view and diction.

Identifying biblical narrative with stories displaying a variety of themes and characters, Longman Ⅲ (1993:70) presents four elements of all stories: plot, character, setting, and narrator or point of view. Similarly, Powell (1990:35) claims that every story contains three elements: events, characters, and setting. In addition, Powell deals with 'plot' and 'point of view' in separated chapters respectively. Thus, it would not be farfetched to assume that Ryken, Powell and Longman agree on the basic constitutive elements of stories or narratives.

The literary approach does not pay much attention as to how the text came to its present form. One of the most important features of literary approaches to the Bible is a focus on the text in its present form and an acceptance of the text as a unified whole (Ryken & Longman 1993:19). The literary approach examines how the essential elements of narrative fit together and shape a story as a unified whole. This approach has been frequently applied to biblical narratives, like Gospels or Acts, but rarely to apocalyptic literature. However, apocalyptic literature has been recently studied by some scholars[27] in terms of narratology, because the apocalypse as a whole is a narrative made up of many short narratives (Collins 1983:79) and all of the four elements of biblical narrative are relevant to apocalyptic literature. Thus, it can be useful to abstract a literary unit from the whole story of Revelation to clarify the dynamics of the plot.

In this sense, to approach a particular section of Revelation as a large literary unit may mean firstly to consider four elements of the biblical narrative, and secondly to investigate the correlation between events or images in different sections of the book.

[27] Several scholars have recently analyzed Revelation in terms of narrative criticism: James L. Resseguie, the author of "The Revelation of John: A Narrative Commentary (2009)"; Craig R. Koester, the author of "Revelation and end of all things (2001)" in which he traces the plot line of Revelation; David L. Barr, the author of "Reading the book of Revelation: a resource for students (2003)."

3.3 A narrative-critical analysis of Revelation 12-20

3.3.1 Four narrative elements in Rev. 12-20

3.3.1.1 Setting

In a story, settings do not simply provide the context for the actions of characters; they are also as essential and integral to the story as are the events and the characters themselves. Setting designates when, where, and how the action occurs. Moreover, settings can be defined as related to locale, time, and social circumstances (Powell 1990:70). Powell (1990:70) divides settings into three categories: spatial, temporal, and social. These categories are also relevant to apocalyptic literature. The content of the apocalyptic literatures, as noted above in the definition of an apocalypse, involves both a temporal and a spatial dimension. Thus, in this chapter, the writer will examine two of them, namely spatial and temporal settings. As regards social setting, the writer will deal with it in the fourth chapter which is about the socio-rhetorical perspective.

3.3.1.1.1 Spatial element

One of the characteristics of an apocalypse that Revelation shares is that the seer's spatial perspective is universal. It is two-dimensional, taking in both earth and heaven. For example, in the apocalyptic vision of Daniel the earthly conflict between Israel and Syria is associated with the conflict between Michael and the angelic prince of Israel and the princes of Persia and Greece (Dan 10:13, 20f., 12:1). Heaven is the place where God dwells on the throne and his reigning starts, and thus everything happening on earth hinges on things of heaven. From chapter 1 to chapter 3, the spatial background is an island called Patmos where John sees the vision of Christ and receives the words of prophecy that must soon take place. However, in chapter 4, the spatial background is changed into heaven to which John, in the Spirit, is elevated through a door open and sees the throne of God from which God's reign starts. After the fourth chapter, the heaven as the place of God is contrasted with the earth that is under the wrath of God (Rev. 6:4; 10; 7:2; 8:13; 11:9).

From chapter 12 on, the author of Revelation reveals the true nature of the conflictive structure behind the scenes. The notice of the change of the place where characters speak and act is very important. Firstly, it is very significant to take notice of how the Dragon's position falls from heaven to earth and, ultimately, on the last stage of this plot to the lake of fire. The casting of Satan from heaven to earth is a significant feature of the chapter, and the introduction of the characters in heaven may serve to heighten the effect. In fact, Satan, as the book of Job (1:6f; 2:1) shows, originally had a place in heaven. The falling of the Dragon from heaven through the earth to the lake of fire is one of the essential points for seeing this unit (Rev. 12-21) as a plot. The conflict that began in Rev. 12 climaxes in Rev. 19-20 (Koester 2001:174), where the one on a white horse and his armies sent the beast and the false prophet tumbling down from the earth to "the lake of fire that burns with sulfur" (Rev. 19:20), and after a thousand years the Dragon was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur (20:10).

In the beginning of this plot, there are two wars presented, one of which is in heaven with angelic armies engaged (12:7-9), and the other is war against the saints on earth (13:7).

In the first war broken out in heaven between Michael and the Dragon, the Dragon and his angels were defeated and thrown down to the earth. The victory of Michael over the dragon is based on the work of Jesus on the cross and his resurrection because the following voice in heaven announces the messianic salvation of Christ and the victory of the saints by the blood of the Lamb over the accuser. With the enthronement of Christ (12:5) and the expulsion of the dragon (12:9), salvation has come (12:10). Suffice it to note that one of the features of Greek plays supports this view. According to a Greek play, a chorus that stands at the side of the stage helped the audience interpret the action (Koester 2001:122), a setting found also for the apocalyptic portrayal in Rev. 12.

The song of victory takes, as a connecting motif between the war and the song, the dragon thrown down to the earth that is repeated three times in the preceding paragraph (v. 7-9). However, this victory is nothing but the beginning of all conflict because according to Rev. 12:12, the devil, knowing that his time is limited, has come down to the earth with great wrath to afflict its inhabitants. The defeat of the dragon adds to this plot suspense and deepens the conflict in the beginning. The repetition of the expression "thrown down" in Rev.

12 (v. 9x3, 10, 13) intensifies the conflictive situation rhetorically. Moreover, in verse 12, the sharp contrast between heaven and earth reinforces the conflictive structure:

Rejoice ←→ woe
Heavens and those who dwell in them ←→ to the earth and the sea
Thrown down / passive (v. 9, 10) ←→ come down / active (v. 12)

Through this spatial approach, a tense atmosphere becomes noticeable at this stage in the development of the plot as well as an interesting irony. The war story (Rev. 12:7-9) and the song of victory (12:10-12) are sandwiched between the stories of the woman and the Dragon, emphasizing the change of the position of Christ and the Dragon. Christ was taken up to God and was enthroned at the right side of God, while the Dragon who had once exercised his power in heaven and tried to kill the child was thrown down to the earth. Thrown down to the earth, the dragon changes his target and pursues the woman who had given birth to the male child, Christ, and attempts to sweep her away with the flood that the dragon had poured from his mouth. However, having lost his authority in heaven, the dragon, even on the earth, fails to control nature, so that the earth comes to the aid of the woman. Thus, angry with the woman, the Dragon prepares to make war on the rest of her children with whom the audiences or readers would have identified themselves. Then, he takes his stand on the sand of the seashore.

The sea is also one of the important motifs on the basis of which we can see Rev. 12-20 as a literary unit constituting plot. Now the writer shall turn to a spatial position, i.e. the sea.

Most of the verses[28] in Revelation where the sea is used are related to a literal body of water, the ocean. Quite often in Revelation the sea, used as a synecdoche, represents one integral element of the totality of the old creation (Beale 1999:1042), along with the earth (7:1-3), heaven (5:13; 10:2-8) and the springs of water (14:7), and it contains creatures (8:9; 10:6) that are capable of praising God and the lamb (5:13). As a part of creation, the sea suffers with the earth at the hands of the devil (12:12) and from the judgments carried out by God's angels (8:8-9; 16:3). In this respect, the passing away of the sea in Rev. 21:1c might be

[28] The sea is used 21 times in Revelation (NRSV): 4:6; 5:13; 7:1; 7:3; 8:8; 8:9; 10:2; 10:5; 10:6; 10:8; 12:12; 12:18 (seashore); 13:1; 14:7; 15:2; 16:3; 18:19; 18:21; 20:8; 20:13; 21:1.

expected to parallel that of the first heaven and earth, which flee from before God's presence in 20:11 to make way for the new creation in 21:1: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away."

However, such an explanation fails to account adequately for Rev. 21:1c. It ignores, for example, the fact that the disappearance of the sea is mentioned separately from the passing away of the first heaven and earth. The sea in 21:1 is not associated with the natural sea but with negative images such as death, mourning, sorrow, pain, everything cursed, and night that also are no more (Rev. 21:4; 22:3,5). The connection between the two verses, 1c and 4, is confirmed in that they are respectively introduced and concluded by the same formula expressing the dissolution of the old order, "the first heaven and the first earth passed away" in v 1 and " the first things passed away" in v 4. This is supported by the allusion to Isa. 51:10-11, which metaphorically equates the removal of the waters at the Red Sea with the removal of sorrows at the consummation of the ages (Beale 1999:1043). The evil nuance of the sea metaphorically represents the entire range of afflictions that formerly threatened God's people in the old world (Beale 1999:1042).[29] Caird (1966:185) also argues that the sea, in the symbolic world of Revelation, stands for the primeval ocean or abyss for the dragon Leviathan, a home for the monster, and a throne for the whore (Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:1).

In his recent article about the sea in Rev. 21:1, Moo (2009:161), enumerating various identifications of Revelation's usage of sea imagery, summarizes it as follows:

> θάλασσα (the sea) can be used in Revelation to denote the realm of cosmic evil, sometimes linked with the abyss and death, and it is regularly associated with God's judgments. The sea can also be one integral part of creation which glorifies God along with heaven and earth, but neither heaven nor earth are so closely linked elsewhere within John's symbolic universe to evil and judgment.

In this respect, the removal (21:1c) of the sea out of which the beast rose (13:1) derives from

[29] Beale (1999:1043) presents five usages of the sea in Revelation: the origin of cosmic evil (especially in the light of OT background; so 4:6; 12:18; 13:1; 15:2); the unbelieving, rebellious nations who cause tribulation for God's people (12:18; 13:1; Isa. 57:20; cf. Rev. 17:2,6); the place of the dead (20:13); the primary location of the world's idolatrous trade activity (18:10-19); a literal body of water, sometimes mentioned together with the earth, used as a synecdoche in which the sea as a part of the old creation represents the totality of it (5:13; 7:1-3; 8:8-9; 10:2,5-6,8; 14:7;16:3).

the ultimate victory of God and his people against the dragon and his followers. The conflict, which started in Rev. 12, reaches its peak in Rev. 19-20 where God defeats the Dragon, the beasts, and the followers. In Rev. 21 the ultimate vision of God is fulfilled. Thus, the sea is one of the most important elements for Rev. 12-20 to be functioning as a plot.

3.3.1.1.2 Temporal element

Another characteristic of an apocalypse in relation to setting is that the author of Revelation regards the time of which he speaks as that for which divine intervention is imminent. It is the time of crisis. What he sees is what "must soon take place" (1:1), and "the time is near" (1:3); the martyrs must wait for only "a little longer" for vengeance (6:11); in the course of the vision it is announced by an angel that "there should be no more delay" (10:6); and even the devil's "time is short" (12:12). In the conclusion it is reiterated that what has been shown is what "must soon take place" (22:6), with the promise "I am coming soon" (22:7, 12, 20).

The author of Revelation seems to help the readers or the audience to recognize that they already reached the time of the end referred to in Daniel 12:4, 9. According to Dan. 12:4, Daniel was commanded to "keep the words secret and the book sealed until the time of the end". In Rev. 5 there appeared a scroll sealed with seven seals and proclaimed a slaughtered Lamb who is worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals. Then, the Lamb opens the seven seals one by one. These scenes would have made the readers or the audience recognize that Rev. 5-6 portrays a vision of inaugurated fulfilment of the prophecy of Daniel. That is, while the divine response to Daniel's question about how and when the prophecies would be fulfilled was that the book was "sealed up until the end time", now with the author of Revelation the answer finally comes (Beale 1999:347).

When it comes to Rev. 12, the temporal imminence is reinforced by the conflict between the woman and the dragon. According to Rev. 12:12, the dragon knows that his time is short, which produces a tense atmosphere and intensifies the conflictive structure. In terms of the temporal element, the scenes enter into a new phase.

In Rev. 15:1; 15:8, there is another significant word, namely the word "last" that could be a redemptive-historical reference to the last events of history rather than just an indication of

placement in the order of John's visions (Beale 1999:787). According to the Old Testament and external sources, the exodus judgments will be enacted against the world at the end of history when Israel will again be redeemed (Mic. 7:10-17; Targ. Jon. Zech. 10:9-12; 1QM 11:9-11; 14:1; Apoc. Ab. 29:15-16; 30:1-8). The typological and eschatological background of the Old Testament and Jewish antecedents makes plausible the suggestion that the plagues in Revelation, especially in Rev. 16, are last in the sense that they occur in the latter days in contrast to the former days when the Egyptian plagues occurred. In this sense, the song of Moses in Rev. 15 implies an ultimate plan of God in which He judges the world and saves his people.

After chapter 20, in which the cosmic evil of God's people was removed, the temporal tense is resolved by the proclamation of the end of the time which involves the ultimate fulfilment of God's plan: "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end (Rev. 21:6a)." Thus, in terms of the temporal as well as the spatial element, a distinctive boundary exists between Rev. 20 and 21, and it can be inferred that Rev. 12-20 is a discrete literary unit constituting a plot.

3.3.1.2 Character

One fruitful approach to the character of the apocalypse would be to concentrate on the major imageries. As regards the images of the apocalypse, Bauckham (1993a:185) argues that "the images of the apocalypse are in many cases a form of sharply perceived metaphor, and their purpose is to sharpen the readers' perception of the object in view, enabling them in a peculiarly vivid way to share the author's perception of it". In this respect, it is important to look into imageries, so that we may understand characters and their functions in Rev. 12-20 as a coherent story. Moreover, the conflictive relationship among characters shed significant light on the development of the plot, namely Rev. 12-20. The conflictive setting among characters even hints the nature behind the conflict in this world and the perspective of the author regarding his socio-rhetorical situation.

There are three important characters in Rev. 12-21 that we need to examine to understand the conflictive structure of the plot: woman, child, and dragon. It is very important to examine the characters in detail, since this plot starts with descriptions of two significant characters: "a

woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rev. 12:1), and "a red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads" (Rev. 12:3). Although there are other characters in Rev. 12-20, we, in this section, will concentrate only on the three main characters mentioned above.

Rev. 12-20 tell the same story as Rev. 1-11 but explain in greater detail what Rev. 1-11 only introduce and imply (Collins 1983:80). The author of Revelation, through new and distinctive images, creates a new plot and tries to uncover the conflict at a deeper level. The conflictive relationship between the woman and the child and the dragon in Rev. 12:1-6 may allude to several typological images in the Bible: Eve, her offspring, and the serpent; Israel, Moses, and Pharaoh; Mary, Jesus, and Herod. They are essential in moving the plot forward.

Firstly, Eve, her offspring, and the serpent are representative of the origin of the conflict in the Garden of Eden, from which all subsequent curses originated. In Rev. 22:3, the author reintroduces the motif of Eden, where nothing accursed will be found any more. The identification of the Dragon as the ancient serpent in Rev. 12:9, 20:2 supports this view.

Secondly, the Israelites, Moses, and Pharaoh fit well into the structure of this plot. The description of the woman in Rev. 12:1 does not seem to refer to an individual but the twelve tribes of Israel. Beale (1998:628) also argues that "the primary focus here is not on individual but on the community of faith within which the messianic line ultimately yielded a kingly offspring". This is evident from the content of Rev. 12 in which the woman is persecuted, flees into the desert, and bears other children, who are described as faithful Christians. Moreover, her time in the wilderness is the time of Israel's tribulation prophesied in Daniel 10:13, 21. Although Rev. 12 starts with the description of the appearances of the woman and the Dragon respectively, the intrinsic conflict is between Christ and the dragon. The dragon, at first, tried to devour the child whom the woman was about to bear, but failing to do that, the dragon pursues the woman. However, even the dragon's pursuit of the woman is failing, so that he prepares to wage war on the rest of her children.

When it comes to the image of a male child, that is, Christ, four images concerning Jesus Christ occur in Revelation: the glorious Lord (1:9-20); the Lamb (5:6-7; 14:1); the male child (12:5); the warrior and king of kings (19:11-16). These images vary according to the theme of

each section. In Rev. 12-21, the image of Jesus Christ as a warrior who conquers the dragon and his followers features prominently. In this section, the image of Jesus Christ is developed from a male child (12:5) to an adult warrior (19:11-16). In Rev. 12:5, Jesus Christ is described as a male child who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. This depiction is repeated in 19:15, where he is described as King of kings and Lord of lords.

On the contrary, the Dragon who called up the beasts out of the sea and the earth to rule over the kings of the earth is thrown into the lake of fire after all. The contrasting development of the identity of Christ and the dragon emphasizes that the ultimate enemy, the Dragon who is the ancient serpent, called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world, will be defeated by the warrior, Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ will rule over the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. Thus, Jesus Christ will rule over the earth forever and the Devil is thrown into the lake of fire and will be tormented day and night forever and ever. In this sense, Jesus is the protagonist and the dragon is the antagonist. Moreover, the rest of the children of the woman follow Jesus Christ, and the inhabitants of the earth follow the beast and worship the dragon. The former will reign on earth with Jesus Christ (Rev. 5:10; 20:6; 22:5), but the latter will be tormented day and night with the dragon in the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10).

In Rev. 12-20, we can also see a structural conflict between God's kingdom and Dragon's kingdom. To describe the structural conflict, the author of Revelation utilizes parody as a literary technique. In fact, parody permeates Revelation (Moore 2006:106).

The Dragon, the beast, and the false prophet forms a unholy trinity (16:13; 19:20; 20:10), mimicking the holy trinity of God, Lamb, and seven spirits (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; cf. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). In addition to the general structural parallel of two antithetical triads, certain characteristics ascribed to the sea-beast in particular mirror those ascribed to Jesus or God. Those are the Christ-like resurrection attributed to the sea-beast in 13:3, 14, and also the threefold declaration that "it was and is not and is to come" (17:8, 17:11), parodying the threefold acclamation of God as he "who is and who was and who is to come" (1:4, 8; 4:8). Moreover, notable is the depiction of the land-beast as also a lamb-beast: "it had two horns like a lamb" (13:11). Through these parodies the author of Revelation is engaging in subtle mockery of Satan and his elect agents, implying that they are best seen as distorted reflections

of God and his elect agents (Moore 2006:113).

Thus, the examination of the characters in Rev. 12-20 clarifies the conflictive relationship among the characters and through the removal of the characters causing the conflict this unit reaches its peak and comes to an end.

3.3.1.3 Point of view

The concept of 'point of view' is usually linked to the various perspectives from which a story may be told (Tolmie 1999:29). Stories concerning the same basic events, characters, and settings can be told in different ways that produce completely different narratives, just like the four Gospels. A central question relating to point of view is how the implied author guides the implied reader in understanding the story. The readers are guided through devices intrinsic to the process of storytelling.

There is an important aspect that should be considered in relation to point of view. Unlike the traditional approach to point of view, Tolmie (1999:29-38) draws on the distinction of Genette[30] between the voice that tells the story, that is, the narrator and focalization. Thus, in order to analyze point of view in a literary text, we should ask the question: through whose eyes do we view the events that are being told?

In the book of Revelation, the story is narrated mostly in the focus of the first-person narrator, John, and thus, the narrator uses the words "I saw" (38 times in NRSV) or "I looked" (11 times in NRSV) or "I heard" (25 times in NRSV) repeatedly almost throughout. It is the case in Rev. 12-21 as well. However, there is one exception. In Rev. 12:12, the locus of focalization is moved into an internal position of one of the characters that John saw, the dragon. Then, in v 13, the story is portrayed as perceived through the eyes of the dragon, describing, "The Dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth". The change of the focalization is very important to understand the plot line and the emphasis of the author, and

[30] Gérard Genette (born 1930 in Paris) is a French literary theorist, associated in particular with the structuralist movement and such figures as Roland Barthes and Claude Lévi-Strauss, from whom he adapted the concept of bricolage. Genette is largely responsible for the reintroduction of a rhetorical vocabulary into literary criticism, for example, such terms as trope and metonymy. Additionally his work on narrative, best known in English through the selection Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method, has been of importance. His major work is the multi-part Figures series, of which Narrative Discourse is a section.

is closely related to the change of the spatial plane as the writer examined above. The following table illustrates the change of the focalization:

Verse	**Content**	**Spatial plane**	**Focalization**
12:1-6	Description of the woman and the Dragon	Heaven	Author-observer
12:7-9	War between Michael and the Dragon	Heaven	Author-observer
12:10-12a	A loud voice of proclamation	Heaven	First-person observer: "I heard"/ Direct citation
12:12b	The recognition of the Dragon being cast down into the earth	Heaven	Omniscient author: "He knows that his time is short"
12:13-16	The pursuing woman of dragon	Earth	Author-observer: "The Dragon saw"
12:17	The preparation of war against the church	Earth	Omniscient author: "The Dragon was angry with the woman"
12:18	The standing on the sand of the seashore	Seashore	Author-observer: "The Dragon took his stand"

According to this table, when the spatial plane is moved from heaven to earth, the focalization is changed from that of the author to that of a character in the story, the dragon. The focalization is changed through a rhetorical technique, i.e. apostrophe: "But woe to the earth and the sea". If we read this chapter only through the eyes of author-observer, we would miss the point of emphasis of this chapter and the plot line. In this chapter, the point of emphasis is on the casting down of the dragon and the imminent woe about to occur on the earth. Moreover, the attention of the readers or the audiences is shifted to the action that the Dragon is about to take: to make war on the rest of the children of the woman.

At the end of this plot, all the attempts of the dragon against the church are failing. Satan deceives the nations in order to gather them for battle, marches up over the breadth of the

earth, and surrounds the camp of the saints and the beloved city. However, fire comes down from heaven and consumes them, and the dragon is thrown into the lake of fire as the spatial plane is moved from the earth to the lake of fire. Thus, the exception of the focalization, focused on the dragon's act and his destiny, can be a basis for the view that Rev. 12-20 forms a unit constituting a plot.

3.3.1.4 Plot and its crucial structure of Revelation 12-20

In the book, "Narrative in the Hebrew Bible", Gunn and Fewell (1993:2) explain a plot as follows: "It is a sequence of actions, often explicitly connected in terms of cause and effect, leading from an initial situation, through complication, to some sense of resolution or revelation." The initial situation is usually characterized by incompleteness, disorder, or unfulfilled desire, from which develops a subsequent conflict or complication. The conflict between characters moves through various phases until a climax gives way to some degree of resolution (Gunn & Fewell 1993:102). Accordingly, a plot has several features in forming a literary unit: A plot has clear beginnings and clear endings; there exist conflicts between characters; the conflict proceeds forward to the conclusion; each unit in this plot is connected in terms of cause and effect. In this sense, Rev. 12-20 constitutes a plot.

Firstly, Rev. 12-20 has a clear beginning and a clear ending. Unlike other beginnings of sections before Rev. 12, there is no literary link with the preceding sections. The first expression of Rev. 12-20, "a great portent", appears three times in Revelation, with the first occurrence in Rev. 12:1. Moreover, a new cast of characters is presented in this literary unit, Rev. 12-20: A woman, a male child, and a red dragon. From a different perspective a fuller version of the message of 11:3-13 is told (Collins 1983:79) and will converge again on the end, the judgment in Rev. 19-20 and the kingdom of the Lord being established in Rev. 21-22. Moreover, as the writer examined above, there is a distinctive boundary between Rev. 20 and 21 in terms of the removal of the sea, the cosmic evil. Accordingly, it can be argued that this literary unit has a clear beginning and a clear end.

Secondly, Rev. 12-20 highlights a specific conflict between the characters and the conflict started from Rev. 12 is resolved in Rev. 20. In Rev. 12, three new characters are introduced on the stage: a woman, a male child, and a red dragon. They are in a conflictive relationship,

one which is characterised by war. War is one of the important motifs through which we can interpret Rev. 12-20. The Dragon that was thrown down from heaven to earth attempts to make war on the saints in the beginning of this plot, but then in Rev. 19-20 the attempt to wage war on the saints is thwarted by the Lord, the warrior with a rod of iron, and the fire from heaven. Thus, Rev. 12-20 forms a discrete literary unit in terms of the conflict between characters and its resolution.

Lastly, the story line of Rev. 12-20 is threaded in terms of cause and effect. Revelation is made up of many visions. However, it was not put together arbitrarily, but is highly stylized and composited.

The plot traces the defeat of the dragon, which is thrown down from heaven to earth, and from earth to the abyss. In the course of the action, the dragon seeks to operate through other agents, including two beasts and a harlot, but God and the Lamb eventually thwart the efforts of the dragon and his agents.

With this plot in mind, it is also helpful to consider from discourse analytical perspective how the elements fit together. In practice narrative criticism is a complex process that calls for attention to numerous literary dynamics. In relation to narrative analysis, Green (1995:244-48) lists a few of the most significant matters, one of which is structural patterns. Green argues that readers' responses to a narrative may also be affected by the patterns of discourse through which the story is told. Such structural patterns may be poetic, employing repetition, meter, rhyme, or alliteration. They may also take the form of a logical ordering of content based on a scheme of generalization, particularization, or the like (Green 1995:244-48).

Thus, within this broad narrative of Rev. 12-20, we shall take into consideration a discourse analytical structure of the nine chapters. While a number of scholars[31] have taken a chiastic approach to the book of Revelation, Koester would be appropriate for this study of Rev. 12-20, because he examined Rev. 12-20 by way of a chiastic structure.

Koester (2001:174) claims that the overall sequence of events is highly stylized and outlined

[31] For example, Siew (2005:4) examines how, by way of a chiastic reading of the middle chapters of Revelation, the contents of Re. 11:1-14:5 are to be understood as a cohesive literary unit.

as follows:

Satan thrown down from heaven to earth (Rev. 12)
Beast and false prophet conquer (Rev. 13)
Harlot rides on the beast (Rev. 17)
Harlot destroyed by the beast (Rev. 17)
Beast and false prophet conquered (Rev. 19)
Satan thrown down from earth into the abyss (Rev. 20)

With this outline, Koester (2001:116) argues that John systematically introduces Satan, the beast and false prophet, and finally the harlot into the drama, and in reverse order he describes the defeats of the harlot, the beast and false prophet, and finally Satan himself.

Koester's argument is insightful and convincing but is not comprehensive. Thus, the writer suggests a more detailed structure:

A: **Christ** as a child taken up to heaven from earth (Rev. 12)
Satan thrown down from heaven to earth (Rev. 12)
B: Beast out of the sea and the earth (Rev. 13)
The Lamb and **one hundred forty-four thousand** who are blameless (Rev. 14:1-5)
C: Harvest on the earth (Rev. 14:6-20)
Those who worship the beast have no rest (14:9, 11)
D: the wrath of God is ended (15:1)
E: **The song of Moses and the song of the Lamb at a sea of glass** (Rev. 15:2-4)
Those who had conquered the beast and its image sing the songs
d: the seven plagues are ended (15:5-8)
c: Seven plagues on the earth (Rev. 16)
People of the kingdom of the beast gnaw their tongues in agony (16:10)
b: Harlot and the beast that carries her, and the fall of Babylon the Great (Rev. 17-18)
The Lamb and **the saints** who are righteous, their marriage (Rev. 19:1-10)
a: **Christ** as a warrior who threw the beast and false prophet into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:11-21)
Satan thrown down from the earth into the abyss (Rev. 20)

Also in this discourse analytical structure, one can see how within the narratological perspective the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb play a crucial role. Now the writer shall argue how Rev. 12-20 is stylized in the chiastic structure, with the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb centered.

We can see significant contrasts in this structure. Firstly, Christ and Satan in verse 'A' and 'a' are contrasted in terms of their character and authority. From the beginning of this plot, Satan is clearly identified as "ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world" (Rev. 12:9), and "the accuser" of the comrades of the saints (12:10). His identity is repeated at the end of this plot: "the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan" (20:2), and the one who deceive the nations (20:3). In terms of the authority of Satan, he loses his position in heaven and is thrown down to the earth by Michael (Rev. 12:7). Although he exercises his authority through his agents, the beasts out of the sea and the earth, over the inhabitants of the earth only for a while, he is seized by an angel from heaven and is thrown down to the bottomless pit, and finally is thrown down to the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet already were.

Significantly, it must be noted that the words "devour" (Rev. 12:4 NRSV) and "consumed" (Rev. 20:9 NRSV) are a means which linguistically connects the beginning of Rev. 12-20 with the ending. In fact, the words "devour" (καταφάγῃ) (*Nestle-Aland*[27])[32] and "consumed" (κατέφαγεν) are from the same Greek verb, "κατεσθίω."

On the other hand, Christ, paralleled with Satan in this plot, is described as a glorious one: "His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems" (19:12). "He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called The Word of God" (19:13). Contrasted with Satan who is the deceiver of the world, Christ is called "Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war" (19:11). Moreover, Christ has the authority to rule over the nations with a rod of iron, and on his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, "King of kings and Lord of lords" (19:16).

When it comes to spatial position, the authority of Christ is more manifest. Christ, in Rev. 12,

[32] Greek words throughout this thesis are taken from *Nestle-Aland*[27].

is taken up to heaven from the earth, while Satan is thrown down from heaven to the earth. At the end of this plot, Christ comes back again to the earth in dignity, while Satan is thrown down into the abyss in shame.

Secondly, in this chiastic structure, the inhabitants of the earth and the saints are contrasted with each other, with the former worshipping the beast and the latter conquering the beast. In the third verse, 'C', "those who worship the beast and its image, and receive a mark on their foreheads or on their hands" (Rev. 14:9), they are said to drink the wine of God's wrath, and they will be tormented with fire and sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. In the paralleled verse, 'c', when the fifth bowl is poured on the throne of the beast, those who worship the beast and its image gnaw their tongues in agony, cursed the God of heaven, and do not repent their deeds. On the other hand, in the middle of the chiastic structure, 'E', those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name stand beside the sea of glass, and sing with harps of God in their hands the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

In this chiastic structure, the songs of Moses and the Lamb in the middle part, 'E', are not only the climax of the former part, Rev. 12-14, but also the beginning of the following chapter about the seven bowls. The songs, as it were, play a role of a bridge connecting the narrative begun in the chapter 12 and the following chapters about the seven bowls (Bauckham 1993a:16; Beale 1999:784).

Scholars, like Beale, Collins, and Bauckham largely agree that the songs of Moses and the Lamb in Rev 15:2-4 are the last out of seven visions having been presented since the beginning of the series in 12:1. Moreover, Beale (1999:784) rightly argues that "the song of Moses has an interlocking function, literarily as well as thematically, with respect to the preceding and following sections, concluding 12:1-14:20 and introducing the bowls."

However, the writer suggests that the songs involve a wider context, from Rev. 12 to 20. One of the controversial problems concerning the songs is the expression 'mixed with fire' which is added after the phrase 'a sea of glass'. Even though there are various views on this topic, the viewpoint of Aune is the most fitting to the whole story of this plot, Rev. 12-20. According to Aune (1998:871), 'a sea of glass mixed with fire' combines the motifs of a

celestial sea above which the throne of God is set and the river of fire that flows forth from his throne. To support this notion, he presents various sources including an extra-biblical text, like 3 Enoch 19:4 which mentions four fiery rivers. Aune (1998:871) also argues that the phrase 'mixed with fire' is included to symbolize impending judgment and that though 'a sea of glass mixed with fire' is a heavenly reality, the corresponding cosmic counterpart is the lake of fire (Rev 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8). His argument is supported by Rev. 14:10-11 which says that those who worship the beast "will be tormented with fire and sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." Moreover, according to T. Levi 3:2 (Moo 2009:154), the heavenly sea is described as full of fire and ice prepared to carry out God's judgment, the sea of glass mixed with fire in Rev 15:2 likely portends the plagues about to be poured out on the world in the following chapter and ultimately the lake of fire in Rev. 19-20.

The Dragon and his followers and all the people whose names were not found written in the book of life were thrown into the lake of fire in Rev. 20, and then in Rev. 21 the sea is proclaimed to be no more. The removal of them punctuates the plot, Rev. 12-20, and is associated with that of the sea from the new creation in Rev. 21. It is appropriate that the songs of Moses and the Lamb, at the center verse 'E', are sung by those who conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name. The image of Moses and the image of the Lamb have been overlapped from the beginning of this plot, Rev. 12-20. In Rev. 12, the scene about the Dragon preparing to devour the male child is reminiscent of two instances in the Bible, namely Exod. 1 (Moses) and Matt. 1 (Christ). When Pharaoh tried to massacre all the Hebrew boys by throwing them into the Nile River, Moses survived and rescued God's people out of Egypt, performing many miracles. In leading God's people to Mount Sinai, splitting the Red Sea was the critical act against Pharaoh and his armies.

Likewise, Jesus survived King Herod's massacre of all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or younger by escaping to Egypt for a while. During his public ministry, Jesus performed many miracles for the weak and the diseased and saved people from their sins through his death on the cross. He will return and defeat all the enemies of the saints including the ultimate cosmic evil, Satan. Moreover, he will rescue the saints out of Babylon that is under the control of Satan and move them to the new world where there will be no more sea (Rev. 21:1). In this respect, the songs of Moses and the Lamb extend from

Rev. 12 to 20 and even to Rev. 21.

To sum up, the involvement of the songs of Moses and the Lamb ranges from Rev. 12 to 20. In addition, Rev. 12-20, a literary unit constituting a plot, has a chiastic structure with the songs of Moses and the Lamb in the middle. The basic frame of Rev. 12-20 is derived importantly from the exodus motif, though the contents of the songs of Moses and the Lamb in Rev. 15:3b-4 can be derived largely from various Old Testament sources.

3.4 Summary

The writer has examined Rev. 12-20 in terms of four narrative elements out of which we can consider Rev. 12-20 as a discrete literary unit constituting a plot, and has argued that Rev. 12-20, as a plot, is highly stylized in the chiastic structure which has the songs of Moses and the Lamb at the centre.

Many scholars argue that the author of Revelation borrowed from the ancient near eastern combat myths the main conflictive structure of Rev. 12-20 because the mention of the doing away with the sea in Rev 21:1 may echo the common motif of combat myth (Moo 2009:158). However, it needs to be examined in terms of intertextuality, which will be the key word of the following chapter.

Chapter 4

The adoption of the exodus motif as a frame for reading Revelation 12-20: Socio-rhetorical perspectives.

4.1 Introduction

In the foregoing chapter on the narrative-critical analysis of Rev. 12-20, the writer studied how Rev. 12-20 as a story forms a plot in the chiastic structure which has the songs of Moses and the Lamb at the centre. As regards methodology, the narrative-critical approach was utilised. However, in this chapter, the writer shall examine the role or function of the songs of Moses and the Lamb in terms of a socio-rhetorical perspective: inner texture; intertexture; social and cultural texture; ideological texture; sacred texture. Out of these five categories, 'inter texture' and 'social and cultural texture' will be considered.

Thus, the writer shall approach this chapter in terms of intertexture and examine firstly the combat myth, which was widespread around the Mediterranean during the first century CE, and secondly the exodus motifs. Finally, the writer will explain how the author of Revelation adopts the exodus motifs in order to create messages for those who were assimilated into the power of Roman Empire and its culture.

4.2 Intertextual analysis of Rev 12-20

4.2.1 The combat myth and Rev. 12

Controversy exists as regards the sources behind Rev. 12. Many scholars[33] try to trace the origin to the Near-Eastern and Greek-Roman myths: Greek sources – A. Yarbro Collins, J. Fontenrose, W. K. Hedrick; Egyptian sources – A. Y. Collins H. Frankfort; Gnostic sources – J. M. Robinson. The legendary narrative pattern of a combat between a hero and his adversary or the mythic narrative pattern of a primordial cosmic struggle between two divine

[33] Aune (1998:667-674) summarises and estimates various possible sources from Greek and Egyptian co mbat myths.

beings and their allies for sovereignty was widespread throughout the ancient world. Beale (1998:624) summarizes succinctly the outline of the ancient combat myth as follows:

> Many ancient mythologies contain a story of an evil usurper who is doomed to be vanquished by a yet unborn prince. The usurper tries to escape his destiny by killing the prince when he is born. But the prince is unexpectedly snatched away from danger until he is old enough to kill the fiend and claim his rightful inheritance and throne. The version of this story best known in Asia Minor was that of the goddess Leto who was pregnant with Apollo, the son of Zeus. The god Poseidon hid the island under the water so that Python could not find the woman and her child. Four days after Apollo was born, he found the dragon and slew it.

In Rev. 12, the author of Revelation writes almost the same story. Thus, recognising the similarities, Yarbro Collins tries to match the eight constituent motifs of the combat myth in Rev. 12 with one of Greek combat myth, the version of the Leto-Apollo myth. Collins (1976:58) argues that the combat myth in Rev. 12 reflects the combat tradition from both the Near East (Rev. 12:7-9) and Hellenism (12:4b-6, 13-17), and demonstrates that the Python-Leto-Apollo myth was well known in western Anatolia prior to the end of the first century A D (Collins 1976:245-61). However, Aune (1998:671-2) points out that there are some flaws in Collins' analysis of Rev. 12. The point that Aune makes is that in some essential elements Rev. 12 is quite different from the pagan stories.

None of the pagan stories from Babylon, Ugarit, Persia, Egypt, or Greece uses a coherent pagan myth and has all the essential elements found in Revelation 12. Thus, Aune (1998:627) argues that the author has created a pastiche of mythological motifs. On the contrary, Beale (1998:624) argues that the author of Revelation may be reflecting on them collectively and interpreting them through the lens of the Old Testament and Jewish tradition. However, the writer holds that the author of Revelation would have taken the Old Testament as a main source and a frame, not just a tool in which the author may reflect on the pagan stories. Thus, we shall turn to the Old Testament relating to the sources behind Rev. 12

4.2.2 The Old Testament sources

Farrer (1986:19) rightly claims that the author "is always doing something with the Old Testament," adding that the images "have an astonishing multiplicity of reference". When it comes to the source from which the author of Revelation borrowed, many scholars have suggested various views. A. Vanhoye has suggested that Ezekiel is a dominant influence, and Austin Farrer, and John Sweet, have proposed in a general way that Daniel is the essential key to an understanding of the Apocalypse (Beale 1984). Steve Moyise (2001:117) deals significantly with prophetic books of the Old Testament as sources for Revelation. Scholars tend to focus on apocalyptic books such as Daniel and Ezekiel as well as other prophetic books, without paying enough attention to the book of Exodus which can be shown to actually provide the prototype of the main theme of apocalyptic books as well as Revelation (Daube 1963:11). Daube (1963:11) illustrates the exodus motif as follows:

> As is well known, this habit of looking on the exodus as a prototype, as a mould in which other stories of rescue from ruin may be cast, goes back to the Bible itself. The account of Joshua's crossing of the Jordan is full of elements designed to recall the crossing of the red sea under Moses. In the second century B.C. Ben-Sira prays for a repetition of signs and wonders – he means final redemption, thought of in terms of the exodus. Exactly that has come to pass, according to Acts, through Jesus – a second Moses, leading forth his people a second time.

The exodus pattern or motif influences the Old Testament as well as Apocrypha and the New Testament. Significantly, the exodus motif plays a critical role in Revelation as well; it influences Revelation in general and Rev. 12-20 in particular. With such concerns, the author shall examine how the exodus motif as a frame influences Rev. 12-20.

The first part of a story or a narrative should be noted cautiously because the essential elements for a plot tend to be introduced in the first stage of the story, such as new characters, conflict among the characters, and setting including temporal and spatial elements. In this sense, Rev. 12 plays a role of the first important step on the basis of which the ensuing story may be understood and interpreted.

In Rev. 12:1-2, a woman appeared in a great portent in heaven and is described as clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. Moreover, the woman was pregnant and cried out in birth pangs. It is true that she resembles a character in ancient myths as the writer quoted the summary of Beale above. However, there are distinctive differences between the woman in Rev. 12 and the character in ancient myths[34].

The image of the woman is not just a pastiche of mythological motifs. Rather, it may be from the Old Testament and Jewish tradition, representing Israel. If we interpret the symbols in light of biblical predecessors and archetypes, it is not hard to piece the story together.

The image of the woman in Rev. 12 is reminiscent of the dream of Joseph, the patriarch, which refers to the number twelve and to the sun, moon, and the stars (cf. Ryken 1993:467; Brown 1997:790; Beale & McDonough 2007:1122). Moreover, the woman in travail may be associated with Israel under the persecution of Pharaoh. Then, the readers or audiences would have taken the image of a great red dragon for Pharaoh, because in the Old Testament and Jewish tradition Pharaoh was called a dragon in the sea (cf. e.g., Ezekiel 32:2; 29:3; Isaiah 27:1).

It follows from the foregoing that the two portents in heaven, a woman and a red dragon, and the conflictive relationship between them may help us see the mythical drama of Rev.12-20 through the lens of the exodus motifs.

A point that should be noted in the author's use of the exodus motifs is that he may have seen Exodus as a coherent story and applied the structure and the message of Exodus to Rev.12-20 and Rev. 21. Chances are that the author of Revelation had pondered the book of Exodus as a whole and adopted the key of the plot into Revelation, just as Paul read the scroll of Isaiah as a whole and developed a sustained reading of it as he argued his apostolic ministry in Romans (Hays 2005:27). Hays argues that there is abundant evidence in Paul's letters that he read Isa 40-55 as a coherent prophetic vision foretelling and authorizing Paul's own apostolic activity. The disclosure of God's righteousness, the proclaiming of the word to the nations, the unbelief of Israel, the apostle's commission to announce the good news of salvation – all these themes are richly suggested by the passages in Isaiah that Paul quotes and echoes (Hays

[34] See Aune's (1998:667-76) commentary on Revelation.

2005:40).

Thus, now the writer shall turn to Exodus for drawing the big picture in terms of Exodus 1-15 being a plot and examine how the exodus motif is adopted into Revelation.

4.2.3 A brief analysis of the book of Exodus 1-15 as a plot

When it comes to the analysis of Exodus 1-15, we should examine only one element out of the four narrative elements, namely setting, character, point of view, and plot, since the principal goal of this study of Exod. 1-15 is to explain the relevance of Exodus to Revelation. The division of Exodus into two major parts has been recognized by a number of scholars, for example, Fokkelman (1987:57-8) – chapter 1-15:21 and 15:22-40:38 (NRSV).

As the writer argued in the foregoing chapter that Rev. 12-20 is a plot in terms of three distinctive features, so shall he argue that Exodus 1-15, as the first part of Exodus, constitutes a plot in the same way. The three features were as follows: a plot has clear beginnings and clear endings; there exist conflicts between characters which proceed forward to the conclusion; each unit in the plot is connected in terms of cause and effect. The writer shall examine the plot of Exodus 1-15 in terms of the crucial events called kernels; the examination will be to some extent doubled.

4.2.3.1 Clear beginning and clear ending

Firstly, in its present form, Exodus 1-15 has a clear beginning and a clear ending. It goes without saying that in Exodus 1-2 a new story starts with the introduction of new characters between whom a conflict occurs. The major motif stated in Exodus 1-2 is resolved in Exodus 14-15.

The first two chapters of the Book of Exodus are the prelude to the story of the Exodus (Isbell 1982:56; Davies 1992:20) and constitute a plot in itself.[35] This opening unit of Exod. 1-2 sets out important lines along which the story will proceed and indicates key themes which the

[35] Some commentators, like Pixley (Pixley 1987:xv), place Exod. 2:23-25 with Exodus 3 and following.

story will develop. Exodus 1 begins with the genealogical list of ancestors' names and ends with Moses naming his two sons at the end of Exodus 2. Moreover, in Exod. 1:8, a new king arose in Egypt, who did not know Joseph, and in Exod. 2:23 the king of Egypt died.

Now, the writer shall examine the opening two chapters more, which connect Exod. 1-2 with the concluding part in terms of the plot line and make it clear that Exodus 1-15 constitutes a plot.

Exodus 1:1-7 is designed to join the opening chapters of Exodus to what has preceded in Genesis (cf. Childs [1974] 2004:1-2; Fokkelman 1987:58; Smith 1997:183), presenting the conditions for the furtherance of the story in terms of a new plot.[36] Then, the following passage, Exodus 1:8-14, begins with the introduction of a new character, Pharaoh, because of whom a conflict happens. The passage builds up tension from an opening of relative calm and a sense of anxious uncertainty arises. The Israelites' growth is a blessing in itself, but Pharaoh considers it as a problem in a way that sets the train of the narrative. The outline of the pericope is drawn broadly with two strokes: the speech of Pharaoh, and his audience's response in their oppression of the Hebrews (Davies 1992:46). In his speech, Pharaoh tries to describe the proliferation of the Hebrews as a danger and to win the Egyptians to his side against them. Pharaoh's speech contains two elements of rhetorical structure: the *proem* or *exordium*[37], and the argumentation or confirmation (Davies 1992:48). As regards the rhetorical strategy of his speech, Pharaoh associates himself with his listeners by using the first-person plural. Moreover, he uses the proverbial wisdom of the kings of Egypt (Ackerman 1974:80): "Let us deal shrewdly with them" (Exodus 1:10), so that Pharaoh's instruction (vv. 9b-10c) aims at creating a community of values that both stimulates the egoism of the audience and enhances the appeal of the speaker (Davies 1992:48-9). Pharaoh's strategy against the Israelites were in three steps, but all failed. His final plan was to throw all the people of Israel into the Nile River. Pharaoh's speech hints at the main theme of Exodus 1-15, which is a war, and how God would deal shrewdly with Pharaoh and defeat him after

[36] Smith (1997:183-4) mentions that there is a thematic break between Genesis and Exodus and that chapter 1 would appear to mark a new narrative stage.

[37] *Exordium* is a rhetorical terminology in Latin and is designed as it were only to open the interview between the speaker and hearer, or between the writer and reader. In this, a general salutation is made, and the occasion and circumstances of the discourse are set forth (Coppée 1859:249). In Western classical rhetoric, the *exordium* was the introductory portion of an oration. The term is Latin and the Greek equivalent was called the *Proem* or *Prooimion (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exordium_(rhetoric)*.

all.

The words, ‘war’ and ‘fight’, introduced in Pharaoh’s speech, play an important role in Exodus 1-15 as a whole and make the story appear as a war story (Isbell 1982:42). According to the Pharaoh (Exod. 1:10), the necessity of enslaving the Israelites arose from the possibility that they would hold improper allegiance to the enemy in case of a war. The word ‘war’ does not occur in the story again until 13:17. The theme of war is finally settled in chapter 14 when Moses seeks to allay the fear of the Israelites by promising them that Yahweh will fight for them (Exod. 14:14). Shortly thereafter (14:25), the Egyptians, unfortunate victims of a power struggle themselves, acknowledge the fulfilment of Moses’ promise, again using verb ‘war’: “Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt (14:25).” Isbell (1982:46) describes this scene as follows:

> The fear of Pharaoh which at first (1:10) appeared to be so paranoid and completely unfounded, ultimately proves to be exactly what did happen. A war was declared, the Israelites did in fact line up on the side opposite the Egyptians, and after the war was over (after Yahweh finished warring for his people!), the Israelites did indeed go up from the land.

It is appropriate that the Lord is praised as a warrior in the song of Moses after the victory of Yahweh over Pharaoh and his armies (Exod. 15:3).

One should also note the importance of the word “son” (Exod. 1:22) in this story. According to Pharaoh’s commandment, “every son” that is born to the Hebrews is supposed to be killed by being thrown into the Nile in Exod. 1:22. Then, in Exod. 4:22-23, God declares war on Pharaoh: “Israel is my firstborn son. I said to you, Let my son go that he may worship me. But you refused to let him go; now I will kill your firstborn son.” Just as Pharaoh got the Israelites, which is God’s first-born son (Exod. 4:22), to be thrown into the Nile (Exod. 1:22), God killed all the firstborn sons of Pharaoh and Egyptians including the livestock (Exod. 12:29) and threw Pharaoh and all his armies into the Sea of Reeds (Exod. 14:26-28). In addition, just as Moses was rescued from the Nile River (Exod. 2:5), the Israelites were redeemed from the Red Sea.

A number of scholars[38] using various approaches held the view that Exodus 1-15 constitutes a plot. For example, paralleling with a Greek play, Robertson argues that Exodus 1-15 constitutes a plot. In the introduction of his book, Robertson (1977:16) lays out some basic presuppositions underlying a consideration of the Bible as literature and then in the second chapter he analyzes Exodus 1-15 as a comedy forming a basic plot line, setting it over against one particular Greek tragedy, the *Bacchae*. According to Robertson (1977:16), the literary conventions that governed the writing of the *Bacchae* are also operative in Exodus 1-15. In terms of its plot line, Robertson views Exodus 1-15 as a comedy in which two heroes, Moses and Yahweh, are integrated into the societies to which they rightfully belong (Robertson 1977:16).

4.2.3.2 Conflict between characters

In Exodus 1-15, there exist conflicts between characters which proceed forward to the conclusion. The main characters are Pharaoh, Moses, Israel, and God, and their conflictive relationship becomes known by means of investigating key words in this plot.

Key words introduced in this opening unit (Exodus 1-2) indicate the essence of the exodus story and several of the concepts introduced in this opening unit are not fully explained by the narrative until the final unit (Exodus 13:7-14:31) (Isbell 1982:39). For example, Isbell (1982:44) argues that the word "service" in 1:14 hints at a major concept of the entire exodus narrative and that in 3:12, the task to be given Moses is that of freeing the Israelite who are serving the Pharaoh in Egypt so that they may serve God on Mount Sinai instead. In fact, one of the major motifs relating to the exodus pattern is that of a change of master (Daube 1963:42-46). In terms of social laws and customs, a person enslaved and redeemed by a relation became that relation's slave, though it would ordinarily be a milder and preferable kind of subjection. This was the case not only in the ancient Israelite system, but also in many others of antiquity (Daube 1963:42). The conflictive relations are revealed the most in between God's command to release Israel and Pharaoh's hardened heart. God's demand to Pharaoh to release Israel from serving him is repeated eight times in the famous formula:

[38] Gunn (1982:72-96) examines Exodus 1-14 in terms of a plot and as a significant theme penetrating the plot, he deals with the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Isbell (1982:37-61) shows how Exodus 1:8-2:25 functions as a kind of prelude to the whole story of Exodus 1-14. However, these two scholars do not include Exodus 15, the song of Moses.

"Let my people go that they may serve me" (Exod. 4:23; 5:1; 7:16; 8:1; 20; 9:1; 13; 10:3). However, Pharaoh hardened his heart and did not allow the people of Israel to leave Egypt. That Pharaoh's heart was hardened is repeated nineteen times in Exodus 1-14. In the end, God destructed Pharaoh, his firstborn son and all the armies and Israel sang to the Lord the song in Exodus 15, where God is praised for his salvation of Israel and his victory over Pharaoh and his armies. In this respect, the main theme throughout Exodus 1-15 is not slavery versus freedom, but the identity and character of the master whom Israel must serve (Isbell 1982:45).

4.2.3.3 Causality

Each unit in the plot, Exodus 1-15, is connected in terms of cause and effect. As we examined above, Exodus 1-15 has a quite clear beginning and a clear ending, and presents Pharaoh, Moses, and God as the main characters, among whom conflicts occur and by God's intervention the conflicts are resolved.

Now it is appropriate to ask how the whole story is structured and how the development takes place in the story. Gunn (1982:73-4) argues that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is vital to the plot and is part of the essential chain of cause and effect in the story, so that without it there may be no story about the plagues. As the writer examined briefly above, one of the most important key words that connects the beginning to the end and becomes known the conflict between characters is "throw into" in Exod. 1:22.[39] After his failure of the two plans by which to oppress Israel, Pharaoh tries to massacre Israel by throwing into the Nile River every boy that is born to the Hebrews. Isbell rightly claims that Yahweh has no choice but to do battle with Pharaoh in the same way that he killed every sons of Israel as he commanded to throw them into the Nile River (Isbell 1982:47). The unsparing destruction of sons in 1:22 sets the stage for the remarkable saga of the first-born which follows (Isbell 1982:47). God's proclamation of Israel being his first-born son in Exod. 4:23 reinforces the development of the plot line. Moreover, God lays claim to let his people go and serve him continuously, as we observed above. In Exodus 14, God throws Pharaoh and all his armies into the Red Sea. In this respect, Exodus 1-2 and Exodus 14-15 are paralleled. If that is the case, the big picture of

[39] The words "throw into" and the synonyms are repeated in Exodus 14-15: 14:24; 27; 15:1; 4; 7; 21.

Exodus 1-15 may be outlined as follows:

A

a: Pharaoh throws into the Nile every son born to the Hebrews (Exod. 1)

b: Moses is rescued among the reeds in the Nile (Exod. 2)

B: God's commandment to release Israel versus Pharaoh's hardened heart (Exod. 3-13).

A'

a': God throws into the Red Sea Pharaoh and all his armies (Exod. 14)

b': Israel is rescued from the Red Sea which is called Sea of Reeds (Exod. 14-15)

"Throw into" and "reeds" are the key words in the paralleled structure. The song sung by Moses and the Israelites in Exodus 15 which celebrates Yahweh's defeat of the Egyptians brings to a close one episode in the story of Moses (Robertson 1977:17). Fretheim (1991:35) rightly claims that the policy of Pharaoh in Exod. 1:22 "is ironic in that it portends the way in which Pharaoh's successor and his armies will meet their end" by means of throwing them into the Sea of Reeds (Exod. 14:26-28). Thus, we can conclude that Exodus 1-15 is a distinctive literary unit and constitutes a plot.

As regards the source-critical approach to Exodus, biblical scholars largely agree that the book of Exodus shows a significant amount of priestly material as well as a marked priestly redaction (cf. Smith 1997:181; Coggins 2000:xv).[40] Smith (1997:191) argues that in terms of the priestly redaction Exodus is arranged in a double journey to, and sojourning at, the holy place of Sinai, and that in this way pilgrimage constitutes the basic pattern of the book. According to Smith, Exodus is divided into two parts, namely chapters 1-14 and 15:22-40:38. Smith (1997:190-1) outlines the priestly redactional arrangement of Exodus in the following manner:

[40] Some narratives, the genealogies, a number of the itinerary notices, the legal literature of Exodus 25-31 and its narrative execution in 35-40, as well as numerous glosses have been generally regarded as priestly (Smith 1997:159-60).

Ⅰ. Egypt

A. Chapters 1 – 2: Moses' movement from Egypt to Midian

B. Two calls and two confrontations

i. 3:1 – 6:1: Moses' first call and confrontation with Pharaoh

ii. 6:2 – 14:31: Moses' second call and Yahweh's confrontation with Pharaoh

The conflict between the powers of Egypt and Sinai

15:1-21: Victory at the Red Sea[41]

Ⅱ. Sinai

A'. 15:22 – 18-27: Israel's movement from Egypt to Midian

B'. Two covenants and two sets of tablets

i. Chapters 19-31: Israel's first covenant with Yahweh; the first tablets

ii. Chapters 32-40: Israel's second covenant with Yahweh; the second tablets

According to Smith's outline of Exodus, the book of Exodus is geographically divided into two larger parts: Egypt as the overall setting for the first half of Exodus, and Sinai as the realm of Yahweh's power, which dominates the second half of the book. Moreover, Moses and the Israelites are parallel in general terms: both flee Egypt and both go to the divine mountain and receive the divine word. It should also be noted that Sinai plays a role already in the first part of Moses' encounter with God which hints at the role the mountain will play in the second half of the book.

As regards the struggle between the two parts of Pharaoh and God, with Yahweh's victory at the Sea, the power of God is made manifest. Smith (1997:190-1) emphasizes the middle part of the song of Moses and the Israelites as follows:

> Finally, this schema highlights the central, pivotal place of Exod. 15:1-21 within the priestly redaction of the book. The poem might be viewed as the ending to section B (6:2-14:31), but it serves a larger function as a fulcrum-point in Exodus. The poem in

[41] Smith (1997:190-1) did not put any labeling on the middle part of Exod. 15:1-21, though he could distinguish the middle part at the Red Sea from the first part at Egypt and the second part at Sinai.

its redactional context looks back at the events leading up to the victory at the sea (vv. 1-12) and anticipates the events at the mountain following the victory (vv. 13-18).

According to Smith, Exodus 1-14 constitutes a literary unit and Exodus 15, the song of Moses, is the climax of the first part (Smith 1997:191).

In conclusion, Exodus 1-15 constitutes a distinctive literary unit in terms of the three features of a plot. Moreover, the war motif between Pharaoh and God is one of the main themes in the book of Exodus. The war motif is well explained in the song of Moses, in which God is described as a warrior: "The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name" (Exod. 15:3). If that is the case, we can see Exod. 15:1-18, the song of Moses, as the climax of the former part of Exodus (Propp 1998:572). Moreover, the song of Moses plays a role of connecting the former part with the latter part.

Now we should examine how the song of Moses is structured in itself and how it connects the former with the latter.

4.2.3.4 The song of Moses in Exodus 15:1-18

The song of Moses may be thought of as two parts: vv. 1-12 refer to the events leading up to and including the victory at the Red Sea rendered in the first half of the book, while vv. 13-18 anticipate the events following the victory at the Red sea, as described in the second half of the book (cf. Pixley 1987:93; Smith 1997:207). The song in its present context looks both backward to the preceding victory from slavery in Egypt and forward to the journey to Mount Sinai. Thus, the song (Exod. 15:1-18) in effect epitomizes the book of Exodus (Propp 1998:562) and functions as "the fulcrum-point of the book of Exodus" (Smith 1997:207). The first part of the song relates to the defeat of the Egyptians at the Red Sea while the second part of the song concerns the divine guidance of the people to the divinely established sanctuary on the mountain (Smith 1997:219).[42] Propp (1998:562) claims that "although it is traditionally known as the song of the sea, Exod. 15:1-18 could with equal justice be called the song of the mountain." Thus, the two halves of the poem in Exodus 15 recapitulate the

[42] Pixley (1987:93) claims that the second part celebrates the triumph over the rulers of Canaan.

preceding and following events of the book.

In the song of Moses in Exod. 15:1-18, the victory of vv. 1-12 is only complete with the house-building of v. 17, which reflects the big picture of the book of Exodus. It should be noted that this pattern, namely victory and holy house, is paralleled with the Baal Cycle (KTU 1.1-1.6), the apparent Ugaritic antecedent: the victory over Sea in KTU 1.2 Ⅳ and the establishment of Baal's house at his holy abode, Mount *Sapan*, in KTU 1.4 Ⅴ-Ⅶ (Smith 1997:219-20). If that is the case, battle, victory, and holy abode may have constituted a pattern which was followed by the author of Revelation in its forming the theme and the structure of Revelation.

The writer argued in the third chapter and in this chapter that Rev. 12-20 constitutes a plot in which the song of Moses and the Lamb plays a significant role, with the songs being placed at the centre in the chiastic structure, and that Exod. 1-15 also forms a plot in which the song of Moses reaches a peak and connects the former part with the latter part of Exodus.

In the following section, the writer shall examine how the book of Exodus is considered in forming Rev. 12-20 and 21 in terms of both theme and structure.

4.2.4 Adoption of the book of Exodus in Rev. 12-20 and 21

4.2.4.1 Adoption of the theme and the structure of Exodus

Rev. 12-20 is paralleled with Exodus 1-15 and Rev. 21 is paralleled with the latter part of Exodus. The author of Revelation may have remembered the themes of Exodus which may be listed as follows:

1. Pharaoh raging a war against God and his people by throwing them into the Nile
2. Moses rescued out of the Nile
3. The conflict between Pharaoh and Moses (the ten plagues on Egypt)
4. God's defeat of Pharaoh at the Red Sea by throwing him into the Red Sea
5. God's covenant with the Israelites

6. The tabernacle, the place of the glory of God.

The Red Sea is a barrier between God's people and the Mount Sinai, where God and the people of Israel made a covenant and built the tabernacle.

These themes of Exodus are repeated in Revelation 12-21 and may be listed as follows:

1. The Dragon trying to devour Christ
2. Christ taken to God and his throne
3. The conflict between the Dragon and the two beasts, and Christ and his followers (the seven bowls which alludes to the ten plagues on the earth, and the fall of Babylon)
4. God's defeat of the Dragon and his followers by throwing them into the lake of fire
5. The renewal of the covenantal relationship with God
6. The New Jerusalem, the place of the glory of God and the Lamb

When it comes to the structure, the book of Exodus may be followed by that of Revelation 12-20 as well as 21. The structural similarity may be outlined as follows:

Exod. 1-14: The war between Pharaoh and God, by *the mediator, Moses*.
Exod. 15:1-21: (at the end of the story) / The song of Moses
Exod. 15:22-40:38: The covenant with God and the temple which the glory of God filled.

Rev. 12-20/ The war between the Dragon and God, by *the mediator, Jesus Christ*.
Rev. 15:2-4: (in the middle of the story) / The song of Moses and *the song of the Lamb*
Rev. 21-22:5: The covenant with God and *the new Jerusalem*, where God is the temple and their light.

In this parallelism, there are two distinctions in Revelation. Firstly, the mediator, Moses, is replaced by Jesus Christ, which means that Jesus will take the role that Moses played when he led the Israelites out of Egypt. Jesus alludes to Moses in that Jesus plays a crucial role of leading the saints to the New Jerusalem in his second coming.

Secondly, the temple image of Exodus is substituted for the New Jerusalem in Rev. 21, where there is no temple. The New Jerusalem is a perfect cube which suggests that the holy city is a holy sanctuary.

When it comes to the Old Testament, the inner rooms of the tabernacle and the temple were cubic in shape (1 Kings 6:20). Ordinary worshipers could not enter such a sacred space. Only the high priest, whose turban was inscribed with the name of God and who wore a breastplate adorned with twelve gems, was to come before the Lord in the cubic chamber (Exod. 28:17-20, 36-38). When the tabernacle and the temple were dedicated, however, the glory of the Lord was manifested in the sanctuary in such a way that no one could draw near (Exod. 40:34; 1 Kings 8:11). Contrarily, as regards Revelation, the entire city and the entire community is God's sanctuary (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:21-22), but here God's glory is manifested (Rev. 21:23-24), and all worshipers come before the Lord bearing God's name upon their foreheads (22:4). The limitations of the old order give way to the new paradigm for all the redeemed in the presence of God (Koester 2001:197).

The New Jerusalem measures 12,000 stadia on each side, which is fifteen hundred miles (Rev. 21:16). We need to note that Ezekiel also saw a vision of a restored Jerusalem in which God's glory would be manifest and rivers of water would flow from the sanctuary (Ezek. 40:1-4; 43:1-5; 47:1-12), but in his vision the city with the twelve gates measured 2,500 cubits on each side which is only a little more than 1.5 miles on a side (Ezek. 48:8-9, 30-35). The author of Revelation speaks of another New Jerusalem that will be a thousand times greater than the Jerusalem that Ezekiel saw. It affirms that God will both keep and surpass the promises that were made through the prophets (Koester 2001:196).

This intertextual adoption must have played a significant role in Revelation in terms of the socio-rhetorical perspective. That is, the exodus motif had a socio-rhetorical function, so that it may create messages for those who were assimilated into the Roman Empire and the cult culture.

Thus, in the following section, the writer shall trace the socio-rhetorical situation of the time when Revelation was written.

4.3 The socio-rhetorical situation of the readers or audiences

4.3.1 Methodologies in examining the Roman Empire

As mentioned about the methodology in the first chapter, the writer will move beyond an analysis of the text itself and examine Revelation's dynamics of engaging Roman imperial power in terms of socio-rhetorical situations.

The rhetorical language of a text must be dealt with in an appropriate manner, and its symbolic-poetic images in Revelation make sense within its overall context and it has meanings and the power of persuasion in its own particular social-historical situation (Schüssler Fiorenza 1985:183). Thus, Schüssler Fiorenza (1985:183) argues that Revelation must be understood as a poetic-rhetorical construction of an alternative symbolic universe that fits its rhetorical-historical situation.

There are various models through which we can trace the context: historical-critical approach, social-scientific approach; social-historical approach; postcolonial approach; and socio-political or socio-rhetorical approach. In this study, the writer shall use mainly a socio-rhetorical approach in examining the context of the recipients of Revelation and in a complementary manner use postcolonial approach as well.

4.3.2 Recent view on the principal background of Revelation

The book of Revelation is mixture of three different types of genre which are apocalypse, prophecy, and letter. The author of Revelation utilises a letter for marking the prologue (1:1-8) and the epilogue (22:6-21), which is one of the rhetorical devices that the author uses, *an inclusio*. An inclusion uses similar words and phrases to bracket the beginning and ending of a text (Resseguie 1998:9). Rev. 1-3 explicitly shows that it is addressed in a genre of a circular letter to seven urban churches in the Roman province of Asia (Rev 1:4, 11). The seven messages given to the seven churches imply the socio-rhetorical context in which the later visions can be understood (Bauckham 2001:1288). Thus, we must take the first-century socio-rhetorical context of its first readers or audiences seriously in reading the whole book.

The various contexts of the first readers are sketched in Revelation itself, in the seven messages to the churches. As regards the major context of Revelation, there are two views: the Roman Empire's persecution of churches or assimilation of the Churches with the Roman Empire.

Firstly, the traditional view on the historical background of Revelation was that Christians in the late first-century CE were persecuted by emperor Domitian (81-96 CE) who was known as an evil tyrant having prompted the imperial cult (Reddish 1988:85; Carter 2008:70). In fact, three passages in Rev. 2-3 deal with the external difficulties (2:8-11, 13; 3:8-10) and all centre on persecution. Moreover, Roman authors like Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny show how Domitian persecuted despised Christians (Slater 1999:240-48, 251; Osborne 2002:9).

However, this view has recently been challenged by the second view which is more likely internal, not external persecution. There is one question that has been asked concerning the context of when Revelation was originally written: Did Christians in Asia Minor in fact experience Roman persecution? Concerning this issue, Carter (2008:69) lists three possible presumptions in which Jesus-believers in one of the cities in Asia Minor, Ephesus, suffered official imperial persecution and argues that none of these three claims can be sustained: (1) persecution after separation from a synagogue Jewish *religio licita* status; (2) persecution by the emperor Domitian; and (3) persecution such as that attested in the correspondence between the provincial governor Pliny and the emperor Trajan. Contrary to oft-repeated and popular scenarios, a number of scholars (cf. Collins 1983:69-73; Thompson 1990:105-9; Ford 1993:246-47; Carter 2008:70-2; Blount 2009:x) have recently challenged the view that the persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire was pervasive during Domitian's reign. Carter (2008:72) states, "Though persecution has often figured prominently in popular stereotypical scenarios of the early Christian movement, no evidence sustains the three scenarios mentioned above. Persecution is not one of the means by which Rome asserted its power in late first-century Asia-Minor", and it does not comprise the central dynamic for Revelation's complex interaction with the empire.

Nevertheless, while no evidence of widespread persecution exists, the relation between the state and Roman religious life put tremendous pressure on all citizens to participate in the official religion. Every aspect of civic life, from the guilds to commerce itself, was affected.

Thus, Ford (1993:246-47) rightly claims that Roman persecution under Domitian is not systematic persecution but the daily oppression and social ostracism that resulted from Christians refusing to participate in the life of the Roman cult.

It is now appropriate to briefly examine the main features of the Roman Empire, and identify some specific ways in which it was expressed in Asia-Minor in the late first century CE.

4.3.3 The main features of the Roman Empire

Since Augustus was the main founder of the Roman imperial system, his reign (31 BCE-14 CE) is significant for an understanding of the Roman Empire and for gaining insight into the functioning of the Christian movement within that system. In relation to the system that Augustus developed, Cassidy (2001:9-11) presents four key elements which the Roman authorities employed in their effort to make Roman rule acceptable to those who were the subjects under this rule.

The first key is construction projects benefiting the local and regional infrastructure such as amphitheatres, dikes system, public baths, harbours, and water supply. Such forms of public works certainly provided tangible benefits to the peoples of the subjugated territories.

The second key element is the achievement of relative peace and order, *pax atque quieta*, within the conquered territories. It was achieved by military campaigns or the threat of such campaigns, and it was dependent on the continuing deployment of hundreds of thousands of Roman troops. This form of peace successfully prohibited and quelled regional conflicts, civil strife, and attacks by bandits and pirates. For these reasons, many within the province, especially the provincial elites, readily welcomed Augustus' peace.

The third key component in Augustus' strategy for achieving an effective administration of Rome's provinces is the efficient utilization of these regional and municipal elites. Supreme within a given province, local authorities of the Roman Empire could be authorized to oversee many aspects of daily life, including public order and the collection of taxes. Local magnates who cooperated in fulfilling Roman objectives might well retain and enhance their property holdings, their positions of influence, and their titles of honor.

The fourth key element in Augustus' program was the dissemination of convincing propaganda on behalf of imperial rule. The famous Altar of Peace in Rome and other edifices at the provincial level were constructed from an expression of public gratitude from the benefits of Roman peace. Moreover, inscriptions on public buildings and the figures and inscriptions engraved on coins emphasized that Augustus was a Benefactor and Saviour of those whom he ruled.

Cassidy (2001:11) concludes that "for all of these reasons, the responsible course for all subjugated peoples was to live peacefully and cooperatively under Roman rule". As regards the structure of Roman power in Asia Minor, it is useful to borrow from postcolonial theories.

4.3.4 Expressions of the Roman Empire in Asia Minor

There are three principal types of Roman provincial community: (1) the *colonia* that were civic communities of Roman citizens settled outside Italy and also composed mainly of military veterans; (2) the *municipia* that were confined mainly to the Latin west, and of lesser status than the *colonia*; (3) the city or town that was neither an official *colonia* nor *municipia*, and as such less 'Romanized' than the first two (Moore 2006:100). The classic unit of Roman colonization was urban, and it was through an infrastructure of self-governing cities that Roman provinces were administered.

Contemporary postcolonial historians generally distinguishes between colonies of settlement (also known as settler colonies or settler-invader colonies), on the one hand, and colonies of occupation, on the other (Johnston & Lawson 2000:360-1). Colonies of settlement are those in which the indigenous population is decimated and uprooted, eventually becoming a minority in relation to the majority settler-invader population. Modern examples of such colonies would include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. In contrast, colonies of occupation are those in which the indigenous population remains in the majority numerically, but is subjugated and governed by a foreign power. Modern examples would include most of the European colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific (Johnston & Lawson 2000:360-1).

Regarding Asia Minor in the first-century CE, Moore (2006:101) claims that Roman Asia Minor better fits the colony of occupation model than the settler-invader colony model, since, in contrast to the rural Anatolian interior, which managed to preserve its indigenous character, Roman culture was concentrated in the mainly coastal cities of the province. However, the number of elite Roman officials allotted to any one the Rome provinces was minuscule relative to the amount of territory to be administered. Asia Minor was one of the ungarrisoned provinces of the empire, with no full legion stationed there.

It is now appropriate to ask what, then, the mechanisms were that enabled continuous Roman control of Asia. The concept for postcolonial studies serves to account for the ability of an imperial power to govern a colonized territory whose indigenous population overwhelmingly outnumbers the army of occupation. The concept of hegemony usefully illuminates the situation of Roman Asia Minor. The province itself originated not in an invasion but in an invitation. For example, Attalus Ⅲ of Pergamum bequeathed his kingdom to the Romans. Thus, it became province Asia after his death in 133 BCE (Moore 2006:102). Like any Roman province, the routine governance of Asia depended upon the active cooperation and participation of the local urban elites (Moore 2006:102; Carter 2008:71). Moreover, the local Asian elites enthusiastically embraced the Roman imperial cult, dedication to which became a major vehicle of competition between the leading cities of the province.

4.3.5 Roman imperial cult in Asia Minor

In the western provinces, the imperial cult tended to be imposed by Rome, while in the eastern provinces it was a voluntary affair. Moreover, in the Roman Empire itself divine honours were bestowed on as a rule only to deceased emperors, while the worship of currently reigning emperors was tolerated and even encouraged in the province (Moore 2006:103). However, it was a highly regulated competition. Delegates of the various civic communities met annually as the Council or Assembly of Asia in one of the five official provincial cities (Ephesus, Pergamum, Smyrna, Sardis, or Cyzicus) in order to conduct the business of the province, a crucial element of which was the organization of the imperial cult. In 29 BCE, a mere two years after Augustus'(Octavian) accession to supreme power, the Assembly of Asia had requested and was granted the honour of erecting a provincial temple to Roma and Augustus at Pergamum. The establishment of a cult of Roma and Augustus in

Asia became a model for other eastern provinces. It was neither imposed nor modeled by those at the apex of power, but was invented by Roman elite subjects instead. Considerable prestige was attached to the priesthoods and other offices of the provincial imperial cults and they could reach the pinnacle of a local political career. Moreover, major priesthoods in the imperial cults could also act as crucial stepping stones to a political career in Rome itself (Kraybill 1996:60-1; Moore 2006:103-4).

Each of Revelation's seven cities erected temples or altars to Roman emperors living or dead. The leading cities competed for the coveted title of *neokoros*, Temple Warden, awarded at the discretion of the senate and the emperor to cities containing an imperial temple with pan-provincial status (Moore 2006:105). Moreover, elaborate imperial festivals became a prominent feature of the religious life of the province. Moore (2006:102) summarily defines the imperial cult and the hegemony of Roman power in Asia Minor as follows:

> The mainspring of the complex hegemonic mechanism that enabled Roman governance of Asia, however – economically a jewel in the imperial crown, rich in natural resources, agriculture, and industry – was the intense competition for imperial favor and recognition in which the principal Asian cities were permanently locked (Ephesus, Pergamum, and Smyrna in particular, although the rivalry extended to many lesser cities as well). A vital expression of this competition was the city's public demonstration of the measure of its loyalty to the emperor, the ultimate patron or benefactor in relation to whom the city was a client or dependent, and as such in rivalry with the other client cities of the province for a limited quantity of goods and privileges. And the principal mechanism in turn (the wheel within a wheel) for formal demonstrations of such loyalty was the imperial cult: the rendering of divine honors to Roman Emperors, living or dead.

There is a good chance that many Christians also would have negotiated and participated in the civic and imperial context (Kraybill[43] 1996:21; Thompson 1990:15; Carter 2008:93). In relation to the imperial cult, Carter (2008:71) argues that Christians in Ephesus had in various ways negotiated the imperial cult for decades without reference to persecution and that

[43] In his book titled "Imperial cult and commerce in John's apocalypse," he examines how commerce and the imperial cult blended in the Roman Empire, and how Christians should respond.

participation in it was voluntary.

We hitherto examined the Roman Empire in relation to Asia Minor. Now we shall turn to the text of Revelation and look into what the text implies about the context.

4.3.6 Internal evidences of Roman imperial theology in Revelation

The influences of the culture and political system of the Roman Empire were spreading in Revelation. However, the first three chapters are among the most important in the book because they hint at the situation in which the later visions can be understood. As Koester (2001: 42) remarks, "The visions in Revelation do not float freely in heaven but address issues confronting Christian congregations on earth."

It is clear in Revelation that one of the primary problems of Christians in Asia Minor was the Roman imperial cult, that is, Emperor Worship (Rev. 13:4, 14-17; 14:9; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4) (Du Rand 2006:567). However, it was not by the coercion of the Roman Empire but by the assimilation of the churches in Asia Minor. In fact, Osborne (2002:7) claims that "Revelation speaks of a certain stability in the situation of the churches (2:4, 14-15, 20; 3:4, 16-17) but yet a fair amount of persecution" (1:9; 2:2-3; 9-10, 13; 3:8, 10). Most of the persecution was Jewish (2:9; 3:9), however, and the martyrdom of Antipas (2:13) was in the past. There is little evidence in the book for official Roman persecution at the time of writing, and only two of the letters mention affliction (Smyrna and Thyatira), although the letter to Philadelphia presupposes it. The perspective of the book is that most of the oppression is yet to come (6:9-11; 12:11; 13:7, 10, 15; 16:6;17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4). Thus, a number of scholars have challenged the evidence for official persecution under Domitian's rule (Collins 1983: 14-31; L. Thompson 1990:105-9).

Looking at Rev. 13, we can clearly see internal evidence of the imperial cult. As the writer examined in the foregoing chapter, Rev. 12-20 show parodies in which the Dragon, the two beasts mimic the holy trinity of God, Lamb, and seven spirits. In Rev. 13:3, the description of the beast is a parody. The same Greek phrase "ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον", translated as "seemed to have received a deathblow" (NRSV 13:3), is used to describe the Lamb – "ὡς ἐσφαγμένον", translated as "as if it had been slaughtered" (NRSV 5:6). The same Greek word,

"ἐσφαγμένον" and "ἐσφαγμένην", is used for both the Lamb and the beast respectively. Just like the Lamb in Rev. 5:6 is worshipped as the one worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing (NRSV 5:12, 13), the beast is worshipped by the inhabitants of the earth and is praised as follows: "who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" (NRSV 13:4). Moreover, Rev. 13:12 says that the mortal wound of the first beast had been healed, which is also a parody mimicking the resurrection of the Lamb. The beast is the demonic counterpart to the Lamb. Borrowing from a legend that although Nero died at violent death, he was still alive and would return supported by Parthian armies to regain Roman rule, Collins (1983:94) argues that the author of Revelation seems to present Nero as the demonic counterpart of Jesus. A number of scholars (e.g. Bauckham 1993a:384) agree that the beast representative as its number, 666, refers to Nero, the Roman emperor. If this is true, Rev. 13 is the chapter that shows the imperial cult in the clearest way.

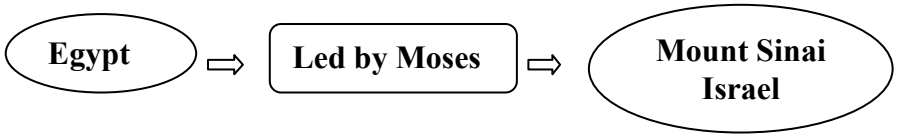
We hitherto sketched the Roman Empire in terms of Asia Minor. In the following section, we should examine how the exodus motif matches with Rev. 12-20 as well as 21 in terms of the situation of the Roman Empire and its imperial cult.

4.4 Socio-rhetorical roles of the exodus motif in Rev 12-20 and 21

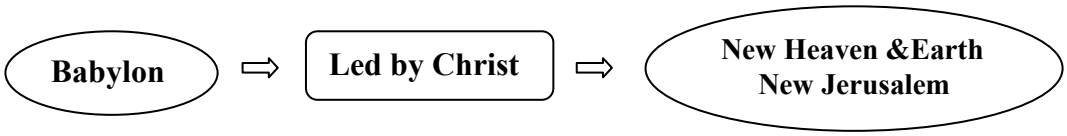
4.4.1 Socio-rhetorical effects of adopting the exodus motif into Rev 12-20

In the third chapter, the writer argued that Rev. 12-20 constitutes a plot in which the song of Moses and the Lamb plays a significant role, with the songs being placed at the center in the chiastic structure. As we have seen above, Rev. 12-20 is paralleled with Exodus 1-15 and Rev. 21 is paralleled with the latter part of Exodus. Rev. 12-20 contains both images of the first Exodus led by Moses and the new Exodus led by Christ in his second coming. In Rev. 12-20 the two images overlap from the beginning: Moses and Christ. It may be diagramed as follows:

The first exodus: the exodus out of Egypt by the leading of Moses to Mount Sinai



The second exodus: the new exodus out of Babylon by the leading of the Lamb to the New Heaven and New Earth



The image of the new exodus is one of the dominant symbolic motifs of Revelation in general (Bauckham 1993a:296) and Rev. 12-20 in particular. Moreover, it may well match with the situation of the audiences or the readers who were assimilated into the Roman Empire. The new exodus motif must have impacted much on the lives of the audiences or the readers, so that it would have made them expect a brand-new thing that Jesus Christ would rescue the redeemed community out of Babylon and lead them into the new world recreated by God, where the saints are demonstrated as a bride adorned for her husband, Jesus Christ (Rev. 21:2) and are symbolized as the New Jerusalem.

Moreover, the use of an exodus framework would cohere well with the emphasis in Rev 21 on the redemption of his people and the establishment of the Lord's sanctuary, and the role that the sea plays within this scenario is consistent with how sea imagery functions elsewhere in Revelation. The sea through which the Israelites passed and which God used to judge their enemies was already associated in biblical and early Jewish literature with the cosmic abyss, the realm of evil monsters and spirits and the chaotic powers that had been restrained at creation (Moo 2009:164). The absence of the sea from the new creation in Rev. 21 may imply the removal of the barrier between God's people and their promised homeland (Moo 2009:155), and therefore the accomplishment of the second exodus for the exiled people of God.

This adoption of the exodus motif to Rev. 12-20 and 21 would have challenged the audiences or the readers who were under the power of the Roman Empire to "come out of her" (Rev. 18:4), the Roman Empire and to be holy and to live as God's chosen people.

4.4.2 Socio-rhetorical role of the song of Moses

The vision of the conquerors standing on the sea of glass, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb in Rev 15, may be deliberately drawn so as to echo the experience of the Israelites at the Red Sea in Exod. 14-15. This allusion to the exodus supports the idea that the sea of glass mixed with fire signifies the judgments about to be poured out on God's enemies, and it implies that it is beyond this sea that God's people will find themselves established on Mount Zion (Rev. 14:1) in the presence of God and the Lamb (7:15), with their sorrows wiped away (7:17) (Moo 2009:155).

Through the reference of the song in Rev. 15:2-4 to Moses and the Lamb, the author of Revelation may reinforce the first exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt as well as its idolatrous culture, and also the new exodus of the saints out of Babylon as well as its imperial cult respectively. From the beginning of the plot, the author must have intended for the readers or audiences to see the plot in the light of the first exodus, but while reading or listening to this specific literary unit, the audiences or readers would have found in their situation an analogy to that of the Israelites. Thus, through the identification of their situation with that of Israel, the audiences or the readers may have recognized that Christ is the new leader who would save his people out of the ungodly world and challenge them to leave the ungodly nation, Babylon (Rev. 18:4).

4.6 Summary

In this chapter, the writer examined firstly the combat myth, which was widespread around the Mediterranean during the first century CE, and secondly the exodus motifs. Then, the researcher explained how the author of Revelation adopts the exodus motifs in forming both the theme and the structure. As we have seen, the intertextual adoption which recalls the themes and the structure of Exodus creates messages for those who were assimilated into the power of Roman Empire and the cultic culture. Thus, we examined the socio-rhetorical context, namely the Roman Empire and dealt with the socio-rhetorical role of the exodus motif in the book of Revelation.

It may be that the intertextual adoption does not remain in just giving some messages, but it

may evoke a new identity, drawing boundary between God's people and the inhabitant of the earth, namely people who were assimilated with the Roman Empire. In the following chapter, it will be argued that the ultimate goal of the allusive language of the exodus motif is to shape the new identity in the mind of the original readers or audiences, so that they may be holy apart from the culture and the system of the Roman Empire.

Chapter 5
Evoking a new identity from the exodus motif in Rev. 12-21: Allusions, memories, and identity

5.1 Introduction

In the foregoing chapters, the writer argued that Revelation 12-20 constitutes a plot in terms of narratology and that the theme and structure of Exodus 1-15 as a coherent story played a significant role in forming the theme and structure of Revelation 12-20 as well as 21. In addition, I offered a suggestion that the exodus motif in Rev. 12-20 not simply gives some meanings to the audiences or the readers who were under the power of the Roman Empire, but also challenges their assimilated identity to be attuned anew to the covenantal identity.

For the new identity that the author tried to form in the minds of readers, the writer shall explore more in detail in this chapter the frame of allusions, memories, and identity. In relation to identity, Lieu (2004:30) argues that "texts, as in any age, construct a sense of who we are, even when they seem to be engaged in doing something quite different." Jonker (2010:xi) also claims that it is commonly agreed in various disciplines and contexts that history writing often contributes to the process of identity (re)formulation. Using a text that was written in the past in order to find a renewed identity in new situations is characteristic of Hebrew Bible historiographies (Jonker 2010:xi). This may also be applied to the book of Revelation since it uses a number of the Old Testament books, significantly the book of Exodus, in a new situation, namely the Roman Empire.

Thus, firstly, we shall consider a framework of how the exodus motif works in relation to constructing a new identity through use of the Old Testament texts. It will be conducted in the frame of allusions, memories, and identity. That is, we shall explore how the allusion to the exodus event evokes essential memories which lead to the construction of a new identity in a community situated in a socio-rhetorical space, the Roman Empire.

Then, the core and the formation of the covenant will be discussed, which will be followed by

an examination of the main theme of this chapter, the new identity which is the new covenantal people of God in the Roman Empire.

5.2 A theoretical framework for forming a new identity: Allusions, memories, and identity

5.2.1 Allusion as a rhetorical strategy

Allison (2000:7-8) divides the relation between texts into formal quotations and allusions. He (2000:7-8) argues that formal quotations typically call attention to authority for the arguments that an author tried to make in a book in the New Testament. For example, in the authentic Pauline letters such as Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, or Philemon, there are no quotations at all. Moreover, whereas the Corinthian correspondences average less than one formal quotation per chapter, the six chapters of Galatians contain ten such quotations, and Romans has forty-eight. Thus, Allison (2000:7-8) argues that Paul tended to quote Scripture explicitly in polemical situations in which his opponents were also quoting Scripture. This explains the pattern of scriptural quotations in the authentic Pauline epistles. However, the primary purpose of the allusions, explains Allison, is not to add authority or help clinch arguments. Rather, their general effect is to stimulate readers to become more active, that is, allusions heighten attention and evoke memories and imaginations (Allison 2000:7-8).

One of the common rhetorical features of traditional Jewish and Christian literature is the expansion and intensification of meaning through inexplicit borrowing and allusion (Allison 2000:2). Biblical authors add depth and symbolism to their creative compositions by noting expressions hopefully memorized by the intended audiences or readers. In relation to the creative compositions, Keesmaat (1999:25) argues that traditions which are contained in biblical texts are constantly being adapted, transformed or reinterpreted in such a way that they have relevance for new historical situations. There is no mechanical dependence nor copying but a creative use of the old texts (Beale 1998:15). Thus, such a reworking gives rise to new texts in which the old texts are present, but are transformed and revitalized (Keesmaat 1999:25). According to James Sanders (1987:19), the adaptability is a compulsive factor of

the very nature of canonical story. However, the original author's frame should also be considered, since the new authors using the old texts, like the author of Revelation, are seen to show respect for the Old Testament contexts to which they are making reference (Beale 1998:15).

From at least the Babylonian Exile on, Jewish literary history as well as the New Testament is to a significant degree a series of responses to the Pentateuch (Allison 2000:3). These biblical books are typically designed to move their readers back to subtexts. Thus, in order to appreciate these books fully one must look behind them, to the texts in the background.

However, we tend to miss many subtle nuances until we stop, listen, ponder, and remember the older text appreciation of the authors of the New Testament. If we wish to understand more fully our sacred texts, we must consider possible subtexts that echo in the text. The subtexts in the background of the text can shed significant light on a vague symbolic language.

In this sense, allusion is in function similar to poetic language. Thus, in what follows, we shall consider allusion as a poetic-rhetorical device.

5.2.2 Allusion as a poetic-rhetorical device

In relation to allusion as a poetic language,[44] Conte (1996:38) argues that allusion works in the same way as a rhetorical figure, like metaphor. Allusion is in function close to metaphor. He (1996:53) also argues that "these two forms (allusion and metaphor) of poetic discourse rank equally as cultural products, and both require the dynamic functioning of memory." The literal forms taken by both appear to deviate from the meaning they convey. Both exist by virtue of their semantic duplicity, and their literary power lies in their capacity to enclose in tension within themselves the gap that extends between their lexical value and the image that they indirectly evoke (Conte 1996:53).

In his book titled "Interpretation theory: discourse and the surplus meaning," Ricoeur

[44] See Conte (1996:23-99). He deals with the art of allusion in Latin poets in relation to the features of poetic languages.

(1976:46) also argued that a work of discourse, distinguished from scientific discourse, brings an explicit and an implicit meaning into relation. The gap between the literal and figurative meaning in a metaphor generates the semantic ambiguity that characterizes a literary work (Ricoeur 1976:47).

The metaphorical density created by an allusive device will depend on its capacity to establish a tension between the normal (nonpoetic) sense and the expanded sense permitted by poetry. The transparence of practical discourse is only misted over by the comparative image conjured by a simile, but it may be made thoroughly opaque in the case of metaphor. Similarly, a range of disturbances of transparency will be created in allusion (in accordance with the type of contextual function), stretching between the high values characteristic of integrative allusion, when poetic memory contains an intrinsic surplus of sense, and the low values characteristic of reflective allusion, when poetic memory increases its meaning by attaching itself to an external source of sense (Conte 1996:69).

In fact, there is no explicit citation in Revelation but lots of implicit references which allude to the various texts in the Old Testament. In this respect, the images and the songs in the book of Revelation may have an affinity with poetry in terms of "the artistic process of detachment" (Conte 1996:51). In this respect, the book of Revelation requires us to apply all that we know about metaphors and similes. Poetry often hints rather than says; it signifies much with few words. The unfamiliarity of poetic language gives rise to a time gap to grasp the meaning, and intensifies the images or the memories that the author intends to evoke.

5.2.2 Allusion and identity

As regards the socio-rhetorical role of allusions, Allison (2000:7) claims that the use of allusive language that outsiders do not understand gives insiders something very important in common and so helps strengthen their communal bonds. Thus, the allusive language can be a way of drawing group boundaries and reinforcing feelings of group membership.

Examining the functions of the exodus motif in Romans and Galatians, Keesmaat (1999:136-154; 189-215) also deals with communities' identities and argues that the exodus motif in Paul's epistles has the effect of forming both the identity of those to whom Paul is writing

and their behavior in much the same way that the exodus narrative shaped the identity of Israel. Paul emphasizes the exodus motif to shape the self-understanding of the people of God. Moreover, the memory or remembering of the exodus event or the exodus narrative echoes language of the new exodus which the prophets anticipated (Keesmaat 1999:139). In this sense, Keesmaat's examining of the functions of the exodus motif also offers important insights on the approach to the covenantal identity that the author of Revelation tried to form.

In sum, the exodus motif in the book of Revelation in general and Rev. 12-20 in particular can play a significant role firstly in terms of invoking memories of God's action performed in Israel's history and secondly in terms of forming the community identity as God's people, the covenantal people of God.

Although Allison's classification helps us to explain the role that allusions play in a text pertaining to the formation of identity, we should go further to clarify the interaction between allusions and identities in the mediation of memories. For the clarification of the interaction, social psychological concepts will be drawn on to complement the respective models of Allison and Keesmaat.

5.2.3 Memory as a medium between allusion and identity

The study of memory and remembrance is a vital aspect of the study of identity in terms of how groups and societies create and sustain a sense of who they are and who they want to be by locating themselves in relation to time, especially the past (Struckenbruck, Barton & Wold 2007:1).

Agreeing with Halbwachs, Assmann (2006:1) argues that memory is a social phenomenon. Moreover, he (2006:8) also argues that memory has a cultural basis and that what communication is for communicative memory,[45] which is a synchronic memory, tradition is for cultural memory which is a diachronic memory. In his essay "Collective memory and cultural identity," Assmann (1995:126) defines cultural memory as "a collective concept of all knowledge that directs behavior and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation."

[45] It describes the social aspect of individual memory (Assmann 2006:3).

Drawing on the work of Assmann (1995; 2003; 2006), Punt (2010:3) claims that cultural memory plays an important role in the construal and maintenance of group identity, since social groups provide the setting and social patterns for coherent and enduring memories. He (2010:4) also argues that "unlike communicative memory and its focus on proximity and the present, cultural memory is concerned with notions and events of the past, which it actively props up through cultural formation such as texts, rituals, monuments and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observation)."

Keesmaat (1999:33-4) raises a question concerning Paul's relation to his tradition and outlines three options as possible responses to tradition in a new situation: abandonment of the tradition; reversion to tradition unchanged; and transformation of the tradition. Then, she examines Paul's relationship to one particular tradition within Israel's history, which is the exodus tradition. She (1999:34) claims that within Israelite historical memories (or cultural memory) the exodus was continually recalled as the major formative event in Israelite history and was seen as the event in which Israel was created. Moreover, it was recalled as the foundation that propped up the identity of the Israelite people and also as the basis for Israelite social interaction (Keesmaat 1999:34). In this respect, it is important to note that the people of Israel are specifically called to remember that which their God has done on their behalf (e.g. Exod. 13:3; Deut. 4:9, 23, 31; 6:12; 8:11-20; Isa. 44:21).

As regards the relevance of narrative to memory, in his 1971 essay titled "The narrative quality of experience", Stephen Crites (1971:291) claims that narrative, like music, is a cultural form reflecting our existence as temporal creatures. Experience, he says, is already an incipient story, made coherent by memory (Crites 1971:293). While we live forwards, we understand backwards. Hinchman & Hinchman (1997:2) argues that "memory, through which we perceive events in a simple before-and-after sequence, gives rise to recollection, involving the artful, though by no means arbitrary, transformation of mere chronological sequence into full-blown narrative". Only by virtue of the selective rearranging and reconstruction essential to narratives do the concepts of past, present, and future surface in human consciousness (Hinchman & Hinchman 1997:2).

Memory is important in the shaping of narratives in form and strategy, in order to invoke a suppressed past while it simultaneously enables a renewing which is vital to regain control

over individual and the group's life and future (Punt 2010:6). In his recent paper,[46] Punt (2010:7) argues that "narrative supports the activation of identity through memory" and "as social construction memories allow for their reconstruction in narratives in pursuit of change and new meaning." In the following sections, we should further explore the relation between identity and narrative.

5.2.5 Narrative and identity

The writer shall start this section with a question: why did the author of Revelation choose to present his cosmic story in the particular fashion, namely the apocalyptic narrative, borrowing its main theme and structure from the book of Exodus?[47] I would like to relate these questions to our discussion on the theme of identity in Revelation in the sections below.

Taking into consideration the recent turn to discourse in the study of collective memory (cf. Singh, Skerrett and Hogan 1994:19; Assmann 1995:132; Guijarro 2007:93; Mendels 2007:12; Byrskog 2008a:4; Punt 2010:7), we should consider the relation between identity and narrative discourse. Recent studies in social psychology and related fields provide many useful theoretical frameworks and concepts in terms of the interrelation of narrative and identity. According to these studies on the relationship between narrative and identity, communities defined in terms of nationality, gender, or ethnicity have been shown to use narrative resources in specific ways that set them apart from other communities (De Fina 2003:19-20). Biblical scholarship, in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, has also recognized the significant value of biblical texts as vehicles to shape a community identity (Keesmaat 1999:138-9; Knoppers & Ristau 2009:3).

How does the narrative model provide a framework for understanding persons or groups? Narrative is one of the privileged forms used by humans to elaborate experience. This is why narratives have been widely studied as windows into the analysis of human communities and

[46] Paper presented at the second UNISA symposium of New Testament and early Christian Studies on "memory and identity in Early Christianity," Pretoria, 6-8 October 2010.
[47] As regards the relationship between narrative and identity, it should be noted that for presenting the audiences or the readers with a new identity, the author of Revelation borrows the main theme and the structure from the exodus narrative in Exodus 1-15. That is why we examined Revelation 12-20 and Exodus 1-15 in terms of narratology.

individuals in diverse fields[48] (De Fina 2003:6). Arguing for the importance of the analysis of identity among Mexican immigrants, De Fina (2003:4-5) shows how such analysis inevitably leads to its expression in narrative discourse.[49] Moreover, advocating for a discourse-based approach to identity, she argues that narrative discourse is particularly illuminating of ways in which immigrants represent the migration process and themselves in it.

Language is central to the expression of identity. People in a group cannot understand and share experience if they do not express it linguistically. Thus, De Fina (2003:5) argues that storytelling, like other discursive practices, rests on socially shared meanings, conceptions and ideologies, establishing a constant dialogue with them, but also generating new meanings and new behaviours. One of the central functions of storytelling is that of presenting and representing identity. In this framework, storytelling or narrating is a way of talking about the self, but also a way of practicing certain types of identity in specific contexts (De Fina 2003:5). The recognition of the structuring power of discourse and of discourse organization is central to the duty of studying identity through discourse analysis (De Fina 2003:5). David Carr also contends that we use storytelling to integrate the past, present, and future, and to constitute stable, coherent identities on both a personal and communal level (Hinchman & Sandra K. 1997:2).

Narrative identity is not simply a first-person report but a complex structure that interweaves first-, second-, third-person perspectives into a semantic and temporal unity with a subject who attests to that identity and in doing so constitutes it as his/her own; one whose claims concerning identity are subject to certain constraints and can be tested by processes of validation (Atkins 2008:57).

Seeing the book of Revelation as a dramatic theological narrative, Du Rand (2006:578) characterizes the book of Revelation as follows:

> The book of Revelation may be characterized as an identity-enhancing narrative. The coherent theological plot of the narrative reaffirms the believers' identity and their

[48] See De Fina (2003:6). In her book titled "Identity in narrative," she enumerated the diverse fields in which narratives have been studied.
[49] De Fina, in her book, alternates the term "discourse" with "narrative" or "narrative discourse".

perception of a meaningful present and future in God's cosmic and soteriological plan.

In relation to the theme of identity in Revelation, it should be noted that the author of Revelation, through allusions familiar to his audiences or readers, tries to lead them to a certain point in time in the past of Israel and to evoke memories that God had a relationship with and worked among their ancestors. Such flashbacks are characteristic of prophetic literature (Beale 1998:367).

It should be also noted that as we have seen in the foregoing chapter, there are a multitude of connections between the exodus motif and the author's Roman-period audiences or readers.[50] It is clear that the author intended these allusions from Exodus as a framework to say something about the present day by saying something about the past. The exodus motif constructs a paradigm or model that seeks to induce the audiences or the readers to evaluate and classify the character and situation of their generation assimilated into the Roman Empire and to take appropriate steps as God's covenantal people.

To sum up, we have hitherto explored the interaction of allusions, memories, and identities in order to build up the framework for explaining what the exodus motif brings about in and through the book of Revelation. On the basis of the theoretical framework mentioned above, now we should examine what kind of identity the author tried to shape in the minds of the audiences or the readers.

Since the theme and the structure of the book of Exodus had been considered in forming those of the book of Revelation in general and Rev. 12-20 as well as 21 in particular, chances are that the theme of the covenant of God with Israel would have also been taken into consideration in forming the book of Revelation. The covenantal relationship between God and Israel would also have influenced the message of Revelation significantly. Moreover, the core concepts of the covenant were thought of as still continuous in their time (Rev. 11:19). Covenantal identity has not only a temporal, historical dimension as well as a theological dimension of having a relationship with God, but also a social dimension (Christiansen 1995:1). In this sense, it is safe to say that through the use of the exodus motif as a cultural memory of Israel, the author intended to evoke the covenantal identity as a paradigm on the

[50] See chapter 4.4.

basis of which the audiences or the readers may live holy as God's people distinct from the Roman Empire.

In what follows below, I will endeavour to apply these insights from social psychology to our reading of the cosmic narrative in Rev. 12-21. Firstly, the notions of the covenant will be briefly explored and how the covenantal identity is applied to the first century audiences or readers will be examined on the basis of the framework of allusions, memories, and identities.

5.3 The covenant of God with his people

We should admit that this is not the place to examine this theme in an in-depth discussion. The purpose of this section is more modest, namely to provide an overview of the Sinai covenant in order to investigate how the Sinai covenant interacts with the situation[51] of the Roman Empire.

Mount Sinai stands at the heart of the Bible and is in a sense its beginning. In fact, it was in the light of Sinai that the Hebrews looked back upon their earlier history (Faley 1997:5). In this respect, it is essential to look into the Sinai covenant in relation to the identity of God's people.

The Sinai covenant is regarded as a parallel to the international treaty forms of the day, best exhibited in the materials available from Hittite sources (Dumbrell 1984:94). Covenant is a formal legal-contractual arrangement in which both parties, a major power and a vassal, have obligations and responsibilities toward one another (Fee & Stuart 2002:438). In the Sinai covenant, God's obligation is blessing and mercy to those who keep covenant with him; the obligation of his people is obedience, especially the obedience as expressed in loving God and neighbour (Fee & Stuart 2002:438). In this broad sense, we shall explore important factors of the Sinai covenant.

[51] See chapter 4.3.

5.3.1 The continuity of the Sinai covenant with the Abrahamic covenant

To understand the covenant of God with his people as a nation, we should firstly turn to the passage of Exod. 6:2-8, because the passage explicitly reveals the relevance of the Sinai covenant to the Abrahamic covenant. Exodus 6:4 refers to the Exodus event as being in fulfilment of the patriarchal covenants, specifically the Abrahamic covenant. The book of Exodus starts with the implicit fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant which is the expansion of Abraham's descendants (cf. Gen. 15:5). The purpose of the exodus events is to bring about the nation with whom God will establish a special relationship (Exod. 6:7; cf. Gen. 17:7-8). Thus, Anderson (1999:137) concludes that in the final form of the Pentateuch (Torah), the Mosaic covenant is subordinated to the Abrahamic covenant which guarantees the promise of land and posterity.

One of the questions that are raised in Exod. 6:2-8 is that Exod. 6:3 is in conflict with 3:13-15 since it seems to indicate that the name of YHWH was unknown during the patriarchal period (Dumbrell 1984:83). For a solution to this problem, Motyer (1959:16) should be followed and thus Exod. 6:3 should be construed to mean that it is now in the Exodus period that the significance of the name YHWH is communicated.

The writer shall now examine significant factors in the Sinai covenant: the divine name, YHWH; three key terms in Exod. 19:3-6; the covenant formula; the importance of the victory at the Red Sea; the covenantal significance of the tabernacle.

5.3.2 Covenant formality in the Sinai covenant

5.3.2.1 The significance of the divine name, YHWH

Firstly, the divine name, YHWH, which is revealed to Moses in Exod. 3:14, it has a significant bearing on the covenant of God with his people. The divine response to Moses' request for God's name in Exod. 3:14 is of tremendous significance in terms of God's covenant with Israel. There is general agreement that the divine name YHWH is a verbal component of the Hebrew verb 'to be' (Dumbrell 1984:83). In relation to the divine name,

Childs ([1974] 2004:76) suggests that what is being said in 3:14-15 is that YHWH's nature will be known from his future acts, particularly from the imminent liberation.

Exodus 20:1-31:18 introduces the Sinai Covenant, which is a formal, solemn expression of God's relationship to his people (Stuart 2006:438). The introduction of God's identity in Exod. 20:1 is of extraordinary importance. The declaration of who God is ties the law back into the prior narrative (Exod. 19:1). God identifies himself in relation to a particular history of Exod. 1-15. The covenant of God with his people is based on the activity of God in redeeming Israel out of the land of Egypt, which is predicted by the divine name, YHWH, in Exod. 3:14. The redeeming activity of God indicates that the law and the service to God and what it entails are not understood to be another form of bondage but a gift of God (Fretheim 1991:223-4). Thus, Dumbrell (1984:84) argues that YHWH is "the name by which the covenant relationship is to be actualized in whatever may be the nature of Israel's responses to the covenant, be that in the faith responses of obedience and trust or in the more formal invocation of the name in Israel's worship." In what follows, we examine Israel's identity.

5.3.2.2 Three key terms in Exod. 19:3-6

The question of a covenant within the framework of Israel's experience at Sinai is raised formally for the first time in Exod.19. Appearing at the beginning of the Sinai pericope,[52]and in particular as the prelude to the theophany and giving of the law, the declaration of Exodus 19:4-6 has a significant bearing on our understanding of the character of the Sinai covenant.

The nature of the covenant is revealed in Exod. 19:4-6. God's message starts with a twofold statement of the historical event that God performed for Israel: You have seen (1) "what I did to the Egyptians" (v. 4a), (2) "how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself" (v. 4b). This twofold statement of v.4 is paralleled by a twofold description in vv. 5-6 of what is to be Israel's relationship with Yahweh (Dumbrell 1984:85): (1) "you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples" (v. 5b), (2) "you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation" (v. 6a). Of great importance are the three terms descriptive of Israel's vocation in

[52] The Sinai pericope, long regarded as a literary patchwork, is seen to have a coherence, and a rationale for the interweaving of narrative, law and cultic material is suggested which is consistent with the declaration of Israel as a royal priesthood.

vv. 5-6 (NRSV): my treasured possession, a priestly kingdom, and a holy nation.[53]

The common factor in the three terms is the separateness of Israel from her world (Dumbrell 1984:85). Israel must keep God's covenant (Exod. 19:5), that is, Israel must fulfil the commandments contained in this particular covenant, as the following chapters indicate. In this respect, the covenant between God and Israel has the bilateral nature, reflected in the conditional framework of Exod. 19:5-6 (Williamson 2007:96). If Israel obeyed God's commandments, God, for his part, would give Israel a special position among the nations, so that they could be his treasured possession. It is an election term in which "the note of the specialization from within what is generally available or at the divine disposal, and thus for private use, cannot be missed in the word" (Dumbrell 1984:86). However, the choice of Israel is not an end since the election term, *segullah*, is attached to the prepositional phrase which follows, "out of all the peoples" (Exod. 19:5 NRSV). The juxtaposing of Israel with peoples connotes "the general royal domain within which Israel is to assume a special function" (Dumbrell 1984:86).

As regards the other two terms, a priestly kingdom and a holy nation, we can understand better by adopting the parallelism between the two phrases. The parallelism suggests that "a priestly kingdom" is restated by "a holy nation" from a slightly different point of view (Dumbrell 1984:88). Taking into consideration the literary context of the terms, Dumbrell (1984:88) concludes that "verse 4 had referred to YHWH's action redemptively, v. 5 to Israel's resulting relationship, and then v. 6 to Israel's designated role and thus to her function."

In this respect, Exod. 19:5-6 clearly indicates what kind of nation God wants Israel to be. It is a holy nation set apart by God from all others. Israel is a light to the nations in terms of its function. Later, prophets, like Isaiah, take this function as the mission of Israel (cf. Isa. 42:6; 49:6; 60:3). Compare the following remark of Williamson (2007:97) in this regard:

> Israel's election as Yahweh's special treasure was not an end in itself, but a mean to a much greater end. Thus understood, the goal of the Sinaitic covenant was the

[53] Also in 1 Peter 2:9-10, Peter presents God's covenantal identity as the true identity of Christian community, emphasizing the continuity between ancient Israel and contemporary Christians (Green 2007:63).

establishment of a special nation through which Yahweh could make himself known to all the families of the earth.

In the frame of the covenant, the function of Israel involves the expression of the reign of YHWH (Exod. 15:17-8). According to the last verse of the song of Moses in Exod. 15, YHWH is exalted to reign forever and ever on the mountain through Israel. Thus, the covenant is closely related to the kingdom of God. The ultimate goal of the covenant of God with Israel is to establish his kingdom which includes all the people on the earth.

5.3.2.3 The covenant formula

Exodus 19-24 is the crucial material concerning covenant-making whereby YHWH reveals his name as the God of Israel, and Israel submits to the commandments of YHWH. This relationship of commandment and obedience is a relationship reflected in the often reiterated formula in the Old Testament: "I will be your God and you shall be my people" (Exod. 6:7; Jer 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; 31:33; Ezek 11:20; 14:11; 36:28; 37:23, 27).

Brueggemann (2003:65) emphasizes two points relating to the covenantal relationship. First, the exodus emancipation and the Sinai covenant belong together. The deliverance is in order to establish the new relationship which is possible only because of the deliverance. In these paired events, Israel trades in the severe governance of Pharaoh for the new governance of YHWH.

Second, in the covenant relationship the God who can say "the whole earth is mine" (Exod. 19:5) is the God who takes Israel as his own special people (Exod. 19:6). That YHWH is Israel's God, and Israel YHWH's people is expressed in a variety of linguistic forms. Rendtorff (1998:11) divides the formula into three versions (with variants): (1) I will be God for you; (2) You shall be a people for me; (3) I will be God for you and you shall be a people for me. There are distinguishing differences in the occurrences of the three formulas. Formula (1) occurs almost exclusively in the first four books of the Pentateuch (Gen. 17:7b, 8b; Exod. 29:45; Lev. 11:45, 22:33, 25:38, 26:45; Num. 15:41). In these books we do not encounter formula (2) at all, but we do find the bilateral formula (3) (Exod. 6:7; Lev. 26:12). In Deuteronomy, the matter is reversed: formula (2) occurs several times (Deut. 4:20, 7:6, 14:2,

27:9, 28:9); formula (1), on the other hand, never; and formula (3) twice (Deut. 26:17, 19, 29:12) (Rendtorff 1998:13).

The place where we first encounter the covenant formula (3) is in Exod. 6:2-8: "I will take you for my people and will be God for you" (v. 7a). According to Rendtorff (1998:17), Exod. 6:2-8 is in several respects a key text. This is true not only of its position in the wider context of the Exodus narrative, but also because of its central theological statements about God's relationship with Israel.

Together with deliverance and covenant, one of the defining categories for the faith of ancient Israel in the book of Exodus is presence which is emphasized in the account of tabernacle. Now we shall turn to the covenantal significance of the victory at the Red Sea.

5.3.2.4 The importance of the victory at the Red Sea

In Near Eastern myths, such as the *Enuma Elish* from Mesopotamia and the Baal text from Ugarit, that narrate the conflict between a divine-warrior god and the forces of chaos, the victory of the divine god is one of the essential factors of the divine warfare. Longman and Reid (1995:83-88) claim that there are five different stages in the myths: warfare, victory, kingship, house-building, and celebration. On the basis of the pattern, they study the biblical material, first of which is Exodus 15. The song of Moses in Exodus 15:1-18 is a psalm of praise for God's victory over the Egyptians. In the poem, one may find all the elements of the pattern of Near Eastern myths.

In this respect, the victory of God at the Red Sea is also essential to the covenant with God. The victory at the Red Sea, which reaches to the climax of the first part of Exodus, symbolizes God's redemptive action of deliverance of his people from Egypt, the final judgement of God on Pharaoh and his army, and the ultimate defeat of God against the Sea with its monsters. It subsequently became a paradigm of God's acts of deliverance of his people from the threat of enemies and death (cf. e.g., Psalm 18:14-15; 29:10; 74:12-17; Isaiah 27:1; 43:14-21; Nahum 1:4a).

Illustrating various examples in which the image of God leading Israel in the exodus occurs

in a number of places in Israel's scriptures, Keesmaat (1999:58-59) argues that the exodus event is repeatedly recollected as a basis for assurance of God's continued faithfulness to Israel. In fact, the imagery of God's war with the Sea in the exodus motif is central to Israelite tradition as it is interpreted and reinterpreted throughout the Septuagint and intertestamental literature.[54]

It should be noted that the victory of God at the Red Sea is significantly alluded to in Rev. 12-20 in terms of the structure and the theme,[55] and that as the basis of Israelite self-identity, the exodus was recalled as the basis for Israelite social interaction (Keesmaat 1999:34).

5.3.2.5 The covenantal significance of the tabernacle

Williamson (2007:96) claims that "the primary concern of the Sinaitic covenant was on how the divine-human relationship between YHWH and the great nation descended from Abraham (Gen. 17:7-8) should be expressed and maintained." Thus, the instructions to erect the tabernacle must be understood in terms of the covenant. The tabernacle represents God's dwelling in the midst of his people and facilitates the maintenance of the divine-human relationship which was at the centre of the Mosaic covenant (Williamson 2007:103-105). As regards its function and the relevance to the New Testament as well as Revelation, Williamson (2007:105) remarks as follows:

> As a symbol of God's relationship with his people, the tabernacle thus served an important function in the life and religion of the people of God. However, it was a temporary institution until the people of God were established in the Promised Land – after which, like their more permanent personal dwellings, God's dwelling took on the form of a house. Nevertheless, even this was but the foreshadowing of the New Testament reality, when God's son would make his tabernacle among his people (John 1:14) and, ultimately, bring heaven down to earth in the New Testament (cf. Rev. 21-22).

[54] The sea is often depicted as the place of primordial chaos which stands in opposition to creation (cf. Ps. 104:6-7; Gen. 1:2-10) and the source of hostility and of the bestial adversaries of God and his people (cf. Isa. 27:1; 51:9-10; Dan. 7:2-3; 1 En. 60:7-8; 4 Ezra 6:49-52; 2 Bar. 29:4; Apoc. Ab. 2VA). God's overt opposition to the hostile sea is a fairly widespread motif in the OT (cf. Job 7:12; 26:12; Pss. 18:15; 29:3; 74:13-14; 77:16; 89:9-10; Jer. 5:22; 51:36; Nah. 1:4; Hab. 3:8; cf. 1 En. 101:7).

[55] As we have seen in the third chapter, the song of Moses and the Lamb (Rev. 15:2-4) is central to the structure and the theme of Rev. 12-20. According to Rev. 21:1, there is no sea in the new creation because God had defeated the cosmic Sea.

It is to be noted that in the Old Testament, the announcement or the renewal of the covenant occurs in the context[56] of the establishment or the restoration of the temple or Jerusalem. For example, in Exod. 29:45 the formula occurs in reference to the establishment of the Tabernacle. In Jer. 31:33, the formula appears in reference to the restoration of the temple or Jerusalem. Moreover, Zech. 8:3 and Ezek. 37:26-27 (cf. 43:7) have the same pattern. Lee (2001:273) argues that this pattern may be applied to the context of Revelation. In the New Jerusalem in Rev. 21:22-23, God the almighty, the Lamb, and even his people are established as the New Temple with no temple (Lee 2001:273).

We, hitherto, have studied the Sinai covenant which may have been adopted as a significant motif for forming the covenantal identity in the minds of the audiences or the readers who were assimilated into the Roman Empire. In what follows below, we shall examine how the covenantal notions interact with the identity of the audiences or the readers.

5.3.3 The covenant in Revelation

5.3.3.1 A divine name

The book of Revelation hints at the theme of identity of God's people from the very beginning. One of Revelation's most important designations of God points to the covenantal identity. It is the threefold form, and the twofold form that occur three times and two times in Revelation respectively:

1:4 him who is and who was and who is to come
1:8 the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come
4:8 the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come
11:17 Lord God Almighty, who are and who were
16:5 O Holy One, who are and were

The repetition of the divine name emphasizes its importance in Revelation. This formula of

[56] Sometimes, the covenant formula also occurs in the context of Torah observance (cf. Lev. 26:11-12; Jer. 7:23).

the divine name is the author's unique alteration on the Old Testament divine name from Exod. 3:14 (cf. Bauckham 1993b:28-9; Beale 1999:187; Koester 2001:50): "ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν" (LXX) ("I AM WHO I AM"/ NRSV). Bauckham (1993b:28-9) argues that later Jewish interpretation understood these terms as statements of the divine eternity. For example, Philo (*Mos. 1:75*) understands the divine name to be "the one who is", which expresses the divine eternity in Hellenistic philosophical fashion as timeless being. Moreover, the Palestinian Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan) paraphrased the divine name: "I am who I was and will be" (Exod. 3:14) or "I am who is and who was, and I am who will be" (Deut 32:29).[57] This formula in three tenses were also used of Greek gods or the supreme God of philosophy: "Zeus was, Zeus is, Zeus shall be" (Pausanias, Description of Greece, 10.12.10), but the author of Revelation insists that these characteristics belong to one true God (Koester 2001:50). Significantly, the difference between the use of the author of Revelation and all other instances, Jewish or Greek, of this threefold formula is that in Rev. 1:4 the third form is not the future of the verb but the present participle of the verb, that is, the one who is coming. Through this kind of variation of the divine name, the author creates theological meanings in Revelation. Bauckham (1993b:29) contends that the author depicts the future of God not as his mere future existence, but as his final coming to the world in salvation and judgment. Beale (1999:187) argues that the eternal, trans-historical perspective of the divine name can encourage the audiences or the readers to stand strong in the face of difficulties that test faith and press to compromise (Beale 1999:187).

This interpretation of the divine name is in significant continuity with the meaning of Exod. 3:14, which indicates to God's commitment to be whom he will be in his history with his people (Bauckham 1993b:30). In Exod. 3:14, God's name connoted the promise in which God, for the redemption of his people, will be with them and save them from Egypt. Thus, God's unique name, "ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν" (LXX) ("I AM WHO I AM"/ NRSV), is closely related to his redemptive action, because the name was given as a covenantal declaration that God would save his people from Egypt. Therefore, the name in Rev. 1:4, "ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος" ("who is and who was and who is to come"/ NRSV), has a special meaning that God is the covenantal God who will achieve his eschatological rule over the world in the second coming of Jesus Christ (Bauckham 1993b:29).

[57] Beale (1999:188) argues that it is unlikely that John is dependent only on Deut. 32:39. Rather, the author of Revelation is more likely familiar with the general traditions that expand Exod. 3:14.

In sum, the name of God originally altered from that of Exod. 3:14 operates as a framework to the audiences or the readers, so that they could listen to or read the rest of the book in the light of the covenant with God.

5.3.3.2 The word "conquer"

All the messages to the seven churches are structured in an identical pattern of eight elements: address to the angel; the city; prophetic messenger formula; Christological ascription; the divine knowledge; the body; the call to attention and obedience; eschatological promise to the victors (Boring [1989] 2011:86-91).

The last pattern with which each letter concludes is a promise of blessing, expressed in apocalyptic terms, to the Christians who conquer (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). As the Christological affirmation with which each message begins represents a flashback to the Christophany of 1:9-20, the promise to the conquerors with which each message concludes represents a forward glimse to the eschatological glory of chapters 20-22 (Boring [1989] 2011:89).

The conquest does not mean that the saints win physically or politically. Conquest does, however, mean that ultimately the saints will, like Christ, through the word of their testimony, resist the bestial forces of Rome (12:11; 15:2; 17:14) and acquire eschatological relationship with God (Blount 2009:52). In this sense, "to conquer is to witness resistantly" (Blount 2009:52).

The word "conquer" is repeated eight times in Rev. 2-3 (2:7, 11, 17, 26, 28; 3:5, 12, 21), where all the cases are used in terms of the victory of the churches. Then, in Rev. 5:5, the word is used in relation to the authority of Jesus Christ to open the scroll, right after which Jesus is described as a Lamb who had been slain. The victory and the authority of Jesus Christ are closely related to the death of Jesus Christ. This pattern may provide the audiences or the readers with an example that they should follow. In this sense, to conquer may be to follow Jesus in his steps to the point of the martyr, just as Jesus was executed on the cross because of the redemptive ministry (5:6, 9, 12). John is also exiled on Patmos (1:9); Antipas

was executed (2:13), as are many like him (6:9-11; cf. 11:7; 13:7).

The word "conquer" is even connected to the ultimate identity that the author tried to shape, the covenantal identity. Rev. 21:7 says, "Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children (NRSV)." As we have examined earlier in this chapter, the expression "I will be their God and they will be my children" is the covenant formula which demonstrates the relationship of God and his people. According to Rev. 21:7, those who conquer will be God's covenantal people. Those who deserve God's covenantal people are people who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name (15:2).

The Christian life called for in chapters 2-3 is not adherence to moralistic norms but a life lived in view of the reality of the Christ event in the past and the victory of God in the eschatological future (Boring [1989] 2011:89-90). The seven messages are thus integrally linked to the apocalyptic eschatology of the body of the book (Boring [1989] 2011:89-90).

Thus, Boring ([1989] 2011:90) argues that conquering is a key word through which we may understand Revelation's Christology and the Christian life. Moreover, it demonstrates the ultimate identity, namely the covenantal identity.

5.3.3.3 The covenantal motif in Rev. 12-20

As the writer examined in the foregoing chapters, the book of Exodus is taken into account significantly in forming the structure and the theme of Rev. 12-20. Rev. 12-20 is outlined in a chiastic structure, with the song of Moses and the Lamb at the center. From the beginning of Rev. 12-20, the exodus motif may be implied in the scene of the conflict between the Dragon and the woman about to bear a son. The author of Revelation may associate the conflict in the first part of Rev. 12-20 with that between Pharaoh and Israel in Egypt. A number of words used in Rev. 12-20 are closely related to the covenant of God with Israel: the two wings of the great eagle (Rev. 12:14); wilderness (12:6, 14); the song of Moses (15:2-4); marriage motif (19:7-8; 21:21:2); priests of God (20:6).

5.3.3.3.1 The two wings of the great eagle and wilderness (Rev. 12:14)

The vision of chapter 12 recalls the cosmic combat story of the dragon Python's attempt to prevent the coming to power of Apollo, the son of Zeus by Leto. Python pursues Leto, while she is pregnant with Apollo, in order to kill her. By order of Zeus, the north wind rescues Leto by carrying her off to an island. Then, Poseidon, god of the sea, hides her by covering the island with waves. Python cannot find her and so gives up his search (Collins 1983:85). Although the story of chapter 12 becomes very similar to the abovementioned cosmic combat myth, there are distinctive differences in Rev. 12, where the woman is apparently helped by order of God (12:6). Whereas Leto is carried off by the north wind, the woman in Rev. 12:14 is given "the two wings of the great eagle" that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness. Moreover, while Poseidon came to Leto's aid, the woman is helped by the earth.

These overt differences could have led the audiences or the readers to the Old Testament traditions in which they may have found special references in relation to the covenant of God with Israel. "The two wings of the great eagle" evokes a metaphor for deliverance from Egypt. Thus, most scholars agree that it alludes to Exod. 19:4. In Exod. 19:4, the eagles' wings stand for God's redemptive action in terms of the covenant of God with Israel.

The refuge prepared for the woman is taken in the wilderness which calls to mind the wilderness of Sinai in front of Mount Sinai (Exod. 19:1-2) and the wilderness wandering (Collins 1983:87). God rescued Israel out of Egypt and led them to Mount Sinai in the wilderness of Sinai where God made a covenant with Israel. During the wilderness wandering, God faithfully provided the Israelites with food and protected them from the foreign people. According to Rev. 12:6, 14, the woman is nourished for one thousand two hundred sixty days in the wilderness, which fits well with God's covenantal providing and protection.

5.3.3.3.2 The song of Moses (15:2-4)

This vision serves as a climax to the preceding visions and prepares for the following golden bowls (Collins 1983:107). Although the contents of the song do not directly alludes to the song of Moses in Exod. 15:1-18, the designation of the song of Moses sung beside the sea of

glass corresponds to Exod. 15:1-18 and plays a significant role of reinforcing the exodus motif. As we have seen, the victory of God at the Red Sea is one of the essential factors regarding the covenant with God. The victory at the Red Sea symbolizes God's covenantal action of deliverance of his people from Egypt, the final judgement of God on Pharaoh and his army, and the ultimate defeat of the Sea with its monsters. In 19:1-20:15 the ultimate triumph or salvation is expressed.

5.3.3.3.3 Marriage motif (19:7-8; 21:21:2)

It is common that in the Old Testament the covenantal relationship is compared to marriage motif: Isa. 62:5; Jer. 2:2; Hos. 2:19-20. The marriage motif in the Old Testament is patterned after the covenantal relationship established at Mount Sinai (Exod. 19) and the banquet motif as a pair with the marriage that follows in Exod. 24.

In Rev. 19, the saints clothed with fine linen of righteous deeds are compared to the bride of the Lamb and the marriage supper of the Lamb follows the marriage motif. The banquet as an image for the kingdom of God occurs frequently in the synoptic gospels (cf. e.g. Mt 22:1-14; Mk 2:18-20; Lk 12:35-38). In this banquet motif, the abundance of food and drink points to the experience of another kind of abundance (Collins 1983:132). On the other hand, "The marriage supper of the Lamb" (19:9), with its tables laden with fine food, are connected to "the greater supper of God" (19:17), in which the birds of heaven are invited to feast on the slaughtered who lie on the battlefield (Koester 2001:171). Be that as it may, the marriage motif, together with the banquet motif, is one of the most distinctive characteristics of the covenant of God with his people.

5.3.3.3.4 Priests of God (20:6)

According to Rev. 1:6; 5:9-10; 20:6, the author identifies the audiences or the readers in terms of the covenantal identity from Exod. 19:6: a kingdom and priests. The author's use of Exod. 19:6 does not simply apply the nation Israel as God's covenantal people to the audiences or the readers but also conveys the implied notion that they now function as the true Israel. The contrast between the future announcement of Exod. 19:6 ("you will be…") and the proclamation of an accomplished fact in Rev. 1:6 ("he made us…") indicates the

inauguration of both functions in the time when Revelation was written (Beale 1999:193). The twofold office was established by Christ's death and resurrection (Rev. 1:5). The identification of the audiences or the readers with his resurrection and kingship means that they too are considered to be resurrected and exercising rule with him as a result of his exaltation (Beale 1999:192), which is reinforced in Rev. 5:9-10 and ultimately fulfilled in Rev. 20:6 and 22:5.

5.4 Evoking a new identity

5.4.1 Drawing boundaries

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, social-psychological notions are important to understand group identities. In relation to the theme of social identity, there are two subareas of social psychology[58], namely social identity theory (SIT)[59] and self-categorization theory (SCT).[60] The former is related to intergroup relationships and explains the uniformity and coherence of group and intergroup behaviour as mediated by social identity. The latter extends social identity theory by describing the way that social identity regulates behaviour. Self-categorization brings about ingroup normative behaviour and self-stereotyping, and is thus the process underlying group behaviour (Hogg 1995:559).

In discussing the construction of early Christian identities, self-categorization theory is helpful[61] (Tellbe 2009:149). Hogg and Abrams (1999:1-12) define the notion of self-categorization theory as follows:

> The core notion of self-categorization theory was that social categorization produces distinct and polarized ingroup-and outgroup-defining prototypes that assimilate

[58] Hogg and Abrams (1999:1-12) offer a good overview of the history of the two subareas of social psychology.
[59] Tajfel and colleagues at the University of Bristol developed the theory of social identity in the 1970s and 1980s. "Tajfel (1972) first introduced the concept of social identity, the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (Hogg & Terry 2001:2).
[60] Turner *et al*. extended social identity theory by noting that self-conception occurs on multiple levels of inclusiveness.
[61] Offering a few methodological remarks, Jonker (2010:65-91) tries to apply the insights from social psychology (particularly from SCT) to the reading of the lists of David's officials in 1 Chronicles 23-27. According to Jonker, the texts very clearly reflect the categorization of officials during the final part of David's reign.

> relevant group members – this depersonalization process, when applied to self, transforms one's self-representation, perceptions, cognitions, feelings, and behaviour so that they are governed by the ingroup prototype.

In relation to Rev. 12-20, the ingroup prototype by which redeemed community in Asia Minor were governed may be the exodus motif. Tajfel (1982:485) demonstrated that, when people were categorized into groups, they immediately started to discriminate in favour of their own group. A group exists since people categorize themselves as members of the group (Tellbe 2009:149). People define themselves in terms of their membership to particular shared social categories (Tellbe 2009:149-50).

Taking into consideration features of self-categorization theory, it may be that the author tried to categorize the saints of the seven churches in Asia Minor as God's covenantal people and intended to challenge them to discriminate themselves from the citizen of the cities in Asia Minor.

When it comes to social conflicts, Tellbe (2009:140-41), borrowing from Coser's thesis on social conflict, summarizes four potential characteristics[62] of ingroup and outgroup conflicts in a social setting. Summarily, Tellbe (2009:140) claims that "ingroup and outgroup conflicts can serve to shape and enforce the identity of the group, to clarify boundary markers and to strengthen the difference between us and them, between insiders and outsiders."

The drawing up and articulation of boundaries play an important role in shaping the identity of one group.[63] Boundary-drawing and self-identification is what constitutes identity. In

[62] "First, conflict may serve as a boundary-maintaining and group-binding function. This means that conflict with other groups contributes to the establishment and reaffirmation of the identity of groups and to the maintenance of their boundaries against the surrounding world. Secondly, the closer the relationship, the more intense a conflict seems to be. In conflicts with close groups (e.g., with heretics), it is likely that one side hates the other more intensely the more the opposing group is felt to be a threat to the unity and identity of the ingroup. Thirdly, conflicts may serve to define and strengthen group structures and may result in ingroup solidarity, enhanced awareness of ingroup identity and a tightening of the group boundaries. A conflict with another group may lead to the mobilization of the energies of the group members, and hence to an increased cohesion of the group itself. Groups engaged in continued struggle with the outside world tend to be intolerant within; they are unlikely to tolerate more than limited departures from the group unity. Fourthly, ideology (the collective aims) that transcends personal interests will make struggles between competing groups more intense. If the antagonists have in common the search for truth and the protection of ideals of the group that they represent, the conflict is likely to be more radical and merciless than conflicts fought for personal reasons" (Tellbe 2009:140).

[63] See Du Rand (2006:565-596). He (2006:571) argues that it is the Christian ethos which dominates Christian identity, because it demonstrates the boundaries.

relation to social conflict between ingroup and outgroup, ingroup glorification and outgroup denigration are common dynamics of groups engaged in conflict (Tellbe 2009:141).

In relating the drawing up of boundaries in social conflicts to Revelation, Revelation in general and Rev. 12-20 in particular show distinctive boundaries: Jesus Christ and the Roman emperor; God's people and the inhabitants of the earth; and their destiny on the contrary. In what follows, we shall examine the boundaries between the redeemed community and citizens of cities in Asia Minor.

5.4.1.1 Jesus Christ and the Roman emperor

It is clear in Revelation that one of the primary problems of the Christians in Asia Minor was the Roman imperial cult, that is, Emperor Worship (Rev. 13:4, 14-17; 14:9; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4). Looking at Rev. 13, we can see internal evidence of the imperial cult clearly. As we have seen in the foregoing chapter[64], Rev. 12-20 show parodies in which the Dragon, the two beasts mimic the holy trinity of God, Lamb, and seven spirits. The former party appears only in Rev. 12-20 (13:1-18; 16:13; 19:20; 20:10), but the latter party is found in the first part of the book (cf. 1:4; 5:1-8). Through the structural parallel, the author tries to draw a distinct boundary between the holy trinity and the ruling system of the Roman Empire which the Dragon rules.

In addition to the general structural parallel of two antithetical triads, certain features about the sea-beast reflect those about Jesus Christ. In Rev. 13:3, the description of the beast is another parody. The same Greek phrase "ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον", translated as "seemed to have received a deathblow" (NRSV 13:3), is used to describe the Lamb – "ὡς ἐσφαγμένον", translated as "as if it had been slaughtered" (NRSV 5:6). The same Greek word, "ἐσφαγμένον" and "ἐσφαγμένην", is used for both the Lamb and the beast respectively. Just like the Lamb in Rev. 5:6 is worshipped as the one worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing (NRSV 5:12, 13), the beast is worshipped by the inhabitants of the earth and is praised as follows: "who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" (NRSV 13:4). Moreover, Rev. 13:12 says that the mortal wound of the first beast had been healed, which is also a parody mimicking the resurrection

[64] See chapter 4.3.6.

of the Lamb. The beast is the demonic counterpart to the Lamb. Borrowing from a legend that although Nero died at violent death, he was still alive and would return supported by Parthian armies to regain the rule of the Roman Empire, Collins (1983:94) argues that the author of Revelation seems to present Nero as the demonic counterpart of Jesus. A number of scholars (Bauckham 1993a:384) agree that the beast representative as its number, 666, refers to Nero, the Roman emperor. If this is true, Revelation in general and Rev. 12-20 in particular clearly draws the boundary between the holy trinity and the unholy trinity and between Jesus Christ and the Roman emperor. Through these boundaries, the author may have intended to help the audiences or the readers to see through the unholy trinity by which the Roman Empire was governed and to challenge them to worship only God as well as their true emperor, Jesus Christ.

5.4.1.2 God's temple in heaven and the Dragon's temple on earth

In Greco-Roman and ancient Near Eastern societies, religion was not a self-contained and isolated phenomenon. Throughout the Hellenistic and early Roman imperial periods, temples permeated virtually every aspect of society in Asia Minor. Thus, Stevenson (2001:1) argues that it is essential to come to grips with the phenomenon of the temple in order to understand the religious attitudes, social practices, economic concerns, and political activities that characterize the culture of Asia Minor. A temple offered a sense of security based in a relationship with the deity and functioned in virtually every context: in the social[65], political[66], and economic[67] areas (Stevenson 2001:1).

Despite differences between the temple in Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures, there was a

[65] Although cultic officials might live in sanctuaries on a semi-regular basis, some Greek sanctuaries offered shelter to esteemed travellers (Stevenson 2001:70).

[66] Both the Greeks and Romans employed temples and sanctuaries for civic, political, and judicial gatherings, including voting (Stevenson 2001:75-6).

[67] "The festivals, competitions, processions, and fame of the temples with their votives and treasures could bring great prestige and much-needed income to a city as well as attract business ventures. Many temples possessed great wealth in a variety of forms. The temple of Artemis at Ephesus increased its wealth through deposits of private money, votive dedications, private donations, bequests, foundations, and fines payable to the goddess. Greek temples or a particular part of the temple such as the rear chamber functioned as treasuries for the protection of the money, dedications, and other treasures. One of the reasons why cities of Asia Minor competed so heavily for the right to build a provincial temple of the imperial cult was due to the tremendous economic benefits that could accrue from such a possession" (Stevenson 2001:72). Coins minted by cities in Asia Minor frequently adopt the motif of the cult statues. Examples of such coins are attested for Artemis at Ephesus, Aphrodite at Aphrodisias, Apollo at Miletus, Artemis Leucophryene at Magnesia on the Maeander, Nemeses at Smyrna, Kore at Sardis, and Artemis at Perge. The motif came to be employed for Roman emperors as well (Stevenson 2001:46).

significant overlap in the broad meanings and functions of temples (Stevenson 2001:215). Jews or Gentiles living in urban cities in Asia Minor could not escape Hellenistic influences and the religious environment that permeated every facet of urban existence (Stevenson 2001:216).

Revelation abounds with temple and cultic language. The first reference to a temple occurs in 3:12 where the reward for the one who conquers is to be made a pillar in the temple of God. In chapters 4-20, the language is centered on the heavenly temple (4-5; 8:3-5; 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5-8; 16:17-18).

In this section, we will focus on chapter 13 which draws the distinctive boundary between God's temple and the Dragon's temple. The cosmic battle between the forces of Satan and the allies of God and the Lamb, which was vividly described in Rev. 12, continues without pause in Rev. 13, where the Dragon operates through the beast from the sea and the beast from the land. The beast out of the sea (Rev. 13:1) bears a striking resemblance to Satan the Dragon (Rev. 12:3). The beast has a leopard's body, a bear's feet, and a lion's mouth (Rev. 13:2). Although the beast has received a deathblow on one of its heads, it has recovered. Thus, people are enthralled by the beast and worship it, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" (13:4c), with the crowds presumably answering, "No one is like the beast." However, through the rhetorical question, the author may have intended for the audiences or the readers to answer differently (Koester 2001:126). They already knew that the armies of heaven have defeated the Dragon in heaven, and that Satan is conquered by the blood of the Lamb and by the testimony of the saints. The beast is the demonic counterpart to the Lamb. Many of the beast's features are distortions of those of the Lamb (Koester 2001:126-27). The beast out of the earth also imitates Christ in that it has "two horns like a lamb". The beast out of the earth functions as a false prophet (Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10).

In relation to the boundary between God's temple and Dragon's temple, it is to be noted that in Rev. 13:6, the beast out of the sea slanders God's "dwelling place," or perhaps, "tabernacle". The most common conception of the temple in antiquity was as an abode of the gods. Then, that the beast blasphemes God's dwelling means attacking God himself. Given the significant functions of temples within everyday life, it is clear how a temple could be a vital symbol of identity that structured someone's relationship both with the deity and with

his or her surrounding environment (Stevenson 2001:1).

Stevenson (2001:223) argues that people establish boundaries in order to construct their identity and then seek to sustain them in order to safeguard that identity. For the Jew, the Jerusalem Temple established boundaries that distinguished the Jewish people as the God's covenantal people from their neighbours (Stevenson 2001:223). Temples can be so easily chosen as symbols of identity because they establish boundaries, dividing the sacred and the profane, the transcendent and the secular, heaven and earth, the faithful and the unfaithful, insiders and outsiders (Stevenson 2001:223).

In this respect, the author draws a clear boundary between God's temple and the Dragon's temple for the audiences or the readers to leave the Roman imperial cult as well as the local temple worship and to maintain their distinctive identity.

5.4.1.3 God's people and the inhabitants of the earth

Christians in the seven churches of Asia who received the book of Revelation confronted pagan temple worship daily. People in Ephesus worshipped Artemis in a majestic temple. Smyrna, with its Caesar-cult, built the second Asian temple to the emperor Tiberius. Pergamum's Caesar-cult held the honour of building the first temple dedicated to Tiberius, in addition to its worship of Aesculapius and Zeus. The main deity of Thyatira was Apollo. Ruins of the great temple of Artemis at Sardis, fashioned after the one in Ephesus, speak to its former splendour. Philadelphia was called temple warden because of its connection with the emperor worship cult. Laodicea was built near the temple of *Men Karou*, a high god in the local pantheon (Overstreet 2009:446).

In his recent essay, "The temple of God in the book of Revelation", Overstreet (2009:446-62) offers an overview of pagan worship in the seven cities. As evidence from the seven cities of Revelation 2-3 shows, temple worship was common in the culture in first century western Asia Minor. Worshippers of pagan gods observed temple practices in elaborate architectural masterpieces and made sacrifices on extravagant altars. The author of Revelation and the audiences or readers were accustomed to the religious environment of his day.

Collins (1983:14-31) relates the messages in Rev. 2-3 to mostly the assimilated and complacent churches whose socio-rhetorical situation was examined in the former chapter. She (1983:20) describes a specific situation in relation to the issue of meat sacrificed to idols as follows:

> The strict avoidance of meat sacrificed to idols would mean a separatist stance for the Christian community. Such a stance would involve not only a radical critique of the religious life of the Roman Empire, but a rejection of its social economic life as well. The position advocated by the Nicolaitans would make possible participation in the social and economic life of the empire. However, it would open the door to syncretism and religious and ethical compromise as well.

In the first century, much of the meat available in the markets and served in private homes and at banquets came from animals which had been slaughtered in a religious ceremony. Although some Christians, like many Jews, refused to eat such meat, many Christians were presupposed in the messages to the seven churches to eat such meat,[68] so that they acknowledged or even worshipped the pagan gods. Therefore, the attacks on these false teachers representative of Nicolaitans and Balaam and Jezebel reflect the basic issue of assimilation, and emphasize what Christian faith and community life are all about (Collins 1983:20).

Thus, presenting the covenantal identity from the incipient stage of Revelation (1:6), the author draws a boundary between God's people and the inhabitants of the earth, which continues through the book of Revelation.

In Revelation, the earth and its inhabitants are described as the enemies of the saints by which the saints had been slaughtered, and thus the wrath of God will be poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth (Rev. 6:10; 8:13). Ellul (1977:94) describes the inhabitants of the earth as follows:

> The inhabitants of the earth, that is to say tied to the things of the earth, characterized

[68] The issue of meat sacrificed to idols was one of the controversies that Christians faced in the first century Mediterranean areas ruled by the Romans (1 Cor. 8-10).

> by their belonging to the earth, find of themselves no higher divinity than the state and put their hope and faith in it.

They are people who were deeply engaged with the earthly things which rooted in the economic system of the Roman Empire. However, the book of Revelation makes a claim on its audiences or readers. It calls them to see the world in a different way and to challenge their lives to be reformed by the new perspective and to reject the religions and cultures of the Roman Empire with which they were assimilated (Rev. 18:4).[69] Moreover, the book even tries to reshape not only individuals but communities and the world as well (Collins 1983:xiv).

In relation to the function of the visual imageries used in Revelation, Bauckham (1993b:10) argues that they create a symbolic world which readers can enter so fully that it affects them and changes their perception of the world. The visual power of the book effects a kind of purging of the Christian imagination, refurbishing it with alternative visions of how the world is and will be (Bauckham 1993b:17).

As we have seen thus far, the author tries to draw a distinctive boundary between God's people and the inhabitant of the earth. What is more, the author offers an alternative world with which a new identity, namely the covenantal identity, interacts.

5.4.1.4 Babylon and the New Jerusalem

In relation to two ancient cities (Babylon and Jerusalem), which were centers of commerce, politics, ritual, and power, Rossing (1999:1) argues that the two cities, namely Babylon and the New Jerusalem, were often used in visionary writings and critical warnings of Jewish literature.[70] The author rhetorically compares the two cities to two contrary images: the whore portraying the decay of empire (Rev. 17-18) and the bride portraying the ultimate

[69] Carter (2008:93) argues that the writer of John's Gospel which is presumed to have been written to Ephesus are concerned about levels of societal participation and that the Gospel functions as a hidden transcript, a contesting voice whose rhetoric of distance offers an alternative reality, urging Jesus-believers to a less-accommodated and more-distinctive existence as an alternative community even while the Gospel's rhetoric participates in and mimics imperial ways.

[70] For Babylon, see 4 Ezra 3:1-2, 28-31; 2 Bar. 10:1; 11:1; 67:7; Sib. Or. 5:143, 159; 1 Pet 5:13. For New Jerusalem, see 4 Ezra 9-10; 2 Bar. 4; Sib. Or. 5:420-27; Tobit 12-14; Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22.

blessing of God's people (Rev. 21). Rossing (1999:1) explains the rhetorical function of the opposing images of the two cities as follows:

> John builds on hundreds of years of tradition to present Jerusalem and Babylon as opposing figures in the most thorough economic, political, religious, and ethical appeal of his time, calling believers to come out of the whorish city and to take part in the glory of a bridal vision.

When it comes to the destiny of the two cities, it should be noted that Revelation emphasizes the temple of God in heaven, "including characteristics of this temple that served as poignant reminders to readers of their position before God in their daily lives" (Overstreet 2009:446). Although the author as well as the audiences or readers knew that the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 CE, they did have a concept of a heavenly temple of God (1 Enoch 14:15-20). According to Rev. 3:12, each saint is metaphorically a pillar in God's temple. It is worth noting that the first mention of the temple of God in Revelation 3:12, and the last mention of the temple in 21:22, both directly connect the word temple with the New Jerusalem which is the center of the new creation (Lee 2001:272) and symbolizes redeemed community (Moo 2009:159). The redeemed community as God's covenantal people (Rev. 21:7) ultimately reign forever and ever (Rev. 22:5), which is the expression of the identity of a kingdom and priests serving his God (Rev. 1:6; 5:10).

On the contrary, the inhabitants of the earth who worship the beast (Rev. 13:8) are in the end thrown into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur (Rev. 19:20). The boundary of the destiny is hinted at in the song of Moses and the Lamb in Rev. 15:2-4 and is clearly manifested in the second coming of Jesus Christ in Rev. 19-20 and beyond.

The rhetorical arrangement of two cities in parallel is designed to give the audiences or the readers a reason to pursue the way of faith in the present (Koester 2001:196).

To sum up, Revelation may emphasize the heavenly position of the redeemed community, which would have challenged the audiences or the readers to detach themselves from the system of the Roman Empire and to recognize their identity as the covenantal people of God.

5.4.2 The new covenantal identity as an alternative community in Asia Minor

In Rev. 12-20, the author alludes to the exodus motif in terms of the structure and the theme, focusing on the removal of the ultimate enemy of God's people. The exodus motif is highlighted by the song of Moses and the Lamb at the centre of the chiastic structure.[71] Through the exodus motif, the author emphasizes God's redemptive action of deliverance of his people from Babylon and the final judgement of God on the unholy trinity of the Dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

The disappearing sea as a cosmic evil in Rev 21:1c is a prerequisite for the arrival of a new creation (cf. Mathewson 2003a:247; Moo 2009:155). Moo (2009:155) explains the significance of the removal of the sea for the new creation as follows:

> To the extent that the sea of Rev 21:1c borrows from the significance of the heavenly sea of Rev 4 and 15, its absence from the new creation could imply the accomplishment of a second exodus for the exiled people of God, and therefore the removal of the sea as a barrier between God's people and their promised homeland—as well as the end of the judgement it threatens.

The removal of the sea accomplishes the second exodus led by Jesus Christ. More evidences for tracing a new Exodus theme derive from Revelation at large.[72] Following his prophetic predecessors, such as Isaiah, the author makes use of the original Exodus event as a paradigm for a second, greater creative act of God in restoring his people from the assimilated lives (Mathewson 2003a:256).

Mathewson (2003a:256) claims that "Isaiah 43:19 is frequently acknowledged as the most explicit exemplar of the new Exodus thematic in Isaiah 40-55" and that "by alluding to Isa

[71] In the third chapter, the writer analyzed Rev. 12-20 in terms of the chiastic structure in which the song of Moses and the Lamb is put at the center.

[72] "Clear indications of the author's utilization of the Exodus motif are: 1) the Passover lamb imagery used to depict Christ (1:5-6; 5:9-10); 2) the trumpet and bowl judgments, modeled on the plagues poured out on Egypt in judgment—blood, frogs, darkness, sores, etc. (8:6-11:19; 15:5-16:21); 3) the vocation of God's people as kings and priests (1:6; 5:10; 20:6; 22:3-5; cf. Exod. 19:5-6); 4) the sequence narrated in 15:1-5-the followers of the Lamb stand by the sea and sing a new song of Moses (cf. Exod. 15); and 5) the Sinai theophany as an image of future judgment (4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18-21; cf. Exod. 19:16)" (Mathewson 2003:255).

43:19, John's composition resonates with the overtones of this scriptural appeal: John conceives of eschatological deliverance as a new Exodus."

In addition, the reference to the covenant dwelling of God (Rev 21:3; cf. Ezek 37:26-27) also reverberates with Exodus connotations, in that a renewed covenant relationship was the very goal of the first Exodus (Exod. 6:7; 15:17; 25:8). What is more, the establishment of God's σκηνή (dwelling; Rev 21:3) resonates with associations of the wilderness tabernacle (Exod 15:17; 25:8; 29:45; Lev 26:11-12). Accordingly, from the cumulative effect of these texts and contexts, we can sketch the following coherent picture: following their deliverance from Babylon (Rev. 12-20), the saints are restored to the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:2a; Isa 52:1) as God's new covenantal people in a new Exodus (Rev. 12-20; Isa 43:19; cf. Rev. 15:2-4) where God dwells in the midst of his people (Rev 21:3; Ezek 37:26-27; Exod. 6:7; 15:17; 25:8) (Mathewson 2003a:256-57).

The part of the new creation that the author focuses on is the redeemed saints (Beale 1999:1041). The vision in 21:2-22:5 is thus dominated by various figurative portrayals of the glorified community of believers. Moreover, Beale (1999:1041) argues that the allusion to the new creation prophecy of Isa. 43:18-19 and 65:17 has begun to be fulfilled in the physical resurrection of Christ. Then, it may be that in Rev. 12-20 and 21, the saved community is emphasized and their covenantal identity is evoked.

The author portrays that consummation in terms that go back through Isaiah to Genesis 1:1: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea" (Rev. 21:1). According to Niehaus (1995:348), this remarkable verse says much about God's covenant faithfulness. It affirms that, "surpassing any ancient Near Eastern emperor, he will not only restore what was damaged through the covenantal unfaithfulness of his vassal; he will remake it entirely, creating an altogether better state of affairs" (Niehaus 1995:348).

To sum up, the allusive language from the exodus motif may invoke the audiences or the readers to expect the new exodus led by Jesus Christ, as he returns in his glorious majesty. In line with a number of Israelite traditions in which the new exodus is expected, Rev. 12-20 and 21 show the theme of the new exodus and the New Jerusalem respectively. Moreover, the

exodus motif may lead to the covenantal identity which is also one of the main themes of Rev. 21.

5.4.3 The song of Moses and the Lamb and the covenantal identity

Schüssler Fiorenza (1985:183) rightly argues that Revelation must be understood as a poetic-rhetorical construction of an alternative symbolic universe that fits its rhetorical-historical situation. She (1985:187) explains it as follows:

> "Revelation is not just a symbolic-poetic work but also a work of visionary rhetoric. While the poetic work seeks to create or organize imaginative experience, the rhetorical seeks to persuade or motivate people to act right. Poetry works by representation and is fulfilled in creation while rhetoric seeks to teach and instigate; poetry invites imaginative participation while rhetoric instigates a change of attitudes and motivations".

Apocalyptic language is imaginative, rather than descriptive or explanatory. The imaginative approach highlights the manner by which the symbolic world addresses the imagination of the audience (Stevenson 2001:14). Revelation, in particular, is a mixture of visionary rhetoric that seeks to persuade and poetry that seeks to engage the imagination. Since participation and persuasion, imagination and changes are not exclusive of each other, poetic and rhetorical elements can be effectively interwoven in Revelation.

In line with the imaginative and persuasive features of the book of Revelation, music, in particular, plays a larger role in the book of Revelation than in any other book of the New Testament. It may be that music reinforces imaginations and persuasive visions. It follows that the song of Moses and the Lamb as music in community worship may strengthen the covenantal identity and the alternative symbolic world which the author intended to construct. It is because whenever the saints gathered for the community worship and the song was sung, they would have remembered the victory of God over Pharaoh as well as his armies and God's covenantal faithfulness. This repeating liturgy may have impacted a lot on the everyday lives of saints, where they would have had to deal with the religions and the cultures of the Roman Empire into which many of them had been assimilated.

Koester (1992:243-49) claims that attention to how the hymns in Revelation would have sounded to the audiences or the readers who first heard or read them can help revitalize the singing of the hymns these passages have inspired. Specifically, the victorious song of Moses and the Lamb in Rev. 15 helps to inspire the faith of readers still facing the prospect of suffering, knowing that God holds the future. Moreover, the song whose contents refer to the judgments upon the Roman Empire would have challenged the audiences or readers to forsake the idols and the lifestyles into which they had been assimilated. This challenge is re-accentuated in Rev. 18:4 which commands to the saints to escape the plagues that are supposed to fall on Babylon the Great: "Come out of her, my people, so that you do not take part in her sins, and so that you do not share in her plagues" (Rev. 18:4 NRSV).
Thus, the song of Moses and the Lamb would have challenged the audiences or the readers to make resolutions to reject the idols and the lifestyles of the Roman Empire. Moreover, the author may have intended to add force to the new identity based on the covenantal relationship with God, so that the identity that was accommodated into the Roman Empire may be substituted for the covenantal identity which is God's ultimate vision for his people (Rev. 21:7).

5.5 Summary

We started this chapter by suggesting that the exodus motif in Rev. 12-20 not simply gives some meanings to the audiences or the readers who were under the power of Roman Empire, but also challenges their assimilated identity to be tuned anew to the covenantal identity.

Drawing on the theoretical assumptions from social psychology, we built up a framework in which we can deal with Rev. 12-21 in terms of identity issues. That is to say, we examined how the allusion to the exodus evokes essential memories which create a new identity in a community situated in a socio-rhetorical space, the Roman Empire.

For the new identity that the author tried to form in the minds of the saints, the writer suggested the covenantal identity as a new identity with which the audiences or the readers may have seen the world under Roman rule in a totally different way that they may have lived holy as God's covenantal people.

Chapter 6
Conclusion

6.1 General summary

The underlying purpose of this research was to study the issues of how to approach the song of Moses and the Lamb in Rev. 15:2-4 and what socio-rhetorical roles does it play for the audiences or readers who were assimilated into the Roman Empire.

This work was carried out in three levels of argument. The first level was narratological (chapter 3-4); the second level was socio-rhetorical (chapter 4); and the third level was social-psychological (chapter 5).

Regarding the first level, it was hypothesized that the song of Moses and the Lamb must be read within the larger context, namely Rev. 12-20, rather than digging into the song itself independently, tracing the sources of which it is made up. In this level, the writer examined Rev. 12-20 and Exod. 1-15 in terms of narratology, and argued that the two units constitute a plot and that Exod. 1-15 is significantly taken into account in forming Rev. 12-20 in terms of both theme and structure.

In the second level, it was argued that through the exodus motif the author intended to deliver relevant meanings to the audiences or readers who lived in the situation in which the culture and religion of the Roman Empire prevailed. In relation to methodology, the socio-rhetorical approach of Robbins (1996) was considered and subsidiarily post-colonial approach was also drawn on.

In the third level of argument, the writer argued that the intertextual adoption does not remain in just giving some messages, but it evokes the covenantal identity. Regarding methodology, social-psychology was used in order to establish the framework explaining the interactions between allusions, memories, and identity. It was argued that the ultimate goal of the allusive language of the exodus motif was to shape the new identity in the mind of the original readers or audiences, so that they may be holy apart from the culture and the system of the Roman Empire.

In what follows, we shall summarise how the three levels of the argument of this thesis were developed in each chapter.

In chapter 2, an overview of the history of interpretation of Revelation was offered and also the perspectives of some scholars who have recently studied Revelation and the song of Moses in Rev 15 were introduced: Bauckham; Aune; Beale; and Moyise. Each scholar has different views[73] in relation to three controversial issues: the relation of Revelation 15:2-4 to the immediate context, namely 15:1 and 5-8; the interpretation of 'a sea of glass mixed with fire'; the sources from which the contents derive. Notwithstanding the insightful researches of each scholar, the writer found in their studies a limitation in relation to the range of context and suggested the necessity of a new approach to the song of Moses in the wider context, namely Rev. 12-20 which may be thought of as a coherent literary unit, constituting a plot. .

In chapter 3, I analysed Rev. 12-20 on the basis of four narrative elements: setting; character, point of view; and plot.[74] In the narratological analysis of Rev. 12-20, we focused more on Rev. 12, which is the beginning part of the unit, and also singled out some part out of Rev. 12-20 in order to prove that Rev. 12-20 forms a unit. In this process, it was clarified that Rev. 12-20 forms a plot. Moreover, drawing on the discourse analysis, the writer outlined Rev. 12-20 in a chiastic structure with the song of Moses at the centre. Rev. 12-20 is structured as follows:

A: **Christ** as a child taken up to heaven from earth (Rev. 12)
Satan thrown down from heaven to earth (Rev. 12)
B: Beast out of the sea and the earth (Rev. 13)
The Lamb and **one hundred forty-four thousand** who are blameless (Rev. 14:1-5)
C: Harvest on the earth (Rev. 14:6-20)
Those who worship the beast have no rest (14:9, 11)
D: the wrath of God is ended (15:1)
E: **The song of Moses and the song of the Lamb at a sea of glass** (Rev. 15:2-4)
Those who had conquered the beast and its image sing the songs

[73] See chapter 2.3.2
[74] See chapter 3.3.1

d: the seven plagues are ended (15:5-8)

c: Seven plagues on the earth (Rev. 16)

People of the kingdom of the beast gnaw their tongues in agony (16:10)

b: Harlot and the beast that carries her, and the fall of Babylon the Great (Rev. 17-18)

The Lamb and **the saints** who are righteous, their marriage (Rev. 19:1-10)

a: **Christ** as a warrior who threw the beast and false prophet into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:11-21)

Satan thrown down from the earth into the abyss (Rev. 20)

Also in this discourse analytical structure, we could see how within the narratological perspective the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb play a crucial role.[75]

In chapter 4, intertextual investigations were carried out in relation to the sources from which the author of Revelation borrowed. Firstly, the combat myth that was widespread around the Mediterranean during the first century was slightly dealt with,[76] and secondly the exodus motif which operates as a frame in forming Rev. 12-20 was examined in detail.[77] It was followed by the argument that Exod. 1-15 constitutes a coherent story[78] and influences Rev. 12-20 in terms of both theme and structure. As regards the theme, I argued that the author of Revelation kept in his mind the themes of Exodus and that Rev. 12-20 is paralleled with Exod. 1-15 and Rev. 21 is paralleled with the latter part of Exodus. It may be tabled as follows:

Exod. 1-15	Rev. 12-20
Pharaoh raging a war against God and his people	The Dragon trying to devour Christ
Moses rescued out of the Nile	Christ taken to God and his throne
The conflict between Pharaoh and Moses	The conflict between the Dragon and the two beasts, and Christ and his followers
God's defeat of Pharaoh at the Red Sea	God's defeat of the Dragon and his followers
God's covenant with the Israelites	The renewal of the covenantal relationship
The tabernacle, the place of the glory of God	The New Jerusalem

[75] See chapter 3.3.1.4 about the explanation of the chiastic structure.
[76] See chapter 4.2.1.
[77] See chapter 4.2.2.
[78] See chapter 4.2.3.

When it comes to the structure, the book of Exodus is followed by Rev. 12-20 as well as 21. The writer outlined the structural similarity as follows:

> Exod. 1-14: The war between Pharaoh and God, by *the mediator, Moses*.
> Exod. 15:1-21: (at the end of the story) / The song of Moses
> Exod. 15:22-40:38: The covenant with God and the temple which the glory of God filled.
>
> Rev. 12-20/ The war between the Dragon and God, by *the mediator, Jesus Christ*.
> Rev. 15:2-4: (in the middle of the story) / The song of Moses and *the song of the Lamb*
> Rev. 21-22:5: The covenant with God and *the New Jerusalem*, where God is the temple and their light.

There are two distinctions in this parallelism. Firstly, the mediator, Moses, is substituted for Jesus Christ. Jesus alludes to Moses in that Jesus plays a crucial role of leading the saints to the New Jerusalem in his second coming. Secondly, the temple image of Exodus is replaced by the New Jerusalem in Rev. 21. In this examination, the writer elucidated that the exodus motif plays an essential role in forming Rev. 12-20 in terms of both theme and structure.

Moreover, we claimed that this intertextual adoption must have created some messages for the audiences or readers in terms of the socio-rhetorical perspective. In other words, the exodus motif has a socio-rhetorical function, so that it may create messages for those who were assimilated into the Roman Empire and the cult culture. Thus, we explored the socio-rhetorical environment,[79] namely Asia Minor under the rule of the Roman Empire, and its socio-rhetorical function of the exodus motif in Rev. 12-20. The exodus motif in Rev. 12-20 must have made the saints expect the new exodus that Jesus Christ would rescue the redeemed community out of Babylon and lead them into the new world recreated by God, where the saints are demonstrated as a bride adorned for her husband, Jesus Christ (Rev. 21:2) and are symbolized as the New Jerusalem.

In chapter 5, it was argued that the intertextual adoption does not remain in just giving some messages, but it may evoke a new identity, drawing a boundary between God's people and

[79] See chapter 4.3.

those who were assimilated into the Roman Empire. For the new identity that the author tried to form in the minds of readers, the writer explored a theoretical framework of allusions, memories, and identity in the light of social psychological theories.[80] Then, as a suggested identity, the writer explored the covenantal identity.[81] On the basis of the covenantal identity, the writer argued that the ultimate goal of the allusive language of the exodus motif is to shape the covenantal identity in the minds of the original readers or audiences, so that they may be holy apart from the culture and the system of the Roman Empire. As regards the song of Moses and the Lamb, the writer argued that music, in particular, plays a larger role in the book of Revelation than in any other book of the New Testament and that music reinforces imaginations and persuasive visions. It follows that the song of Moses and the Lamb as music in community worship strengthens the covenantal identity and the alternative symbolic world which the author intended to construct.[82]

6.2 Conclusion

The ultimate goal of this thesis was firstly to trace the exodus motif in Rev. 12-20 in terms of both theme and structure, and also to investigate the identity that the author wanted to create in the minds of the original readers. Through the three levels of argumentation mentioned above, we demonstrated that Rev. 12-20 constitutes a plot in terms of narratological perspective and that Exod. 1-15 is repeated in Rev. 12-20 in terms of both theme and structure.

Significantly, the song of Moses plays a central role in Rev. 12-20 and Exod. 1-15 in terms of both theme and structure. The victorious song of Moses and the Lamb in Rev. 15 helps to inspire the faith of the audiences or readers still facing the prospect of suffering, knowing that God holds the future. Moreover, the song whose contents refer to the judgments upon the Roman Empire would have challenged the audiences or readers to forsake the idols and the lifestyles into which they had been assimilated. This challenge is re-accentuated in Rev. 18:4 which commands to the saints to escape the plagues that are supposed to fall on Babylon the Great: “Come out of her, my people, so that you do not take part in her sins, and so that you do not share in her plagues” (Rev. 18:4 NRSV). This challenging message through the song

[80] See chapter 5.2.
[81] See chapter 5.3.2.
[82] See chapter 5.4.3.

of Moses and the Lamb evokes the covenantal identity and encourages the saints to live out God's calling as the covenantal people.

One of the personal motivations that inspired me to study the book of Revelation is Caird's demonstration that Revelation is fundamentally a book about God and the Lamb and that the end is not an event, but a person (Caird 1966:266). As we have seen in this thesis, Caird's claim is absolutely true. The book of Revelation ultimately points to the covenantal identity which is also relevant to God's people of all ages. However, there are still many who seek to find secret messages coded in Revelation and eschatological events occurring at the end of time. The church institutionalized in modern material civilization is being secularized, just as the first century church of Asia Minor was assimilated into the Roman Empire. It is safe to say that the modern material civilization can be compared to the ancient Babylon. In this vein, the book of Revelation delivers a significant message for the modern church to live out God's calling as the covenantal people, and the song of Moses and the Lamb may be the song that modern Christians should sing in their worship services and in their real lives until the Lord comes again.

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