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978-0-521-07896-2 - The People of God in the Apocalypse: Discourse, Structure, and Exegesis

Stephen Pattemore

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## THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE APOCALYPSE

Stephen Pattemore examines passages within Rev. 4:1–22:21 that depict the people of God as actors in the apocalyptic drama and infers what impact these passages would have had on the self-understanding and behaviour of the original audience of the work. He uses Relevance Theory, a development in the linguistic field of pragmatics, to help understand the text against the background of allusion to other texts. Three important images are traced. The picture of the souls under the altar (6:9–11) is found to govern much of the direction of the text with its call to faithful witness and willingness for martyrdom. Even the militant image of a messianic army (7:1–8, 14:1–5) urges the audience in precisely the same direction. Both images combine in the final image of the bride, the culmination of challenge and hope traced briefly in the New Jerusalem visions.

Dr Pattemore is a translation consultant with United Bible Societies, working with translation projects in New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

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# The People of God in the Apocalypse

Discourse, Structure, and Exegesis

**STEPHEN PATTEMORE**



**CAMBRIDGE**  
**UNIVERSITY PRESS**

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## PREFACE

The book of Revelation, despite (or perhaps because of) the perplexing nature of its imagery, continues to attract both academic and popular interest in Western societies in the early years of a new millennium. But the stimulus for this study has come from involvement in the task of translating the scriptures into the languages of Asia and the Pacific. The context of Bible translation has given a pragmatic edge to my study. While I have focussed principally on understanding the text within its original context, the goal and purpose has always been not only to add to academic literature on the book of Revelation, but to provide a secure basis for contextualizing its message in the vastly different languages and thought worlds of contemporary societies.

This work has its origins in the major part of my Otago University doctoral thesis, and my thanks go to Paul Trebilco, Tim Meadowcroft, and Peter Carrell for their skilful supervision and advice and also for their friendship and encouragement. Otago University (Dunedin), the Bible College of New Zealand (Auckland), and Tyndale House (Cambridge, UK) have all played a significant part in bringing this research to fruition.

The research was carried out with the help of a scholarship provided by the United Bible Societies, to whom my sincere thanks are due for their generous sponsorship. In particular I wish to acknowledge the help and encouragement of David Clark, for many years UBS Translation Consultant to the Urak Lawoi' New Testament translation project on which I worked. Thanks also to Graham Ogden, and to his successor as Asia-Pacific Regional Translations Coordinator, Daud Soesilo, and to Basil Rebera, formerly UBS Translation Services Coordinator, for their support. Part of my research, a discourse analysis of the entire book of Revelation, which sets the stage for this present work, has recently been published in the UBS Monograph Series. Thanks for financial help are also due to the John Baldwin Memorial Scholarship Fund.

My thanks are due to John Court, and his predecessor as editor of the SNTS Monograph Series, Richard Bauckham, for their advice



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and encouragement. I am also very grateful to the staff of Cambridge University Press, in particular Kate Brett and Jackie Warren, and to Pauline Marsh, for their help in bringing the typescript to publication.

My own family has been a loving and stimulating context in which to carry out this study, keeping me firmly anchored to the reality of contemporary life. This volume is dedicated to my wife, Raewyn, who, having endured an earlier thesis (in Physics, twenty-five years ago), not only accepted another thesis into the family with good grace, but provided all the personal encouragement and support I have needed. And it has been an ever-present challenge to justify to teenage and young adult children why “slaughtered souls under the altar” deserved so much time and attention. Thank you to Kerry and Greg, to David, Rachel, and Brian, fellow pilgrims to the New Jerusalem.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

## Periodicals, series and reference works

AB	Anchor Bible
ACNT	Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament
AnBib	Analectica Biblica
AramBib	The Aramaic Bible: The Targums
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
AUSDDS	Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series
BAGD	W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, <i>A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edn, 1958)
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BBS	<i>Behavioural and Brain Sciences</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BGBE	Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese
BI	Biblical Interpretation
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BT	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BTTB3	Bibliothèque de théologie. Théologie biblique, series 3
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	CBQ Monograph Series
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
ConBNT	Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series

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CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CT	Cahiers théologiques
<i>DSD</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>EstB</i>	<i>Estudios Bíblicos</i>
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
EUS23	European University Studies, Series 23, Theology
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GNS	Good News Studies
GNTE	Guides to New Testament Exegesis
<i>GTJ</i>	<i>Grace Theological Journal</i>
<i>HAR</i>	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
IVPNTC	Intervarsity Press New Testament Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JPrag</i>	<i>Journal of Pragmatics</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	JSNT Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KKNT	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
<i>Lang</i>	<i>Language</i>
<i>LL</i>	<i>Language and Literature</i>
NA	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen

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NA27	B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, and B. M. Metzger (eds.), <i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> (Nestle–Aland) (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 27th edn, 1993)
NCB	New Century Bible
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum, Supplements
<i>NRT</i>	<i>La Nouvelle Revue théologique</i>
NTC	The New Testament in Context
NTL	New Testament Library
NTM	New Testament Message
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
PBNS	Pragmatics and Beyond, New Series
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RivB</i>	<i>Rivista biblica</i>
SacP	Sacra Pagina
<i>SBT</i>	<i>Studies in Biblical Theology</i>
SBT2	Studies in Biblical Theology, Second Series
<i>SM</i>	<i>Studia Missionalia</i>
SNT	Studien zum Neuen Testament
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
<i>TDNT</i>	G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds.), <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , trans. G. W. Bromiley (10 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964– )
<i>TDOT</i>	G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.), <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> (10 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–98), vol. IX, trans. D. E. Green
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal of Theology</i>
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
<i>TynB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>

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UBS4	B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, and B. M. Metzger (eds.), <i>The Greek New Testament</i> (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/ United Bible Societies, 4th edn, 1993)
<i>UCLWPL</i>	<i>University College London Working Papers in Linguistics</i>
UCOP	University of Cambridge Oriental Publications
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>VoxEv</i>	<i>Vox Evangelica</i>
<i>VT</i>	Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum alten und neuen Testament
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschafte</i>

**Books of the Bible and Apocrypha**

Gen.	1 Kings	Eccl.	Obad.
Exod.	2 Kings	Song	Jon.
Lev.	1 Chron.	Isa.	Mic.
Num.	2 Chron.	Jer.	Nah.
Deut.	Ezra	Lam.	Hab.
Josh.	Neh.	Ezek.	Zeph.
Judg.	Esth.	Dan.	Hag.
Ruth	Job	Hos.	Zech.
1 Sam.	Ps. (pl. Pss.)	Joel	Mal.
2 Sam.	Prov.	Amos	
1 Esdr.		Sir.	2 Macc.
4 Ezra (= 2 Esdr. 3–14)		Bar.	
Wisd.		1 Macc.	
Matt.	2 Cor.	1 Tim.	2 Pet.
Mark	Gal.	2 Tim.	1 Jn
Luke	Eph.	Tit.	2 Jn
John	Phil.	Phlm.	3 Jn
Acts	Col.	Heb.	Jude
Rom.	1 Thess.	Jas.	Rev.
1 Cor.	2 Thess.	1 Pet.	

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**Ancient Jewish and Christian literature and texts**

<i>Adv. Marc.</i>	Tertullian, <i>Against Marcion</i>
<i>Ap. Bar.</i>	<i>3 Baruch, Apocalypse of Baruch</i> (Greek)
<i>Asc. Isa.</i>	<i>The Ascension of Isaiah</i>
<i>2 Bar. = Bar. Syr.</i>	<i>2 Baruch, Apocalypse of Baruch</i> (Syriac)
BW	The Book of the Watchers, <i>1 Enoch</i> 1–36
<i>1 Enoch</i>	Ethiopic <i>Enoch</i>
<i>Jos. As.</i>	<i>Joseph and Asenath</i>
<i>JW</i>	Josephus, <i>The Jewish War</i>
LXX	Septuagint (ed. A. Rahlfs)
MT	Masoretic Text
<i>Odes Sol.</i>	<i>Odes of Solomon</i>
OG	Old Greek version of Daniel
1QM	The War Scroll, from Qumran Cave 1
<i>Pss. Sol.</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>
<i>Targ.</i>	<i>Targum</i>
<i>Targ. Jer. Frag.</i>	<i>Targum of Jerusalem</i> (fragmentary)
<i>Targ. Ps.-J.</i>	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan</i>
<i>Test. Jos.</i>	<i>Testament of Joseph</i>
<i>Test. Lev.</i>	<i>Testament of Levi</i>
<i>Test. Sim.</i>	<i>Testament of Simeon</i>
Th.	Theodotion version of Daniel
<i>Tos. Targ.</i>	<i>Tosephta Targum</i>