

The Mystery of the Woman and the Beast

Rhetorical-Narrative Analysis of Revelation 17:1-18

This diploma thesis called “The Mystery of the Woman and the Beast” seeks to unveil the mysterious message of Revelation 17:1-18 by applying the rhetorical-narrative analysis to the text. This analysis entails a specific methodology drawn from the synthesis of both rhetorical and narrative criticism with special regard to persuasive features. The conception of the thesis is based on understanding the message of the text in its own right communicated primarily to its own implicit audience distancing itself from premature theologizing often done especially when dealing with the book of Revelation.

Due to the narrative focus of the thesis, considerable space is devoted to analyzing apocalyptic literary tradition and literary aspects of the book itself. Attention is paid to the origin of the apocalyptic tradition as well as the nature of its genre together with its specific motifs and function. The book of Revelation is seen as a part of long-developing apocalyptic tradition sharing some common traits while still being original in its own right. The unique qualities of Revelation are then fully explored in the following chapter. Of particular importance are the genre, imagery, intertextuality, and structure of the book. These elements contribute to the mysterious nature of the book since they expand its meaning and functioning as a powerful, persuasive device.

The gist of the thesis is exegetical and rhetorical-narrative analysis. The exegetical analysis opens the content of the narrative using the synchronic historical-grammatical method to capture the most significant ideas communicated within. The content of the chapter is arranged according to the development of the story. This chapter serves as a preparation for further rhetorical-narrative analysis and also as its necessary check. The method of rhetorical-narrative approach is then applied in the following chapter by exploring the rhetorical and narrational elements in the text with regard to their persuasive force. The whole persuasive argumentation in the story is also explored as a compact unit in order to demonstrate the development of persuasion in the text.

The thesis is subsequently concluded with a final evaluation of the outcomes of the whole thesis. It is pointed out that the employment of rhetorical-narrative analysis presumes time of the author as a temporal point of departure and that the method is prone to promote its hermeneutical perspective. Further, it is pointed out that the persuasive aspects of the text are creatively communicated on various levels to change the mind and attitude of the audience. Finally, it is pointed out that the results laid out in the thesis are suited for further theological reflection of the text.