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Thesis Paper: Exegetical Analysis of the Vision in Daniel 10-12

Submitted To Dr. Daniel Sloan,

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the completion of

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Thesis Defense

by

Sydni Howard
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Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Dreams and visions may seem mystical and mysterious, especially in the Book of Daniel. They refer to beasts coming from the sea and trees representing people. However, those experiences conveyed messages from God. Dreams and visions were divine communication in the Old Testament, mainly given to the prophets.[1] The Book of Daniel is filled with these supernatural messages.[2] God provided Daniel with information through dreams and visions to support him and his people during troubling times of the present and future. Specifically, Daniel's divine messages contained prophetic intel that would direct and strengthen his people if they were wise and had understanding. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze, exegete, and apply the information in Daniel 10-12. The analysis, exegesis, and inclusion of scholarly support will demonstrate that God gave his wise people supernatural insight and revelation of his plans to aid and give hope in perilous times (Dan 12:4, 9).

Statement of the Problem

In the book of Daniel, Daniel received visions and dreams from God related to the future of his people. God sent angelic beings to interpret these supernatural phenomena (Dan 8:16-17; 9:22-23; 10:12, 14). Within the last vision, a group of wise people arose and withstood the deception of the "man of intrigue." The man seduced others who did not keep the holy covenant (Dan 11:32-35). The wise ones' ability to resist deception was due to their knowledge of their God (Dan 11:32). Further, they had insight and provided understanding to others (Dan 11:32).[3]

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[1] Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Minor Prophets I* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 218.

[2] Paul R. House, David G. Firth, and Tremper Longman III, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 17.

[3] J. Paul Tanner, *Daniel*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 682.

Additionally, the vision spoke of people searching for knowledge everywhere (Dan 12:4). In

contrast, the angel told Daniel to seal the book until the time of the end (Dan 12:4, 9). As such,

Daniel's book was needed to aid the wise in the end.[4] The problem statement or the question is,

"Why did the wise, including Daniel, need information from God about the future?"

<div align="center">Statement of Purpose</div>

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze, exegete, and apply the information in Daniel 10-

12. The analysis, exegesis, and inclusion of scholarly support will demonstrate that God gave his

wise people supernatural insight and revelation of his plans to aid and give hope in perilous times

(Dan 12:4, 9).

While there is a plethora of academic books and articles dedicated to the book of Daniel,

many of them separately focus on the wise and the dreams and visions. In contrast, this thesis

paper will emphasize a wise person's dependence upon God's knowledge. It will show that

knowing and submitting to God and His words produce a wise person who belongs to Him.

Further, it will show that a wise person spreads their insight and inspires Goldy devotion, which

results in a reward.

<div align="center">Statement of Importance of the Problem</div>

Daniel and the wise in his vision endured perilous times, which included persecution

(Dan 11:33). The New Testament tells believers that they will experience these trials (John

16:32-33; 2 Tim 3:1-17; James 1:2, 12; 1 Pet 1:6-7).[5] As such, Christians will need to learn from

and emulate the wise, in character and their stewardship of God's messages and plans, to endure

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[4] John J. Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Final Revelation," in *Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, A Commentary on the Book of Daniel (1517 Media, 1993), 385.

[5] Stephen Miller, *Daniel: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1994), 257.

until the end (Luke 12:35-48; John 14:15-22; 15:3:11, 20; 17:6-8; Eph 5:6-16; 1 Tim 4:1-2; 1 Thes 2).[6]

Statement of Position on the Problem

The thesis argues that the wise in the Book of Daniel needed divine information, as written in Daniel, to endure the trouble Daniel's visions describe. Daniel's book allows readers to understand God's character and how God aids those devoted to Him.[7] The man of intrigue enforced laws that disobeyed God's commandments (Dan 11:32). Knowing who God is and what His Word says provided the wise with the information to resist the deceiver (11:32).[8] Further, the wise understood what was occurring as Daniel predicted the events they experienced.[9] Thus, understanding Daniel's information, knowing God, and keeping God's covenant led to the refinement and purification of the wise (Dan 11:33-34).[10]

Limitations/Delimitations

The thesis is limited in time and methodology. Therefore, the scope will be narrowed to specific passages in the Book of Daniel that pertain to one vision. Moreover, the study will delimit an in-depth description of the historical and political figures that scholars have linked to the symbols and characters within Daniel, as it excludes a historical methodology.

Additionally, it delimits an exhaustive view of symbols in Daniel that are shared with the ancient Near East (ANE). Further, extensive discussions of the text's authorship, date, and unity

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[6] Tanner, *Daniel*, 685.; John C. Whitcomb, *Daniel (Everyday Bible Commentary Series)* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2018), 117.

[7] Tanner, *Daniel*, 682.

[8] Miller, *Daniel*, 256.

[9] Collins, "The Final Revelation," 385.

[10] Tanner, *Daniel*, 685.

are excluded. However, a brief overview of such topics is given. The thesis does not cover the Book of Revelation, as the focus is on Daniel.

<div align="center">Method</div>

Research Methods

The thesis is a research-oriented exegesis. Additionally, it is canonical in context. The methodology is an exegetical analysis. Considering the internal and external biblical context, the analysis inspects the text and reveals the intended meaning. The results give way to application.

Data Analysis

The exegetical analysis includes, but is not limited to, explanations of the pericope, the structure of the passages, grammatical syntax, commonalities, important and repetitive words, and any relevant information regarding the text. The results will aid the reader in ascertaining the necessity to emulate Daniel and the prophesied wise people to endure perilous times.

Chapter 2: Scholarly Review of Daniel 10-12: Dreams, Visions, and God's Plan

Adolf Leo Oppenheim

Adolf Leo Oppenheim is one of the most popular writers on dreams within the ANE. He wrote the book *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East. With a Translation of an Assyrian Dream-Book*, which is sectioned into two parts. Part 1 is dreams as a topic, dreams and their interpretation of the ANE, and dream reports of that provenience.[11] Part two is the translated Assyrian Dream Book, which was the original intent of writing the book.[12] Oppenheim became captivated by dreams and interpretations while preparing the Assyrian Dream Book.[13] As such, he included his notes on dreams and interpretation in his book.

While he did not speak much about visions in the book, he provided a framework that allowed many to understand how the authors of the Bible and others of the ANE viewed dreams.[14] Regarding the Bible and visions, he argued that visions were reserved for God's people while dreams were for the Gentiles.[15] As such, God used covenant people like Daniel to interpret the mysteries of the pagan kings whom God was addressing.[16] The intention was to show these pagan rulers the wisdom and authenticity of God and his people.[17]

John Joseph Collins

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[11] Adolf Leo Oppenheim, "The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East. With a Translation of an Assyrian Dream-Book," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 46, no. 3 (1956): 181.

[12] Oppenheim, "The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East," 179.

[13] Ibid.

[14] David P Melvin, "There Is a God in Heaven Who Reveals Mysteries: Failed Divination and Divine Revelation in Daniel 2 and Genesis 41," Bulletin for Biblical Research 29, no. 2 (2019): 13.

[15] Oppenheim, "The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East," 210.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

John Joseph Collins is another relevant scholar as it relates to dreams and visions in Daniel. In his book, The Apocalyptic Vision of Daniel, he provided a literary-exegetical analysis of the visions of Daniel.18 The analysis was in accordance with the media that the revelation is received, the function, the mode, the mythology and tradition of the themes, the historical present versus eschatology, and the purpose.19

It is important to note that Collins distinguished between Old Testament prophecies and apocalypses. While apocalypses are prophecies, they are information that cannot be changed, requiring interpretation.20 The interpretation can happen centuries later.21 In contrast, prophecies are typically a call to repentance to be urgently delivered.22

The interpretation aspect of apocalypses relates to the *maskilim* in Daniel, which included Daniel and his friends.[23] The *maskilim* were the wise ones who would provide instruction.[24] However, that instruction would come with interpreting Scripture and eschatological visions and dreams.[25] Collins argued that Daniel's visions were examples of such instruction.[26]

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[18] John Joseph Collins, "The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel," *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel*, Harvard Semitic Monographs, No. 16 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press for Harvard Semitic Museum, 1977), xviii.

[19] Collins, "The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel," vii-viii, xvi-xvii.

[20] Ibid., 76.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] 169-170

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

The theme of Daniel, according to Collins, is the eschatological kingdom after God confronts and judges world empires.[27] Additionally, Daniel incorporated historical present and eschatological time frames.[28] As such, the visions were meant to bring strength and guidance to the *maskilim.*[29] However, they had to stand and take action.[30] The emphasis on history shows an interest in politics.[31] Therefore, Collins argued that the function of Daniel is a Political Manifesto.[32]

Tremper Longman III

Tremper Longman III wrote the book *How to Read Daniel* to help readers understand Daniel and its application today.[33] He divided his book into three parts: the first discusses the issues that affect our understanding of the original audience's message and how the book should be approached. The second part focused on Daniel's content and its meaning for the original readers. The third part explained how Daniel's message relates to a modern audience.[34]

Longman believes the message is "in spite of present difficulties, God is in control, and he will have the final victory."[35] The second theme is that God's people can thrive amid a destructive environment.[36] Further, he explained that Daniel's visions would bring hope to his

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[27] Ibid., 161-162.

[28] Ibid., 191.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Tremper Longman III, *How to Read Daniel* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 9.

[34] Longman, How to Read Daniel, 10.

[35] Ibid., 48.

[36] Ibid.

people while they were going through perilous times.[37] Thus, God is sovereign and will bring

justice to his people against their oppressors.[38]

J. Paul Tanner

J. Paul Tanner is the author of the book *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary of Daniel*.

He took a technical approach to the Book of Daniel while incorporating the reformational

interpretive principles.[39] He believes Daniel is full of excellent biblical theology and is

"probably the most foundational Old Testament book for New Testament eschatology."[40] His

analysis concluded that the primary theme of Daniel was "the revelation of Israel's future in

relation to the Gentile kingdoms (now that the nation has gone into exile in Babylon) and God's

exaltation of Daniel as a channel through whom He reveals his will." [41]

As such, Daniel's visions foretold tribulation for his people and hope that the gentile

kingdoms would fall to God's kingdom ruled by Christ.[42] Additionally, his visions provided

insight into God and his sovereign control of the nations, the upcoming Antichrist, and God's

plan for history, which ends in the kingdom of God being given to Christ.[43]

John T. Willis

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[37] Ibid., 18.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Tanner, *Daniel*, xiii.

[40] Ibid., 1.

[41] Ibid., 113.

[42] Ibid., 1

[43] Ibid.

John T. Willis wrote an article called "Crucial Dream and Vision Experiences in the Hebrew Bible." He analyzed dreams and visions in the Hebrew Bible from a traditional-historical approach.[44] His analysis included a focus on the content and purpose of dreams in the Hebrew Bible.[45] He listed the different categories of dreams and visions: announcements of the future pertaining to a nation or people, dreams or visions as prophetic calls, or support of a theological position.[46] He believes that most dreams and visions in the Hebrew Bible fall under the first, including Daniel's vision in chapter 10-11:45.[47]

John Walvoord

John Walvoord was a Christian theologian and teacher who wrote the book *Daniel (The John Walvoord Prophecy Commentaries)*. He believed that Daniel focused on prophecy and godly devotion.[48] Daniel's purpose was to demonstrate God's plan for Israel despite the nation's sin and subsequent consequence of domination under Gentile rulers.[49] The other purpose was to "show what the believing remnant's response should be during this intervening period as these faithful servants waited for the promised establishment of God's messianic kingdom."[50] Further, Walvoord argued that Israel needed the testimony of God's mighty and providential power due to their tragic tribulations.[51]

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[44] John T Willis, "Crucial Dream and Vision Experiences in the Hebrew Bible," *Restoration Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (2022): 13.

[45] Willis, "Crucial Dream and Vision Experiences in the Hebrew Bible," 17-18.

[46] Ibid., 17.

[47] Ibid., 20.

[48] John F. Walvoord, Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 14.

[49] Walvoord, Daniel, 15.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid, 14.

John C Whitcomb

John C Whitcomb, a professor of Old Testament and Christian theology, wrote the commentary, Daniel (Everyday Bible Commentary Series).[52] In his book, he emphasizes God's plan for Israel as it relates to Daniel's prayer in chapter 9. Daniel fasted and prayed after reading Jeremiah's scroll that his people would be in Babylonian captivity for seventy years.[53] Since the seventy years had been up, Daniel repented on behalf of the people and sought God for clarity concerning how God would deliver them, according to Whitcomb.[54]

Additionally, John Whitcomb explains how the prophet Jeremiah precisely predicted the seventy years of Babylonian captivity the Jews would face due to their idolatry.[55] Although the king of Judah hated Jeremiah's words and destroyed them, Daniel must have maintained a copy of Jeremiah's scroll, as he mentions it in chapter 9.[56] Whitcomb suggests that Cyrus of Persia's decree to release the Jews was God's answer to Daniel's prayer and the fulfillment of Jeremiah and Isaiah's prophecies.[57] He says that Cyrus became the king of Babylon in Daniel and that God used him to end captivity, as the prophet Isaiah predicted.[58] Whitcomb believes that Cyrus was "a messiah" for the Jews of that time.[59]

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[52] "The Whitcombs," Whitcomb Ministries, accessed March 20, 2024, https://www.whitcombministries.org/the-whitcombs.html.

[53] Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 88.

[54] Ibid., 87.

[55] Ibid., 88.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

Additionally, Whitcomb compares Ezra's writings with Daniel's visions and words. He explains that two years after Gabriel revealed to Daniel the prophecy of the seventy weeks, the remnant of his people were building the foundations of the second temple.[60] The people were doing this under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua in Judea.[61] Since Daniel was in his 80s and had a prominent role in the Babylonian court, he was not able to travel to Judea.[62] Further, Whitcomb believes that Daniel was aware of the conflicts God's people were facing in building the temple in Judea and was interceding for them in prayer.[63]

Daniel was informed of the future conflict and persecution the Jews would face before the time of the end, according to his visions (chapters 7-9).[64] His visions describe God's plan to end man's systems and replace them with an eternal kingdom ruled by Christ.[65] However, his people would have to endure various evil kings and nations until that time.[66]

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[60] Ibid., 97.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid., 98.

[64] Ibid., 97.

[65] Ibid., 66.

[66] Ibid., 9.

Chapter 3: Context of Daniel 10-12

Historical Context

The Book of Daniel begins during the Neo-Babylon Empire and the first years of the Persian era, which was a difficult period for God's people. Daniel and other Judean noblemen were exiled to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. After many warnings from Yahweh, He allowed Babylon to conquer Judah and Jerusalem due to the Jews' unrepented sin.

Before Judah was exiled, a Judean king named Josiah repented for his ancestors' sins and commanded his people to return to God (2 Kgs 22-23). As a result, God spared Josiah from seeing the judgment of his people (2 Kgs 22:15-22). Josiah was likely king when Daniel was born, as Daniel was about fifteen years old in captivity.[67] He reigned from 640-609 B.C.[68] King Josiah was killed during a battle between Babylon and Egypt, and his son, Jehoahaz, took the throne.[69] However, Pharoah Neco deposed him after three months of reigning, and his eldest brother took his place.[70]

Jehoiakim reigned from 609-597 B.C.[71] Babylon defeated Egypt, successfully invaded Judah, and took Daniel and others captive.[72] King Jehoiakim pledged his loyalty to King Nebuchadnezzar; however, he rebelled and died of unknown circumstances.[73] Two other kings

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[67] Miller, *Daniel,* 32.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., 32; John C Lennox, *Against the Flow: The Inspiration of Daniel in an Age of Relativism* (Chicago: Lion Hudson, 2015), 15.

[70] Ibid.; Lennox, *Against the Flow,* 15.

[71] Tanner, *Daniel,* 91.

[72] Miller, *Daniel,* 32.

[73] Ibid.

succeeded Jehoiakim: his son, Jehoiachin, and Josiah's son, Zedekiah.[74] During their short reigns, Nebuchadnezzar took many more Judean citizens and finally destroyed Jerusalem. The prophets Jeremiah and Habakkuk were prophesying to God's people during this time. Hence, Daniel was familiar with Jeremiah's writing and referenced it later during his exile (Dan 9:2).

When Daniel was first deported, Nebuchadnezzar requested that he and other young men from Judah's noble or royal family serve in his court (Dan 1:3-6). The young men were to be "without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace (Dan 1:4)."

God gave Daniel and three other youths skill in all literature and wisdom (Dan 1:17). However, He gifted Daniel with the understanding of all kinds of dreams and visions (Dan 1:17). Daniel's gift was necessary in the king's court as God gave Nebuchadnezzar dreams that could only be interpreted by Daniel as he was God's faithful servant (Dan 2:27-28, 48; 4:9, 18; 5:11-12). Further, God provided Daniel with visions of his people's future (chs. 7-11).

King Nebuchadnezzar is not the only foreign king mentioned in Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar's son, Amel-Murdok, became king but was assassinated by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar.[75] After Neriglissar, Nabonidus reigned.[76] While the Bible does not mention Nabonidus, it does discuss his son, Belshazzar (ch. 6).[77] Belshazzar's reign in the time of the Bible was once questioned as there was no documented evidence of his existence. However,

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Miller, *Daniel,* 33.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

verification has been discovered, showing that he was Nabonidus' coregent.[78] Belshazzar ruled in Babylon, while his father ruled from Tema.[79]

In Daniel 5, the author records how and why Belshazzar's reign ended. He threw a party with his wives, concubines, and noblemen using vessels from the Jewish temple (Dan 5:2-4). Nebuchadnezzar removed these vessels from Solomon's temple when he invaded Jerusalem (Dan 5:2-3). Due to Belshazzar's sin of offending the Jews by using these vessels for common use, God announced his fall by a finger appearing and writing on the wall (Dan 5). It read, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN (Dan 5:25-28)." Since Belshazzar's wise men could not interpret the words on the wall, he asked Daniel to at the suggestion of the queen mother (Dan 5:8-12). Accordingly, Daniel predicted that the Medes would kill and defeat the king (Dan 5:17-30).

Darius the Mede is another foreign ruler mentioned in Daniel 6. However, scholars cannot find substantial evidence of his existence.[80] Records only show Cyrus of Persia defeating Babylon, the last king Daniel served.[81] It is possible that Cyrus' army general was sent to defeat Babylon and favored Daniel, as discussed in the lion's den narrative (ch.6).[82] Others believe he is either Cyrus' son, Cambyses II, or the last Median king, Cyaxares II, the son of Astyages.[83] However, there is insufficient evidence to confirm any claim.[84]

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[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ronald F. Youngblood, F. F. Bruce, and R. K. Harrison, *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary: New and Enhanced Edition* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Incorporated, 2014), 296.

[81] Youngblood, *Nelson's,* 296; Tanner, *Daniel,* 618.

[82] Youngblood, *Nelson's,* 296.

[83] Tanner*, Daniel,* 357.

[84] Ibid, 358.

During the reigns of Darius and Cyrus, Daniel received visions of future rulers (chs. 7-12). Daniel accurately predicted their uprising and downfall.[85] The predictive aspect of Daniel's book has led some critical scholars to disbelief about the author and the date of the book. How could someone know the future?

Date, Unity, and Authorship Discrepancies

Critical view

Many events predicted in the book's second half far exceed the author's lifespan.[86] The settings range from the exile in the sixth century B.C. to the second century B.C.[87] The book provides accurate information concerning Greece's succession of Persian rule from 323 B.C. to 164 B.C.[88] The Seleucid king Antiochus IV died in 164 B.C.[89] However, he did not die in Palestine, as the book suggests. Therefore, some scholars conclude that the book must have originated during his reign until he died in c.164 B.C.[90] Other scholars believe Daniel 11:36 shifts from Antiochus to the Antichrist.[91]

Further support for the critical view is driven by the languages utilized in the book. It is written in Greek, Aramaic, Persian, and Hebrew.[92] Due to the Persian, Greek, and Aramaic loan

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[85] House, *Daniel*, 44.

[86] House, *Daniel,* 25.

[87] House, *Daniel*, 44; John Goldingay et al., *Daniel* (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2019), 98.

[88] House, *Daniel*, 44.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid.; André LaCocque, *The Book of Daniel : Second Edition*, vol. Second edition (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 184,

[91] Tanner, *Daniel*, 31, 37.

[92] Goldingay, *Daniel,* 98.

words and the unpolished Hebraic words, some argue this as evidence for a later date.[93] While

specific chapters were written earlier, the book was not in its final form until after the second

century B.C.[94] Thus, the book must have been composed over time.[95]

Lastly, the later-date supporters do not believe Daniel is the book's author. It is

apocalyptic literature utilizing fictional characters rather than historical ones.[96] Collins defines

the genre as:

> Apocalyptic literature 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
> [salvation at the end of time], and spatial insofar as it involves
> another, supernatural world.'[97]

Apocalyptic literature usually involved pseudonymity and *ex-eventu* (meaning after the

fact) prophecy, which was popular in Hellenistic times.[98] As such, critics believe the real authors

were Jews during the Maccabean period who wanted to encourage other Jews living under

foreign rule.[99]

Traditional view

In contrast to the critical scholars' view, traditionalists believe that Daniel is the real

author of his book and that he lived in the sixth century.[100] Predictive prophecy is legitimate, and

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[93] House, *Daniel*, 43.

[94] Ibid., 24.

[95] Ibid., 42.

[96] Ibid., 24.

[97] Ibid., 26.

[98] Tanner, *Daniel*, 70.

[99] House, *Daniel*, 24.

[100] Tanner, *Daniel*, 1.

there are plausible explanations for the issues critics discuss.[101] The Hebraic and Aramaic

sections may stem from Hebrew being the language of God's people, while Aramaic was the

language of the Gentile world during Daniel's day.[102] Therefore, the Aramaic language was

likely used when focusing on the Gentile powers, and the Hebrew language was used when the

message was to God's people and their future.[103]

Regarding the loan words, the Akkadian words are part of the manifold Aramaic

language.[104] The Old Iranian can be found in the Targums and the Official Aramaic in the sixth

and fifth-century literary sources.[105] Therefore, the Old Iranian usage shows that the date was

pre-Hellenistic rather than Maccabean.[106] Further, the Greek loan words can be attested in the

Aramaic documents of Elephantine dated to the sixth century.[107] Lastly, it was not unusual for

Greek words to be utilized in Daniel.[108]

The last central point of contention is the implication of the Book of Daniel being

apocalyptic literature. While it does have the markings of apocalyptic, this does not mean that it

was pseudonymous.[109] Other biblical writings include angelic visitation, visions, and

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[101] House, *Daniel*, 43.

[102] Tanner, *Daniel,* 3.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid., 6.

[105] Ibid., 7.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid., 8.

[108] Ibid.

[109] House, *Daniel*, 44.

prophecy.[110] Additionally, Daniel was included in the cannon.[111] Further, it is in the Dead Sea Scroll and Septuagint.[112] Lastly, Jesus mentions the fulfillment of the "abomination of desolation" mentioned by "the prophet Daniel" (Matt 24:15).

As such, Daniel is authentic, reliable, and historically accurate.[113] Paul R. House put it best, "the book provides no specific statement that the author set out to write an apocalyptic work of the sort that appeared later. The book's contents should therefore not be judged negatively by someone starting with a definition of the whole apocalyptic genre which they then impose on Daniel's contents."[114]

Literary Context

Genre

Apocalyptic literature is one of the three suggested genres in the Book of Daniel.[115] It is displayed within the second half of Daniel. As such, it involves Daniel's visions concerning his people and the interpretation received through spiritual beings (chs. 7-12). These visions took place during the reign of Belshazzar and Cyrus (Dan 6:28; 7:1; 8:1; 10:1).[116]

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[110] Ibid., 38.

[111] Ibid., 46.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid., 43.

[115] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 147, 567; Carol A. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, 2014), 8.

[116] Tanner, *Daniel*, 393, 405.

The other two genres are narrative and court tales, which are demonstrated in the first half of Daniel.[117] Chapters one to six contain stories of Daniel in the court of foreign kings.[118] As Daniel is filled with a series of stories, it qualifies as a narrative.[119] However, the terms narrative and court tale do not purport that the stories are not historical.[120] Historical forms may take on less factual forms as well.[121] However, one must remember a fact mentioned previously. Daniel was not written with a genre in mind.[122] Scholars have formulated genres to assign the Book of Daniel to better assist readers in comprehending the narrative.[123]

As such, some label the first half of Daniel as a court tale.[124] Daniel interprets King Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and has encounters within the king's court (chs.1, 2, and 4). Within Mesopotamia in Daniel's time, writings of court tales usually involved tensions between kings and their courtiers and rivalry amongst courtiers.[125] One may notice issues between the king and his courtiers in Daniel 2 when Nebuchadnezzar asks the dream interpretation experts in his court to tell him the contents of his dream without any prior knowledge. The courtiers could not tell him the dream's content or meaning (Dan 2:5-10). As a result, he ordered their deaths (Dan 2:12-13). If Daniel had not sought Yahweh and received the king's dream and interpretation during sleep, they would all have died (Dan 2:27, 28).

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[117] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 144

[118] Ibid., 141-142; Newsom, *Daniel,* 8.

[119] House, *Daniel*, 39.

[120] Ibid., 38.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 141, 144; Newsom, *Daniel*, 8.

[125] Newsom, *Daniel*, 13.

Newsom adds a subgenre to court tales that can be found in Daniel

> Within the court stories two typical plot lines recur with such frequency that they may be called subgenres. Lee Humphreys described these as "tales of contest" and "tales of conflict." In the tales of contest the hero— often an outsider or low-ranking figure— is able to solve a problem or interpret an enigma that the established sages are not able to resolve. The subgenre, the tale of conflict, involves tension between the hero and jealous courtiers who scheme to bring about the hero's downfall but are thwarted in the end, so that the hero is rewarded by the king. Daniel 2, 4, and 5 exhibit in stronger or more superficial form the contest plot, but chs. 3 and 6 are strongly shaped by the conflict pattern. [126]

Further, the court tales in the Jewish Bible contain ethnic and moral tension in the court tales.[127] An example of this can be found in Daniel 1. Daniel decided to fast from the king's food in his preparation phase for becoming a Babylonian courtier (Dan 1:8). When the fast ended, Daniel was in better shape than all the other noblemen and wise men because he obeyed his moral conviction (Dan 1:15-21).

<div align="center">Cultural Context</div>

ANE Religious Culture

Daniel was placed in the position to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dreams because he and three other Hebrew boys stood out amongst everyone, including all the magicians and enchanters in the kingdom (Dan 1:20). God gave the Hebrew boys the capacity to learn and be skilled in the king's culture and literature (Dan 1:17). As Jewish exiles, they were immersed in the Assyro-Babylonian religion and were expected to submit to its rules (Dan 3 and 6) and culture practices. Thus, reviewing the information about its gods and culture is essential to having a proper view of Daniel's visions while exiled.

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[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., 16.

The Assyo-Babylonian religious culture derived from Samaria.[128] Samaria had a pantheon of gods.[129] Many of these deities had conflicts with each other.[130] Additionally, these gods were a part of the universe's makeup instead of outside of it.

Like Judaism, some Mesopotamian religions have creation and flood stories.[131] However, a few gods were involved in those narratives rather than one singular deity.[132] Further, these gods were seen as needing the help of humans rather than the other way around.[133] Another contrast to Yahweh is that man was made to serve the gods rather than for pleasure (Rev 4:11).[134]

While several gods of the Assyro-Babylonian religion exist, only Marduk and Nebo will be discussed. Marduk and Nebo were two of the main gods during Daniel's time.[135] Marduk was referred to as Bel, meaning Lord, in the Bible.[136] He was the son of a cosmic deity named Ea, chosen as the prominent god of Babylon, and assumed the roles of other deities.[137]

Additionally, Marduk was the god of magic and incantation and was worshiped in the Babylonian temple.[138] As such, Daniel would have been familiar with the worship of Marduk.[139]

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[128] Tanner, *Daniel*, 107.

[129] Tanner, *Daniel*, 107.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid.

[133] John D. Currid, Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 62.

[134] Currid, *Against the Gods*, 37; Tanner, Daniel, 107.

[135] Tanner, *Daniel*, 108.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Tanner, *Daniel*, 109.

[139] Ibid., 110.

Another popular deity during Daniel's time and mentioned in the Bible was Nebo.[140] Nebo (or Nabu) was the son of Marduk and the god of wisdom.[141] Paul Tanner states that the name "Nebuchadnezzar" may mean "(god) Nabu, protect my offspring (or firstborn)."[142] Additionally, Nebuchadnezzar stood as the head of the religion and received kingship from the gods, as was tradition.[143] Tanner points out the humility Yahweh placed upon Nebuchadnezzar after serving himself and other gods for so long.[144]

Nebuchadnezzar witnessed the true God of mysteries when Daniel could retell and interpret his dreams in Daniel 2. In the Babylonian world, information from the divine or the gods was received through occultic practices.[145] The Babylonians would seek to know the will of the divine or the people's future through divination practices, including dream divination.[146] Divination is a "technique of communicating with the gods." Dream divination was a way to interpret a dream's message.[147]

There are three different ways dream interpreters would decipher dreams, specifically symbolic ones.[148] One was through intuitive understanding of the symbolic representation, two was through the collection of dream omnia, and three was through communicating with the deity

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[140] Ibid., 109; Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 21.

[141] Ibid.

[142] Tanner, *Daniel*, 109.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid., 107.

[145] Ibid., 111.

[146] Ibid.; Melvin, "There Is a God in Heaven," 145.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Oppenheim, "The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East," 221.

that provided the dream using magic or oracular apparatus.[149] Symbolic dreams were utilized in the Book of Daniel, which was normal for Gentiles.[150]

Jewish Religious Culture

However, God's people generally received message dreams, which do not contain any symbols.[151] Daniel and Joseph are exceptions.[152] Daniel and Joseph had symbolic dreams and worked in the court of foreign kings whose dreams they interpreted (Gen 37-41; Dan 2 and 4). God was providing Daniel and Joseph with intel that would elevate them and bring glory to His name (Gen 41:37-44; Dan 2:47-49).

Through both men, the God who reveals mysteries was revealed to the pagan kings. In Mesopotamia and Egypt, the divinest typically interpreted dreams, which allowed them to receive all the glory.[153] Since both Daniel and Joseph were the only ones who could interpret the kings' dreams and give credit to God, Yahweh was exalted. Pharoah says about Joseph, "'Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?' Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are (Gen 41:38–39).'"

King Nebuchadnezzar tells Daniel, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery (Dan 2:47–48)." The queen mother says about Daniel, "There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods (Dan 5:11)." The Jewish God has created an opportunity to prove His distinction above all other gods.

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[149] Ibid.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid.

[152] Ibid., 210.

[153] Melvin, "There Is a God in Heaven," 152.

The Judean religion is a stark contrast to the Babylonian and Egyptian ones. The God of the Hebrew Bible was not in creation; He is the creator.[154] His essence always existed and was not part of the universe's atmosphere.[155] Later in the New Testament, it is revealed that Yahweh created man for his pleasure as opposed to His slaves (Rev 4:11).[156] Moreover, there is a progressive unveiling of God's plan for His people to become bondservants of Christ (1 Cor 7:22). However, it was never his purpose for creating man.

God loves His people, watches over His people, and has a special plan for those who love Him in return, as seen in Daniel (Psa 121:8; Jer 29:11; John 3:16; Rom 8:28; Dan 7-12). God called Daniel "a man greatly beloved (Dan 10:11)." He provided him with wisdom and insight as a response to his prayers because He loved him (Dan 10:11-14). Further, the revelation was meant to aid Daniel and his people in future generations.

The avenues of receiving information from the divine are different from the Assyro-Babylonians. One does not cast spells, perform magic, or physically sacrifice children to gain information or blessings from Yahweh. There is no technique for learning the will of God. His people discover His will by reading His Word (Psa 119:105). Additionally, He reveals it to His children (Mic 6:8). [157] His people receive the revelation by worshipping Him, not conforming to the world, and allowing God to transform the mind (Rom 12:1-2).

God's Plan for Israel

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[154] Paul Copan and William Lane Craig, *Creation out of Nothing: A Biblical, Philosophical, and Scientific Exploration* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 33; Tanner, *Daniel*, 172.

[155] Copan and Craig, *Creation of out Nothing*, 33.

[156] Tanner, *Daniel*, 107.

[157] Andrew E. Steinmann, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 363.

To fully understand Daniel's dreams and visions in chapters 10-12, one must be informed of God's plan for his people, Israel. As previously discussed, God sentenced his people to seventy years of captivity due to their disobedience and unrepentant sin (Jer 25:11).[158] He said for them to have families in captivity and build homes because they would be there for a whole generation (Jer 29:5-10). However, God would bring them out and restore their land (Jer 29:10, 13). Additionally, he promised a Day of the Lord where God would destroy their enemies, including the king of Babylon, and bring in a Messiah who would be king over an eternal kingdom (Jer 30:16; 51; Isa 51-53). Daniel 7-8 discusses the kingdoms that would come before the Lord judges them and ushers them into the eternal kingdom. Further, it shows the persecution Israel would face before God's judgment commenced.

In Daniel 9, Daniel desired an understanding of his people's release from captivity. Israel had been in Babylon for the promised seventy years.[159] He received revelation of kingdoms to come and the eternal kingdom from his previous visions and the dream of Nebuchadnezzar (ch. 2, 7-8), but he sought understanding of his present time.[160] The angel Gabriel explained the seventy weeks' timeline, which included the rebuilding of Jerusalem and further desolations (Dan 9:2). Chapters 10-12 provide greater insight into these various kingdoms and the time of the end, specifically what would happen to God's people and His plan for them.

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[158] Walvoord, *Daniel*, 252.

[159] Ibid., 250.

[160] Ibid.

Chapter 4: Divine Communication and Guidance in Daniel 10-12

Discussion of Daniel 10-12 and God's Plan

Daniel begins his vision report in chapter 10, explaining that it was a word or message of conflict (Dan 10:1). It was one that he understood (Dan 10:1). Later in the chapter, the supernatural messenger compels Daniel to understand (Dan 10:10, 12). The emphasis of the message and understanding of it may indicate the purpose of the vision he was about to describe. However, he spends most of the chapter describing the encounter with the supernatural being(s) and does not reveal the message until the end of the chapter. The term "word" is mentioned 11 times, and the various forms of the term "speak" are used 12 times. Hence, the information given in the chapter is the main point, rather than the encounter itself, despite its impact on Daniel.[161]

It contains knowledge concerning God's people in the "latter days (Dan 10:14)." It is a message worth fighting over as the spiritual being was prevented from delivering the message for twenty-one days because the Prince of Persia withstood him (Dan 10:14, 20).[162] Michael, the angelic Chief Prince of God's people, had to assist him in the battle against another angelic

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[161] Ibid., 301; Tanner, *Daniel,* 616.

[162] Newsom, *Daniel*, 333.

prince (Dan 10:13). While God's plan for His people consisted of conflict, the enemy sought to prevent the unveiling of it. Carol Newsome argues that the reason is that the message of Daniel would be passed to the wise described in chapter 11.[163] The prince of Persia did not want them to have such knowledge since knowledge results in proper action.[164]

Chapter 11 reveals God's plan of kings rising, falling, and their kingdoms dividing. It is the same as the other visions Daniel had in chapters 7 and 8 and Nebuchadnezzar had in 2. However, it provides greater detail and shifts focus to the latter days as it relates to Daniel's people. During the fight for territory, Judah would be caught in the crossfire.[165] While some would return to Jerusalem and begin rebuilding the temple, they still would be under a foreign power (Ezra 1:1; 4; Neh 2).[166]

It is important to note that scholars unanimously agree that some of these events have already occurred. Daniel was alive to see Cyrus of Persia conquer Babylon, but the rest of the kings he envisioned were beyond his time (Dan 10:1; 10-12).[167] After Persia, a king from Greece would arise and grow strong (Dan 11:1-4). However, his reign would come to an end, and his kingdom would be divided (Dan 11:4). Paul Tanner, amongst other scholars, states that this king was Alexander the Great.[168]

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[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Tanner, *Daniel*, 651.

[166] Walvoord, *Daniel*, 250-252.

[167] Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 108.

[168] Ibid., 104; Tanner, *Daniel*, 648.

Alexander's kingdom was split after his death and his military leaders ruled his territories.[169] (1) Lysimachus: Thrace and Bithynia (and much of Asia Minor); (2) Cassander: Macedonia and Greece; (3) Seleucus I: Syria, Babylonia, and the lands to the east; (4) Ptolemy I: Egypt, Israel, and Arabia Petrea.[170] These kingdoms grew and divided, never coming to the level of authority and strength of Alexander the Great (Dan 11:4).[171]

Daniel names the kings who succeeded Alexander over 150 years: the king of the North and the king of the South.[172] Throughout the chapter, he depicts them gaining, battling, and aligning over the territory Alexander once had. Eventually, only the descendants of Seleucid (king of the North) and Ptolemy king of the South) continued to war over these lands. Judah was always in the middle of their conflict.[173]

Further, in Daniel's message, God predicts that the violent within God's covenant people would take action against one of the kings. "...the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail (Dan 11:14)." "The violent among your own people" is literally "the sons of the violent." "Violent ones" (pārîṣ) refers to robbers and murderers.[174] Stephen Miller argues that the "violent ones" in verse 14 refer to Jews who helped Antiochus IV Epiphanes, also known as the king of the North.[175] Tanner agrees,

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[169] Tanner, *Daniel*, 648.

[170] Ibid.

[171] Ibid.

[172] Ibid., 648.

[173] Ibid., 651.

[174] Francis Brown et al., *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (BDB)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 829; Miller, *Daniel*, 250.

[175] Miller, *Daniel*, 250.

specifying them as Jewish Revolutionaries dissatisfied with Egypt's rule over Judah and Jerusalem.[176]

It is unclear what "to fulfill the vision" is referencing. Miller and Walvoord say it refers to Daniel's vision itself (ch. 8). Saint Jerome said it was a prophecy recorded in Isaiah. Collins views it metaphorically as "visionary support."[177] What is clear is that they were unsuccessful in their revolt (Dan 11:14).

The spiritual being reveals how an evil king would target those violating God's covenant. The king of the North would first set his heart against the covenant people, which means he would be coming against God and His people (Dan 11:28).[178] The covenant is relational and speaks of two parties: God and his people. It is not about the land at this point but God.[179] The persecution of the Jews would take place because of their God, and it would be within His plan.[180]

Later, the king of the North would become enraged with the Jewish people and take action against them (Dan 11:30). He would specifically target those who would violate the covenant and seduce them with flattery (Dan 11:34). The king would use force and his cunning prowess to get God's people to further sin against Him. However, one must understand that this will happen at the appointed time (Dan 11:29).

God foresaw the attack on Him and His people. Their persecution involved desecrating the temple, ceasing the burnt offerings, and setting up an abomination of desolation within the

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[176] Tanner, *Daniel*, 657.

[177] Collin, *Daniel*, 380; Miller, *Daniel*, 250; Walvoord, *Daniel*, 337.

[178] House, *Daniel*, 211.

[179] Ibid.

[180] Ibid.; Miller, *Daniel*, 254.

temple (Dan 11:31). Further, His people would "stumble" by sword, flame, captivity, and plunder (Dan 11:33). Scholars unanimously agree that the king of the North, beginning from verse 21-35, is Antiochus IV Epiphanes.[181]

He seized the throne from his nephew illegally while he was being retained in Rome.[182] He was a despicable man who desired to Hellenize all of his territory, including Judah.[183] When he lost his campaign against Egypt due to Rome's assistance, he vented his anger on the Jews and slaughtered 80,000 of them.[184] He further seduced some Jews in favor of the Hellenization to help him set up an abomination within the temple, possibly a statue of Zeus.[185] Further, he ordered the burning of Torahs, forbade circumcision, stopped official sacrifices, and called for the sacrifice of swine on altars in the temple.[186]

While the king seduced covenant violators, he lacked success with those "who know their God" (Dan 11:32). Those who were truly devout to God would not overlook the defilement of their temple and worship.[187] They would stand firm and take action just as the wicked king took action against them (Dan 11:35). The wise would cause many to understand (Dan 11:33).[188] They would "stumble." However, it would lead to their spiritual refinement (Dan 11: 35). "So that they may be refined" (לִצְרוֹף) is a purpose statement and refine can mean "test" (Dan 11:35).

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[181] Tanner, *Daniel*, 2, 22.

[182] Ibid., 671.

[183] Ibid., 672.

[184] Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 107.

[185] Ibid., Tanner, *Daniel*, 678.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Tanner, *Daniel*, 682.

[188] An explanation of the wise and their role in chapter 11 will be given in the next section.

Their stumbling is in regard to or for the purpose of their refinement or testing.[189] The stumbling

may mean death, but it would result in purity.[190]

Again, many commentators believe that the people who would take action and stumble

referred to the Maccabean Revolt.[191] When rulers under Antiochus IV Epiphanes came to a

village named Modein, where the priest Matthias Maccabeus resided, they attempted to force the

Jews to sin and defile the temple.[192] However, Matthias led many others to stand firm, and the

revolt began.[193] Many Jews "stumbled" or died in battle by sword or fire, and others were taken

captive and their homes plundered.[194] Nevertheless, some of the Jews provided insight into the

Scriptures to the Jewish people so they would remain faithful to God.[195] Tanner states, "Yet from

God's perspective, this would serve a good purpose, for the result would be refinement,

purification, and cleansing of the nation (Dan 11:35).[196]

Many scholars debate whether verses 36-45 still speak of Antiochus IV Epiphanes or the

Antichrist.[197] Dispensational commentators believe Antiochus is a type of Antichrist whose

abomination of desolation and persecution of God's people foreshadowed what the "man of

lawlessness" would do (2 Thess 2:3).[198] The vision came to pass as Daniel described. However,

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[189] Collins, "The Final Revelation," 386.

[190] Tanner, *Daniel*, 682-683.

[191] Ibid., 683; Collins, "The Final Revelation," 386; Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 107.

[192] Tanner, *Daniel*, 683.

[193] Ibid.

[194] Walvoord, *Daniel*, 345.

[195] Tanner, 685.

[196] Ibid., 683.

[197] Ibid., 686; Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 108; Miller, *Daniel*, 268.

[198] Ibid.

Antiochus did not die in Judah and the rest of the activities described in Daniel do not align with Antiochus. Some suggest "the king" in verse 35 is the "little horn" in chapter 7.[199] Further, he appears during the "time of the end" (Dan 11:40).[200] The vision has shifted to the far future.[201]

The supernatural messenger calls the perilous time for God's people and the holy covenant (Dan 11:31-45) "the shattering of the power of the holy covenant" and "a time of trouble" (Dan 12:1,7). Michael would arise and deliver God's people, who would receive everlasting life. Those who were wise and brought others to righteousness would shine. Due to their spiritual insight and examples of faithfulness, which brought many to righteousness, they would receive glory at their resurrection.[202] All of this was written in Daniel's book as part of God's plan for His people. While it is a plan of conflict, it reveals how God uses conflict to purify His people. As such, it should provide comfort and hope since it can be perceived that there is a purpose and plan for suffering.

A few clues in Daniel 11 and 12 allow the reader to see that these testing times are a part of God's plan. Phrases referencing a set time, such as "at the pointed time," "time of trouble," or "time of the end," appear at various points within the chapters (Dan 11:14, 24, 27, 29, 35, 40; 12:1, 4, 7, 9, 11). They are examples of a specific time frame where things are allowed and predicted to occur.[203] While this predictive vision comes from God, indicating He is aware of the conflict and persecution that will take place, the phrases describing set times emphasize that the

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[199] Ibid.

[200] Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 108.

[201] Ibid.

[202] Miller, *Daniel*, 269.

[203] Tanner, *Daniel*, 179.

kings are only allowed to do these acts when God permits.[204] Further, God has planned for these evil acts to end and His kingdom to shine.[205]

A specific example of this is when the angel tells Daniel, "They shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail, for the end is yet to be at the time appointed (Dan 11:27)." The kings would not have success in their deceit at this point in this vision because God ordained it for an appointed time in the future. Miller suggests that the Lord has an appointed time for the defeat and end of evil and lies.[206] Again, terms referencing set times should provide hope to God's people as it shows that God is in control despite man's or Satan's plans. As Walvoord stated, the kings would be "fulfilling prophecy on God's timetable."[207]

Another clue that God orchestrates the events is the consistent use of passive verbs as they relate to the kings' actions. Kingdoms shall be broken, plucked up, swept away, and given into the hands of their enemies (ch.11). The same uprising and downfall occur in chapter 7 with the four beasts. On the other hand, God's people shall be refined, purified, and delivered. While men believe they are in control of everything and succeeding by their own accord, God is causing this to happen.[208] Again, He is the one who raises and tears kings down (Dan 2:21). He already demonstrated this to Nebuchadnezzar, and He is confirming this to Daniel and His people.

The Lord spoke through the prophet Jeremiah that God had plans for His people who were exiled to Babylon (Jer 29:1-11). His plans would prosper them and were not evil. They

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[204] Ibid.

[205] Miller, *Daniel*, 254.

[206] Miller, *Daniel*, 211.

[207] Walvoord, *Daniel*, 342.

[208] Ibid.

were plans to give them hope and a future. God laid out all that would occur while they were in

Babylon. They needed to build their houses and pray for the welfare of Babylon until seventy

years passed and they would return to their homeland. During the last years of Daniel's life, the

people did return as God planned (Dan 10:1; Ezra 1:1).[209] Daniel learned through his visions that

God has additional plans for his people, which would provide hope and a future.[210] God's plans

delivered through dreams and visions brought prosperity to Daniel and his friends (Dan 6:28). In

the end, He will bring eternal prosperity and victory to His people.

<div align="center">Divine Communication (Dreams and Visions) in 10-12</div>

Terminology of the *ḥlm*

Since dreams and visions were the main mediums that God spoke through to Daniel

about His plans for his people and other kingdoms, it is important to conduct a word study on

"dream" *(halom)*. Jean-Marie Husser provided an explanation of the root *ḥlm* in his book *Dreams*

and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World:

Like Ugaritic and the various Aramaic dialects, Hebrew uses only one root, *ḥlm*, with its

nominal derivatives, to describe different kinds of dreams. Arabic, on the other hand, reserves

ḥulm for ordinary dreams, for nightmares and for more unusual dream experiences, while the

word for a divine revelation in a dream is ru' ya or manam.[211]

BDB translates *halom* as 1.) an ordinary dream of sleep and 2.) dreams with prophetic

meaning, which will be discussed below.[212] Additionally, it mentions that dreams are the lowest

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[209] Ibid., 250.

[210] House, *Daniel*, 189.

[211] Jean-Marie Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World,* trans. Jill Munro (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1999), 88.

[212] Brown, BDB, 321.

grade of prophecy and dreamers are in the lower order of prophets compared to Moses (Num 12:8).[213] Further, it highlights the word in association with false prophets.[214]

The Old Testament mentions *halom* 65 times. Some dreams bring promise and hope, while others warn. God appears to Abimelech, Jacob, and Laban in dreams (Gen 20:3-6; 31:10-11; 31:24). For Abimelech and Laban, it was to warn them against harming His chosen people (Gen 20:3-6; 31:24). Accordingly, the angel of the Lord informed Jacob through a dream that He saw Laban's mistreatment and promised to bless Jacob (Gen 31:10-13). In this dream, God introduced himself as the God Jacob vowed to (Gen 28:12-20; 31:13). Solomon had a similar dream. God appeared to him and asked how he would like to be blessed (1 Kgs 3:5).

The main commonality between the dreams of Abimelech, Laban, Jacob, and Solomon is that they are all considered "message dreams" and/or "prophetic dreams," as they include no symbolism, and God delivers a clear message.[215] In contrast, there are others in the Bible who had symbolic dreams, such as Joseph (Gen 37:8, 9; 40:5; 41:15), Gideon's opposing army member (Judg 7:13-15), Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:31-45; 4:8-17), and Daniel. The ladder is the focus of this paper. Although these are "symbolic dreams," they still contain prophetic messages from God. However, they need interpretation.[216]

As mentioned, Joseph had two symbolic dreams regarding his future promotion (Gen 37:8, 9). He later interprets the dreams of two court workers and a Pharoah, which were all symbolic (Gen 40:5; 41:15). A symbolic dream also occurs in the story of Gideon. In this

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[213] Ibid.

[214] Ibid.

[215] Husser, Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World, 23.

[216] Esther J. Hamori and Jonathan Stökl, *Perchance to Dream: Dream Divination in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2018), 136.

narrative, a member of the opposing army had a symbolic dream, which the dreamer's comrade interpreted. The dream predicted Gideon's victory over the dreamer's army (Judg 7:13-15).

Nebuchadnezzar, in the Book of Daniel, had predictive dreams as well. They were symbolic and required interpretation, which Daniel provided. The interpretation revealed Nebuchadnezzar's temporary fall and the future of various kingdoms (Dan 2:31-45; 4:8-17). It is important to note that it was common for Gentiles to have symbolic dreams, while Hebrews mainly had message or prophetic dreams.[217]

Hence, Daniel and Joseph stand out as they are the only recorded Hebrews to have symbolic dreams according to the Hebrew Bible.[218] Daniel saw a "dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed," which symbolically depicted the future of his people and various kingdoms.[219] Additionally, he saw and interacted with spiritual beings. One of these beings interpreted his visions. Thus, the dreams involving Joseph, Gideon, Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel were symbolic and required interpretation.[220] Further, they revealed personal and corporate prophecy (Gen 40:20-23; 41:26, 32; 42:9).[221]

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[217] Oppenheim, "The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East," 207.

[218] Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives,* 106. Oppenheim differs slightly in categorizing Joseph and Daniel's dreams/visions as symbolic. He emphasizes that Joseph's dreams are self-explanatory, and Daniel's personal experiences are visions (Oppenheim, "The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East," 205, 210).

[219] Daniel mentions having a dream and vision interchangeably (Dan 7:1). Further, he says that the vision is by night as he lay in his bed (Dan 7:2). Other biblical characters mention having a "vision of the night" (1 Sam 29:7; Job 20:8; 33:15; Isa 29:7). Regarding Daniel, Husser states that the difference between a dream and a "vision in the night" is that a dream requires an interpretation. The ladder includes the key to the interpretation. An angelic being providing the interpretation, in the case of Daniel, does not change the classification of the visionary experience (Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World*, 120-122).

[220] Ibid., 24.

[221] Ibid.

Daniel's dreams or visions were corporate prophecies, although they encouraged him personally since he was concerned for his people. The visions contained messages from God that needed to be decoded, which the angel provided (Dan 7-9, 12). However, his visions would be sealed and reserved for a specific point in time (Dan 12:4). God's people would read the visions and interpretations that revealed what they would experience: suffering for the sake of refinement and reward (Dan 11:33-35; 12:1,10). The wise within God's holy covenant would need insight into their plight so that they could resist deception and help others maintain their righteousness (Dan 11:32-35). They would undergo persecution, but in the end, they would be purified and shine brightly.

God's supernatural message was made clear to his people: He is sovereign. He raises up and tears down kings. He has considered all that His people would experience and is in control. They would go through perilous times, but they only needed to endure until the end. Deliverance would come. In the meantime, He would provide knowledge and wisdom to guide them through it all.

<div align="center">Divine Wisdom in Daniel 10-12</div>

Wisdom is a prevalent theme in the book of Daniel, aside from dreams and visions.[222] Daniel and his three friends were devout and wise (Dan 1:11-17). Additionally, God required him to share insight with other wise people who would be just as devoted to God in the future (Dan 7:1; 10:14; 12:4). Further, Daniel was considered a "wise man" in the kings' courts because God gifted and elevated him (Dan 1:17-21). As such, it is important to understand what the author of Daniel meant by the "wise."

Terminology of the *ŚKL*

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[222] House, *Daniel*, 30.

Daniel 11:33, 35, 12:3 speaks of "the wise" (*maskillim*) causing others to understand, being refined, and shining like the sun.[223] However, according to Daniel, these Scriptures do not provide a clear picture of the composition of a wise person. Thus, a word study on the word *maskilim* (root form *skl*) in the Hebrew Bible and Daniel would prove beneficial in determining the identification of "the wise." Within the Hebrew Bible, *skl* can be translated as:

Wise	Gen 3:6; Job 22:2; Psa 2:10; Psa 36:3; Psa 94:8; Prov 1:3; Prov 14:35; Prov 17:2; Isa 52:13; Jer 23:5; Dan 11:33, 35; Dan 12:3,10
Understand	Deut 32:29; Job 17:4; Psa 14:3; 53:2; 111:10; 119:99; Isa 41:20, 44:18; Jer 3:15; Jer 9:24; Dan 9:25
Success	Jos 1:7, 8; 1 Sam 18:5, 14, 30; Prov 3:4; Jer 20:11
Prosper	Deut 29:9; 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 18:7; Prov 17:8; Jer 10:21
Prudent	Prov 10:5, 19; 15:24; 19:14; Amos 5:13
Ponder	Psa 64:9; 101:2
Instruct	Neh 9:20; Psa 32:8, Prov 21:11
Insight	Job 34:35; Dan 9:13, 22
Consider	Psa 41:1; 106:7
Skill	2 Chron 30:22; Dan 1:4, 17
Clear	1 Chron 28:19
Showed	2 Chron 30:22
Study	Neh 8:13

[223] Newsom, *Daniel*,11; Brown, BDB, 968.

Regard	Job 34:27
Thought	Prov 16:20
Judicious	Prov 16:23
Observes	Prov 21:12
Sense	Neh 8:8; Prov 12:8; 13:15; 16:22; 19:11; 21:16; 23:9
Psalm	Psa 47:7
Discretion	1 Chron 22:12; 2 Chron 2:12; Ezra 8:18
Shrewd	1 Chron 26:14
Maskil	Psa 32; 42; 44; 45; 52-55; 74; 78; 88-89;142
Cunning	Dan 8:25
Discerning	1 Sam 25:3; Dan 9:13, 25

Upon observation, one can concede that *śkl* in Daniel is translated as wise, skill, understanding, insight, cunning, and discerning. Regarding skill, it can mean technical matters and intelligence, which can be natural and God-given (Dan 1:4, 17).[224] Insight, discernment, and understanding often refer to the ability to provide or gain these traits through God's truth and by His messengers (Dan 9:13, 22, 38; 11:33). Further, *śkl* in Daniel means to consider the future carefully (Dan 1:4; 9:24); one who undergoes God's refinement (Dan11:35); and being cunning (Dan 8:25).[225]

Scholastic Translations of *ŚKL*

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[224] Brown, BDB, 968; Ludwig Koehler, et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 1328.

[225] Brown, BDB, 968.

Anne Gardner believes that *śkl* should be translated as "discerning" in the Hebrew Bible, including Daniel.[226] As it relates to "the wise" (*maskilim*), she states that they were well versed in the Scriptures, able to provide discernment of a specific time and give assurance to their people, from the line of Aaron in name and function, and fulfilled the promise of God by being discerning leaders.[227]

Steven Thompson agrees with Garner that the *maskilim* were the "wise, discerning ones."[228] However, he stresses the link between the *maskilim* and the *rabbim*, "the many" (Dan 11:33-34).[229] The role and function of the wise are discerners, spiritual guides to "the many" or covenant community, and instructors. Additionally, God would choose them to shine and receive a reward after stumbling and refinement.[230]

Tanner reaches a similar conclusion concerning the *maskilim* and their relation to the *rabbim.* However, he calls the *maskilim* "Jews with insight among the people." [231] Those with insight provided understanding and were wise in knowledge concerning the Scripture.[232] He adds that they urged "the many" to obey God faithfully. Further, the *maskilim's* wisdom was for the

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[226] Anne E. Gardner, "לכשׂ In the Hebrew Bible: Key to the Identity and Function of the Maskilim in Daniel," *Revue Biblique (1946-)* 118, no. 4 (2011): 502.

[227] Ibid., 510-514.

[228] Steven Thompson, "Those Who Are Wise: The Maskilim in Daniel and the New Testament," (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1997).

[229] Thompson, "Those Who Are Wise," 216.

[230] Ibid.

[231] Tanner, *Daniel*, 682.

[232] Ibid.

present and future.[233] As such, they could make prudent decisions concerning the eschatological revelation of perilousness.[234]

One may conclude from Thompson, Garner, and Tanner's study of the Hebrew Bible that the *maskilim* were wise and discerning. They had insight and understanding naturally and spiritually, especially in God's Word. Additionally, these wise ones could provide understanding to those who were in their community. Further, they were prudent yet willing to experience suffering, which resulted in refinement and reward.

Understanding God's Word and His plans for his people helped the wise to guide others in devotion and righteousness. God does not reveal his plans for knowledge alone but to aid and give hope to his people. Because the people knew their God and had the revelation stored in Daniel's book and God's Word, they could take a stand and not give in to the deceit of the evil king. The wise were spiritual guides and discerners who helped many overcome the temptation to sin against God. Their reward would be great, as was the case with Daniel.

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[233] Ibid.

[234] Ibid.

Chapter 5: Application and Conclusion

Application

Just as God had a plan for His wise followers during the time of Daniel in perilous times, He also has a plan for believers today. In 2 Timothy 3:1, it is mentioned that perilous times will come in the last days, with an increase in wicked behavior. People will become selfish, disobedient, proud, heartless, lacking self-control, and lovers of money (2 Tim 3:2-3). They will prioritize pleasure over God and have an outward appearance of godliness while denying its true power (2 Tim 3:4-5). The apostle Paul instructed believers to avoid such individuals (2 Tim 3:5).

They should hold fast to the Scriptures, which contain the wisdom for salvation through faith (2 Tim 3:15). It was prophesied that people's character would deteriorate, with the wicked becoming more deceived (2 Tim 3:14). Despite this, believers are encouraged to continue in the teachings they have received, following the example of Paul in his conduct, heart, sufferings, and persecutions (2 Tim 3:10-11, 14). Similar to the time of Daniel, persecution will come to all who live godly lives (2 Tim 3:12). Nevertheless, they are urged to preach the word regardless of the challenging times, just as the wise did in Daniel's time and the apostles did (2 Tim 4:2). The purpose of the word is to reprove, rebuke, and exhort (2 Tim 4:2). Endurance in sound teaching is necessary as people will not desire truth. Just as the king of intrigue in Daniel deceived people, so will they be deceived in the last days. Jesus warned that even the elect would fall away if He did not come soon (Matt 24:22-24). Therefore, Christians are to have their senses trained by the word of God to discern between good and evil (Heb 5:14). The Bible serves as their guide and contains God's plans (Psa 119:105).

God knew that challenging times would arise for His people. Therefore, He provided divine guidance through His apostles and His word to warn them and offer hope. Jesus cautioned

his disciples about persecution but assured them they would not lose heart, as he had already overcome the world (John 16:33). The same holds true for all believers. They will encounter difficulties, but they will ultimately triumph. They are called to persevere and cling to the wisdom of the word, sharing it with others, just like the maskilim, despite the prevailing deception and wickedness (Dan 12:10; 2 Tim 3:13; 15). The warnings and instructions provided by God bring hope, as a crown of righteousness awaits those who endure until the end (2 Tim 4:8).

Conclusion

The book of Daniel contains numerous instances of God communicating with Daniel through dreams and visions while he was in captivity. The problem this thesis addresses is the need for God to provide insight into the future through this supernatural phenomenon to Daniel and the wise. Many scholars have conducted analyses dedicated to the interpretation and history of the dreams and visions of Daniel and to whom the wise were in separate instances. However, there are not many that have tied the need for this insight to the intended recipient: the wise in covenant with God. The exegetical analysis revealed that God divulged his plans to Daniel to aid and give hope to him and other wise followers of Yahweh during perilous times. The analysis is significant because believers today will face times of difficulty and will need to emulate the character of the wise to endure and receive their righteous reward like the wise in the book of Daniel.

Context Overview

Since the exegetical analysis is research-oriented, a discussion on the history, cultural, and literary context of Daniel was needed for the readers to ascertain an adequate perspective of

the thesis. The historical context detailed the time of Israel's captivity in Babylon and the subsequent Persian rule. Additionally, it reviews how and why Israel was taken captive. Israel rebelled against God and did not repent. As a result, God judged the nation by allowing them to be taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon as promised. Yahweh revealed His plans for them before this occurred and He promised to return them to their land after a generation had passed. The historical section discusses the kings who reigned in Israel at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's rule.

Daniel was one of the first taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. God provided him and three other Hebrew men with intelligence that far succeeded the other wisemen of Babylon. God especially gifted Daniel with the ability to understand all kinds of dreams and visions. Daniel was a devout man of God who obeyed God despite the threat of persecution in Babylon. God rewarded his faithfulness by giving him favor with various kings through interpreting their dreams and omens. These interpretations provided an opportunity for Yahweh to be exalted rather than Daniel or any pagan deities. Additionally, the interpretations provided insight into the future concerning future kingdoms.

The predictive nature of Daniel's visions is a point of contention for scholars, as well as a few other things. The historical context discussed the discrepancies in the date, unity, and author of the text among the critical and traditional views. Those who are of the critical approach believe that Daniel was not the author but was written by others who lived during the reign of the Seleucid king, Antiochus IV. They believe Daniel was fictional and the book is apocalyptic literature. The purpose of the writing was to encourage Jews living during the Maccabean Revolt, which was waged against Antiochus. The reasons for this view are the disbelief in predicative prophecy, certain words utilized do not fit the date of the supposed writing, and the book was not in its final form until after the second century in B.C.

However, those of the traditional view have opposing arguments. Daniel is the real author and the book was written in the second century B.C. Predictive prophecy is legitimate and there are substantial reasons for the supposed discrepancies in the language used. The Hebrew and Aramaic words can be explained by the linguistic context of Daniel's time. Additionally, Hebrew was the language of God's people, while Aramaic was the language of the Gentile people. The loan words utilized were in operation and were consistent in their use during the sixth century. Lastly, the book is apocalyptic but not pseudonymous. Other biblical writings contain marks of apocalyptic elements, and Jesus mentioned Daniel in the New Testament, validating his authenticity. The paper agrees with the traditionalist view and concludes that the Book of Daniel is authentic, reliable, and historically accurate.

The next section discussed is the literary context. It details the three suggested genres within Daniel: apocalyptic literature, court tales, and narrative. The court tales and narrative appear in the first half of Daniel and the apocalyptic literature in the second. Apocalypses generally contain elements of angelic visitation, visions, and prophecy. Daniel includes angelic visitations in dreams and visions, which provide messages of prophecy.

Daniel 1-6 is filled with a series of stories, making it a narrative. The stories are about conflicts between the kings and their courtiers, qualifying it as a court tale. An example of this is when the king demands that the wisemen tell him his dream contents without first hearing it. He did this to ensure they could not deceive them. Since they were unable to tell him the dream, he ordered their deaths until Daniel intervened. Daniel would be the hero of the story, further evidencing a court tale genre. The court tale genre in Jewish traditions typically included moral and ethnic tension in the court. Daniel's fast from the king's meat and drink resulted in him being in better shape than all the noblemen and wise men due to his ability to keep his moral convictions.

The last context section is cultural, which analyzed the differences between the ANE and Jewish religious cultures. The ANE, specifically Assyro-Babylon, had a pantheon of gods. Additionally, they had creation and flood stories that involved gods that were part of the universe. Further, only two deities were prominent in Babylon during Daniel's time: Nebo and Marduk. Marduk, known as Bel, was the god of magic and incantation. Nebo, or Nabu, the god of wisdom, was the son of Marduk. These are the gods that Nebuchadnezzar served.

He and the pagans, under his rule sought information and the will of the divine through divination practice, which included dream divination. Dream divination is a way of interpreting dreams, and the techniques involve an intuitive understanding of the symbolic representation, the collection of dream omnia, and communicating with the deity that provided the dream using magic or oracular apparatus. These techniques were especially used for symbolic dreams.

However, Yahweh demonstrated to Nebuchadnezzar and all in his realm that He was the true God who revealed mysteries and wisdom. Unlike the false deities, He is one, exists outside creation, and created the universe Himself. The ability to receive interpretation was a gift He granted and it was given through divine revelation. Biblical patriarchs Daniel and Joseph, utilized this gift to interpret dreams of Gentiles, including Nebuchadnezzar. It was done through the power of God as opposed to divination. God's people discover His will through reading His word and receiving messages from Him. It is revealed simply because He loves them and is in covenant with them.

God revealed His will specifically through Daniel's visions. Before His people were taken into captivity, it was prophesied by Jeremiah that they would be captured and should stay in Babylon for seventy years. After that time, God would bring them back to their land, restore it, and bring retribution to their enemies. Daniel discusses this in chapter 9 and seeks God for further understanding as the seventy years passed during his time in Babylon.

His visions in the previous chapters revealed God's plans for kingdoms to come, including the eternal kingdom. However, Daniel wanted insight into the present time. The angel, Gabriel, provides this understanding in a vision explaining the seventy-year timeline during which Daniel's people would build and restore their land. However, he revealed further desolations. Additional details and explanations of God's plan were uncovered through Daniel's vision in chapters 10-12, which were analyzed exegetically.

Review of Exegetical Analysis and Findings

God's Plan

Before delving into the contents of the vision, Daniel explains that the message of the vision was one of conflict. He emphasizes that he understood this message. While he spends most of this chapter describing the messenger, it is the message that he wants to highlight, as the words "speak" and "word" are mentioned 11-12 times. The purpose of the vision is to convey a message that concerns God's people in the end days. A spiritual being fought Daniel's messenger to prevent him from obtaining God's intel. As such, this divine information was worth fighting over as it revealed God's plan for his people. The message unveiled further times of trouble, making it one of conflict. However, the enemy did not want Daniel and the wise to receive this message as it would result in proper action from the recipients.

The plan is uncovered in chapter 11. It details kingdoms rising, falling, and dividing. The vision is similar to the ones in chapters 2, 7, and 8. While chapter 11 speaks of multiple kingdoms, it focuses on the latter days of Daniel's people. Judah would get caught in the territorial battles between the kings of the North and South, even as some returned to rebuild the temple under foreign rule. It is almost unanimously agreed that most of the events in chapter 11 have already occurred. Daniel was alive to see Cyrus of Persia capture Babylon. Alexander the Great, likely the Grecian king, arose but his kingdom was divided amongst his generals after he

died. Those subsequent kingdoms grew and further divided, never reaching the power and authority of Alexander the Great.

As Judah was in the middle of this conflict, having been ruled by these kings, violent people within God's plan took action against these kings to fulfill a vision. These violent ones were likely Jewish Revolutionaries dissatisfied with Egypt's rule over Judah and Jerusalem. It is unclear what vision is being referred to in 11:14. What is known is that they were unsuccessful in their revolt.

God additionally revealed that an evil king would target those who violated His covenant by seducing them with flattery. The evil king, referred to by Daniel as the king of the North, was the Seleucid king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Antiochus's intent was to come against God and His people. He persecuted the Jews and his attack included setting up an abomination in the temple and forbidding Jewish religious customs. However, those faithful to the covenant stood firm by resisting the temptation to sin and taking action against him. Thus, the Maccabean Revolution began.

It was a resistance against the Hellenization of Jews and persecution. While Antiochus persecuted the Jews, it resulted in spiritual refinement and purification. Wise Jews provided insight into the Scriptures to the others within their covenant so they would remain faithful to God. Despite the plunder and death of many Jews, God's purpose of refinement and purification of the nation was fulfilled. All these events were a part of God's plan and timing.

It is debated whether Antiochus IV Epiphanes is the king referred to in Daniel 11:36-45 or if these verses point to the Antichrist mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. The details listed in 11:36-45, including the location of his death, do not align with Antiochus IV Epiphanes according to some scholars. It is likely that the king in verse 36 is the "little horn" from Daniel 7, who will emerge during the end times, indicating a shift to a future ruler. In Daniel, the time of

the end is also referred to as the "time of trouble" and "the shattering of the power of the holy covenant" and "a time of trouble" (Dan 12:1, 7)." Michael will arise and deliver God's people during these trials. The spiritual insight and faithfulness of the wise led many to righteousness. As a result, the wise will receive a reward of glory at their resurrection.

God's plan of conflict for His people would be fulfilled. He utilized the trial His people experienced to develop righteousness. It provided them with the knowledge that there is a purpose in suffering. Thus, His plans gave His people hope and comfort despite trouble.

Divine Communication and Guidance

After uncovering God's plan for Israel in Daniel 10-12, the exegesis reviewed Divine Communication and Guidance as it relates to Daniel and God's people. Dreams and visions were the avenues God used to speak to Daniel. As such, a word study of the term "dream" *(halom)* was conducted, along with an analysis of its use in the Old Testament.[235]

The word study revealed that *halom (*root word *ḥlm)* and its derivatives in different dialects could be used to describe different kinds of dreams: ordinary dreams, nightmares, and more unusual dream experiences. Additionally, BDB defines it as dreams with prophetic meaning. The use of *halom* in the Old Testament occurs 65 times for dreams bringing promise, hope, and warning. These dreams were either message or symbolic dreams. A message dream or prophetic dream is clear and directly from God. It typically requires no interpretation. Examples of people who had message dreams are Abimelech, Laban, Jacob, and Solomon.

The Bible contains various instances of symbolic dreams, such as those experienced by individuals like Joseph, Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel. These dreams often carried prophetic messages from God and required interpretation. The dreams and visions of these individuals

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[235] Dreams and visions are used interchangeably in Daniel.

were generally connected to the kingdoms they were a part of, revealing God's plan for these nations. Daniel's visions also hinted at the suffering and ultimate reward of righteousness for him and his people. They conveyed the message that despite facing persecution, God would eventually deliver them, and they would emerge purified and shining brightly.

The prophetic messages conveyed through dreams and visions outlined God's plans for not only the world but also for His people. These messages revealed His sovereignty in determining the rise and fall of nations. They also illustrated His awareness and consideration of the challenges His people would encounter for His ultimate purposes. Furthermore, they indicated that He would impart knowledge and wisdom to help them navigate and withstand perilous times until the time of His deliverance. As such, God's supernatural communication provided His people with hope and aid during times of trouble.

Divine Wisdom

The book of Daniel emphasizes the theme of wisdom. Daniel and his friends were considered devout and wise, and Daniel was required to share his insight with others. The term "the wise" or *maskillim* (root word *śkl*) is mentioned in Daniel and refers to people who cause others to understand, are refined, and shine like the sun. However, the specific characteristics of a wise person are not clearly defined in the Scriptures, so a word study on the term "wise" in the Hebrew Bible and Daniel was beneficial in understanding its meaning.

Śkl can be translated into 24 words within the English Bible: Wise, Understand, Success, Prosper, Prudent, Ponder, Instruct, Insight, Consider, Skill, Clear, Showed, Study, Regard, Thought, Judicious, Observes, Sense, Psalm, Discretion, Shrewd, Maskil, Cunning, Discerning. However, within Daniel, it is translated as wise, skill, understanding, insight, cunning, and discerning. Scholars believe that the *maskilim*, who were considered wise and discerning, played a significant role in providing insight and understanding to those in covenant with God. They

were well-versed in the Scriptures and were able to guide others spiritually. God's plan aided the

wise with the revelation needed to take a stand for righteousness. Their wisdom was rooted in

knowing and submitting to God's will. Utilizing Daniel's visions and the Word of God, the wise

helped many resist deception and overcome the temptation to sin against God. As a result, the

maskilim were rewarded with glory for their faithfulness.

Findings Contribution

The findings found within the analysis contribute to the gap in research concerning the

Book of Daniel. While various academic works dissect the Book of Daniel's content – the

dreams, visions, historical context, and "maskilim" – few explore the profound purpose behind

God's chosen method of communication as it relates to the wise. As prophesied in Daniel 12:4, 9,

God equips His wise people with supernatural insight and revelations of His plans during

perilous times, offering both guidance and hope. This thesis carves a niche within Daniel's

scholarship by emphasizing the interdependence between the wise and God's knowledge. It

argues that true wisdom stems from knowing and submitting to God's will. This devotion fosters

a "wise person" who not only possesses God-given insight but also inspires devotion in others,

ultimately leading to reward. By analyzing the vision in chapters 10-12, this thesis demonstrates

how God's messages reassured the faithful of his unwavering plan for Israel, as foreshadowed in

earlier biblical texts. Through these visions, God empowered the wise, like Daniel, to face

adversity with unwavering faith and emerge refined.

Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Study

Books of the Bible: God's Plan for Israel

The Book of Daniel is filled with visions and dreams from God. It provides revelation of

God's continuing plan for Israel and the future kingdoms. As such, one should study the Book of

Jeremiah to ascertain Daniel's plight in rebuilding Jerusalem. Jeremiah prophesied God's plan to

send His people into captivity due to their unrepentant sin, but He would allow them to return and rebuild their land (Jer 29:10-14).[236]

Passages within Isaiah prophesy about the sin of God's people, their judgment of captivity to Babylon, and their return to their homes by the decree of a Persian king. Isaiah 13:22-27 speaks of God raising up the Medes and the Persians to overtake His people as a means of judgment for their sins.[237] The effect will be as with Sodom and Gomorrah, destroying the land with only ruins left (Isa 13:19). Isaiah 39 speaks of the captivity as well and how their treasures would be taken by the Babylonians. Isaiah 44:28-45:1 prophesies how God would raise up the Persian king Cyrus, mentioned in Daniel, to release the exiles back to their land and God's temple.[238]

Nehemiah is another recommendation as it details the partial fulfillment of God's prediction that His people would rebuild Jerusalem. After the prophecy of Cyrus allowing exiles to return (Dan 6:28; Ezra 1:1-4), another Persian king named Artaxerxes succeeded him. Nehemiah was his cupbearer and asked to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the city.[239] He went during the return of the third wave of exiles as a government official who oversaw the reconstruction of the temple wall.[240] Despite opposition, he was successful in his endeavor to rebuild the wall.[241]

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[236] Iain M. Duguid, *Daniel* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2008), 122, 134.

[237] John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 306.

[238] Menard Musendekwa, "References to the Messiah in the Pentateuch, Isaiah and Daniel: A Zimbabwean Perspective," *Annals of Global History* 1, no. 2 (June 3, 2019): 13; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Anchor Bible, 2000), 245.

[239] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1988), 178.

[240] Ibid., 208.

[241] Ibid.

Ezra, a priest and scribe who worked alongside Nehemiah, is another book of the Bible to read.

Two others are Zechariah and Ezekiel, as they additionally demonstrate the fulfillment of God's

plan to rebuild his city and temple.[242]

Books of the Bible: Dreams and Visions and God's Plan

Studying books such as Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Revelation can provide a deeper

understanding of God's plan for Israel through dreams and visions. As previously mentioned,

Ezekiel has numerous visions of the people's sin, God's judgment, God's glory departing, and

the future restoration of His people.[243] Zechariah's visions focus on judgment upon Israel's

enemies and the future glory of God's kingdom.[244] Revelation would be a beneficial study for

readers as it contains themes similar to those of Daniel.[245] Its focus is on the end times, as

alluded to in Daniel 12. It contains messages of the final judgment, God's overthrow of Satan,

and the restoration of His eternal kingdom (Rev 20:11-15; 21:1-4). Just like Daniel, these books

offer visionary experiences with comparable themes. Yet, it's important to note that their

symbolic expressions may differ in certain aspects. Each book's unique symbolism and imagery

contribute to a multifaceted understanding of how God communicates His message through

supernatural mediums.[246]

Books of the Bible: Wisdom

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[242] Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 89.

[243] Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 172; Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 102.

[244] Mark J. Boda, *Haggai, Zechariah* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 242.

[245] G. K. Beale, The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010), 154.

[246] Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1-8, 146.

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job are great books that may shed further light upon the meaning of wisdom and the description of the wise. The book of Proverbs is a collection of wise statements related to practical wisdom, ethical teachings, and guidance for righteous living.[247] Some of these writings are traditionally attributed to King Solomon, known as the wisest man of his time (1 Kings 4:29-30). Furthermore, he is traditionally credited with writing the book of Ecclesiastes, although modern scholars debate this attribution.[248] It contains messages such as vanity of life and the pursuit of wisdom, wealth, and pleasure.[249] It reflects on the purpose of life and how it comes from the fear of the Lord, as He is sovereign and wise (Eccl 12:13).[250]

The book of Job serves as a powerful illustration of God's wisdom and sovereignty in the face of human suffering.[251] Despite Job's fear of the Lord, wisdom, and righteousness, he still experiences immense suffering, losing all his possessions and his children.[252] Throughout the book, Job and his friends grapple with the ways of God, struggling to truly understand Him. However, it becomes clear that Job's suffering is not a punishment but rather a test of his faithfulness and trust in God's sovereignty.[253] Ultimately, Job passes this test and is rewarded with even more than he lost (Job 42:10-17). His story exemplifies the idea that faithfulness and righteousness will ultimately be rewarded, even in the face of suffering.[254]

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[247] Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 15.

[248] Tremper Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 19.

[249] Michael V. Fox, *Ecclesiastes* (New York: Yale University Press, 2004), 50.

[250] Ibid.

[251] John H. Walton, *Job* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 108.

[252] Walton, *Job,* 108.

[253] Ibid.

[254] Ibid.

The exploration of Jeremiah, Isaiah, Nehemiah, Ezra, Zechariah, Ezekiel, Revelation, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job collectively provide a holistic understanding of God's intentions, the nature of wisdom, and the pivotal role of the wise in navigating life's complexities with unwavering faith and discernment. This comprehensive study of biblical texts illuminates the depth of God's communication with His people and the profound impact of wisdom on one's spiritual journey. Moreover, it underscores the timeless relevance of divine guidance and the transformative power of wisdom in shaping righteous conduct and enduring faith.

The culmination of the exegetical analysis, bolstered by scholarly support, further reinforces the connection between God's chosen method of communication and the wise individuals throughout the Book of Daniel. The study demonstrates how God gave supernatural insight and revelation of His plans to His wise people, offering them guidance and instilling hope during perilous times, as prophesied in Daniel 12:4 and 9. Through an analysis of the visionary accounts within Daniel, particularly in chapters 10-12, this thesis reveals how God's messages reassured the faithful of His unwavering plan for Israel, as mentioned in earlier biblical texts. Furthermore, the connection between wisdom and divine knowledge is emphasized, highlighting that wisdom originates from a profound understanding and submission to God's will. Godly devotion not only equips individuals with divine insights but also encourages other believers towards faithfulness, ultimately leading to divine reward.

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