Martyrdom as an impetus for divine retribution in the book of Revelation

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Description
This dissertation examines the relationship between martyrdom and divine retribution against the martyr's persecutors in the book of Revelation. The argument is made that Revelation portrays martyrdom as an impetus of Divine retribution against the persecutors of the martyrs. Chapter 1 traces the trend in recent scholarship to view Revelation's portrayal of martyrdom as contributing to the conversion of the nations. Basic assumptions of this view are discussed, as well as some replies from traditionalists. Chapter 2 discusses the methodology and sources used to defend the thesis. A discussion of intertextuality in the book of Revelation leads to the conclusion that the Old Testament, and particularly the prophetic tradition of Israel, is the primary background. The genre analysis leads the author to adopt a modified idealist approach to the symbolism of the book. Chapter 3 argues that martyrdom is the confirmation of the saints' testimony against the persecutors of the church. It is argued that the concept of witness is drawn from the background of...
Divine retribution is supernatural punishment of a person, a group of people, or everyone by a deity in response to some action. Many cultures have a story about how a deity exacted punishment upon previous inhabitants of their land, causing their doom. An example of divine retribution is the story found in many cultures about a great flood destroying all of humanity, as described in the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Hindu Vedas, or Book of Genesis (6:9–8:22), leaving one principal 'chosen' survivor. In the The Book of Revelation has produced many interpretations and much speculation. Many consider it a prophecy predicting what will happen prior to the Second Coming. Indeed, nearly every age has witnessed movements which believe that the prophecies of John were coming to pass and that the Last Days were at hand. Others increasingly take the view of historical criticism, that Revelation was written mainly to inspire first century Christians to resist persecution, in the expectation that Christ would be returning immediately. The vision opens with a detailed description of a divine being who has placed an "open door" before the revelator. "Come up here," a voice declares, "and I will show you what must take place after this." The book's own testimony indicates that it originated in the province of Asia in a time of severe oppression of Christians, which is most readily conceivable under Domitian. Under Domitian, who according to the Eastern pattern laid claim to divine honors for himself as emperor during his own lifetime, there arose for the first time the persecution of Christians by the state on religious grounds. Another most unusual aspect of the book of Revelation is its letters to seven churches in Asia Minor: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (see chapters 2 and 3). This is unparalleled in apocalyptic writing and has to be due ultimately to the impact that Paul's letter writing made on the New Testament church.