

ABSTRACT

The Foreign Kings and the Jewish Sages: Reading the Narratives in Daniel 1–6

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This study examines the portrayal of foreign kings in Dan 1–6, suggesting a new interpretive approach to these narratives and drawing out the implications of this portrayal for the unity and theme of the book of Daniel. This dissertation argues that the narratives depict foreign kings in a positive manner rather than satirizing them. While interpreting the narratives' portrayals of foreign kings as negative fits within the apocalyptic part of the book (Dan 7–12), this reading shows that the narratives in Dan 1–6 have a distinct agenda of demonstrating the role of wise men—*maskîlîm* (11:33, 35; 12:3, 10)—in the context of foreign empires. This study shows that this depiction of the ways in which wise men relate to foreign kings illustrates the role of wise men in Dan 11:33 and 12:3 to “lead many to righteousness,” including even the foreign kings, by the transformative power of wisdom—the knowledge of God.

As a result, the final form of the book of Daniel reflects the concern of wisdom circles as well as an apocalyptic orientation. The narratives carry out the political and theological goals of rationalizing polity and religion under foreign rulers, and envisioning the transformative power of wisdom in an imperial context for the Jews after the exile.

The Foreign Kings and the Jewish Sages: Reading the Narratives in Daniel 1–6

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
AntS	Antiquités Sémitiques
AOTC	Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries
APB	<i>Acta Patristica et Byzantina</i>
AS	<i>Aramaic Studies</i>
AsJT	<i>Asia Journal of Theology</i>
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
AWR	Aus der Welt der Religion
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibSem	The Biblical Seminar
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BLS	Bible and Literature Series
BMI	The Bible and Its Modern Interpreters
BMS	Biblical Monograph Series
BRS	The Biblical Resource Series
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BW	<i>The Biblical World</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CurBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
DCLS	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
Did	<i>Didaskalia</i>
DSD	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
EANEC	Explorations in Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations
EdF	Erträge der Forschung

EIH	H. C. Rawlinson. "East India House Inscription." Pages 53–64 in <i>A Selection from the Historical Inscriptions of Chaldæa, Assyria, and Babylonia</i> . Vol. 1 of <i>The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia</i> . London: Bowler, 1861.
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FCB	Feminist Companion to the Bible
FIOTL	Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GA	Gesammelte Aufsätze
GMS	Grazer Morgenländische Studien
HAR	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
HHR	Handbooks on the History of Religions
HR	<i>History of Religions</i>
HSCPRT	Heythrop Studies in Contemporary Philosophy, Religion, & Theology
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IdS	<i>In die Skriflig</i>
IOS	<i>Israel Oriental Studies</i>
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
IRT	Issues in Religion and Theology
JANES	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JNSL	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
JP	<i>Journal for Preachers</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series

<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JSPSup	Journal for the study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LDSS	The Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament studies
MBCOTS	Mellen biblical commentary, Old Testament series
NCB	New Century Bible
NSKAT	Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar, Altes Testament
OB	Oxford Bible Series
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
<i>Or</i>	<i>Orientalia</i>
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
PrTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RechBib	Recherches bibliques
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review & Expositor</i>
SB	Sources bibliques
SBLAIL	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Israel and Its Literature
SBLANEM	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Near East Monographs
SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SBTS	Sources for Biblical and Theological Study
SCRK	Studien zur christlichen Religions- und Kulturgeschichte
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>

SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SPOT	Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigraphica
TBC	Torch Bible Commentaries
THL	Theory and History of Literature
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TSTS	Toronto Semitic Texts and Studies
TSTSJTSA	Texts and Studies of Theological Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>USQR</i>	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>
<i>VerEcc</i>	<i>Verbum et Ecclesia</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WesBC	Westminster Bible Companion
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>WO</i>	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZBKAT	Zürcher Bibelkommentare, Altes Testament

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Thanks Be to God.

To my family:
Sojung, Hayoung, and Haeun

CHAPTER ONE

History of Scholarship

State of Question

There has been much controversy over the interpretation of the book of Daniel, due to its bilingualism (Aramaic in 2:4b–7:28 and Hebrew in 1:1–2:4a; 8:1–12:13) and its mixture of genres (narratives in Dan 1–6 and apocalyptic visions in 7–12). The book is seemingly divided into two parts: the first half of the book is a collection of court stories about diaspora Jews in foreign courts during the exile, and the second half consists of apocalyptic visions that Daniel receives.¹ Moreover, while the two parts are connected by the common figure Daniel, who interprets and receives dreams, each of these parts shows very different concerns and perspectives. On the one hand, Dan 1–6 depicts a viable and even successful life for the Jews in a foreign court. On the other hand, Dan 7–12 envisions the end of times and the destruction of foreign empires.² These opposite perspectives further relate to the different portrayals of foreign kings in each part. As

¹ As Sweeney notes, there are “formal differences” between narratives and visions. While Dan 1–6 employ a third person perspective, Dan 7–12 use a first-person perspective by Daniel. The setting of Dan 1–6 is a foreign court, whereas the visions in 7–12 relate to Palestine. Daniel 1–6 employ the narrative genre, while Dan 7–12 present an apocalyptic visionary genre. “As a result of these differences, critics maintain that chapters 1–6 were composed in a much earlier period of good relations between Jews and gentile monarchs, perhaps during the fourth or third centuries B.C.E., and were only later placed into their present literary context with the anti-Seleucid visions of chapters 7–12” (“The End of Eschatology in Daniel? Theological and Socio-Political Ramifications of the Changing Contexts of Interpretation,” *BibInt* 9 [2001], 127). For dating the Aramaic of Daniel, see P. W. Coxon, “Syntax of the Aramaic of Daniel: A Dialectal Study,” *HUCA* 48 (1977), 107–22.

² It is worth noting that while the narratives (Dan 1–6) depict Daniel as an interpreter rather than a receiver of dreams, Dan 7–12 present Daniel as receiving dreams without the ability to interpret them.

scholars point out, the narratives in Dan 1–6 depict the foreign kings not as hostile characters but in a positive manner, whereas the apocalyptic texts envision the destruction of foreign empires.³ Due to these different perspectives distinguishing the two parts of the book, scholars often strive for the important task of identifying thematic connections between the two different sections of the book.⁴

When it comes to the interpretation of the narratives, however, the problem becomes more complex. While scholars agree that the apocalyptic visions in Dan 7–12 project Jewish hopes for God’s direct intervention to stop the persecution and religious oppression at the hands of foreign empires, they differ in their opinions about how to interpret the narratives in Dan 1–6. Against reading the narratives’ positive depiction of the foreign kings, recent scholars interpret the narrative as portraying the foreign kings negatively.⁵ These various scholarly opinions partly arise from the nature of a narrative

³ Collins argues that “the fact that they [Dan 1–6] show a very positive attitude to gentile rule. . . . has occasioned some surprise and would be difficult to reconcile with the supposed ‘eschatological conventicles’ of the Hasidim” (“Daniel and His Social World,” *Int* 39 [1985]), 135. See also H. L. Ginsberg, *Studies in Daniel*, TSJTS 14 (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1948), 10; G. von Rad, *The Theology of Israel’s Prophetic Traditions*, vol. 2 of *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1965), 309–10; N. Porteous, *Daniel: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), 19–20, 29; M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, trans. J. Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 1:178–79; M. Henze, “The Ideology of Rule in the Narrative Frame of Daniel (Dan 1–6),” *SBLSP* 38 (1999), 527.

⁴ Some scholars suggest the connection between the different perspectives of the two sections of the book and the bilingual sections. See H. Rouillard-Bonraisin, “Problèmes du bilinguisme en Daniel,” in *Mosaïque de langues, mosaïque culturelle: le bilinguisme dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Antiquités Sémitiques 1 (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1996), 145–70; B. T. Arnold, “The Use of Aramaic in the Hebrew Bible: Another Look at Bilingualism in Ezra and Daniel,” *JNSL* 22 (1996): 1–16; A. E. Portier-Young, “Languages of Identity and Obligation: Daniel as Bilingual Book,” *VT* 60 (2010): 98–115; D. C. Snell, “Why is There Aramaic in the Bible?” *JSOT* 18 (1980): 32–51; A. Lacocque, *Daniel in His Time*, SPOT (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988).

⁵ D. L. Smith-Christopher, “The Book of Daniel,” *NIB* 7, ed. L. E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 17–152; D. N. Fewell, “Chapter Five: Resisting Daniel,” in *The Children of Israel: Reading the Bible for the Sake of Our Children* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 117–130; S. Kirkpatrick, *Competing for*

that allows various interpretations. In addition, the characteristic of the narratives as a collected or compiled work also attributes to the wide range of interpretation of Dan 1–6.

While the narratives generally illustrate how Jewish courtiers could survive and even succeed in a foreign court by the knowledge and power of the Hebrew God, scholars emphasize various foci in relation to the authorial intention or the message of the narratives: the success of the Jews in the diaspora serving both Yahweh and foreign rulers, the necessity of fidelity to God, the importance of Torah observance for diaspora Jews, God’s sovereignty over foreign kings, resistance against Hellenism and empire, or satire and humor mocking the foreign rulers.⁶ Whether the authors of the visions “used the court-tales of the diaspora as a basis for their apocalyptic visions” or they composed the narratives as well, the interpretation of the narratives is central for determining the

Honor: A Social-Scientific Reading of Daniel 1–6. BIS 74 (Leiden: Brill, 2005); D. M. Valeta, *Lions and Ovens and Visions: A Satirical Reading of Daniel 1–6*, HBM 12 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008); M. Chan, “Ira Regis: Comedic Inflections of Royal Rage in Jewish Court Tales,” *JQR* 103 (2013): 1–25; B. A. Jones, “Resisting the Power of Empire: The Theme of Resistance in the Book of Daniel,” *RevExp* 109 (2012): 541–56; A. E. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011; idem., “Theologies of Resistance in Daniel, the Apocalypse of Weeks, the Book of Dreams, and the Testament of Moses,” PhD diss., Duke University, 2004.

⁶ For the success of the Jews in the diaspora, see W. L. Humphreys, “A Life-Style for Diaspora: A Study of the Tales of Esther and Daniel” *JBL* 92 (1973); for the necessity of fidelity to God while serving foreign rulers, see J. J. Collins, “Court-Tales in Daniel and the Development of Apocalyptic,” *JBL* 94 (1975); P. L. Redditt, *Daniel: Based on the New Revised Standard Version*, NCB (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 48; C. L. Seow, *Daniel*, WC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 10; M. Nel, “Daniel 9 as Part of an Apocalyptic Book?” *VerEcc* 34 (2013), 2; for God’s sovereignty over foreign powers, see R. Albertz, *Der Gott des Daniel: Untersuchungen zu Daniel 4–6 in der Septuagintafassung sowie zu Komposition und Theologie des aramäischen Danielbuches*, SBS 131 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988), 185; for satire and humor mocking foreign rulers, see Valeta, *Lions and Ovens*; A. Brenner, “Who’s Afraid of Feminist Criticism? Who’s Afraid of Biblical Humour? The Case of the Obtuse Foreign Ruler in the Hebrew Bible,” *JSOT* 63 (1994): 38–55; for resistance literature against Hellenism and empire, see Smith-Christopher, “The Book of Daniel,” 17–152; Fewell, “Chapter Five: Resisting Daniel,” 117–30; D. C. Polaski, “Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin: Writing and Resistance in Daniel 5 and 6,” *JBL* 123 (2004): 649–69; Kirkpatrick, *Competing the Honor*.

message of the whole book.⁷ As Davies notes, this issue is about defining the relationship between the two parts of the book.⁸ That is, no interpretation of the narratives can be free from considering their relationship with the apocalyptic visions.⁹

Part of the reason for the variety of interpretations of the narratives depends on the nature of a “dialogic” narrative. According to Gunn and Fewell, Ruth, Jonah, Daniel 1–6, and Esther are “dialogic” narratives. A “dialogic” narrative entertains “within it several ideological points of view or ‘voices,’ often in tension, and is characterized by restraint on the part of the narrator and a premium on ‘showing’ through characters’ actions and dialogue rather than simply ‘telling.’”¹⁰ Thus, according to Gunn and Fewell, these “dialogic” narratives contrast to the “monologic” narratives—represented by Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah—which minimize the range of interpretation and focus on ‘telling’ through both narrator’s and characters’ extended monologues.¹¹ Gunn and Fewell’s description of “dialogic” narratives applies to the narratives in Dan 1–6. The history of scholarship discussed later in this chapter further examines the diverse range of interpretations of the narratives in Dan 1–6.

The review of scholarship on Dan 1–6 shows that while most studies focus either on the Jewish sages and their accommodating or resistant strategies, or on the

⁷ Collins, “Court-Tales in Daniel,” 234.

⁸ P. R. Davies, “Eschatology in the Book of Daniel,” *JSOT* 17 (1980), 33.

⁹ J. J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel*, HSM 16 (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1977), 19.

¹⁰ D. M. Gunn and D. N. Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, OBS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

compositional history of the book, scholars often overlook the significance of the foreign rulers in the narratives. The narratives' presentation of the foreign kings, however, especially their acknowledgment of YHWH's wisdom and sovereignty in the doxologies, deserve more careful attention in the interpretation of the narratives.

Thus, this dissertation examines the portrayal of foreign kings in the narratives in Dan 1–6. This study argues against one distinguishing feature of recent scholarship—reading the narratives as satire—and demonstrates that the narratives have a distinct agenda of illustrating the role of wise men, *maškilim* (11:33; 12:3) in the context of foreign empires.¹² The presence of wisdom language and themes in both the narratives (Dan 1–6) and apocalyptic texts (Dan 7–12) supports the view that the book as a final form reflects the concern of wisdom circles as well as an apocalyptic orientation. By reexamining the role of the foreign kings, therefore, this dissertation proposes a new understanding of the linking themes that draw the component parts of Daniel together into a unified whole as found in the final form of the book.

In sum, a synchronic reading of the narratives in this study suggests that the main concern of the narratives is to illustrate possible changes in foreign rulers' acknowledgment of and attitude toward the Jews and YHWH by the transformative power

¹² Daniel 11:33 reads, "The wise among the people shall give understanding to many." Daniel 12:3 reads "those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever." Although Pace argues for the relationship between the narratives and the *maškilim*'s agenda, she focuses on the Jewish sages' proper response to oppressive powers: "[t]he faithful must hold firm in their expectation of the righteous intervention of God, which will effect true change on earth. Those who understand this are the wise teachers (11:33; 12:3) who lead others by their example..." (*Daniel*, SHBC [Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2008], 347). Alternatively, Wills argues that *maškilim* presents "an ironic embodiment of divine power and presence" attained by "humbling themselves before the divine and suffering debasement and death." She argues that "[t]his ironic path to power forms its own counter-story to the one of kingly power" (*Dissonance and the Drama of Divine Sovereignty in the Book of Daniel*, LHBOTS 520 [New York: T&T Clark, 2010], 174–75).

of wisdom. Through this depiction, Dan 1–6 functions as an illustration of the role of *maškîlîm* in 11:33 and 12:3. As a result, the narratives carry out the political and theological goals of rationalizing polity and religion under foreign rulers and envisioning the transformative power of wisdom in an imperial and international context.¹³ This study employs Rick Altman’s approach to narrative analysis, using the concepts of “following” and “dual-focus narrative” in order to examine the stories holistically.¹⁴ This methodology allows this study to examine the narratives of Dan 1–6 as forming a larger single story, which envisions a new reality through the education of the foreign kings.

This introductory chapter unfolds in two parts. First, this chapter surveys the history of scholarship to introduce the prevailing scholarly trend of interpreting the foreign kings negatively in Dan 1–6. Second, this chapter then examines the problems with the interpretation of the kings focused on the satirical reading of the narratives. Third, based on these criticisms, this chapter discusses the positive portrayals of foreign kings along with its interpretive insights and theological implications.

¹³ Newsom argues that “[b]y positing the kings’ acknowledgment of YHWH’s sovereignty, and indeed the recognition of it as the source of their own sovereignty, the text can create a tightly framed narrative world in which YHWH’s sovereignty is indeed a present reality, exercised through the foreign kings.... The Daniel stories appear to be a highly stable way to discharge cognitive dissonance by asserting YHWH’s sovereignty within the context of foreign imperial rule” (“God’s Other: The Intractable Problem of the Gentile King in Judean and Early Jewish Literature,” in *The “Other” in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in Honor of John J. Collins*, ed. D. C. Harlow et al. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011], 48).

¹⁴ Rick Altman, *A Theory of Narrative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

History of Scholarship on Daniel 1–6

The Beginning of the Question

The stories of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace and Daniel in the lion's den lead some scholars to argue that the narratives in Dan 1–6 present images of religious persecution and divine intervention, and thus set the narratives' historical context within the persecution of Antiochus IV in the second century BCE.¹⁵ In this sense, these narratives in Dan 1–6 and the apocalyptic visions in Dan 7–12 encourage steadfast faith and provide hope for divine intervention during times of trial.¹⁶

Although the above interpretation identifies a unity within the book centered on a unified theme and a historical context, a number of scholars notice the different portrayals of the gentiles in each part, as well as the differences in genre and language. They thus suggest that the non-apocalyptic narratives in Dan 1–6 and the apocalyptic visions in Dan 7–12 were composed in different periods.¹⁷ For instance, Redditt

¹⁵ H. H. Rowley, "The Unity of the Book of Daniel," *HUCA* 23 (1951), 278; Porteous, *Daniel*, 13; M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 485.

¹⁶ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 485.

¹⁷ Newsom summarizes following Montgomery that "[t]he most persuasive and commonly held theory is that an original pre-Maccabean corpus of narratives composed in Aramaic was expanded in the Maccabean period by a series of apocalyptic visions largely composed in Hebrew (Montgomery 88–89)" (C. A. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, OTL [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014], 8). See also J. G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung ins alte Testament* (Göttingen: Rosenbusch, 1824); K. Koch, *Daniel*, BKAT 22 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner, 1986); O. H. Steck, "Weltgeschehen und Gottesvolk im Buch Daniel" in *Kirche: Festschrift für Günther Bornkamm zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. D. Lührmann and G. Strecker (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1980), 53–78; Albertz, *Der Gott des Daniel*, 170–93; R. G. Kratz, *Translatio Imperii: Untersuchungen zu den aramäischen Danielerzählungen und ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Umfeld*, WMANT 63 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner, 1991), 6–42; J. Gammie, "The Classification, Stages of Growth, and Changing Intentions of the Book of Daniel," *JBL* 95 (1976), 191–204; J. A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ICC 22 (Edinburgh: Clark, 1927), 90–96; M. Delcor, *Le Livre de Daniel*, SB (Paris: Gabalda, 1971); A. Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel*, trans. D. Pellauer (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979); J. J. Collins, *Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress,

maintains that Dan 1–6 reflect the time of Antiochus III when the Jews may have remained faithful to YHWH and Torah, but the apocalyptic texts reflect the persecutions under Antiochus IV, which changed their foreign benefactor into their enemy.¹⁸ For Redditt, however, both the narratives in Dan 1–6 and the apocalyptic visions in Dan 7–12 originated from the same group who thought of themselves as “the wise.”¹⁹ He insists that the group behind the text in Dan 10–12 consisted of Jews “associated with the Seleucids in some kind of scribal capacity,” which explains their interest in stories of Jews in the foreign court and their detestation of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.²⁰ Based on this understanding, Redditt agrees with Reid and argues that the visions in Dan 7–8 and 10–12 testify to a “quietistic and revolutionist, or at least non-resistant” perspective.²¹

Similarly, Collins focuses on several shared features of both parts, such as the four kingdoms, dream and interpretation, and interest in the wise. He suggests that “the

1993); L. F. Hartman and A. A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, AB 23 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); S. Burkes, *God, Self, and Death: The Shape of Religious Transformation in the Second Temple Period*, JSJSup 79 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 121–28; Humphreys, “A Life-Style for Diaspora, 211–23; P. R. Davies, *Daniel*, OTG (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 12–14; Newsom, “God’s Other,” 31–48; H. J. M. van Deventer, “Another Look at the Redaction History of the Book of Daniel, or, Reading Daniel from Left to Right,” *JSOT* 38 (2013): 239–60.

¹⁸ P. L. Redditt, “Daniel 11 and the Sociohistorical Setting of the Book of Daniel,” *CBQ* 60 (1998), 474.

¹⁹ Redditt argues, “[t]he book of Daniel was collected and arranged by a group of scribes employed by the Seleucid government of Israel after 198 B.C.E., who perceived a threat to themselves in the actions of the Seleucid king, Antiochus IV, and retold narratives set during the Babylonian captivity designed to encourage members of the group as well as other like-minded Jews” (“The Community behind the Book of Daniel: Challenges, Hopes, Values, and Its View of God,” *PRS* 36 [2009], 321).

²⁰ Redditt, “Daniel 11,” 472. For the discussion about the court sages in the Hellenistic period, see J. G. Gammie, “The Sage in Hellenistic Royal Courts,” in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, eds. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 147–53.

²¹ Redditt, “Daniel 11,” 472; S. B. Reid, *Enoch and Daniel: A Form Critical and Sociological Study of Historical Apocalypses*, BMS 2 (Berkeley, CA: Bibal, 1989), 131.

visions of Daniel were written by a member of a group which had returned to Palestine from the diaspora. Then Daniel 7–12 was a product of the same group, or the descendants of the group, which produced Daniel 1–6.”²² He proposes that this hypothesis has the merit of explaining how diaspora court tales became the basis for apocalyptic visions.²³ However, the argument that both parts of the book were produced by the same group or subsequent generations of the same group based on the self-designation of *maškîlîm* in Dan 1, 11, and 12 is less convincing. It is more probable that either Dan 1 was added when the narratives were connected to the apocalyptic visions to produce the whole book, or the original introduction to the narratives was modified or translated to form an introduction to the book.²⁴ In either case, the authorial self-identification as *maškîlîm* functions as a literary connection between the narratives and the visions.

While Redditt and a few scholars presuppose that both Dan 1–6 and 7–12 have originated within the same group, most scholars argue that the later author of the apocalyptic text used the older stories or traditions about the Jews in the exilic period.²⁵ Assuming the separate provenance of each part of the book leads to the question about the purpose of combining the two parts and subsequently the nature and message of the

²² Collins, “Court-Tales in Daniel,” 230–234.

²³ Ibid., 232–233.

²⁴ For the first case, see J.-C. Lebram, *Das Buch Daniel*, ZBK. AT 23 (Zürich: Theologischer, 1984), 22–23, 43, 48, 51–52; for the second case, see Koch, *Daniel*, 16–18, Newsom, *Daniel*, 38.

²⁵ Regarding the argument for the origin within the same group, see also Rowley, “The Unity of the Book,” 270; R. R. Wilson, “From Prophecy to Apocalyptic: Reflections on the Shape of Israelite Religion,” *Semeia* 21 (1981): 79–95; Davies, *Daniel*. For a separate provenance theory, see among others Montgomery, *Book of Daniel*, 90, 96; Ginsberg, *Studies in Daniel*, 27; Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 16; E. Haag, *Die Errettung Daniels aus der Löwengrube: Untersuchungen zum Ursprung der biblischen Danieltradition*, SBS 110 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH, 1983), 129; Collins, *Daniel*, 47; Humphreys, “A Life-Style for Diaspora,” 211–23; Newsom, “God’s Other,” 31–48.

narratives in Dan 1–6. What is the purpose of the later authors to adopt the older stories of the Jewish courtiers? To answer this question, the next section explores the nature and message of the narrative in Dan 1–6.

The Nature and Message of the Narratives in Daniel 1–6

While scholars agree that the apocalyptic visions in Dan 7–12 project the Jews' hope for God's direct intervention to stop the persecution and religious oppression, they differ in their opinions about how to interpret the narratives in Dan 1–6. This diversity of interpretation is well reflected in scholars' identification of the genre of the narratives. In providing the definition of apocalypse, Redditt insists that ancient Jewish and Christian apocalypses share literary characters such as visions, exhortations, pseudonymity, symbolism, and interpreting angels. In addition, they also share ideas or concepts like "a periodization of history, the impending in-break of the divine, the reversal of bad conditions, and a cataclysm perhaps accompanied by cosmic upheaval and other 'signs.'"²⁶ Since Dan 1–6 also includes literary characteristics such as visions and exhortation, he argues that the book as a whole is "an apocalypse comprised of a total of ten narratives."²⁷

To the question of foreign kings, Redditt suggests that the foreign kings in the narratives are compared to Greek rulers, including Antiochus IV, in the second century BCE. These foreign rulers thus served as "examples" of kings that the community behind the book encountered. Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 1–4 represents knowledge, wealth, and

²⁶ Redditt, "The Community behind the Book," 322.

²⁷ Ibid., 322–23.

power “to be admired, but not to be pursued.” Darius in Dan 6 demonstrates that well-intentioned foreign rulers could be turned against the Jew. The death of Belshazzar in Dan 5 illustrates the end of the blasphemous power of Antiochus IV.²⁸ It is probable that the author in the Hellenistic period used the names of the foreign kings from the Babylonian and Persian periods in order to present or criticize current Greek rulers.

To label the court narratives as apocalypse, however, does not have enough support from literary and thematic evidence. Rather, Gane suggests that apocalyptic literature usually begins with a narrative setting, and the narratives in Dan 1–6 are a narrative frame for the visions in Dan 7–12.²⁹ The discrepancy in themes and point of view between Dan 1–6 and 7–12, however, leads many scholars to designate a different genre for the narratives.

Humphreys’s 1973 study opened a new chapter for genre study and the interpretation of Dan 1–6.³⁰ He compared the stories of Daniel and Esther and named both narratives as court tales.³¹ He insists that the narratives suggest and demonstrate “the possibility of a rewarding and creative life in a foreign court and in the same moment of the possibility of service and devoted loyalty to one’s people and religious identity.” Moreover, he assumes that the Jeremianic tradition, which was open to the possibilities of

²⁸ Ibid., 329.

²⁹ R. Gane, “Genre Awareness and Interpretation of the Book of Daniel,” in *To Understand the Scripture: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea*, ed. D. Merling (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1997), 136–48.

³⁰ Humphreys, “A Life-Style in Diaspora,” 211–23.

³¹ Humphreys subdivides the court tales into “tales of court conflict” (Daniel 3, 6) and “tales of court contest” (Daniel 2, 4, 5, Ibid., 219–220; idem, “The Motif of the Wise Courtier in the Old Testament” [PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1970], 326–27).

welfare in the foreign context (Jer 29:4–7), was utilized by the authors who attempted to construct a new lifestyle and theological self-understanding.³²

Since then, others have identified the genre of the non-apocalyptic narratives in Dan 1–6 as court legend, court tale, didactic or wisdom tale, hero story, and story-collection.³³ These genre studies, however, as Valeta notes, provide no satisfactory solution to fundamental interpretive issues and the social setting of the literature.³⁴ Nevertheless, a distinguishing feature of recent scholarship, which categorizes the narratives as resistance literature or satire, not only presents possible historical and social backgrounds for the non-apocalyptic narratives, but also provides a connection between the narratives in Dan 1–6 and the apocalyptic visions in Dan 7–12. This development in recent scholarship thus supplies grounds for locating the unity of the book as a whole.³⁵ The key to this perspective is to interpret the narratives' portrayal of foreign kings as negative. Reading the narratives' depiction of foreign kings as negative provides a better thematic link between the narratives (Dan 1–6) and the visions (Dan 7–12). Conversely,

³² Humphreys, "A Life-Style in Diaspora," 211–12.

³³ For "court legend," see J. J. Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, FOTL 20 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984); L. M. Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King: Ancient Jewish Court Legends*, HDR 26 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990). For "court tale," see Humphreys, "A Life-Style in Diaspora"; R. D. Patterson, "Holding on to Daniel's Court Tales," *JETS* 36 (1993). For "didactic" or "wisdom tale," see Haag, *Die Errettung Daniels*; H-P. Müller, "Die weisheitliche Lehrerzählung im alten Testament und seiner Umwelt," *WO* 9 (1977); D. E. Gowan, *Daniel*, AOTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001). For "hero story," see S. Niditch and R. Doran, "The Success Story of the Wise Courtier: A Formal Approach," *JBL* 96 (1977); W. S. Towner, *Daniel*, IBC (Atlanta: John Knox, 2012). For "story-collection," see T. Holm, "A Biblical Story-Collection: Daniel 1–6" (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1996).

³⁴ D. M. Valeta, "The Book of Daniel in Recent Research (Part 1)," *CBR* 6 (2008), 335.

³⁵ Smith-Christopher, "The Book of Daniel," 17–152; M. Henze, "The Ideology of Rule," 527–539; Sweeney, "The End of Eschatology," 123–140; Brenner, "Who's Afraid," 228–244; Fewell, "Chapter Five: Resisting Daniel," 117–130; Polaski, "Mene, Mene," 649–669; Kirkpatrick, *Competing for Honor*; Valeta, *Lions and Ovens*; Portier-Young, "Languages of Identity," 98–115.

interpreting the narratives' portrayal of foreign kings as positive—as argued by Redditt, Humphreys, Collins, and Newsom—makes a thematic discrepancy between the non-apocalyptic narratives and the apocalyptic visions, which requires an additional explanation concerning the unity of the book.

These contrasting interpretations between accommodation and resistance are articulated by some scholars in terms of divine governance versus human empires. Steck argues that the narratives in Dan 1–6 reflect the ideology of a theocratic institution in Jerusalem in the context of the world's empires.³⁶ He understands the narratives to illustrate the situation of living in a foreign empire under divine governance, thus the merging of divine and human governance. Though Haag similarly proposes that the group behind the book of Daniel consists of scribal circles of the Jerusalem Temple priests, he interprets the narratives as reflecting an ideology against intolerable and secular Hellenism.³⁷ He suggests that the scribal circle created its work to provide aid to the faithful people of God with the example of the well-known tradition of a righteous and wise Daniel.³⁸

Based on his study on the composition history of Daniel, Albertz argues that there is no non-apocalyptic pre-stage of the narrative in Dan 2–6 and that the narratives explicitly portray negative images of foreign power.³⁹ He insists that the compiler's theological goal is to show that God's kingdom will bring all worldly powers to an end

³⁶ Steck, "Weltgeschehen und Gottesvolk," 53–78.

³⁷ Haag, *Die Errettung Daniels*, 131.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 129.

³⁹ Albertz, *Der Gott des Daniel*, 185.

and that God's kingdom will stand alone forever (Dan 2:44; 7:14).⁴⁰ Thus, he criticizes those who suggest that the narratives illustrate the merging of eternal divine world governance and successive human empires, and that God's kingdom and power are manifest in human empires.⁴¹

In summary, the interpretations of the narratives can be categorized mainly in two ways: positive or negative portrayals of foreign kings. One can read the narratives as an accommodation strategy or as resistance literature. In addition, this dichotomy carries a connotation of "merging" versus "separating" of human and divine governance. How one interprets the non-apocalyptic narratives is important because it determines how one understands the book as a whole. While a negative view of foreign kings can easily lead to a thematic connection between the narratives and apocalyptic visions, there remain many issues and questions that this view needs to answer concerning the stories' narrative devices such as character development, plot, and structure.

Negative Portrayals of Foreign Kings

One distinguishing feature of recent scholarship, especially in North America, is to read the non-apocalyptic narratives as portraying foreign kings negatively and interpret the narratives as resistance literature or satire.⁴² This inclination is illustrated with the study of Smith-Christopher who examines the systems and methods of empires. Based on

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 185–186.

⁴² Smith-Christopher, "The Book of Daniel," 17–152; Fewell, "Chapter Five: Resisting Daniel," 117–130; Kirkpatrick, *Competing for Honor*; Valeta, *Lions and Ovens*; Portier-Young, "Languages of Identity"; Chan, "Ira Regis."

his examination, Smith-Christopher argues against the scholars who maintain that the life of the Jews in exile was not particularly hard and that the narratives in Dan 1–6 depict foreign kings in a positive light. His sociological and postcolonial analysis suggests a reading of the narratives as a resistant text and provides a thematic connection between the narratives and the visions.⁴³ In more recent studies, he explores the use of dream as political resistance by comparing the Daniel narratives with Aeschylus's (525–456 BCE) work "The Persians," which deals with the conflicts between Greeks and Persians set in the court of Susa.⁴⁴ Smith-Christopher argues that "[t]he Daniel tales teach that knowledge of Jewish identity as the people of Yahweh's light and wisdom is the key not only to survival, but also to the eventual defeat of the Imperial rule of 'the nations' on earth."⁴⁵

Against Humphreys's and others' positive readings of the narratives, and based on Green's study on Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties, Smith-Christopher argues that "[t]he 'social setting' of Daniel should not be presumed to be a land of great opportunity for prosperity!"⁴⁶ He continues to argue that "[s]ince the work of Humphreys, I would argue, we have misread the court setting as indicative of a positive evaluation of the conditions of exile, and thus of a hopeful message for a diaspora Jew."⁴⁷ As one who reads the

⁴³ Smith-Christopher, "The Book of Daniel." 17–152.

⁴⁴ D. L. Smith-Christopher, "Prayers and Dreams: Power and Diaspora Identities in the Social Setting of the Daniel Tales," in vol. 1 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, eds. J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint, 2 vols, VTSup FIOTL 83,1 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 282–283.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 289.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 279–280.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 285–286.

narratives as satire, Valeta points out the problem of a positive reading of foreign kings in the narratives. He emphasizes that “[t]his violates the sociological awareness that living under the imperial rule is unpleasant for most; moreover, it grates against the negative attitude toward colonial rule held by the visions.”⁴⁸

Valeta’s rationale for criticizing those who argue for the positive attitude toward the foreign kings, however, is questionable in some sense. He criticizes the positive analyses based on two reasons. First, the positive reading of foreign kings contradicts the historical facts about colonial times. Second, this positive reading contradicts the attitude toward the gentile rule of the second half of the book.⁴⁹ The first argument is based on a false premise that the narrative fiction should not be contradictory to the historical setting that it is based on or utilizes. Moreover, although Green and Valeta argue that the historical situation under imperial rule was harsh and severe for most, it does not necessarily direct the literature to portray foreign rule negatively and incite resistance against the polity and culture of the empires.⁵⁰ The foreign kings in the narratives do not

⁴⁸ Valeta, *Lions and Ovens*, 16.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 16–17.

⁵⁰ This argument for the narrative’s (fiction’s) character, merits, and freedom is valid for the Daniel narratives. This study argues that the Daniel narratives are not just a satire, but a philosophical or religious proposal reflecting religious or theopolitical imagination. The correlation to historicity cannot be a criterion for evaluating a narrative’s claim. Rather, as Poetics IX puts it, “[t]he difference lies in the fact that the historian speaks of what has happened, the poet of the kind of thing that *can* happen. Hence also poetry is a more philosophical and serious business than history; for poetry speaks more of universals, history of particulars. ‘Universal’ in this case is what kind of person is likely to do or say certain kinds of things, according to probability and necessity; that is what poetry aims, although it gives its persons particular names afterwards” (*Aristotle Poetics: Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Gerald F. Else* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967], 32–33).

necessarily represent historical gentile rulers of the empires.⁵¹ Instead, they are characters in the narrative world that are created by the author(s). They are narrative characters acting according to the purpose of the narratives, and thus we need to focus on the characterization and development of the characters in relation to the plot of the narratives without necessarily correlating their literary function to a historical reality and figures.

The second argument is also based on a false assumption that a book must have a coherent and consistent perspective or idea throughout the work. This assumption is problematic when it imposes restrictions on the interpretation of the narratives.

According to Gunn and Fewell's classification, the narratives in Daniel belong to an "imaginative genre" rather than "recording genres."⁵² To "capture the complexity of meaning produced by biblical stories," they suggest, we need to focus on and ask questions of "the inner workings of the stories themselves."⁵³ Considering this nature of the narrative, it is necessary to focus on the text itself and the narrative's "imaginative" world that the stories construct.

In addition, the comparison between Smith-Christopher's and Valeta's criticisms reveals another aspect to take into consideration. While they both argue against reading a positive attitude in the narratives as represented by Humphreys, their arguments show some differences. While Smith-Christopher questions "a positive evaluation of the

⁵¹ Davies also points out that there is a tendency in current biblical studies to take the texts about social reality as reliable presentations of a historical situation ("Reading Daniel Sociologically," in *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings*, ed. A. S. van der Woude [Leuven: Peeters, 1993], 347).

⁵² Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 6.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 5.

conditions of exile,”⁵⁴ Valeta says the most troubling is “a positive attitude toward the imperial rule.”⁵⁵ It is true that the condition of exile inevitably relates to the nature of the imperial rule. However, when it comes to the interpretation of the Daniel narratives, those two statements do not have the same implication. That is, in the narratives, a positive attitude toward the foreign ruler does not necessarily mean a positive evaluation of the exile or the life in the empire.

Regarding the resistance reading of the narratives, while many scholars attend to the resistance factors of the narratives, what they mean by resistance is very different from one another. For example, Polaski agrees with Smith-Christopher in that Daniel subverts the empires with the practice of anti-imperial nonviolent resistance.⁵⁶ While Smith-Christopher celebrates wisdom as a tactic of resistance and contrasts Daniel’s wisdom with the brutal power of the empires, Polaski argues that writing is used in the narratives as political power.⁵⁷ Polaski evaluates the role of writing in Daniel narratives saying, “it [writing] marks the exercise of political power, by emperors and the deity alike. The fate of Daniel’s people (12:1), as well as that of the emperor (5:24–28), is determined by writing. The book of Daniel discloses an ideology of writing held by its

⁵⁴ Smith-Christopher, “Prayers and Dreams,” 286.

⁵⁵ Valeta explains that “Humphreys, in particular, designates the narratives of Daniel 1–6 as ‘Success in the Court’ or ‘Lifestyle in the Diaspora’ tales.... The result is the opinion that the overall political stance of these stories is one of loyalty, optimism, and accommodation toward the ruling powers” (*Lions and Ovens*, 16–17).

⁵⁶ Polaski, “Mene, Mene,” 668.

⁵⁷ D. L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, OBT (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 186; Polaski, “Mene, Mene,” 649.

authors.”⁵⁸ For another example, Valeta argues that the narratives are “thoroughly satirical”⁵⁹ and that “[i]t shatters the monologic authoritarian voices of empires by combining many genres, languages, and voices into a unified and dialogic piece.”⁶⁰

Among these arguments for writing, wisdom, and satire as means of resistance, satirical reading or biblical humor has received more scholarly interest recently. The following discussion thus examines the satirical reading of the narratives.

Reading the narratives as satire. John Bullard explains the character and purpose of biblical humor, explaining that it “employs rhetorical forms of wit” and “imbues whole books or portions of books with ironic, satirical, or sarcastic tone, all of which is placed in the instrumentality of a religious, moral, or profoundly theological message.”⁶¹ He argues that the sole purpose of the book of Daniel is ridicule: “[w]ithout the dimension of humor, the book would be entirely ineffective. Ridicule is the key to its interpretation; to ignore this is to make of Daniel a hero-legend with little reason for the inclusion in the Canon.”⁶² Bullard’s statement about the character and purpose of biblical humor has some truth, and there are many examples in the Hebrew Bible. His assessment that to

⁵⁸ Polaski, “Mene, Mene,” 649.

⁵⁹ Valeta, *Lions and Ovens*, 193.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ J. M. Bullard, “Biblical Humor: Its Nature and Function” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1962), 214–15.

⁶² Ibid., 170–171.

ridicule is “the sole purpose” of the book, however, is less convincing, though there are some satirical elements in the stories.⁶³

Once Bullard identifies the primary goal of the narratives as to mock foreign kings, it becomes difficult to explain the distinctive doxologies of the foreign kings at the end of each chapter. Even though the foreign king’s praise of YHWH is parody and irony in its literary form, it is necessary to consider the contextual function of this parody and irony. For example, scholars have focused on satirical elements in the book of Jonah, and those elements apply to various characters including Jonah, the Ninevite king, the gentile sailors, and the Ninevite people. After examining all of the satirical and ironical elements in the book of Jonah, Marcus argues,

If the book is satire, then what is the purpose of the satire? This question is not an easy one to answer for a number of reasons.... A satirist will try to write so that his work can be taken on two levels (the real and apparent), and by doing so will thus give no hint of his real purpose.... This is the situation with the book of Jonah. The literary form tells us that the work is a satire, but we are left to ponder whether the target of the satire is Jonah himself or whether Jonah presents some other person (e.g., another prophet or a type of prophet).... [Moreover] we have to consider whether the satire is advocating a particular message by having Jonah act as a foil to the author. That is, whether Jonah is made the representative of a position, belief or ideology which is opposed by the author.⁶⁴

⁶³ Marcus argues that “[a] text may be identified as a satire if it has a target which is the object of attack, either directly or indirectly, and has a preponderance of the essential attributes of satire.... It is not enough for these techniques [absurdities, grotesqueries, distortions, ironies, ridicule, or parody] just to appear in a work in an isolated fashion, they must dominate it by being the very essence of the work. It is this domination which distinguishes a genuine satire from other works containing some satire” (*From Balaam to Jonah: Anti-Prophetic Satire in the Hebrew Bible*, BJS 301 [Atlanta: Scholars, 1995], 9–10). This study suggests that Daniel serves to accomplish more literary purposes than simply satirizing the follies of foreign rulers. As this study argues, the narratives have the purpose of presenting “religious, moral, or profoundly theological messages” (Bullard’s terms, “Biblical Humor,” 215) for the Jews in a new context of foreign empires not by satirizing or criticizing foreign kings, but by presenting foreign kings’ possible assimilation or conversion to the knowledge of YHWH.

⁶⁴ Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah*, 147.

According to Marcus, even though the story is full of parodies and ironies—such as the non-Israelite sailor’s prayer to the Israelite God using quotes from the Hebrew Bible or the infamous Ninevite king’s abrupt obedience and repentance—it is necessary to ask the purpose and message of the satire. Marcus concludes,

From the foregoing survey it is apparent that none of the above messages is entirely compelling. None of those proposals is explicitly expressed, and all require inductive reasoning from the text... What we have here is nothing less than a satire on the prophet himself. It is the behavior of the prophet with which the book is dealing. Jonah is satirized for behavior thought to be unbecoming to a prophet.⁶⁵

In case of the Daniel narratives, the unprecedented and excessive praise by foreign kings has certain elements of irony and parody. Considering this satirical depiction’s “two levels” of meaning that Marcus mentions, readers should recognize its first level pertains to satirizing and mocking the foreign rulers. The reader should inquire, however, about the second level of meaning, which is not explicit, in relation to the purpose and message of the satire. In this sense, the primary task of this study is to examine the favorable depiction of foreign kings in relation to the purpose and message of the Daniel narratives.

Reading the Narratives Positively

Even though the foreign kings are the antagonists representing the evil power of the empires against Daniel and his friends who try to keep their faith despite the conflicts

⁶⁵ Ibid., 158. See also Edwin M. Good, *Irony in the Old Testament*, Bible and Literature series 3 (Sheffield: Almond, 1981), 54. Conversely, the author of the present study reads the book of Jonah as a satire criticizing the exclusive nationalistic ideology and theology by arguing for the universal YHWH. Holbert similarly argues, “[i]t is, of course, Jonah who is the object of the satirical attack of the book, but who is Jonah? What is being satirized?... Jonah is a Hebrew prophet disobedient and hypocritical, angered by God’s will to save, yet claiming to affirm God’s power to do so, having witnessed it in his own person. Jonah is thus an attack on Hebrew prophetic hypocrisy” (“‘Deliverance Belongs to Yahweh!’: Satire in the Book of Jonah,” *JSOT* 21 (1981), 75).

and trials that they face, the foreign kings in the narratives are not portrayed explicitly negatively or as stereotypical tyrants. For example, having noted that the narratives show “a very positive attitude to gentile rule,” Collins argues that this positive attitude brings about some surprise and that it would be hard to reconcile with the apocalyptic eschatology of the visions.⁶⁶ This problem leads Collins to argue that the group behind the apocalypticism in Dan 7–12 differs from the supposed eschatological conventicles.⁶⁷

Collins lists some inner, literary factors in the narratives that support the idea of the legitimacy of gentile rule, that is, a positive attitude toward the foreign kings.⁶⁸ For example, Daniel wishes, “may the dream be for those who hate you [Nebuchadnezzar], and its interpretation for your enemies!” (4:19); the four-kingdom prophecy in Dan 2 shows no urgency; and Daniel accepts the rewards and honors that foreign kings offer and even seeks the promotion of his three friends. There is no question “How long?” in these chapters, which assumes that the sovereignty of YHWH is compatible with the gentile rule for the present.⁶⁹

However, interpreting the narratives as presenting a positive attitude toward foreign kings does not necessarily result in legitimizing the foreign rule or providing an accommodation strategy for the Jews, as are the cases in Collins or Humphreys. Henze emphasizes that the stories show no hostility toward the foreign rulers but present an unexpected positive attitude toward the foreign kings in whose courts Daniel and his

⁶⁶ Collins, “Daniel and His Social World,” 135.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 137.

⁶⁸ Collins, *Daniel*, 51.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

friends serve.⁷⁰ He states, “[t]his is most surprising in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, the destroyer of the Jerusalem Temple and architect of the Babylonian Exile (Dan 1:1–2), who is criticized fiercely by other voices in the Hebrew Bible.”⁷¹

While Henze notes that Daniel entertains a friendly relationship with the foreign monarchs, he presents the purpose of that depiction as to underscore the conflict between the protagonist and the malicious courtiers.⁷² Thus, he interprets that “the tolerant and positive attitude towards the gentile rulers and the perpetual conflict with the courtiers are thus two sides of the same coin, two aspects of the same literary device.”⁷³ From this observation, Henze insists that despite its positive attitude toward foreign kings, it is doubtful that the stories served as successful guides for young Jews navigating careers in Babylonian society, as Humphreys suggests. “After all,” he argues, “Daniel finds his most vehement opponents precisely in the ranks of the Babylonian intellectuals into which the aspiring Jewish elite allegedly sought to advance.”⁷⁴ As Henze shows, the foreign kings may be interpreted in various ways. The positive depiction of foreign kings and the favorable relation between the gentile rulers and Jewish courtiers can be interpreted as signs of accommodation or success, legitimizing foreign rule, or underscoring the malice of foreign courtiers. In arguing for the positive portrayal of

⁷⁰ Henze, “The Ideology of Rule,” 527.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 532.

⁷² M. Henze, “The Narrative Frame of Daniel: A Literary Assessment,” *JSJ* 32 (2001), 14.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

foreign kings and in suggesting how to understand those positive depictions of foreign kings, this study focuses on the doxology of the foreign kings in the narratives.

The doxology of foreign kings. Regarding the various genre designations for the Daniel narratives, Valeta points out that the problem and confusion in the genre identification derive from the fact that each scholar emphasizes a particular feature of the narratives and highlights “that specific feature as the most important, while other characteristics are diminished.”⁷⁵ Valeta’s point has importance concerning not just genre identification but also the interpretation of the narratives. Only a few scholars pay enough attention to the foreign kings’ doxologies and their importance for interpreting the narratives. Albertz also points out that most scholars degenerate the hymnic phrases about the kingship of God mostly to ornamental accessories and only Plöger, Lebram, and Towner pay more attention to them.⁷⁶

Plöger’s earlier study focuses on the prayers and speeches in the Deuteronomistic history and Ezra-Nehemiah-Chronicles. He argues that these speeches are not merely the author’s insertions, but also play an important role in delivering the meaning, message, and didactic purpose of the texts.⁷⁷ Towner similarly suggests that the poetic prayers or psalms in Dan 2, 4, and 6 play essential roles in the narratives. He argues that the poems (doxologies) have their antecedents in the tradition of Israelite religion. Their roles in the narratives, according to Towner, have a different purpose:

⁷⁵ Valeta, “The Book of Daniel,” 334.

⁷⁶ Albertz, *Der Gott des Daniel*, 185.

⁷⁷ O. Plöger, “Reden und Gebete im deuteronomistischen und chronistischen Geschichtswerk,” in *Festschrift für Günther Dehn*, ed. W. Schneemelcher (Neukirchen: Kreis Moers, 1957), 35–49.

The combined narrative/prayer sequence of the present text constitutes a new thing, greater than the sum of its parts, namely, a universalist-theodicy pattern.... They should be seen as fulfilling an important role in the didactic purpose of the canonical text of Dn 1–6.⁷⁸

Niskanen explores the peculiarity of the foreign kings’—especially Nebuchadnezzar’s—doxology in Dan 2. He maintains, “[h]is confession that Daniel’s God is the ‘God of gods and Lord of kings’ (2:47) is a curious statement to find on the lips of the destroyer of Jerusalem and its temple.”⁷⁹ Due to their distinctive character within the narratives, Collins even considers the prayer and the doxologies in 4:3 (MT 3:33), 4:34–35 (MT 4:31–32), and 6:26–27 (MT 6:27–28) as redactional elements and 2:20–23 as even later than the others.⁸⁰ On the contrary, however, Holm identifies the doxologies as the frame of the earliest material. Focused on the doxologies’ literary function, she finds that doxologies open or close a chunk of the stories, which is likely an independent collection of the Masoretic Text of Dan 4–6.⁸¹ Holm thus argues that the placement of these hymnic phrases possibly demarcates either an earlier story collection or an apocoped version of the original Daniel tradition.⁸² Henze also suggests, “[t]he distinctive religious quality of the tales is underscored further by the composition of the

⁷⁸ W. S. Towner, “The Poetic Passages of Daniel 1–6,” *CBQ* 31 (1969), 326.

⁷⁹ P. Niskanen, *The Human and the Divine in History: Herodotus and the Book of Daniel*, JSOTSup 396 (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 56.

⁸⁰ Collins, *Daniel*, 35.

⁸¹ T. L. Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings: The Biblical Daniel Narratives and Ancient Story-Collections*, EANE 1 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 480.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 480–481.

narrative frame as a whole. Nebuchadnezzar's two great doxologies clearly stand out in this respect, strategically placed by the redactor in Dan 3:31–33 and 6:27–28.”⁸³

Whether the doxologies are the redactional additions or signs of an earlier story collection, this study explores the narrative function of the doxologies in the final form of the book. This examination explores some implications for the composition history of the narratives. This study primarily focuses on the function and meaning of the doxologies, and why King Nebuchadnezzar is not bothered by the interpretation predicting the end of his kingdom. King Nebuchadnezzar trembled at the dream when he did not know what it meant. After realizing that the dream is an ill omen for him and his kingdom, however, he shows no worry about the content of the dream but rather suddenly praises God for revealing that ill omen for him and the kingdom.

Valeta explores the literary function of the doxology and states that “[h]e apparently ends his song with the sour notes of conceit and smugness, missing the tone of true praise. Daniel 4 ends with Nebuchadnezzar's restoration but his failure to comprehend his full blasphemy and pride.”⁸⁴ In another place, Valeta mentions that “[s]uch blessings, songs, and proclamations in the mouths of conquering kings lend themselves, however, to the view that this text is parodying the psalms and blessings of the Hebrew Bible.”⁸⁵ Valeta minimizes the narrative importance of these doxologies by

⁸³ Henze, “The Narrative Frame of Daniel,” 21.

⁸⁴ Valeta, *Lions and Ovens*, 94.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 132.

regarding them just as a parody of canonical doxologies, based on the fact that foreign kings are ultimately judged and pay for their idol worship.⁸⁶

Buchanan also argues that “[i]t [Dan 4] is designed to make the most powerful of the gentiles look stupid and be forced to recognize the superiority of Judaism.”⁸⁷ In addition, King Darius’s plea to the Hebrew deity for the deliverance of Daniel (Dan 6:16 [MT 6:17]) and offering up a hymnic phrase (Dan 6:26–27 [MT 6:27–28]) leads Valeta to argue,

This unexpected act reinforces the powerlessness of the king and seriously questions his supposed authority and the efficacy of the imperial religious system.... The text completely mutes whatever words of praise they might have sung to their own gods. The doxology form is being utilized in such a way as to bring dishonor upon the king.⁸⁸

It is true that the doxologies testify to the foreign kings’ powerlessness, however, it is necessary to inquire into what leads the foreign king to praise YHWH. Since one of the main issues of the narratives is the impact of YHWH’s revelation—thus, his power and sovereignty—upon the foreign kings, their doxologies are not an “unexpected act” but rather an intended outcome of the stories. For this reason, this study pays attention to the literary function of foreign kings’ doxologies, and argues that the doxologies are not used to dishonor or ridicule the foreign kings, but rather to evince the power and wisdom of YHWH that make even the gentile kings confess and praise their subjects’ God.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Ibid., 133.

⁸⁷ G. W. Buchanan, *The Book of Daniel*, MBCOT 25 (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1999), 108.

⁸⁸ Valeta, *Lions and Ovens*, 173.

⁸⁹ Brueggemann claims that “Nebuchadnezzar sings a doxology, which means that he engages in an act of ceding ultimacy from himself to the God of all mercy. Doxology is indeed a political act of

Comparative, tradition-historical approach. This study explores not only literary elements but also the comparative or tradition-historical evidence to assess Valeta's and others' negative or satirical reading of the narratives. For example, comparing the Daniel narratives with other similar biblical stories like Joseph or Esther illuminates the message of the narratives: How are the stories similar and different? What is the interpretive implication of the similarities and the differences? Through the comparisons with the Joseph and Esther narratives, the primary concern of Daniel's stories will emerge.

Joseph's court narrative in Gen 41 has many similar features with the Daniel narratives, which has attracted several scholars' attention.⁹⁰ Both Joseph and Daniel are forced to immigrate into a foreign land when they are young, both serve in foreign courts, both are dreamers and interpreters of king's dreams, and both are promoted to a high rank in foreign countries by foreign kings. To explore the doxologies' meaning and function in the Daniel narratives, this study also needs to compare the literary features of Gen 41 and Dan 2. First, both narratives begin with a king having a dream (Gen 41:1; Dan 2:1). Second, each king's "spirit was troubled" due to the content of the dreams (Gen 41:8; Dan 2:1). Third, though they call all the wise, no one can interpret the king's dream (Gen 41:8; Dan 2:10–11). Fourth, both Joseph and Daniel tell the kings before they interpret

submission and surrender to the one who properly receives our attestation of ultimacy" ("The Non-Negotiable Price of Sanity," *JP* [20014], 34).

⁹⁰ Niditch and Doran, "The Success Story"; S. Beyerle, "Joseph und Daniel: Zwei 'Väter' am Hofe eines fremden Königs," in *Verbindungslien: Festschrift für Werner H. Schmidt zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. A. Graupner et al. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2000); B. Naor, "Joseph and Daniel: Court Jews and Dreamers," *JBQ* 30 (2002), 10–16; M. Segal, "From Joseph to Daniel: The Literary Development of the Narrative in Daniel 2," *VT* 59 (2009), 123–49; M. S. Rindge, "Jewish Identity under Foreign Rule: Daniel 2 as a Reconfiguration of Genesis 41," *JBL* 129 (2010), 85–104; Chan, "Ira Regis"; L. A. Rosenthal, "Die Josephgeschichte mit den Büchern Ester und Daniel verglichen," *ZAW* 15 (1895), 278–85; Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 56; Collins, *Daniel*, 39–40.

that only God can give an interpretation (Gen 41:16; Dan 2: 28). Fifth, both Joseph and Daniel tell the kings that God reveals to the king future events (Gen 41:25; Dan 2:28–29). Sixth, King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and worshipped Daniel (Dan 2:46), and Pharaoh ordered everyone to “bow the knee” before Joseph (Gen 41:43). Seventh, both kings confess that God is the revealer of mysteries and God makes the protagonists able to interpret the dream (Gen 41:39; Dan 2:47). Eighth, both kings promote Joseph and Daniel to the highest rank among the courtiers (Gen 41:40; Dan 2:48).

This parallel shows that both narratives are very similar in contents and some phrases (e.g., “his spirit was troubled,” Gen 41:8; Dan 2:1).⁹¹ This similarity makes the absence and presence of foreign kings’ doxology at the end of the stories even more marked. On the one hand, while Pharaoh praises Joseph’s ability and admits that “God has shown you all this,” he does not praise God in the form of doxology. On the other hand, Nebuchadnezzar falls on his face and worships Daniel and says “[t]ruly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings and revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery!” (Dan 2:47).

Rindge also points out the peculiarity of Nebuchadnezzar’s praise. He notes that to begin the declaration with “truly” emphasizes the fact that the king made this confession.⁹² Rindge also notes that since Nebuchadnezzar’s depiction of God as a revealer accords to Daniel’s testimony about God (2:28–29), Nebuchadnezzar’s confession supports the theology of the book and shows that he “has been converted to

⁹¹ In Hebrew, Daniel uses the *hithpaal* verbal form while Genesis employs a *niphal* verb. Most English Bibles (JPS, KJV, NAS, NRSV, etc.) translate it “his spirit was troubled.”

⁹² Rindge, “Jewish Identity,” 94.

Daniel's perception of God."⁹³ In addition, he provides an insightful suggestion regarding the comparison between the Joseph and Daniel narratives. He points out the inverse of the syntactical relationship between YHWH and the protagonist.⁹⁴ In the Joseph narrative, Pharaoh says to Joseph, "[s]ince God has shown you all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you!" (Gen 41:39). The main point of Pharaoh is the greatness of Joseph's wisdom. God's revelation to Joseph features as the reason for Joseph's greatness. Conversely, in the Daniel narratives Nebuchadnezzar says to Daniel, "[t]ruly, 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). Obviously, the object of Nebuchadnezzar's praise is Daniel's God who is God of gods and Lord of kings.⁹⁵ In this sentence, Daniel's ability only serves as "the reason for a belief in the greatness of God."⁹⁶ He concludes that "God's role elevates the status of Joseph in Pharaoh's eyes, while Daniel elevates the status of God in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar."⁹⁷

Against the Negative or Satirical Reading

So far, this study examined the detailed aspects of both positive and negative readings of foreign kings in the narratives. Interpreting the narratives as presenting a negative attitude toward foreign kings gains more interest with the emergence of the

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Henze also notes that "the stories in Daniel differ from other court tales.... It is not the protagonist who is praised by the monarch, but his God" ("The Narrative Frame of Daniel," 21).

⁹⁶ Rindge, "Jewish Identity," 94.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

social-scientific or sociological study of the biblical narratives and the post-colonial criticism of ancient texts. While this tendency has some truth in its assessment of the book of Daniel, especially in the social context of religious oppression and persecution, to interpret the narratives in this way confines the imaginative narrative world that the text constructs and the theological and ideological breadth that the world envisions.

Before arguing against reading the narratives as a satire, it is necessary to mention two issues to consider when interpreting the narratives in relation to their social settings. First, the agreed social and political context of the book, that is religious oppression of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the second century BCE, makes it plausible to read the narratives as satire. For this reason, those who observe the favorable attitude toward the foreign kings assign the dating of the narratives to an earlier and more peaceful period. Second, the apocalyptic visions which follow the narratives make it more plausible to read the narratives as presenting negative portrayals of foreign rulers. Since apocalyptic texts deal with the end of the empire and the establishment of God's kingdom, foreign kings are expected to be eliminated with the nations. Accordingly, scholars understand that the final editor or compiler connects the narratives to the apocalypse based on their thematic similarity.⁹⁸ As examined above, however, the literary evidence is not enough to argue for the negative depiction of foreign kings or the satirical character of the narratives.

⁹⁸ Sweeney similarly argues for the thematic connection that "[a]lthough earlier versions of the court tales of Daniel 1–6 may well have been composed at a different time and for a different purpose, their present form and context within the book of Daniel certainly indicate that they are meant to be read in relation to the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus IV." Thus, he interprets that the foreign rulers in Dan 3(2)–6 points to Antiochus IV and argues, "[i]t provides a striking contrast in perspective to prophetic books, such as Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah, that call upon Israelites and Judeans to recognize foreign conquest and oppression as an act of YHWH designed to punish and purify the nation for YHWH's divine purpose" ("The End of Eschatology," 130–133, 139).

The satirical reading cannot explain the foreign kings' doxologies or the changes that they show throughout the narratives and their favorable attitude toward the Jewish courtiers.

As a result, the counterargument against the satirical or negative readings of the narratives is based on the following four points. First, reading the narratives as satire cannot explain the foreign kings' doxologies praising YHWH. These doxologies of foreign kings are a distinctive and unique factor in the Daniel narratives, which cannot be found in other similar court narratives in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Joseph or Esther). In the tradition-historical approach, the departure from an earlier form of the tradition can construct new meaning through a new use of the tradition. This distinctive feature, therefore, should not be ignored or devalued as "ornamental accessories."⁹⁹ Valeta suggests this doxology "is filled with irony as the infamous ruler of the Babylonian captivity is portrayed as piously dependent upon the God of his captives. It is as if the king's song of praise puts the final touches on the author's portrait of the king as fool."¹⁰⁰ If the author's main purpose is to ridicule the foreign kings, as Valeta argues, then why would the authors present the kings as wrongfully using the name of YHWH "in an absurd, even comic manner"?¹⁰¹ It is unconvincing that Jews let the Holy Name, blessed be He, be misused by the gentile rulers repeatedly throughout the stories.

⁹⁹ Albertz, *Der Gott des Daniel*, 185.

¹⁰⁰ Valeta, *Lions and Ovens*, 89.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

The second counterargument to the satirical reading of the foreign kings argues that even though the narratives contain satirical elements, reading the stories as a satire cannot lead to a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the narratives. Valeta argues that the Menippean satire “shatters the monologic authoritarian voices of the empire by combining many genres, languages, and voices into a unified and dialogic piece. It deconstructs kingly authority and power in favor of God’s authority and power.”¹⁰² His argument has certain truth in that the narratives deal with two authorities: divine and human. However, it is less convincing that combining many genres, languages, and voices can be a factor that shatters foreign kings’ authority and reinforces God’s authority. This study argues that the holistic narrative reading reveals that God’s power and wisdom exalt themselves and transform the foreign kings.

The third counterargument to the negative interpretation of the foreign kings draws upon other contemporary literary evidence that shows a foreign king’s reverence to YHWH. This comparative evidence suggests that the presentation of foreign kings in the Daniel narratives is not just an irony, “the apogee of incongruity,”¹⁰³ or absurd piety.¹⁰⁴ As this study will examine, much literature of the Second Temple period includes cases in which foreign rulers display veneration toward the Hebrew deity, YHWH.¹⁰⁵ This study explains

¹⁰² Ibid., 193–94.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 89.

¹⁰⁴ D. N. Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics in the Book of Daniel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 64.

¹⁰⁵ Terence Donaldson argues foreign kings present certain kinds of veneration towards the Israelite God in fourteen narratives of the Second Temple period. He provides four patterns of the transformation of foreign kings: “subjugation of an adversary,” “conversion to monotheism,” “recognition of Israel’s true character and excellence,” and “deliverance from deception” (“Royal Sympathizers in Jewish Narrative,” *JSP* 16 [2006], 41–59); see also S. J. D. Cohen, “Respect for Judaism by Gentiles

this literary phenomenon as reflecting the Jewish theological and political struggle in dealing with the absence of an Israelite (or Judean) monarchy. The narratives in Daniel also present the new proposal of a scribal group for how to understand their political situation theologically. Their narratives reveal how they understand the relationship between the Jewish God and the foreign kings. This political and theological proposal is similar to the Deuteronomistic perspective in the exilic and postexilic periods explaining the fall of Jerusalem and the defeat of YHWH by foreign deities.

The fourth counterargument argues that the positive depiction of the foreign kings in the narratives works as a criticism against the preexilic Israelite monarchy. In the Daniel narratives, foreign kings do not resist against or threaten Daniel who declares ill omens against them, even the end of the foreign rulers and their empires. Instead, they reward Daniel with gifts and promotions, and praise YHWH who reveals an unfavorable future of their empires. These responses of foreign kings to Daniel contrast with some of the preexilic Israelite kings.¹⁰⁶ The Hebrew Bible records that the Israelite monarchs not only disregard YHWH's words by the prophets—who proclaim judgment and call them to repentance—but also threaten and kill those prophets.¹⁰⁷ For example, after hiding from

according to Josephus," *HTR* 80 (1987): 409–430.

¹⁰⁶ Similarly, Fretheim mentions the Ninevite king's response in the book of Jonah: "[t]he author intends thereby to stress the prophet's success.... He may also have intended to contrast Nineveh's response to Israel's at this point. The animals are more responsive to God than Israel (see Isaiah 1:3)" (*The Message of Jonah*, 111). "The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not understand" (Isa 1:3); "At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it" (Jer 18:7–8).

¹⁰⁷ E.g., 1 Kgs 17:1–4; 18:4, 12–14; 19:2–4, 19:10; 22:26–27; 2 Kgs 17:13–14; Jer 26:20–23; 29:19; 36:24–26; 37:2, 14–15; 38:4–6.

Jezebel's threat, Elijah says to YHWH that "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelite have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away" (1 Kgs 19:10).¹⁰⁸ Jeremiah is the most troublesome prophet for the Israelite kings and experiences the most hardship under the kings' oppression. Considering the suggested relation between Jeremianic tradition and the book of Daniel, it is suggestive that the Israelite kings depicted in Jeremiah show a distinctive contrast to the foreign kings in Daniel narratives.¹⁰⁹

Conclusion and Preview

Holm argues that in every interpretation of the Daniel narratives, there are certain elements of resistance.¹¹⁰ Holm's statement has some truth in it, in that the narratives deal with the relation between the two authorities: divine and human. From the above observation, however, this study maintains that the Daniel narratives are resistance literature not by depicting foreign rulers as fools or tyrants, but by presenting the process in which the foreign kings acknowledge and praise YHWH's wisdom and sovereignty.

¹⁰⁸ Elijah's statement "I alone am left," of course, does not reflect Obadiah's sheltering of prophets within this story (1 Kgs 18:4).

¹⁰⁹ Newsom observes the relationship between the Jeremiah tradition (Jer 27:5–6) and Daniel. Newsom thus argues that Nebuchadnezzar is not merely a rod of God's anger, but rather that these verses show a "breathtaking new assimilation of a foreign king" ("God's Other," 41–42). Humphreys also insists that the author(s) of Daniel use the Jeremiah tradition ("A Life-Style," 211–12). See also L. L. Grabbe, "'The End of the Desolation of Jerusalem': From Jeremiah's 70 Years to Daniel's 70 Weeks of Years," in *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis: Studies in Memory of William Hugh Brownlee*, eds. C. A. Evans and W. F. Stinespring, Homage Series (Atlanta: Scholars, 1987), 67–72; A. Lacocque, "Liturgical Prayer in Daniel 9," *HUCA* 47 (1976): 119–42; G. H. Wilson, "The Prayer of Daniel 9: Reflection on Jeremiah 29," *JSOT* 48 (1990): 91–99.

¹¹⁰ Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 330.

Through this process the Daniel narratives envision anew the relation between the foreign kings and the Jews' God and the concept of YHWH's people.

Chapter two explores Rick Altman's narrative theory as a guide for analyzing the Daniel narratives in Dan 1–6. It examines Altman's theory in comparison with other narrative theories and explores the benefit of applying this theory to the Daniel narratives. The narratives in Dan 1–6 have been regarded as a collection of originally separate lore that has a similar theme or moral.¹¹¹ Altman's method, however, makes it possible to read the stories as “a” narrative rather than an anthology. According to Altman, “the reader's sense of following a character from action to action and scene to scene” makes a text “narrative” revealing narrational activity.¹¹² In addition, the process of “framing” gives narratives a structure, thus revealing another type of narrational activity. In the case of the narratives in Dan 1–6, “following” helps focus attention on the different foreign kings in each scene in order to “conceive them as a succession of following-units.” “Framing” presents a series of events in the final form as “a” structured narrative.¹¹³ In addition, the

¹¹¹ Collins, *Daniel*, 35–38; K. Koch, T. Niewisch, and J. Tubach, *Das Buch Daniel*, EdF 144 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980), 61–66; W. Baumgartner, *Das Buch Daniel*, *Aus der Welt der Religion* 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1926), 8; G. Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, trans. D. E. Green (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 473–474; A. Bentzen, *Daniel*, 2d ed. HAT 1,19 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1952).

¹¹² Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 15.

¹¹³ Altman explains that either one or more than one characters can be followed: “[s]ome narratives resolutely follow the same character from beginning to end, while others regularly alternate between two characters or groups, still others follow many different characters during the course of the narrative” (Ibid., 21–22).

tradition-historical approach provides criteria for comparing and evaluating the portrayals of foreign kings in Dan 1–6.¹¹⁴

Chapter three interprets Dan 1–3 using Altman’s theory of “following” and “framing,” as well as the tradition-historical approach. The reading strategy of “following” characters reveals where the reader needs to focus and how the narratives make changes throughout the chapters to introduce new levels of meaning. In the first three chapters of Daniel, the foreign king Nebuchadnezzar goes through transforming experiences and development across the individual stories. Nebuchadnezzar comes to recognize and honor the wisdom and sovereignty of YHWH as the stories continue. Daniel and his companions help facilitate this change and development of the foreign king’s understanding and attitude. In addition, the tradition-historical approach allows the reader to find distinctive characteristics of foreign kings’ doxologies. Although they are similar to other biblical doxologies or thanksgiving hymns, the tradition-historical approach demonstrates the uniqueness of these foreign kings’ doxologies and their messages.

Chapter four interprets the rest of the narratives in Dan 4–6. Although the narratives have different foreign kings for Dan 5 and 6 (Belshazzar and Darius respectively), Altman’s theory of interchangeability allows the reader to perceive these different figures as functioning as a single character. By continuing to “follow” foreign

¹¹⁴ Steck explains that “[t]radition history asks the degree to which the contents of the author’s statements are determined by pre-existing elements from the author’s intellectual world ... or the degree to which the author has deviated from that intellectual world” (O. H. Steck, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Guide to Methodology*, trans. J. D. Nogalski, SBLRBS 39 [Atlanta: Scholars, 1998], 121–22). This method is useful in asking how the portrayal of foreign kings in the book of Daniel is different from the previous tradition.

kings beyond individual stories, the reader can find another level of meaning: diegesis.¹¹⁵

This feature makes the narratives distinct from other similar foreign court tales such as the Joseph or Esther stories. In addition, following the foreign kings reveals a narrative instance that is not confined to each story, but rather extends to the stories as a whole.

Regarding a diegetic level of meaning of the narratives, this chapter argues that the narratives envision the positive change of foreign kings by the transformative power of the wisdom of the Jews as a way of legitimizing foreign rulers in the postexilic context.¹¹⁶

Based on the analysis of the narratives in chapters three and four, chapter five draws the connection between the narratives and the apocalyptic visions in Dan 7–12. This study argues that the role of Daniel instructing and transforming the foreign kings by the revelation and wisdom of YHWH in the narratives is an illustration of the role of *maškîlîm* mentioned in Dan 11:33 and 12:3. Reading the main message of the narratives as a possible change and inclusion of foreign kings makes it possible to regard Daniel and his companions as *maškîlîm*. Daniel's role of educating and transforming the foreign kings gives understanding to many (11:33) and leads many to righteousness (12:3). Daniel and his companions are models of *maškîlîm* and their stories reflect the main

¹¹⁵ Altman defines "diegesis" as "a posited level independent of the textual vehicle." Diegetic level, beyond the primary graphic and linguistic levels, is where the narrative—thus, the meaning—is located (*A Theory of Narrative*, 13–14, 17).

¹¹⁶ Boling's argument about the message of Isa 40–55 can be applied to the way in which the Daniel narratives present its message. After presenting the "definition of "scenario" which is any "imagined or projected sequence of events, especially any of several detailed plans or possibilities" [Random House Dictionary, 1712], he argues, "what we have in Isaiah 40–55 may be understood as a scenario for the existential drama. It is a drama in which the hearers/readers of those chapters are invited, by virtue of poetic form ... to be followed by YHWH's nonviolent world-conquest, and acknowledgment of YHWH's transnational governance" (R. G. Boling, "Kings and Prophets: Cyrus and Servant, Reading Isaiah 40–55," in *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine*, eds. R. Chazan, W. W. Hallo, and L. H. Schiffman [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999], 175).

concern of the scribal group behind the final text. For this argument, chapter five examines the use of the word *maškilîm* and its root מַשְׁכִּיל in the Hebrew Bible.

Chapter six summarizes this study and discusses the political and theological implications of the conclusions. Although scholars commonly find the themes of the superior power and sovereignty of YHWH, as well as the call for faithfulness to YHWH in the context of worldly empires, what has been overlooked is the narrative function of the foreign kings and their doxologies. The interpretation of the narratives following the foreign kings reveals three purposes for compiling the narratives. First, the narratives envision the transformative power and impact of the wisdom and knowledge of YHWH. Second, the narratives envision a newly defined relationship between YHWH and foreign sovereignty, as well as a new concept of YHWH's people including confessing and converting individuals in the context of foreign empires. Third, the narratives serve as illustrative stories, demonstrating the role of the sages (*maškilîm*) in Dan 11:33 and 12:3. Their roles are to give understanding to many—including the gentiles—and lead them to righteousness in a new religious and political context of the Jews.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology

The Nature of the Daniel Narratives

The Daniel narratives are similar to a television series in that the narratives share the same characters—Daniel, his friends, the foreign kings, and the courtiers—and the same location—the foreign court. They also have the characteristic of “open-endedness” which allows for a number of stories to be joined together, while each episode has its own sense of closure.¹ Reading Dan 3 separately, for example, makes a good story by itself with its own plot, consisting of a beginning, middle, and end. In addition, at the end of Dan 6, the readers find that the situation of the Jewish courtiers does not change dramatically from the previous chapters. The nature of this conclusion allows for the addition of another episode at the end or in the middle of the chapters without interrupting the narrative flow.²

Although studies traditionally interpret the Daniel narratives as a compilation of stories with common themes, this study explores the ways in which the arrangement of

¹ Holm explains some features of story-collections, “[t]hese story-collections demonstrate many of the same features as the mature European examples, such as open-endedness or a lack of closure with regard to the precise number of stories. As for ancient Near Eastern literature, it often utilized the ‘frame narrative,’ a common element in story-collections worldwide, in order to box stories, proverbs, pseudo-prophecies, and other genres” (*Of Courtiers and Kings: The Biblical Daniel Narratives and Ancient Story-Collections*, EANECE [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013], 5–6).

² “The overarching chronology and choice of kings in Daniel leave open the number of stories that can be included in the book.... One notes that surely chapters 1–6 are not the only stories one could set in the days of the three kings who are mentioned—Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius—nor are these the only kings that could have been included.” (Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 59).

these stories presents an overarching plot across the narratives. Consequently, one of the main goals of this study is to find that overarching plot of the narratives. This task involves exploring the significance of each chapter in its place in order to identify a level of meaning that emerges from the interaction between these stories in their current order.

Not all scholars assume that the meaning of the Daniel narratives emerges from an intentional arrangement of the court stories. Regarding the nature of the book of Daniel, Di Lella points out,

Each of these sections forms a distinct unit separable from the rest.... Any one or more of the sections could have been lost, and the remaining sections would not have suffered in any significant way at all. Superficially, the book seems to be a collection of once isolated miniworks.³

Holm, however, suggests something more than a collection with reference to “the story-collection genre.”⁴ She argues that “the collecting of separate genres often results in a transformation of genre; for Daniel, this supports the view that what the stories mean individually and what they mean together or with the visions changes dramatically.”⁵ Regarding the narratives’ collective meaning in relation to Dan 7–12, Holm explains that the “entertaining stories of Jewish courtiers outwitting their rivals ... gain the more somber and defiant tone of apocalyptic literature when read as the foundation and legitimation of chs. 7–12.”⁶

³ L. F. Hartman and A. A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 23 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 9.

⁴ Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 5.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

For the purpose of analyzing the Daniel narratives, this chapter explores Rick Altman's narrative theory as a methodological tool. Altman provides an innovative way of reading narratives in contrast to the neo-Aristotelian understanding of plot and narrative. By employing "following" and "framing" methods, Altman's theory makes it possible to read a series of stories as a single narrative rather than an anthology. In this sense, Altman's narrative theory provides an essential means by which this study examines the meaning that emerges from the developments across these court stories.

In the following section, this chapter introduces Altman's narrative theory focusing on its strategy of "following" a character, the process of "framing," and the concept of "single-focus" and "dual-focus" narratives. The reading strategy of "following" a character helps readers focus on different foreign kings in each scene and "conceive them as a succession of following-units" instead of separate foreign kings. The process of "framing" lets readers recognize a series of events as a single structured narrative by giving the series their beginning and end.⁷ In addition, the tradition-historical approach provides criteria for analyzing and evaluating the portrayals of foreign kings in Dan 1–6 in comparison with other similar foreign court tales, and show the distinct nature of the Daniel narratives. Both Altman's narrative theory and the tradition-historical approach provide important theoretical and methodological bases on which chapters three and four analyze and interpret the Daniel narratives.

⁷ R. Altman, *A Theory of Narrative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 15–18, 55–57, 119–20.

Altman's Theory of Narrative

Rick Altman proposes a new definition of narrative against what he calls the “plot-based definition.”⁸ According to him, the “plot-based definition” or “plot-based notions of structure” have dominated the concerns of narrative theory since the late Renaissance.⁹ He explains that the revival of Aristotle’s tradition in the late Renaissance attenuated diverse strategies in defining and analyzing a narrative.¹⁰ This neo-Aristotelian definition of a narrative is “dependent on action and built around the hero’s passing by a series of probable or necessary stages from misfortune to happiness, or from happiness to misfortune.”¹¹ Belfiore explains Aristotle’s understanding of the plot found in *Poetics*

XIII:

Since a tragic plot is a movement or change (*metabasis*) between the endpoints of good and bad fortune, there are two possible kinds of change: that which begins in good fortune and ends in bad fortune, and that which begins in bad fortune and ends in good fortune.¹²

This Aristotelian definition of plot explains various traditional readings of the Daniel narratives. According to the Aristotelian reading of the narratives, each story in Dan 1–6 presents a plot that begins in bad fortune or crisis and ends in good fortune. This

⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁹ Altman elaborates the importance of a plot in seventeenth century France: “[m]ost important for the history of narrative theory is the eventual agreement on the necessity to respect what is called a ‘unity of action.’ Adapted from Aristotle, the notion of unity of action involves the need to build a play around a single unbroken plot thread, eschewing competing story lines, unnecessary characters, and unrelated episodes” (Ibid., 3).

¹⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹¹ Ibid., 2.

¹² E. S. Belfiore, *Tragic Pleasures: Aristotle on Plot and Emotion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 161.

reading focuses on the protagonists, Daniel and his companions, who overcome various crises and finally are rewarded. This reading reveals a message about God's power and sovereignty that makes the Jewish courtiers win over the antagonists. The narratives in some way issue a call to religious fidelity in the exilic condition. This reading of the narratives focused on the Aristotelian plot and action, however, often fails to reveal the purpose of compiling the stories into an intentionally arranged collection.

In summary, since the late Renaissance, and especially “during the third quarter of the twentieth century” in “Anglo-American criticism,” the Aristotelian plot-based reading has provided the primary methodological guidelines for the narrative theories.¹³ This approach explains various traditional readings of the Daniel narratives focused on their plot with a crisis, dramatic settlement, and rewards or good fortune. This “quest-oriented model,” however, cannot explain the purpose and the message of the story-collection, leaving each story to be interpreted to have a similar plot or message.¹⁴ In this respect, Altman's strategy of reading the narratives in light of “following” and “framing” provides the reader with a useful tool to read the collection of narratives as an entity. His methodology helps the reader explore what the narratives in Dan 1–6 mean together beyond each story.

¹³ Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 4.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Character versus Plot

In a neo-Aristotelian reading of the narratives, characters do not serve a primary role in identifying the main idea or theme. Characters are determined and defined by the plot, but they are not the essence of the plot. This plot often involves a beginning, middle, and end. Altman explains this concept of plot quoting Tzvetan Todorov's five basic stages of a narrative: first, "a state of equilibrium at the outset;" second, "a disruption of the equilibrium by some action;" third, "a recognition that there has been a disruption;" fourth, "an attempt to repair the disruption;" and fifth, "a reinstatement of the initial equilibrium."¹⁵ Branigan explains these stages of a narrative in terms of "change." He writes, "[i]n a narrative, some person, object, or situation undergoes a particular type of change and this change is measured by a sequence of attributions which apply to the thing at different times."¹⁶ While this "change" is the central concept in the Aristotelian understanding of plot when he discusses the change in fortune, Altman argues that this approach centered on change cannot attend to the necessary questions of difference and moves his attention to the issue of characters.¹⁷

Regarding the characters, Altman's approach requires a certain process of representation before the reader recognizes a character. He illustrates this process using a short story "Funes, the Memorious" by Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges. This story

¹⁵ Tzvetan Todorov, "The 2 Principles of Narrative," *Diacritics* 1 (1971), 39; Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 6.

¹⁶ Edward Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 4.

¹⁷ Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 9

is about a man named Funes. In this story, the narrator explains that Funes gained a prodigious memory after suffering a horseback-riding accident. Borges explains that,

He remembered the shapes of the clouds in the south at dawn on the 30th of April of 1882, and he could compare them in his recollection with the marbled grain in the design of a leather-bound book ... and with the lines in the spray which an oar raised in the Rio Negor on the eve of the battle of the Quebracho.¹⁸

In addition to this prodigious memory, Funes perceives everything in remarkable detail.

Borges describes Funes' memory, writing that,

A circumference on a blackboard, a rectangular triangle, a rhomb, are forms which we can fully intuit; the same held true with Ireneo [Funes] for the tempestuous mane of a stallion ... the ever-changing flame or the innumerable ash, the many faces of a dead man during the course of a protracted wake.¹⁹

Funes' ability, however, makes him almost incapable of generalization. That is, it is problematic for him to understand that the generic name "dog" embraces so many different individual creatures of diverse form and size. In addition, he was surprised every time he saw his own face in the mirror or his own hands because he could notice the progress of corruption, decay, and death. Borges states that "I suspect, nevertheless, that he was not very capable of thought. To think is to forget a difference, to generalize, to abstract. In the overly replete world of Funes, there were nothing but details, almost contiguous details."²⁰

Based on the discussion about Funes, Altman explains the process that leads readers to recognize a character: "[w]e look at the comic strip and see one image, then an

¹⁸ J. L. Borges, "Funes, the Memorious," in *A Personal Anthology*, ed. and trans. A. Kerrigan (New York: Grove, 1967), 40.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

instant later see the second image. The two images are demonstrably different.... Yet for us to construe this comic strip as narrative, we must give the same character name to both images.”²¹ Just as Borges argues that to think is to generalize and abstract, so does Altman argue that to perceive two demonstrably different images as the same character is the way in which knowledge is created: “In order for phenomena to be memorized and turned into knowledge, we must renounce nominalism in favor of the abstract categories of realism.”²² According to Altman, to give the same character name to two different images is precisely the process that makes readers recognize a character.

To a certain extent, this process contains similarity with Gestalt psychology. In psychology, Gestalt theory explores the human mind process that allows humanity to receive meaningful perceptions in an apparently unmeaningful world. Gestalt means “whole,” “totality,” or “configuration” in German. This theory builds upon antecedent thinkers such as Kant, who argue that “sensory experience is structured by the faculties of the mind.”²³ According to Gestalt psychology, the perceptual principles of the mind that form the elements of perception into organized configurations include,

Continuity, by which stimuli following some pattern are seen as a perceptual unit; proximity, by which stimuli that are close together form a perceptual unit; similarity, by which similar stimuli form a perceptual unit; inclusiveness, by which a large perceptual configuration masks smaller ones.²⁴

²¹ Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 13.

²² Ibid.

²³ B. R. Hergenhahn, *An Introduction to the History of Psychology*, 6th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2009), 481.

²⁴ Ibid., 482.

Through these self-organizing tendencies, the whole has a reality of its own, which is “not equal the sum of the parts, nor is it merely more than the sum of the parts.” Rather, the whole is “so different from a sum of its parts.”²⁵

According to Altman’s theory and Gestalt psychology, identifying a character is a result of a perceptive process in reading a narrative. Moreover, the product that this process brings about is quite different from a sum of each instance. Altman argues that without this process of perception (or abstraction), human activities such as thought or knowledge are impossible. Regarding reading a narrative, Altman writes:

Narrative knowledge depends on this level of abstraction—we must abandon the media used to express and communicate the narrative in favor of a constructed, abstract level where the figure in frame one (seen from the side) and the figure in frame two (seen from the front) and the name used in frame three are all recognized as referring to the same character.²⁶

This insight offers a helpful tool for us to read the collection of stories featuring three different foreign kings. Traditionally, on the one hand, Daniel and his three friends have been regarded as the main characters whose speech or action has the primary importance for the plot. Focusing on Daniel and his friends as the main characters, however, inevitably leads the reader to identify a typical Aristotelian plot in the narratives, since these protagonists undergo typical narrative plot of crisis, resolution, and reward.

On the other hand, the foreign kings have been interpreted as secondary characters playing an antagonistic role and creating conflict or tension necessary for the narrative plot. What makes the reader hesitant to focus on the foreign kings as key

²⁵ D. B. King and M. Wertheimer, *Max Wertheimer & Gestalt Theory* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2005), 368.

²⁶ Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 13.

characters is the fact that they create problems or crises for the protagonists. In addition, the fact that in the narratives the foreign kings switch among three different figures—Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius—against the unchanged protagonist Daniel implies the foreign kings’ secondary status among narrative characters. If readers pay attention, however, to the depiction of the foreign kings in the narratives, one can hardly miss the narratives’ peculiar presentation of the foreign kings that does not fit into the traditional idea of the gentile rulers in the Hebrew Bible. Altman’s approach enables us to focus on three foreign kings as a key character and to acquire some meaningful whole from these three separate figures.

Altman’s perceptive process of generalizing and abstracting in identifying a character allows the reader to recognize different foreign kings not as separate characters, but rather as a single character, which results in a change of the narrative function of the foreign kings. Above all, his strategy of “following,” which will be discussed below, makes it easier to read the whole narrative as centered not on Daniel, but rather on the foreign kings. This narrative reading strategy allows the reader to approach the collection of court stories in Dan 1–6 as forming a macrostructural narrative that extends across the individual episodes. Altman explains that “[n]one of these taken alone actually is the character ... in the process erasing the primary graphic and linguistic levels. The development of characters thus participates in the creation of a ‘diegesis,’ a posited level independent of the textual vehicle.”²⁷ This process erases the primary linguistic levels (three different names) of foreign kings and creates a posited level (a meaningful whole).

²⁷ Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 13–14. On “diegesis,” see p. 38, n. 115.

In this respect, Altman suggests the term “character” is not a synonym of “actor” (the one who acts) or “subject” (the one who puts the verb in motion). Rather, the term “character” serves as a technical term only applied to a specific range of actor-subjects.²⁸ The foreign kings as a single “character” are not limited to the linguistic level or textual vehicle. Thus, the reader can perceive the foreign kings in six different chapters with three different actor names as representing one character of “a foreign king.” That is, the foreign king as a narrative character is created and developed by the reiteration in continuing stories.²⁹

Altman’s treating of a character not merely as an actor of actions or a subject of a motion, but as a central vehicle for a narrative meaning resembles Seymour Chatman’s understanding of a character. Chatman argues that a viable theory of character has to maintain openness and regard characters as “autonomous beings, not as mere plot function.”³⁰ He maintains that “[i]t should argue that character is reconstructed by the audience from evidence announced or implicit in an original construction and communicated by the discourse, through whatever medium.”³¹ Wolfgang Iser also provides some helpful suggestions about the understanding of narrative characters: “[i]t does illustrate plainly the vital richness of potential that arises out of the fact that the hero

²⁸ Ibid., 14.

²⁹ Especially, Altman emphasizes the relation between character and act: “[i]ndeed, it is the very fact that a character acts that permits us to recognize successive images as representing the same character. Conversely, it is through association with a character that simple activities become narrative-defining actions” (*A Theory of Narrative*, 15).

³⁰ S. B. Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 119.

³¹ Ibid.

in the novel must be pictured and cannot be seen. With the novel the reader must use his imagination to synthesize the information given to him, and so his perception is simultaneously richer and more private.”³² In this sense, Iser’s understanding is different from “La mort de l’auteur” of Roland Barthes and can be described as reconstruction—as in Chatman’s explanation—rather than deconstruction. Iser’s methodology of “picturing” and “synthesizing the information” corresponds with Altman’s approach to narrative characters and the meaningful perception in Gestalt psychology. Based on this understanding of narrative characters, Altman moves to the concept of “following” in recognizing and analyzing narrative activity.

Narrative-Defining Actions (“Following” of a Character)

Altman considers the process of “following” as essential in interpreting or comprising narrative. According to him, one of the most characteristic features of a narrative is “the reader’s sense of following a character from action to action and scene to scene.”³³ He emphasizes that “not until a particular character is followed will we sense the activity of a narrator, thereby defining the text as narrative.”³⁴ He explains that while some narratives follow one character from beginning to end, others either alternate between two characters or follow many different characters throughout the narrative.³⁵

³² W. Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 283.

³³ Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 15.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 21–22.

What does it mean to “follow” a particular character in the Daniel narratives? Altman explains that by following a particular person, we foreground that person’s existence and action, which reveals an abstract level, rather than a textual or linguistic level. Consequently, the followed character and its existence and action come to have narrational importance, thus carrying out the theme or the message of the narrative.³⁶ Altman explains that in the following process, there is enormous variation in its pattern of following. While some narratives follow the same character, others follow two or more characters or groups throughout the narrative.³⁷ The Daniel narratives belong to the last category. Even though Daniel appears constantly throughout the narratives, the narratives follow various foreign kings instead of Daniel or other characters.

In addition, Altman explains that due to the primacy of function over personality, this reading allows interchangeability. That is,

Once the characters are killed or depart, their slots are filled like the ranks of an army in battle. As each new pair of following-units gives way to the next, new characters take the stage, but their relationship remains stable and thus representative of the duality governing Roland’s overall structure.³⁸

Altman’s statement about the “primacy of function over personality” is very important to the methodological approach of this study. It encourages readers to focus on the narrative functions of the foreign kings as a character, instead of looking at the kings as individual actors. In this sense, the reader realizes that the foreign kings are interchangeable. That is, their generalized or abstract existence transcends their individual names, and leads the

³⁶ Ibid., 16, 21.

³⁷ Ibid., 21–23.

³⁸ Ibid., 48–49.

reader to a certain meaningful perception. He adds, “[b]y the same token, a group can be represented by any one of its individuals.”³⁹ This abstraction of individual actors into a single “character” leads readers to identify the names of the foreign kings as representing the functional character of the foreign king. As a result, the process of “following” reveals the focus of the narrative eyes, as well as the main message or meaning of the narratives. By following different foreign kings in each chapter, the narratives reveal another level of meaning (diegesis) which has a more dynamic nature.

Framing

In addition to the process of “following,” Altman adds another reading strategy of “framing.” He explains that just as “following” a character allows a text to become a narrative, “so a series of events becomes narrative only when those events are framed, thus revealing another type of narrational activity.”⁴⁰ Applying this concept of framing to the Daniel narratives, a series of events in six chapters become “a” narrative revealing another level of meaning when they are framed. This concept of “framing” is no less illuminating than that of “following” in exploring the six stories in Dan 1–6.

As Altman emphasizes the process of “framing,” he argues that “[w]ithout framing, texts are all middle; by the very act of framing, texts gain a beginning and end.”⁴¹ According to the traditional readings focusing on the character of Daniel and his friends, it would make no difference if we relocate the stories in a different order, with

³⁹ Ibid., 49.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 18.

⁴¹ Ibid., 18.

the exception of the first introductory chapter. That is, the story of the lion's den in Dan 6 and that of the blazing fire furnace in Dan 3 are interchangeable without significantly altering the message. Though the stories are seemingly ordered chronologically according to the incipits, it is evident that they are not historical records but fictional backdrops of the stories.⁴² In addition, some scholars find the structural organization of the stories, including symmetry, and argue for the internal reason for the ordering.⁴³ This symmetrical structure, however, cannot reveal any narrative necessity of the current ordering relating to the overarching plot of the narratives. In the next chapter, this study explores how the stories are framed to make an overarching narrative.

Narrative Drive

In his theory of narrative, Altman does not argue that the diegetic level of meaning is inherent in the text itself or an exclusive reading of a narrative, but rather takes up Michael J. Toolen's position that "[a] narrative is a perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events."⁴⁴ In this definition, "non-randomly connected" gives some insight into the nature of the Daniel narratives. Toolen explains, "[t]he emphasis on 'non-

⁴² "An *incipit* is a sentence which begins a narrative or a narrative book. A *superscription* is a title, sometimes expanded, over a book, a portion of a book, or a poem" (J. D. W. Watts, "Superscriptions and Incipits in the Book of the Twelve," in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, eds. J. D. Nogalski and M. A. Sweeney, SBLSymS 15 [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000], 111). See also G. M. Tucker, "Prophetic Superscriptions and the Growth of the Canon," in *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology*, eds. G. W. Coats and B. O. Long (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 57.

⁴³ A. Lenglet, "La structure littéraire de Daniel 2–7," *Bib* 53 (1972), 169–190; J. G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 23 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1978), 59–63; J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (Missoula: Scholars, 1977), 11–14; J. P. Tanner, "The Literary Structure of the Book of Daniel," *BSac* 160 (2003): 269–82; C. L. Seow, "The Rule of God in the Book of Daniel," in *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts*, eds. B. F. Batto and K. L. Roberts (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 226; Cf. Newsom, *Daniel*, 39.

⁴⁴ M. J. Toolen, *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1988), 8.

random connectedness’ means that a pure collage of described events, even given in sequence, does not count as a narrative.... unless someone comes to perceive a non-random connection.”⁴⁵ According to Toolen’s definition, the stories in Dan 1–6 can be a narrative only if they have non-random connectedness that transcends sequence into the realm of consequence.

More importantly, in relation to Altman’s concept of “narrative drive,” non-randomly connected events should be “perceived” to make a narrative. Toolen argues,

The consequence is not so much ‘given’ as ‘perceived’: narrative depends on the addressee seeing it as narrative.... Perceiving non-random connectedness in a sequence of events is the prerogative of the addressee.... The ultimate authority for ratifying a text as a narrative rests not with the teller but with the perceiver or addressee.⁴⁶

In a similar vein, Altman argues, “it is entirely imaginable that the narrator responsible for narrational activity can be the spectator or reader.”⁴⁷ In this sense, Altman’s methodology does not entirely rely on the text itself, but also emphasizes the readers’ role in interpreting a narrative. He explains that “[i]dentifying the characters and actions meaningful to their specific context, these ‘spectators’ perform the narrational function of following individual characters and framing separate narratives.”⁴⁸

Even though his definition of narrative is inclusive—in that he includes many activities of interpreting objects such as “social customs, ancient stones, and physical symptoms”—his approach is helpful for seeing a narrative not as an already-completed

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 7

⁴⁷ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

work or entity, but rather as open to receptive activities of readers or hearers.⁴⁹ His concept of “narrative drive” refers to this tendency or acts to read a text as a narrative.⁵⁰ Altman’s emphasis on “narrative drive” positions his theory within the broader concept of “reader-response criticism.”⁵¹ The fact that a narrative reveals its diegetic level only by spectator’s narrational activity of following and framing emphasizes the reader as an active agent in creating a message out of the text.

According to Altman, “narrative drive” involves creating a narrative out of materials that are not necessarily a narrative in itself. He argues that “though narrative drive usually arises in response to specific textual factors, a strong narrative drive can generate the very factors necessary for recognition of narrative.”⁵² In this sense, Altman’s narrative drive is in the middle ground between text-centered interpretation and reader-oriented reading. In reading the Daniel narratives, a “narrative drive” helps the reader create a narrational activity out of multiple stories. That is, “narrative drive” lets the reader focus on three foreign kings and perceive a non-random connectedness in the depictions of foreign kings throughout the stories. In this process, “narrative drive”

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Among reader-response critics, see N. Holland, *5 Readers Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); idem, *Poems in Persons: An Introduction to the Psychoanalysis of Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); S. E. Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); W. Iser, “Indeterminacy and the Reader’s Response,” in *Twentieth-Century Literary Theory*, ed. K. M. Newton (New York: St. Martin’s, 1997), 195–199; idem, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); H. R. Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception, Theory and History of Literature 2*, trans. T. Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982); R. Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. S. Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).

⁵² Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 19–20.

generates the very factor of “following” the foreign kings, thus making the stories reveal a diegetic level of meaning which is not necessarily explicit in the text.

Dual to Single-Focus Narrative

According to Altman, his narrative theory offers an analytic benefit, providing various approaches to narrative focusing on the readers, texts, and literary categories.⁵³ While the “following” and “framing” focus on the reader’s specific relationship to the text, a typological analysis, which recognizes the single-focus and dual-focus structures, concentrates on internal textual connections.⁵⁴ Altman argues that the coordinated strategy of these two complementary methods—the reader-oriented “following” and “framing” on the one hand, and the text-centered “dual-focus” and “single-focus” on the other hand—can benefit the textual analysis of a large corpus of narrative texts.⁵⁵

Altman categorizes a narrative either as single-focus or dual-focus narrative. In dual-focus narratives, the narrator alternates between two sides instead of following a single character, and the conflict between two groups provides the plot:

Succeeding following-units typically portray the two sides engaged in similar activities. This parallelism induces comparison of the two sides and is the source of the text’s main rhetorical thrust.... The text ends when two sides are reduced to one, by death or expulsion, or through marriage or conversion.⁵⁶

When Altman interprets “The Song of Roland,” he mentions that “Roland tends toward the universal, toward the elimination of every exception. Far from presenting this

⁵³ Ibid., 315.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 291, 315.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 291.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 55.

movement as a linear progression, however, the poet cleverly disguises this passage from a differentiated to a unified world behind a mask of static opposition.”⁵⁷ Concerning the dual-focus narrative, he continues to explain that:

Throughout the text, generalizations are carefully juxtaposed with assertions of exception. Each general statement provides a projection into the future, a foreshadowing of that moment at the end of the text when absolute domination will be realized, whereas each exception represents the present, when the disputed land is still shared and balance is still possible.⁵⁸

Applying Altman’s reading of the Song of Roland to the interpretation of the Daniel narratives leads the reader discern a projection into the future where YHWH’s sovereignty is acknowledged and established beyond the current static opposition. That is, while the present situation shows an opposition between the Jews and the foreign powers—between “the general” and “the exception”—thus presenting a static opposition, the narratives contain a projection into the unified world with the elimination of every exception under YHWH’s sovereignty. In terms of Altman’s view of single and dual-focus narratives, the book of Daniel presents a “dual to single” focus narrative. While there is a balanced opposition between Jewish courtiers and the foreign courtiers, this binary resolves into a single-focus narrative in the apocalyptic visions in Dan 7–12 with the elimination of evil and worldly powers and the establishment of YHWH’s kingdom.⁵⁹

While applying Altman’s theory of dual-focus narrative to the reading Daniel is useful, such a task encounters several complexities. This study suggests that the

⁵⁷ Ibid., 43.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ But at the same time, the possible alternative of integration is projected by the kings in terms of wisdom. In this sense, the book of Daniel presents two kinds of establishments of YHWH’s kingdom.

narratives in Dan 1–6 do not present simple dual-focus narratives between the Jews and the foreign kings. Furthermore, the apocalyptic visions also require more a sophisticated reading. This study reads the book of Daniel as envisioning a distinct future integration or unification by juxtaposing apocalyptic visions with wisdom’s vision in the narratives. The book of Daniel thus presents an inclusive apocalyptic perspective in which the identity of “YHWH’s people” or “true Israel” is redefined in order to include confessing and converting individuals.⁶⁰ In addition, the book emphasizes the role of apocalyptic *maškilîm*, who will lead many—including the gentiles—to righteousness by the transformative power of eschatological wisdom—the knowledge of future secrets (“mystery”). In this sense, the narratives in Dan 1–6 present an illustration of the role and function of *maškilîm* in educating the gentile rulers.

Polarity Adjustment

Then, how do the dual-focus narratives generate the meaning or message? Due to the interchangeability of characters, according to Altman, the dual-focus text can expand its basic structure indefinitely. That is, its replacement principle, or interchangeability, allows the dual-focus narrative to continue by simple variation of each polarity. Beyond this repetition or expansion of dual-focus, Altman argues,

⁶⁰ Newsom explains the nature of combining the visions to the court tales that “[t]he unusual literary setting of the Daniel apocalypses as supplements to a cycle of court stories is due to the fact that the narratives provided hospitable ideological ground for the development of apocalyptic revelations through the mantic talents of Daniel and the preoccupation of the narratives with the theme of divine sovereignty. Historically speaking, in the aftermath of Alexander’s death, it was apparently the protracted violence of the wars of the Diadochi that made the symbolic accommodation of Gentile rule no longer seem plausible and thus to require some different response. One response was the redaction of the Danielic tales themselves to incorporate an eschatological element (Nebuchadnezzar’s dream). But perhaps it was not seen as sufficient for God to communicate the end of the period of Gentile rule only to a Gentile monarch” (*Daniel*, 18).

Roland is constantly evolving, constantly redefining its terms as adjustments are made in the identity of its polarities. Each section of the text presents a conflict between polar opposites, but from one section to another the specifics of the polarity may shift, isolating a new variable.⁶¹

This shift is where the meaning arises. Though the dual-focus narrative seems to repeat the same opposition, a closer look suggests that something more is going on in the narrative. Altman explains that

As we move through a series of replacement operations, instead of exactly repeating the same opposition again and again we encounter small but meaningful differences in the parameter of opposition. This ‘polarity adjustment’ offers a minimalist but powerful method of making meaning, characteristic of dual-focus narrative.”⁶²

In summary, Altman’s narrative theory provides various useful tools and processes by which the reader can interpret the narratives and explore another level of meaning beyond the traditional plot-based reading. Altman’s “following” allows the reader to identify an overarching message across the component parts of Dan 1–6. The process of “following” a character helps the reader to receive a meaningful perception in the existences and actions of different foreign kings. The strategy of “framing” illuminates another type of narrative activity from a series of events or factors: the foreign kings’ doxologies in the case of the Daniel narratives.

In relation to Altman’s concept of dual-focus narrative, this study interprets the Daniel narratives as envisioning a distinct future integration or unification. Finally, the concept of polarity adjustment reveals how the repetition of seemingly similar events and the same opposition creates knowledge or message by minimal but meaningful

⁶¹ Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 49.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 83.

differences. In the next section, this study explores how the tradition-historical approach contributes to the methodology of this study by revealing the narratives' distinctiveness in the tradition of Israel's narratives. This distinctiveness sheds light on the unique literary function, and thus the message, of the Daniel narratives. This message illustrates this distinct perspective of Israel's attitude toward the foreigners in these stories.

The Tradition-Historical Approach

In addition to Altman's theory of narrative, the tradition-historical approach is necessary for understanding and interpreting the Daniel narratives. Various scholars interpret the Daniel narratives by comparing them with other court narratives in the Hebrew Bible.⁶³ For example, Matthew Rindge argues that Dan 2 reconfigures the character of Joseph in Gen 41.⁶⁴ Niditch and Doran examine similar forms or types within the Syriac Ahiqar 5–7, Gen 41, and Dan 2.⁶⁵ They provide a detailed outline of those stories based on Aarne and Thompson's typological study of folktales.⁶⁶

(1) A Person of lower status (a prisoner, foreigner, debtor, servant, youngest son or all possible nuances) is called before a person of higher status (often a king or bishop or chief of some kind) to answer difficult questions or to solve a problem requiring insight. (The problem may be posed on purpose to perplex or may be a genuine dilemma. Often a threat of punishment exists for failure to answer.)

⁶³ See for example Humphreys' tradition-historical approach in "A Life-Style for Diaspora: A Study of the Tales of Esther and Daniel," *JBL* 92 (1973), 211–23.

⁶⁴ M. Rindge, "Jewish Identity under Foreign Rule: Daniel 2 as a Reconfiguration of Genesis 41," *JBL* 129 (2010), 85–86.

⁶⁵ S. Niditch and R. Doran, "The Success Story of the Wise Courtier: A Formal Approach," *JBL* 96 (1977), 179–93.

⁶⁶ A. Aarne, *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography*, trans. S. Thompson, Folklore Fellows Communications 184, 2d ed. (Helsinki: Academia Scientarum Fennica, 1961).

- (2) The person of lower status poses the problem which no one seems capable of solving.
- (3) The person of lower status (who may in fact be a disguised substitute for the person expected by the questioner) does solve the problem.
- (4) The person of lower status is rewarded for answering (by being given half the kingdom, the daughter of the king, special clothing, a signet ring, or some other sign of a raise in status).⁶⁷

Through comparing similar court narratives, Rowley argues that “I find them to be stories which the writer based partly on traditions, but which he skillfully used to convey a timely message to his contemporaries, and into which, therefore, he worked allusions to contemporary events.”⁶⁸ Rowley’s remark suggests the way in which the interpreter can understand the Daniel narratives in relation to other traditions and in its own context of the postexilic situation. To find the “timely message to his contemporaries” of the Daniel narratives, thorough comparison and the subsequent exploration of some distinct differences among the court narratives are the essential processes of this study.

Steck explains the tradition-historical approach’s starting point concerning a text’s presupposition:

Old Testament texts are not solely the expression of an isolated author.... Statements were formed under influences and with shaping devices which provided the author the prerequisites of possible linguistic utterances.... The treatment concentrates upon the pre-text of the “world” in which an author and the author’s addresses live. It is a linguistic (§7), intellectual (§8), and concretely historical (§9) world in which a formulation and its original understanding were taken as self-evident.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Niditch and Doran, “The Success Story,” 180.

⁶⁸ H. H. Rowley, “A Rejoinder,” *JBL* 70 (1950), 202.

⁶⁹ O. H. Steck, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Guide to the Methodology*, trans. J. D. Nogalski, SBLRBS 39 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1998), 121.

According to Steck's tradition-history approach, the Daniel narratives have a very unusual aspect. Statements in the text are supposed to be under the influence of certain preconditions of possible linguistic utterances, which are related to the pre-text of the current intellectual world. The foreign kings' doxologies, however, cannot be aligned with the intellectual world in which a formulation is taken as self-evident. Steck's explanation is helpful in this respect when he argues that

Tradition history asks the degree to which the contents of the author's statements are determined by pre-existing elements from the author's intellectual world, the degree to which the statements can only be understood from their background, or the degree to which the author has deviated from that intellectual world.⁷⁰

The tradition-historical approach leads the reader of the Daniel narratives to explore the degree to which the Daniel narratives' contents are determined by traditional Old Testament court narratives as well as pre-existing elements from the author's intellectual world. This exploration provides the background for assessing the degree to which the Daniel narratives have deviated from those court narratives as well as the author's intellectual world.

In the Daniel narratives, an explicit deviation that draws the readers' attention is the foreign kings' doxologies. Praising Yahweh's name and power by the mouths of the foreign kings (including Nebuchadnezzar, the destroyer of Jerusalem and its temple) cannot be understood as acceptable from the author's intellectual and historical world.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Ibid., 122.

⁷¹ For the study of foreign kings' speeches in the literature, see Ben Zvi, "When the Foreign Monarch Speaks," 209–228; Newsom, "God's other," 31–48; Rindge, "Jewish Identity," 94. For Neco's speech to Josiah, see H. G. M. Williamson, "The Death of Josiah and the Continuing Development of the Deuteronomistic History," *VT* 32 (1982), 242–47; C. T. Begg, "The Death of Josiah in Chronicles: Another View," *VT* 37 (1987), 1–8. For Cyrus, see H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 419.

When one compares the Daniel narratives to other court narratives, while they share many aspects like what Aarne-Thompson lists as the motifs of court folktales, the foreign rulers' praising the Jewish God is peculiar to the Daniel narratives.

The identification of differences within the tradition-history allows readers to identify a locus of meaning-construction. The tradition-historical approach begins from the similarity of the texts, which shows how the thought patterns or conceptual complexes were "presupposed by the text, incorporated into the text, or revised by the author."⁷² Steck lists different areas of tradition-historical inquiry such as "thought patterns," "convictions," "knowledge and awareness," "conceptually loaded terms," and "themes."⁷³ Applying these categories to the study of the Daniel narratives allows one to identify the "thought pattern" as cases of the superior activities of Yahweh in interpreting dreams and visions. In the Israelite tradition in the Hebrew Bible, while some traditions prohibit interpreting dreams, other dream interpretation narratives are connected to God's superior power and knowledge or God's revelation to his people.⁷⁴ The Daniel narratives preserve the view of dream interpretation as the revelation of God's power and knowledge. These traditions relate to wisdom circles, which are connected to Joseph's, Jacob's, and other court narratives.

The area of "convictions" in the narratives pertains to the belief that the exile is YHWH's punishment. In Dan 1, YHWH leads the Israelites to the Babylonian exile. This

⁷² Steck, *Old Testament Exegesis*, 123.

⁷³ Ibid., 125–26.

⁷⁴ Regarding a comprehensive study on dreams and divination in ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible, see J.-M. Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World*. Biblical Seminar 63. trans. J. M. Munro (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996).

perception of the exile relates to the Deuteronomistic perspective that interprets Israelite history through the lens of exile. In the Daniel narratives, YHWH's sovereignty is expanded to include YHWH's educating and transforming the foreign kings. The stories illustrate the impact of YHWH's revelation on foreign kings and that YHWH requires acknowledgment, atonement, and change from them.

Di Vito's insight about tradition criticism is noteworthy in relation to this study. Di Vito explains that tradition criticism is sometimes more than other types of criticism, because "it represents an approach to the biblical text that formulates investigative goals for synthesizing the manifold conclusions arrived at through 'other' methods."⁷⁵ In this study, the tradition-historical approach will play an important role by synthesizing or supporting the conclusions arrived at through a narrative reading of the text.

The genre of the folk narrative is one of the traditions to which Di Vito pays attention. He confines tradition to verbal tradition transmitted through generations orally or in writings. According to him, tradition is "developed and shaped over the course of their transmission by the group or groups who have a direct interest in their preservation and for whom they play a vital role."⁷⁶ The most important aspect to investigate is the "direct interest" of those who preserved and modified the tradition. It is necessary to explore the authorial intent behind preserving court narratives and the ways in which scribes modify the tradition in light of the contemporary theological or political agenda.

⁷⁵ R. A. Di Vito, "Tradition-Historical Criticism," in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Applications*, eds., S. R. Haynes and S. L. McKenzie (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 90.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 91.

For the tradition-historical approach, according to Davies, it is necessary to thoroughly analyze the ways in which Daniel employs the Hebrew Bible allusions either directly or indirectly, verbatim or paraphrase, and with or without the reference to context.⁷⁷

Regarding the traditions about depicting the foreign kings in the Hebrew Bible, Ben Zvi presents a helpful example for comparing to the Daniel narratives.⁷⁸ Ben Zvi argues that 2 Chronicles depicts Hiram as a foreign king who agrees with the Israelite view of YHWH as a creator and as one who loves Israel.⁷⁹ In addition, Hiram also accepts other convictions of Israel, such as the Israelites as YHWH's people or YHWH as the one who appoints kings. Ben Zvi further argues that 2 Chronicles also depicts the role and words of King Neco of Egypt as similar to those of a pious Israelite.⁸⁰ He notes that

Significantly, both of the last two 'godly' addresses in Chronicles are placed in the mouths of foreign monarchs: one in that of Neco, king of Egypt, here in 2 Chr 35:31, and the other in that of Cyrus, king of Persia, in 2 Chr 36:23. Significantly, Persia and Egypt are the two most important foreign powers from the perspective of Achaemenid Yehud."⁸¹

Ben Zvi illustrates the questions that the tradition-historical approach explores, using a textual sample with similarities to the Daniel narratives. To name just one aspect, Ben Zvi argues that the cases of the quoted speeches of foreign kings or the theological

⁷⁷ P. R. Davies, "Eschatology in the Book of Daniel," *JSOT* 17 (1980), 45.

⁷⁸ As an example, Hiram's praise is noteworthy: "Then King Hiram of Tyre answered in a letter that he sent to Solomon, 'Because the Lord loves his people he has made you king over them.' Hiram also said, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, who has given King David a wise son, endowed with discretion and understanding, who will build a temple for the Lord, and a royal palace for himself' (2 Chr 2:11–12).

⁷⁹ E. Ben Zvi, "When the Foreign Monarch Speaks," in *Chronicler as Author* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 217.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 221–22.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 222.

message of the narrator “reflect tension between, (1) a foreignness that is essential to the characters; and (2) a clear tendency to ‘Israelize’ their subjective viewpoints and to convey a sense of ‘sameness’ in the human world populated by Israelites and foreigners.”⁸² This observation shows some shared thought patterns or ideas with the Daniel narratives’ depiction of the foreign kings in envisioning a universal perspective or an inclusive tendency of the texts and authors.⁸³

Conclusion

This chapter explored Rick Altman’s narrative theory and the tradition-historical approach as methodological tools for analyzing the series of stories in Dan 1–6. Altman’s narrative theory provides an innovative way of reading the narratives by employing several useful processes, such as “following,” “framing,” and “polarity adjustment.” Through these reading strategies, Altman’s theory makes it possible to read a series or collection of stories as a single narrative with an overarching plot and message that transcend each individual pericope. According to Altman, the narrative material and activity are not necessarily within the text, and he emphasizes the readers’ role in interpreting and perceiving a narrative. In addition, the tradition-historical approach will help the reader compare Dan 1–6 with other court narratives in the Israelite tradition and find the distinct nature and message of the Daniel narratives.

⁸² Ibid., 224–25.

⁸³ Another one of Ben Zvi’s statements is also notable: “a tendency to ‘Israelize’ or ‘appropriate’ the foreigner is only to be expected in a book written in Achaemenid Yehud dealing with Israel and Israelite theology that ‘contains no reference to the nations in their own right’ and was written within and for a Yehudite and mostly Jerusalemite rereadership” (Ibid., 225).

In the next two chapters, this study explores the diegetic level of the narratives' meaning by employing Altman's methodology. Chapter three interprets Dan 1–3 using Altman's theory of "following" and "framing," as well as the tradition-historical approach. Chapter four continues this study by examining Dan 4–6 through the same methodological lenses. The process of "following" and "framing" aids the reader in focusing on the existence, action, and speech—especially the doxologies—of the foreign kings. In addition, the tradition-historical approach highlights the distinct nature of foreign kings' doxologies in relation to the Israelite tradition of court narratives and explores the function of the doxologies.

CHAPTER THREE

Narrative Reading of Daniel 1–3

Introduction

This chapter interprets the narratives in Dan 1–3 using Altman’s narrative theory and the tradition-historical approach. Each chapter of the Daniel narratives has its own plot with a beginning, middle, and end, and thus makes a self-contained story. The traditional way of categorizing the stories as either “tales of court conflict” (Dan 3, 6) or “tales of court contest” (Dan 2, 4, 6), which is accepted by many scholars, shows the assumption that each story can exist as a separate, complete unit.¹ Recently, however, scholars find conflicts not just between Jewish and gentile courtiers, but also between human and divine sovereignty. This approach reads the narratives as resistance literature contesting the imperial claims of power and confirming the ultimate power and sovereignty of YHWH.² These approaches, however, do not explain the purpose of compiling the narratives in the present order or the overarching plot and message of the narratives, which are greater than the individual morals.

¹ Humphreys subdivides the court tales into “tales of court conflict” (Dan 3, 6) and “tales of court contest” (Dan 2, 4, 5) (“A Life-Style for Diaspora: A Study of the Tales of Esther and Daniel,” *JBL* 92 [1973], 219–220). See also J. J. Collins, *Daniel: With an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, FOTL 20 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 119; M. Chan, “Ira Regis: Comedic Inflections of Royal Rage in Jewish Court Tales,” *JQR* 103 (2013), 13.

² C. A. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 16; O. H. Steck, “Weltgeschehen und Gottesvolk im Buch Daniel,” in *Kirche: Festschrift für Günther Bornkamm zum 75. Geburtstag*, eds. D. Lührmann and G. Strecker (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1980), 53–78; R. Albertz, *Der Gott des Daniel: Untersuchungen zu Daniel 4–6 in der Septuagintafassung sowie zu Komposition und Theologie des aramäischen Danielbuches*. SBS 131 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988), 185–186.

This dissertation examines the Daniel narratives in two parts: this chapter focuses on Dan 1–3 and chapter four explores Dan 4–6. By using Altman’s theory of “following,” this study follows the foreign kings across the individual stories and explores diegesis—“a posited level independent of the textual vehicle.”³ In addition, the tradition-historical approach allows the reader to find the distinctive characteristics of foreign kings’ doxologies. Although they are similar to other biblical doxologies or thanksgiving hymns, the tradition-historical approach demonstrates the uniqueness of these foreign kings’ doxologies and their messages.⁴

As a result, this study maintains that the Daniel narratives relate to the issue of human sovereignty and more specifically the relationship between foreign kings and the Jews and YHWH. Through the process of following the foreign kings, this study examines the way in which the narratives present this agenda beyond the themes of the contest and conflict between Jewish and foreign courtiers, and the superiority of Jewish wisdom and YHWH’s sovereignty. The interpretation of the narratives in chapters three and four demonstrate how the narratives portray, by subtle narrational differences, the development of the foreign kings’ attitude toward the Jews and the acknowledgment of YHWH. That is, the narrative illustrates how the foreign kings come to recognize and praise the superior sovereignty of YHWH through the experience of YHWH’s revelation.

³ R. Altman, *A Theory of Narrative* (New York: Columbia University, 2008), 14.

⁴ Goswell emphasizes the significance of the doxologies that “[t]he theology of the book of Daniel is succinctly expressed in the closing doxologies of chapters 2, 3, 4 and 6, with the strong affirmation of divine sovereignty put into the mouths of the foreign kings (who have seen events directly) rather than being made by the narrator. The affirmations are all the more impressive for that fact” (“The Divisions of the Book of Daniel,” in *The Impact of Unit Delimitation on Exegesis*, eds. R. De Hoop, M. C. A. Korpel, and S. E. Porter, Pericope 7 [Leiden: Brill, 2009], 94).

Daniel One

Characters

Daniel 1 plays an important role as an introduction to the narratives and the book as a whole. This chapter introduces three elements of the narratives: characters, background, and theme.⁵ Daniel 1 introduces two primary groups of characters: the Jews and the gentiles. On the one side, the narrative introduces the exiled faithful young Jews—Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—who are the protagonists of the narratives. On the other side, there are foreign kings and foreign courtiers who are the antagonists in a traditional sense. The story unfolds based on the conflict and contest between these two groups of characters. In relation to the issue around which the conflict and contest arises, the narrator describes the precondition of selecting these Jewish young men according to their “wisdom,” “knowledge,” and “insight” (1:4); as well as their appearance—“without physical defect and handsome” (1:4).⁶

The emphasis on wisdom and knowledge as the characteristics of these Jewish young men becomes a central theme in the following chapters. In addition, this theme also connects the narratives in Dan 1–6 to the apocalyptic visions in Dan 7–12. For

⁵ Goswell argues that “[t]he differentiation of Daniel 1 (due to the language difference) from the succeeding chapters suggests its character as an introduction (in Hebrew) to the book of Daniel (with a change to Aramaic at 2:4b), so that we should expect it to provide an initial exploration of relevant themes” (“The Divisions of the Book of Daniel,” in *The Impact of Unit Delimitation on Exegesis*, eds. R. De Hoop, M. C. A. Korpel, and S. E. Porter, Pericope 7 [Leiden: Brill, 2009], 107).

⁶ Regarding the role of royal sages in Israel, Whybray states that “Israelite kings ... did not usually make important decisions without consulting their ministers or courtiers, although they sometimes chose to ignore their advice. The ability to give sound advice to the king was clearly an important kind of wisdom, and one would expect to find royal advisers described as wise” (“The Sage in the Israelite Royal Court,” in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, eds. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 133–34).

example, in describing the precondition of the Jewish courtiers, the narrator states, “versed [משכילים] in every branch of wisdom” (1:4). The term *maskîlîm* also occurs in the second half of the book (“the wise,” 11:33, 35; 12:3), thus thematically connecting the two sections. Scholars often identify these *maskîlîm* as reflecting the identification of the assumed authors responsible for the compilation and composition of the book of Daniel.⁷

These characteristics of the Jewish young men—wisdom and knowledge—play an important role in the following events. The narrative in Dan 1, however, implies that there are two kinds of wisdom. While the Jewish courtiers were selected based on their wisdom, knowledge, and insight (1:4), the narrator states at the end of Dan 1 that “[t]o these four young men God gave knowledge and skill in every aspect of literature and wisdom; Daniel also had insight into all visions and dreams” (1:17). Thus, Wooden distinguishes the wisdom in 1:4 as “profane” and argues that as God gave them more insight, “it moves into the ‘sacred’ sphere.”⁸ This God-given wisdom and knowledge, especially the revelatory wisdom (“insight into all visions and dreams”) of Daniel, stand

⁷ Collins calls this group “the heroes of the Maccabean crisis” (*Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 137). Regarding the discussion on *maskîlîm*, see also P. R. Davies, “The Scribal Schools of Daniel” in vol. 1 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, eds. J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint, 2 vols., VTSup FIOTL 83,1 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 252; R. G. Wooden, “The Book of Daniel and Manticism: A Critical Assessment of the View that the Book of Daniel Derives from a Mantic Tradition” (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 2000), 292; Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 66–67, 385–86; R. Albertz, “The Social Setting of the Aramaic and Hebrew Book of Daniel” in vol. 1 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, eds. J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint, 2 vols., VTSup FIOTL 83,1 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 193; P. L. Redditt, “Daniel 11 and the Sociohistorical Setting of the Book of Daniel,” *CBQ* 60 (1998), 463–74.

⁸ Wooden, “The Book of Daniel,” 298. Conversely, Goldingay argues that “[i]n combination the four terms [in 1:4] convey an impression of young men well-versed in the practical learning embodied in a book such as Proverbs,” and insists that “it is embodied above all in the royal figure of Solomon” (*Daniel*, 16).

in contrast to those of the Babylonian wise men.⁹ This God-given wisdom and insight play an essential role in the following narratives. That is, the following narratives compare the wisdom and knowledge of the Jewish sages to those of the Babylonian wise men. The competing relationship between these two groups based on their wisdom and knowledge is one of the fundamental motifs that drive the narratives. According to Altman, this use of the binary opposition relates to a typical “dual-focus” narrative in which the conflict between two groups provides the plot.¹⁰

Another characteristic of the Jewish courtiers is their faithfulness to YHWH’s law. This faithfulness recurs as the main theme in Dan 3 and 6. As an introduction to the narratives and the book, Dan 1 presents both characteristics of the Jewish courtiers and shows how their faithfulness to Torah relates to their wisdom and knowledge. The narrator elaborates that God gives these young men “knowledge and skill in every aspect of literature and wisdom” and especially to Daniel “insight into all visions and dreams” (1:17), which establishes Daniel as a dream interpreter in the following narratives.

As a result, King Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges that the wisdom, skill, knowledge, and insights of the Jewish courtiers are “ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom” (1:20). To summarize, the story in Dan

⁹ Daniel’s depiction of wisdom as an insight into all visions and dreams leads von Rad to argue that “are not the matters with which apocalyptic literature is occupied expressly those of wisdom and its science?” He continues to propose, “Daniel is educated as a wise man (Dan. I. 3ff.), and in consequence he is enrolled among the wise men (Dan. II. 48); charismatic wisdom gives him his ability to interpret dreams (Dan. II. 30, V. 11), and his Book, which contains an ‘almost overwhelming admixture of eruditions,’ actually ends with an apotheosis of the Wisdom teachers (Dan. XII. 3)” (*The Theology of Israel’s Prophetic Traditions*, vol. 2 of *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1965], 306).

¹⁰ Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 55.

1 presents narrative motifs such as the binary opposition between the faithful Jewish courtiers, and the magicians and enchanters of Babylon; the faithfulness and wisdom of the Jewish courtiers; and the impact of the Jewish courtiers on the foreign king. The narrative depicts that the faithful Jewish courtiers receive wisdom and insight from YHWH as rewards for their faithfulness, and the foreign king comes to acknowledge that the Jews' wisdom and knowledge are superior to those of the Chaldeans.¹¹

Although the readers find out how the Jewish courtiers come to have superior wisdom, knowledge, and insight, including Daniel's insight into all visions and dreams, King Nebuchadnezzar does not yet know that these abilities are God's reward. This fact plays an important role in the character development of foreign kings and constructing an overarching plot. That is, Dan 1 presents an initial stage of Nebuchadnezzar's recognition of YHWH's superior wisdom and power which will develop in the following stories.

The second group of characters consists of the foreign king and the foreign courtiers or sages. Whereas extant literature does not provide any clue about the relationship between Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah and any historical figures, the narrative employs the names of the historical foreign kings for its characters. For example, the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 1–4 was the cruelest enemy of Judah and its surrounding neighbors. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and its temple in 587 BCE

¹¹ This God-given wisdom and knowledge of the Jewish sages (*maškîlîm*) has a parallel in what Newsom notes about Maškîl's characteristics in 1QS: "The knowledge and strength that come to the Maškîl through his contemplation of God is what allows him to undertake the moral commitments he enumerates in 10:16–11:2. This tensive relationship of the Maškîl's own incapacity and divine super-capacity becomes the dominating theme in the first **כִּיָּא אֲנִי** passage. There, everything that constitutes the Maškîl—his perfection of way, insight into mysteries, strength and sureness, status as part of God's eternal possession—is seen as coming from the hand of God (11:2–9)" (*Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran*, STDJ 52 [Leiden: Brill, 2004], 172).

and deported a portion of the population to Babylon (2 Kgs 24–25; Jer 39–40). While Jewish readers could not help but connect the narrative character Nebuchadnezzar to the historical Nebuchadnezzar, the Nebuchadnezzar of the narratives serves as a fictional character, lacking a direct connection to the historical figure.¹² This observation thus leads to the question of the authorial intent behind this literary use of the infamous symbolic name of Nebuchadnezzar in these four chapters of the Daniel narratives. The reason for using this infamous king in these narratives becomes clear only after assessing these four chapters using Altman’s theory of narrative reading.¹³ This study argues that the reason for using Nebuchadnezzar’s name in the narratives is to demonstrate the transformative power of YHWH’s wisdom and the possible conversion of foreign kings in a fictional but powerful way.¹⁴

Aside from the king, this second group of characters includes the foreign courtiers, such as the Babylonian wise men and officials. Among them, the palace master Ashpenaz is depicted as friendly and even cooperative. The narrative explains this attitude of Ashpenaz that “God allowed Daniel to receive favor and compassion from the palace

¹² Newsom also notes the nature of Dan 1’s depiction of Nebuchadnezzar that “he is represented as a knowledgeable and even detail-oriented king who knows the qualifications he wants for the personnel who will serve in his court, as well as the training and support necessary to produce them.... not only characterizes him as an intelligent and discerning monarch but also as someone who likes to be in control of the process from beginning to end” (*Daniel*, 42, 51).

¹³ Interestingly, the name Nebuchadnezzar has a connection to wisdom. Harper introduces an inscription in which Nebuchadnezzar introduces himself: “Nabû-kudurri-usur, king of Babylon ... the beloved of Nabû, the judge, the possessor of wisdom, who searches out the way(s) of their divinity, who hears their lordship” (“Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon [604–561 B.C.],” *The Biblical World* 14 [1899], 3). “Nabû was the patron deity of scribes, literacy, and wisdom” (S. Bertman, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* [New York: Fact on File, 2003], 122).

¹⁴ See “Why Nebuchadnezzar?” on pp. 146–49.

master” (v.9).¹⁵ As a result, the foreign official shows no antagonism against the Jews in Dan 1, but rather even shows some favoritism.

Daniel 1 constructs a binary between the faithful Jewish protagonists and all other “young men who eat the royal rations” (v.13). Although Dan 1 does not present a major “conflict” or “contest” according to Humphreys’ terms, King Nebuchadnezzar’s recognition of the superiority of the Jewish young men over other young men introduces the kind of “contest” that develops in the following stories.¹⁶ This binary opposition drives the plot development in these narratives. In Dan 1, the narrative constructs a contest based on this binary opposition between the faithful Jews who don’t eat royal rations and the others.

Background

Daniel 1 also introduces the political and religious background of the narratives. The narrator explains the situation in which the Jews are exiled to Babylon and forced to serve Nebuchadnezzar.¹⁷ Although these depictions of the foreign court do not likely provide historical insight into diaspora Jewish life and the relationship between exiled

¹⁵ The narrator presents the hand of God operating behind the scenes in Dan 1.

¹⁶ Humphreys does not include Dan 1 in his divisions between the “tales of court conflict” (Dan 3, 6) and “tales of court contest” (Dan 2, 4, 5; “A Life-Style for Diaspora,” 219–220).

¹⁷ Even though the background of these narrative scenes (1:1–2) relates to the historical event in 587 BCE, the characters and the events in the narratives are not necessarily related to historical figures, especially to the foreign kings of the same names: Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 1–4), Belshazzar (Dan 5), and Darius (Dan 6). In addition, as Newsom points out, the timeline of the events is also fictitious: “[s]ince Jehoiakim’s accession to the throne is usually dated to 609 BCE, and Nebuchadnezzar did not become king until 605, the synchronism of v. 1 is impossible (cf. Jer 25:1). Moreover, no evidence exists for a Babylonian siege of Jerusalem before 597, as both 2 Kgs 25 and the Babylonian Chronicle independently attest” (*Daniel*, 39). See also Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 130–131; N. Porteous, *Daniel: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), 25–26; J. Goldingay, *Daniel*, WBC 30 (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989), 14–15.

Jews and foreign powers during the exile, the narrative hints at the political and religious issues among postexilic Jews dealing with foreign subservience. The issue of human sovereignty—kings—is one of the political and religious issues following the exile.¹⁸

The Judeans lost their land, nation, temple, and kings during the Babylonian exile. The Daniel narratives relate to, among others, the issue of human sovereignty and more specifically the relationship between foreign kings and the Jews or YHWH. In the narratives the Jews are supposed to serve foreign kings in the absence of the Israelite monarchy, and there is no sign of animosity of the Jews against this foreign sovereignty. Even though some scholars argue for the satirical nature of the narratives mocking the foreign rulers, this chapter and chapter four demonstrate that the narratives present a positive portrayal of the foreign kings. Moreover, the narratives hint at an implicit approval of YHWH for the Jews to serve foreign kings, which Jeremiah's prophecy (25:9–12; 29:5–7) presents more explicitly.¹⁹ Then, what is the narratives' main concern regarding the relationship between foreign kings and the Jews: compromise, resistance,

¹⁸ For a discussion about the issue of the foreign rulers, see C. Newsom, "God's Other: The Intractable Problem of the Gentile King in Judean and Early Jewish Literature," in *The "Other" in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in Honor of John J. Collins*, eds. D. C. Harlow, K. M. Hogan, M. Goff, and J. S. Kaminsky (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 31–48.

¹⁹ "I am going to send for all the tribes of the north ... even for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants.... and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon for seventy years" (Jer 25:9–11); "Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare" (Jer 29:5–7). Regarding the dependence on Jeremiah in Dan 9, see L. L. Grabbe, "'The End of the Desolation': From Jeremiah's 70 Years to Daniel's 70 Weeks of Years," in *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis: Studies in Memory of William Hugh Brownlee*, eds. C. A. Evans and W. F. Stinespring, Homage Series (Atlanta: Scholars, 1987), 67–72; A. Lacocque, "Liturgical Prayer in Daniel 9," *HUCA* 47 (1976): 119–42; G. H. Wilson, "The Prayer of Daniel 9: Reflection on Jeremiah 29," *JSOT* 48 (1990): 91–99.

or *via media*? This study deals with the issue of foreign sovereignty in relation to other scholarly discussions on the Daniel narratives. This study argues that the narratives envision a newly defined relationship between YHWH and foreign sovereignty by legitimizing foreign rulers, and an inclusive concept of YHWH's people beyond the national or ethnic boundaries in the foreign imperial context.

Theme

Daniel 1 also introduces the theme of the narratives: the superior wisdom and sovereignty of YHWH. The author constructs the narratives around this theme, which relates to the above discussed two characteristics of the Jewish courtiers. At the beginning of Dan 1, Nebuchadnezzar's command to bring Jewish young men with wisdom, knowledge, and insight (1:4) provides the background for unfolding this theme. The narrator explains that Nebuchadnezzar plans to teach the Jewish courtiers the literature and language of the Chaldeans so that they might serve in the king's court.

The purpose of teaching Babylonian literature and language, however, is not just for preparing, orienting, or educating the young men to serve in the Babylonian court, but also serves as a form of colonizing and subduing these young Jews. The ancient Near Eastern literature and language are not only about knowledge or culture, but concern ideology, theology, and national identity. At the same time, the Babylonian's teaching the exiles their literature and language shows their assumption that their knowledge and wisdom are superior to those of others, including the Jews. Considering that the main part of the Babylonian curriculum includes omen literature and divination texts, Dan 1

introduces the contest between Babylonian wisdom and Jewish God-given wisdom.²⁰

This contest continues in the following stories.

Although this contest drives the individual stories, it provides the backdrop for identifying an overarching plot—another level of meaning. Across the various conflicts, the narratives illustrate the foreign kings’ development in their acknowledgment of and attitude toward the Jews and YHWH.²¹ Although this conflict has long been a topic for a scholarly discussion on Daniel, this study focuses on the level of meaning constructed when reading these narratives together in succession. Altman explains using the example of *The Song of Roland*:

Is *Roland* then fundamentally the same from beginning to end?... *Roland* is constantly evolving, constantly redefining its terms as adjustments are made in the identity of its polarities. Each section of the text presents a conflict between polar opposites, but from one section to another the specifics of the polarity may shift, isolating a new variable. By offering a slightly different comparison, each subsequent opposition provides further insight into the qualities and beliefs requisite for victory.²²

In this sense, the study follows the developments of the foreign kings and how these developments affect the nature of the polarities and create meaningful differences.²³

²⁰ Collins explains this education in relation to dream and sign interpretation: “[i]n ancient Babylon, divination and omen interpretation were the province of specialized priestly guilds, whose qualifications included purity of descent. Their expertise required extensive education in the vast Babylonian omen literature. Scribes learned their craft by copying first vocabularies, then standard works of the literature and tradition, including divination texts” (*Daniel: A Commentary*, 138–39). See also E. Reiner, “Fortune-telling in Mesopotamia,” *JNES* 19 (1960), 23; A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 206–27.

²¹ Newsom describes this development of the character Nebuchadnezzar that “the king is slowly and painfully educated about the source of his own sovereignty in relation to that of the Most High God” (*Daniel*, 10)

²² *Ibid.*, 49.

²³ Newsom maintains that “[w]hile one can certainly read these narratives in light of the challenges posed to the Jewish characters—and that has primarily been how the history of reception has

Daniel 1 illustrates that even though the Jews lost their land, nation, Temple, and kings—and thus now serve foreign rulers—their knowledge, wisdom, and insight are superior to those of their foreign masters.²⁴ Moreover, this fact testifies to the superiority of the Jewish God over the Babylonian deity. In this way, Dan 1 demonstrates the Jewish understanding that even their defeated did not reflect the inferiority of their God to a gentile deity. This theological reading of the narratives connects Dan 1–6 to the apocalyptic visions in Dan 7–12 which portray the final victory of this superior Jewish God and God’s sovereignty over the Babylonian empire and the entire world.

The preexilic literature also testifies to God’s sovereignty over the nations as well as Israel. In the exilic and postexilic periods, however, the issue of God’s sovereignty over the nations becomes the most prominent and urgent issue of the exiles. For example, the exilic and postexilic portions of Isaiah reflect the idea of God’s sovereignty over the nations as part of polemics against the foreign deities. These oracles testify to the emerging modes of presenting the monotheistic belief in YHWH relation to the nations.²⁵

read these stories—a good case can be made that the true focus is on the figure of the Gentile king. The drama of the stories can be grasped in terms of whether and how the Gentile king will recognize the true nature of eternal divine sovereignty and the actual source of his own, delegated sovereignty” (*Daniel*, 33).

²⁴ Daniel 1 also depicts that the Jews lost their names (1:7). “Having been stripped of Judean home, family, religion, language and culture, they are now suitable as Babylonian courtiers. Their new names seems to make the transition complete.... ‘Belteshazzar’ is an Akkadian hypocoristicon from a theophoric name-type meaning ‘(may Marduk) guard his life’ ([*Bēl*]-*batāṣu-ušur*).... ‘Abednego’ is apparently an intentional distortion of ‘*Abed-Nabû*, ‘servant of Nabu’ (B. T. Arnold, “Word Play and Characterization in Daniel 1,” in *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature*, ed. S. B. Noegel [Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2000], 242, 246); see also M. C. A. Korpel, “Disillusion among Jews in the Postexilic Period,” in *Old Testament in Its World*, eds. R. P. Gordon and J. C. de Moor, *OtSt* 52 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 144–46; M. D. Coogan, *West Semitic Personal Names in the Murašû Documents*, HSM 7 (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1976), 124–25. Alternately, Shea and Stefanovic argue that the name Belteshazzar is an intentional corruption as a negation of Babylonian Bel Marduk. See W. H. Shea, “Bel(te)shazzar Meets Belshazzar,” *AUSS* 26 (1988): 72–81; Z. Stefanovic, “Significant Reversals in Daniel,” *AUSS* 30 (1992): 139–150.

²⁵ Isaiah 40:19–20; 43:10–13; 44:9–20; 45:5–7, 14, 21–22; 46:1–7.

Likewise, Dan 1 presents explicit remarks about YHWH's sovereignty over the nations and world history, saying that it is YHWH who "let King Jehoiakim of Judah fall into his [Nebuchadnezzar's] power" (1:2), and that it is YHWH who let the vessels of the house of God be brought to Babylon (1:2).

In the book of Daniel, however, this perspective on YHWH's power and sovereignty is not introduced just as a theological justification of the exilic and postexilic conditions.²⁶ Instead, the Daniel narratives illustrate the process through which the foreign kings come to acknowledge and admit this perspective about YHWH's superior sovereignty and control over human history. These kings experience a functional conversion to YHWH religion in the narrative imagination. This theme also brings about a subsequent question concerning human (foreign) sovereignty and its relation to YHWH.

In sum, Dan 1 introduces the theme of the Jews' faithfulness to YHWH's law and their superior wisdom received as a reward from YHWH.²⁷ The narrative goal not only concerns the superiority of the wisdom and knowledge of the Jews but also the superior power and sovereignty of YHWH over other gods and the nations.²⁸ The distinctive factor

²⁶ For example, Chia interprets that "[b]y appealing to the divine power, the colonized is able to transcend, for the moment, the mere historical fact of being defeated and colonized, elevating oneself as superior to the imperial colonizer" ("On Naming the Subject: Postcolonial Reading of Daniel 1," in *Postcolonial Biblical Reader*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah [Oxford: Blackwell, 2006], 174).

²⁷ In this sense, the concern for the observance of Torah and the role of wisdom in the exilic and postexilic period go together in the narratives. Wright argues that "the increasing authority of the Torah and the growing importance of Torah-piety in post-exilic and then in Second Temple Judaism worked to make the Torah an indispensable source of wisdom for a sage like Ben Sira.... [Sanders] agrees with Joseph Blenkinsopp and Gerhard von Rad that Ben Sira submerges the category of law to that of wisdom" (B. G. Wright III, "Torah and Sapiential Pedagogy in the Book of Ben Sira," in *Wisdom and Torah: The Reception of 'Torah' in the Wisdom Literature of the Second Temple Period*, eds. B. U. Schipper and D. A. Teeter [Leiden: Brill, 2013], 166).

²⁸ Seow also maintains, "[d]ivine sovereignty, as expressed in this threefold giving, is the theological thread that holds the literary unit together, suggesting that the God of judgment who permits the

of the Daniel narrative, which is not overt in Dan 1, is that it envisions foreign kings' acknowledgment of—and submission to—YHWH's power and sovereignty.

Dual-Focus Narrative

As mentioned above, Dan 1 introduces two groups of characters: the faithful young Jewish courtiers on the one hand, and “all the young men who had been eating the royal rations” on the other hand. The narrative develops its plot throughout the chapters based on this binary opposition between the two groups. In this sense, the narrative in Dan 1 shows a typical dual-focus narrative. Altman explains that in a dual-focus narrative, the narrator alternates between two sides of characters whose conflict constructs the plot.²⁹ He explains that the succeeding following-units depict the two groups engaged in similar events and “[t]his parallelism ... is the source of the text's main rhetorical thrust.”³⁰ The characteristics of dual-focus narratives by Altman are:

[1] The narrator follows no single character throughout but instead alternates regularly between two groups whose conflict provides the plot. [2] Because the group rather than an individual plays the lead role, individuals serve primarily as placeholders, defined by the group, rather than as characters whose development constitutes an independent subject of interest. [3] Succeeding following-units typically portray the two sides engaged in similar activities. [4] This parallelism induces comparison of the two sides and is the source of the text's main rhetorical

exile is, paradoxically, also the God of ‘grace and mercies’ who enables the survival of faith and even grants the possibility of success for the faithful. The introductory story is, therefore, not so much about the courage of the youngsters (although that is surely included) as it is about the sovereignty of God and how that sovereignty is made manifest through God-given knowledge and insight” (“The Rule of God in the Book of Daniel,” in *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts*, eds. B. F. Batto and K. L. Roberts [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004], 220).

²⁹ Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 55.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 55.

thrust.... [5] The text ends when the two sides are reduced to one, by death or expulsion, or through marriage or conversion.³¹

Applying these characteristics to Dan 1, the reader identifies the dual-focus nature of the Daniel narratives. The characters' group identities, rather than their individual characters, play the lead role, and the individuals—including Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar—are defined by the group. Lastly, the comparison—or contest and conflict—between the faithful Jewish wise men and other young courtiers provides the narratives' rhetorical thrust. According to the nature of the dual-focus narrative, individual characters can be replaced by Altman's concept of "interchangeability," while the binary opposition remains stable and governs the narratives' overall structure.³²

According to Altman, a dual-focus narrative continues if the contest between the two groups is not resolved. Since the comparison between the two groups of characters forms the narrative's main rhetorical thrust, a narrative like Daniel's story can continue if the binary opposition continues. Altman states, "[t]he text ends when the two sides are reduced to one, by death or expulsion, or through marriage or conversion."³³ This description of a dual-focus narrative can be used to explain the Daniel narratives which repeat similar activities of conflict and contest between two groups of the Jews and the

³¹ Ibid., 55. The bracketed numberings are added by the author of the present study.

³² Altman explains, "[t]his primacy of function over personality carries with it an assumption of interchangeability. Once characters are killed or depart, their slots are filled like the ranks of an army in battle. As each new pair of following-units gives way to the next, new characters take the stage, but their relationship remains stable.... Its replacement principle permits it to go on and on by simple variation in the size and identity of the group implied.... Individual units take part in a wider opposition and thus cannot be perceived as ends in themselves. By the same token, a group can be represented by any one of its individuals" (*A Theory of Narrative*, 48–49).

³³ Ibid., 55.

gentiles. In this sense, the story in Dan 1 demonstrates and initiates what Altman defines as a dual-focus narrative.

The Function of Daniel 1: Merely an Introduction?

Daniel 1 serves as an introduction to the narratives and the book. The story in Dan 1 introduces all of the characters, including Daniel and his three companions, the foreign king, and other foreign courtiers. This chapter further introduces the historical and geographical setting of the stories. Finally, this chapter inaugurates the theme of the narratives. This introductory function often leads redaction critics to argue that Dan 1 is a later addition supplied to introduce the collection of the stories in Dan 2–6.³⁴

More than simply introducing the collection, Dan 1 initiates the first episode of the court contest.³⁵ Even though King Nebuchadnezzar assigns the young men a daily portion of royal food and wine, Daniel and his companions refuse the foreign food so that they might not defile themselves with the royal rations. Despite the palace master's worry, "God allowed Daniel to receive favor and compassion from the palace master" (1:9) and gave them knowledge, skill, and wisdom in the end. As a result, the king finds them ten times better in every matter of wisdom and understanding than all the wise men in his whole kingdom (1:20). Daniel 1 thus presents the first complete episode of a typical dual-focus narrative. This chapter "completes" an episode in a sense that it has its own closed

³⁴ Seow maintains that "Daniel 1 was probably composed as an introduction to the Aramaic tales of chapters 2–6, if not to the entire book" ("The Rule of God," 220, fn. 6); See also J. J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 24–38; P. R. Davies, "Eschatology in the Book of Daniel," *JSOT* 17 (1980), 35.

³⁵ Neither of Humphreys' subdivisions, however, includes Dan 1: "tales of court conflict" (Daniel 3, 6) and "tales of court contest" (Daniel 2, 4, 5) ("A Life-Style for Diaspora," 219–220).

plot with a beginning, middle, and end. According to Todorov's five stages of a narrative, Dan 1 has "a state of equilibrium" (1:3–7), "a disruption of the equilibrium" (1:8–9), "a recognition of a disruption" (1:10–14), "an attempt to repair the disruption" (1:15–17), and "a reinstatement of the initial equilibrium" (1:18–21).³⁶

While serving as an introduction and a distinctive episode with a closed plot, Dan 1 functions as more than just an introduction to the Daniel narratives. If the narrative in Dan 1 already presents the superiority of Jewish wisdom and insight over the Chaldeans, what can the readers expect to find more in the following narratives? To find another level of meaning from a seemingly static and balanced opposition with the same concerns and similar characters, this study explores Dan 2 by following King Nebuchadnezzar. The main question in interpreting the following stories pertains to the purpose of juxtaposing the similar stories of court contest in the current order and what they mean together. Altman's theory of dual-focus narrative and following characters helps the reader answer these questions as this study interprets the rest of the Daniel narratives.

In sum, Dan 1 presents a binary opposition of two groups in the foreign court and shows that the contest and conflict between them constitute the plot of the story. As a result, Dan 1 introduces the themes concerning the superiority of Jewish wisdom and knowledge and YHWH's superior power and sovereignty. Daniel 1 shows a typical dual-focus narrative in which the comparison between the two groups drives the narratives' main rhetorical impetus.³⁷ This primary vehicle, however, is not where a narrative

³⁶ Tzvetan Todorov, "The 2 Principles of Narrative," *Diacritics* 1 (1971), 39.

³⁷ Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 55.

knowledge or meaning of Dan 1–6 is created. “In favor of a constructed, abstract level” of the narrative meaning of the whole narrative, this study follows foreign kings beyond the primary literary vehicle in each chapter.³⁸ This study focuses on the developments in the depiction of Nebuchadnezzar found in Dan 2 and how these developments affect the nature of the binary opposition in the dual-focus narrative. This reading reveals the process in which the foreign kings come to acknowledge YHWH’s power and sovereignty by the transformative power of YHWH’s revelation and wisdom.

Daniel Two

Reading the Story (Dual-Focus Narrative)

The incipit in Dan 2:1 states that “[i]n the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign,” the king has his mysterious and terrifying dream. Only Dan 1 and 2 include incipits presenting the regnal years. The visions in Dan 7–12, however, begin with the incipits presenting the regnal year for each episode, except for Dan 12 which continues the vision of Dan 11. As a result, these incipits only occur in the Hebrew portions of the book.³⁹

Daniel 2 continues the contest between Babylonian wisdom and Jewish wisdom, which Dan 1 introduces. Daniel 2, however, presents the issue with additional plot developments. The king summons every wise man in Babylon—the “magicians” (חרטמים), “enchanters” (אשפים), “sorcerers” (מכשפים), and the “Chaldeans” (כשדים, 2:2)—to ask the content and the interpretation of his dream, but no one can give the king

³⁸ Ibid., 13.

³⁹ I am thankful for Nick Werse for pointing out this observation.

the dream and its interpretation. While only the “magicians” (חרטמים) and “enchanters” (אשפים, 1:20) are mentioned in Dan 1 as the sages in Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom, Dan 2 adds the “sorcerers” (מכשפים) and the “Chaldeans” (כשדים) to the list of wise men.⁴⁰

The use of the comprehensive list of wise men suggests that no wise man of any kind in the kingdom could reveal and interpret the royal dream. While the one side of the binary opposition extends the list, the other side focuses on the individual Daniel with the minimal help of his companions. This flexibility of the members in a group is characteristic of dual-focus narrative based on the concept of “primacy of function over personality.”⁴¹ Despite the variables in the polar opposites, the stories maintain their binary opposition as a rhetorical thrust. In relation to a narrative function, this extended list of foreign sages rather emphasizes their inabilities while highlighting the ability of the individual Daniel, and YHWH who enables Daniel.

Nebuchadnezzar’s Request

The narrative depicts the king’s order to tell both the dream and its interpretation as an unusual request. Readers would expect the more typical process in which the dreamer first reveals the dream before asking for its interpretation as found in the stories in Dan 4 and Gen 41.⁴² In addition to his impossible request, Nebuchadnezzar decrees

⁴⁰ According to Collins, the Hebrew Bible’s uses of מכשפים (sorcerers) refer to the magicians and sages of Egypt (Exod 7:11) and Babylon (Isa 47:6, 12). He notes that their religious and superstitious practices were forbidden in Israel (Exod 22:17; Deut 18:10; Mal 3:5). In addition, כשדים here does not refer to a national or ethnic entity, but rather “a class of wise men, grouped with dream interpreters and soothsayers” (*Daniel: A Commentary*, 137, 156).

⁴¹ Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 48.

⁴² “Whereas Pharaoh tells the magicians and wise men his dream and seeks an interpretation, Nebuchadnezzar demands to be told not only the interpretation of his dream but the content of the dream as

that “[t]his is a public decree: if you do not tell me both the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins” (2:5).⁴³ Although these commands of the king are overstatements, the narrative’s purpose of the impossible request and the severe punishment serve more than just to depict king’s absurdity, cruelty, or capriciousness as some scholars argue.⁴⁴

The purpose of the seemingly impossible request of the king and the long conversation between Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans leads to the presupposition that “[t]here is no one on earth who can reveal what the king demands!... The thing that the king is asking is too difficult, and no one can reveal it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with mortals” (2:10–11). The Chaldeans’ definite and declarative remark about the impossibility of the king’s mission does not only testify to the difficulty of Nebuchadnezzar’s request but also sets the stage to reveal YHWH’s power and wisdom.⁴⁵

well (2:2). This demand ... marks the sharpest departure from the plot of Genesis 41” (M. S. Rindge, “Jewish Identity under Foreign Rule: Daniel 2 as a Reconfiguration of Genesis 41,” *JBL* 129 [2010], 91).

⁴³ Collins maintains that the severe punishments had a broad context of the ancient Near Eastern royal courts (*Daniel: A Commentary*, 157). See also S. M. Paul, *Studies in the Book of the Covenant in the Light of Cuneiform and Biblical Law* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 75–77.

⁴⁴ Chan, “Ira Regis,” 12–13; D. M. Valeta, *Lions and Ovens and Visions: A Satirical Reading of Daniel 1–6*, HBM 12 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008), 74. Daniel 2:8–9 reveals, however, that Nebuchadnezzar did not trust the Babylonian sages’ interpretation: “I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see I have firmly decreed.... You have agreed to speak lying and misleading words to me until things take a turn. Therefore, tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation” (2:8–9). Newsom also notes, “the king recognizes that he cannot judge whether the interpretation the experts render is truthful. His anxiety reflects the ambivalence of royal power in general, which is ostensibly all powerful but in fact often at the mercy of others” (*Daniel*, 68). While the king’s accusation against the Chaldeans that they “agree to speak lying and misleading words to me until things take a turn” demonstrates a trait of a false prophet in the Hebrew Bible, on the contrary, Daniel is depicted as a true prophet who rightly delivers God’s word or revelation.

⁴⁵ Collins compares Dan 2 to the oracles of Deutero-Isaiah and argues, “[t]he astrologers and Chaldean wise men are powerless. Specifically, they are unable to foretell the future, although that is their profession. The reason is that their idols have no power or wisdom. Yahweh is able to reveal the future because he controls it” (“Court-Tales in Daniel and the Development of Apocalyptic,” *JBL* 94 [1975], 223);

Daniel also repeats the Chaldean's remark later and emphasizes that "[n]o wise men can show to the king the mystery that the king is asking" (2:27).

In other words, the king's absurd request and the long argument is a narrative strategy to highlight Daniel's incomparable wisdom and YHWH's superior power. At the end of the long dispute, the Chaldeans repeat twice the same statement that no one can reveal what the king demands (2:10, 11). When Daniel can reveal and interpret the king's dream, however, the impossibility of king's mission serves to emphasize Daniel's ability. Additionally, in the repeated second statement (2:11), the Chaldeans add that only the gods "whose dwelling is not with mortals" can reveal it. This statement foreshadows that YHWH enables Daniel to reveal the dream and its interpretation.

As a result, the king's absurd request and the Chaldean's remark about its impossibility make Daniel's (and thus YHWH's) revelation of the dream and its interpretation even greater. This process in Dan 2 leads to the foreign king's acknowledgment of the greatness of YHWH who reveals to Daniel the dream and its interpretation. The reading strategy of "following" Nebuchadnezzar in the midst of the dispute and the crisis of massacre leads the reader to a meaningful perception concerning the development of the king.⁴⁶ The impact of this revelation on Nebuchadnezzar leads to

"I am the Lord ... who frustrates the omens of liars, and makes fools of diviners; who turns back the wise, and makes their knowledge foolish" (Isa 44:24–25). Fröhlich also notes the relation between Daniel and Deutero-Isaiah centered on the foreign king Cyrus ("Daniel 2 and Deutero-Isaiah," in *The Book of Daniel: In the Light of New Findings*, ed. A. S. Van der Woude, BETL 106 [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993], 266–270); see also C. L. Seow, "From Mountain to Mountain: The Reign of God in Daniel 2," in *A God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller*, eds. B. A. Strawn and N. R. Bowen (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 359–40.

⁴⁶ Stefanovic notes the characteristic of development: "[t]he line of thematic-theological development given in the historical chapters of the book of Daniel... in a step-by-step progression continually vindicates Yahweh and proves that the universal ancient Near-Eastern pagan notion of a deity's being defeated when that deity's people were taken captive was totally untrue in the case of the God of the

a consequent change and, thus, the development of the foreign king. This change and development is only perceptible in relation to Dan 1's portrayal of the foreign king.

Daniel's Doxology

Daniel's doxology or thanksgiving prayer plays an important role in Dan 2. In his doxology, a response to YHWH's revelation, the narrative employs several phrases which praise YHWH's works: YHWH "changes times and seasons" (2:21), "deposes kings and sets up kings" (2:21), "gives wisdom" (2:21), "[gives] knowledge" (2:21), "reveals the deep and hidden things" (2:22), and "knows what is in the darkness" (2:22). Categorized by their contents, the first two phrases pertain to YHWH's power over history and human rulers, while the latter four phrases relate to the wisdom of YHWH. Daniel already referred to these two categories at the beginning of his prayer—"for wisdom and power are his" (2:20). These two categories parallel the themes of Dan 1.⁴⁷ Daniel 2 develops these themes in a way that highlights the lesson to foreign King Nebuchadnezzar.

Regarding the first category of YHWH's works—power—Daniel's praising that "he changes times and seasons ['epoch,' NAS]" refers to YHWH's ability "to move history from one epoch to another" as well as to move in a natural sense quantitatively and chronologically.⁴⁸ When Daniel mentions YHWH's more specific acts of deposing

Hebrews. Yahweh was repeatedly victorious and was even glorified by such pagan monarchs as Nebuchadnezzar and Darius the Mede. A corollary lesson emerges in the fact that Yahweh brings blessings not only to his people, but also to heathen kings who will treat his people rightly" ("Significant Reversals," 146).

⁴⁷ See "[w]ith God are wisdom and strength" (Job 12:13). Although NRSV translate it as "strength" in Job, both Dan 2:20 and Job 12:13 use the word נְבוֹרָה (Aramaic in Dan 2:20).

⁴⁸ Newsom, *Daniel*, 72

and establishing kings (2:21), they pertain to the former sense of moving history. In the preexilic literary context, YHWH is described as deposing and setting up the Israelite kings (e.g., 1 Sam 9:16; 15:26–28; 1 Kgs 9:6, etc.). In the exilic and postexilic periods in which there is no Israelite king, however, this statement implies that YHWH even deposes and sets up foreign rulers.⁴⁹ This statement relates to the sovereignty of God over the nations and foreign kings, which is one of the themes of Dan 1–6 and the main concern of the apocalyptic visions in Dan 7–12.⁵⁰

Nebuchadnezzar’s case in Dan 4 illustrates YHWH’s ability to establish and depose kings. The narrative describes that God deposes and reinstates Nebuchadnezzar to show that “the Most High is sovereign over the kingdom of mortals; he gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of human beings” (4:17 [MT 4:14]). In this manner, the king-making and deposing role of YHWH (2:21) becomes the primary issue in the following narratives and, moreover, the most powerful tool by which the foreign kings come to acknowledge YHWH’s sovereignty and power.⁵¹ In the following stories,

⁴⁹ Other canonical texts of those time periods also testify to YHWH’s sovereignty over foreign rulers. For example, “[i]t is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth, with the people and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever I please. Now I have given all these lands into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, my servant, and I have given him even the wild animals of the field to serve him” (Jer 27:5–6); “[t]hus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him” (Isa 45:1).

⁵⁰ Hartman also mentions that praising God as the one who changes the times and seasons and who deposes and sets up kings “strikes the keynote of the whole Book of Daniel that YHWH is truly the Lord and Master of human history” (*The Book of Daniel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 23 [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005], 145). While Hartman interprets these phrases as an original composition, Segal regards them as added with Dan 7. He argues, “[t]he power of Antiochus in the vision in chapter 7 is thus contrasted with the true sovereign in the world—God is the one who installs and removes kings, and he is the one who establishes the world order. Dan 2:21 thus serves as foreshadowing foil to 7:24–25” (“From Joseph to Daniel: The Literary Development of the Narrative in Daniel 2,” *VT* 59 [2009]: 148).

⁵¹ Despite its parallel to the Hebrew Bible hymns, Hartman argues that Daniel’s prayer is an original composition because it “not only fits the occasion but which also ... strikes the keynote of the

Daniel's doxology in Dan 2 is revised, renewed, and developed in the doxologies of the foreign kings. In addition to its narrative significance, Daniel's statement about YHWH as one who deposes and sets up kings bears a significant historical and theological implication for the readers under the foreign rule.

Daniel describes the second category of YHWH's works—wisdom—by stating that “he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with him” (2:21–22).⁵² Daniel's remark that God gives wisdom and knowledge, and reveals hidden things also relates to one of the main themes of the narratives: YHWH as the source of superior wisdom and knowledge.

These two themes—YHWH's sovereignty (power) over history and superior wisdom—relate to each other. That is, YHWH, as a sovereign over history, knows and controls everything in the past, present, and future. Thus, YHWH can reveal whatever he wants including what is hidden and unknown to all others. In the narratives, YHWH's revelation of future events to Nebuchadnezzar leads the foreign king to learn and praise YHWH's sovereignty and power over nations and history. Through this dynamic between

whole Book of Daniel, that Yahweh is truly the Lord and Master of human history” (*A Book of Daniel*, 145).

⁵² Both the biblical poetic wisdom tradition and the Qumran sectarian tradition frequently use the thematic binary of “darkness” and “light.” E.g., “He uncovers the deeps out of darkness, and brings deep darkness to light” (Job 12:22, interestingly the next verse relates to YHWH's sovereignty over the nations, “[h]e makes nations great, then destroys them; he enlarges nations, then leads them away” Job 12:33); “For with you is the fountain of light; in your light we see light” (Ps 36:9); see for Qumran references 1QS 3–4; 1QM (Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 160). Newsom explains, “[w]hile the darkness and light ... may simply be a merism, expressing totality, the difference in the relationship to God to darkness and to light suggests an incipient dualism, perhaps under the influence of Persian thought” (*Daniel*, 73).

wisdom and power, the narrative demonstrates its primary agenda—the transformative power of YHWH’s wisdom in the context of the imperial rule.⁵³

Nebuchadnezzar’s Short Doxology

King Nebuchadnezzar’s response to Daniel’s interpretation is noteworthy. First, he “fell on his face, worshipped Daniel, and commanded that a grain-offering and incense be offered to him.”⁵⁴ This description shows that Nebuchadnezzar regards Daniel as in some sense divine. As some argue, this can be “a ludicrous image that serves to belittle and make fun of the king” who is a “sniveling, submissive suppliant.”⁵⁵ This depiction of the foreign king, however, serves a more significant narrative function in two ways. First, this portrayal shows the impact that the dream-revelation and its interpretation have on Nebuchadnezzar. In line with the Chaldeans’ argument—“no one can reveal it to the king except the gods”—Nebuchadnezzar regards Daniel who could reveal the dream and

⁵³ Alternatively, Hartman regards vv.13–23 as a secondary addition based on the inconsistency with the rest of the story (*The Book of Daniel*, 139). He supports his literary-critical conclusions by citing the exclusive occurrence of Daniel’s companions, a doublet of the description of Arioch, and the enraged king’s giving time to Daniel. Moreover, the story in Dan 2 makes better sense and flow without the secondary material. In this case, the content of this secondary material reveals the editor’s concern to depict YHWH’s help in revealing the dream and its interpretation, as well as Daniel’s confession concerning YHWH’s power and wisdom.

⁵⁴ Chan describes this scene that “[a]fter Daniel makes known the dream and its interpretation, the king dramatically genuflects before Daniel (Dan 2.46), commands that offering be made to him (Dan 2.46), and praises Daniel’s god as the ‘god of gods and lord of kings’ (Dan 2.47). Physicality and exaggerated gesture are, of course, important elements in slapstick. The king’s genuflection and worship of Daniel is a remarkable comedic reversal” (“Ira Regis,” 12). Seow, however, presents an interpretation which shows how the change of focus can make a whole different story: “[t]he foreign ruler, who is called ‘the king of kings’ (2:26) is now fallen, his face upon the ground, prostrate before the lowly captive. The prediction of the collapse of the mighty statue (representing human kingship) by a mere stone is foreshadowed, even set in motion in this event.... Thus, just as Deutero-Isaiah predicted the prostration of foreign rulers before the lowly exiles (Isa 45:14; 49:7, 23; 60:14), Nebuchadnezzar is now prostrate before the Judean exile.... The reign of God is, in this way, already effected” (“The Rule of God,” 225).

⁵⁵ Valeta, *Lions and Ovens*, 77.

its interpretation as “not with mortals” (2:11). Thus, this depiction illustrates the extent to which the experience of the superior wisdom and knowledge affects Nebuchadnezzar. This submissive depiction of Nebuchadnezzar before YHWH’s revelation stands in contrast to the preexilic Israelite kings’ stubbornness in the biblical records.⁵⁶

Second, this ludicrous portrayal of Nebuchadnezzar sets up a pre-transformative stage of the foreign king in relation to the following stories. Although Nebuchadnezzar praises Daniel’s God in a rather short phrase, the worship and offering are dedicated to Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar’s short doxology, however, reflects both elements of Daniel’s doxology—the power and wisdom: “[t]ruly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery!” (2:47).⁵⁷ Nebuchadnezzar’s doxology in Dan 2 presents an incipient stage of the king’s recognition

⁵⁶ See 1 Kgs 17:1–4; 18:4, 12–14; 19:2–4, 19:10; 22:26–27; 2 Kgs 17:13–14; Jer 26:20–23; 29:19; 36:24–26; 37:2, 14–15; 38:4–6.

⁵⁷ Newsom notes that whereas the king’s dream is referred to as מַלְאָה (“the thing” or “the matter,” 2:10, 11, 15) at the beginning, now the king calls it רִזְיָה (“mystery,” 2:47, Daniel, 71). Thomas explains that the use of this word in Dan 2 and 4 references “either ... the content of a direct revelation or ... the interpretation of that revelation.” Thus, he argues that “all of these things are related to the work of Daniel the sage, to whom practical wisdom is given to understand visionary revelation. In other words, the episodes involves both the (passive) reception of a vision, and the (active) work of an interpreter endowed with divinely enhanced skill—and the content of each of these aspects is to be considered a ‘mystery’” (S. I. Thomas, *The “Mysteries” of Qumran: Mystery, Secrecy, and Esotericism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, SBLEJL 25 [Leiden: Brill, 2009], 118). For the use of this word at Qumran, Hartman explains, “there is an extensive development of this concept of the divine mysteries or secrets (designated by *sôd* or *rāz* in Hebrew, and by *mystērion* in Greek) concerning a large variety of things which God reveals to men, often in symbolic language. Thus, in the Qumran literature there are ‘mysteries’ of divine providence, cosmic ‘mysteries,’ and even ‘evil mysteries’” (*The Book of Daniel*, 139–140).

and acknowledgment of YHWH's wisdom and power.⁵⁸ The acknowledgment and praise of Nebuchadnezzar in his speeches and doxologies develop in the subsequent stories.⁵⁹

The well-recognized comparison with Gen 41 reveals the focus and agenda of the narrative in Dan 2. Rindge notes that whereas the Pharaoh in Gen 41 praises the greatness of Joseph's wisdom enabled by God's revelation, Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 2 praises YHWH who reveals the mystery to Daniel.⁶⁰ Regarding this difference, Collins maintains that "Daniel 2 is so structured that the emphasis falls on the wisdom of Daniel and his God, and the actual content of the dream-interpretation is relatively disregarded."⁶¹ He points out that Nebuchadnezzar "does not react to Daniel's interpretation; he is amazed at Daniel's wisdom, but he ignores the content of the prophecy."⁶²

⁵⁸ Newsom comments, "Nebuchadnezzar's response to Daniel's interpretation of the dream seems to suggest that he grasps the implications of the fact that Daniel's God is 'Lord of kings.' But the following stories will suggest that he has not yet fully understood" (*Daniel*, 34)

⁵⁹ Regarding the foreign king's direct speech, Ben Zvi examines those in 2 Chronicles and argues that "when the characters are presented as sharing the theological position and ideals of the omniscient and reliable narrator ... the presence of direct speech contributes to rereaders' positive identification with the characters and enhances the credibility of the text" ("When the Foreign Monarch Speaks," in *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture*, eds. G. M. Patrick and S. L. McKenzie, JSOTSup 263 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 224). Even though Daniel and 2 Chronicles are different kinds of narratives, Ben Zvi's remark is noteworthy in that Nebuchadnezzar shares the theological position and ideals of Daniel. Rindge also notes the distinctiveness of the doxology, saying that "Pharaoh does acknowledge that God is the one who revealed both the interpretation and the pragmatic proposal to Joseph.... Conversely Nebuchadnezzar confesses that Daniel's God is 'god of gods and lord of kings' (אלה אלהין ומרא מלכין; 2:47). Prefacing this declaration with מן-קשט ('truly') emphasizes the assurance with which Nebuchadnezzar makes this confession. The king's description of God as one who reveals mysteries (גלה רזין) comports with Daniel's own previous characterization of God (גלא רזיא/גלא רזין) (2:28, 29). Thus, Nebuchadnezzar's 'confession' espouses an appropriate theology given the broader literary context of Daniel. The king has been converted to Daniel's perception of God" ("Jewish Identity," 94). Conversely, Collins argues that "[i]t is not suggested, however, that Nebuchadnezzar forthwith abandoned his own gods. The story reflects a Jewish aspiration that the gentile rulers respect their religion, not that they accept it exclusively" (*Daniel: A Commentary*, 172).

⁶⁰ Rindge, "Jewish Identity," 94.

⁶¹ Collins, "The Court-Tales in Daniel," 220.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 220.

Daniel 2 focuses on more than the content of the dream-interpretation and its consequence. This chapter additionally focuses on Daniel's act of interpretation—or the ability to interpret. Nebuchadnezzar does not mention the content of the interpretation. He rather expresses amazement at the fact that Daniel could reveal both the dream and its interpretation. The king is notably not bothered by an ill omen of the dream in Dan 2. Why is Nebuchadnezzar not bothered by the interpretation that his own kingdom will be defeated and destroyed?⁶³ At the beginning, King Nebuchadnezzar “was troubled and his sleep left him” (2:1) when he did not know what it meant. Upon realizing that the dream was an ill omen for him and his kingdom, he shows no worry about his own fate, but rather praises Daniel and his God. The presence (e.g., Dan 2) and absence (cf. Gen 41) of a foreign king's doxology also testify to the different foci of the stories.⁶⁴ This difference reveals the focus and function of dream-revelation in Dan 2, which is discussed below.

The Goal of the Revelation

Although Dan 2 presents the contest between the Jewish and the Babylonian sages around the dream interpretation, the focus of the narrative is on YHWH's act of revelation and its impact on Nebuchadnezzar. With this revelation, the story in Dan 2 initiates the

⁶³ Collins points out an interesting fact that “[t]he inclusion of exorcists and sorcerers with the dream interpretation must be understood in the context of dream interpretation in the ancient Near East, which involves not only explanation of the symbols but also ‘the dispelling or removing of the evil consequences of such a dream by magic means’ The purpose is not only explanatory but therapeutic. The therapeutic function is not, however, emphasized in the case of Daniel” (*Daniel: A Commentary*, 156); see also A. L. Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East* (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2008), 219.

⁶⁴ Hartman argues about the message of Nebuchadnezzar's doxology that “[t]he book's implied readers under the fourth regime (or its actual readers later) are invited to join Nebuchadnezzar in acknowledging God's wisdom as revealer and his sovereignty as lord of history” (*The Book of Daniel*, 61).

primary task of Dan 1–6 to demonstrate the education of the foreign king. That is, the illustration of the foreign king’s development in his acknowledgment of and attitude toward the Jews and their God is the second level of the message beyond the court-contest and conflict stories. In Dan 2, the revelation divulges to the foreign king “what will happen at the end of days” (2:28) and, as a result, teaches that YHWH is the true source of human sovereignty and that he reigns over nations and history.⁶⁵

Even though some scholars argue for the close relationship between the visions in Dan 2 and 7, the vision in Dan 2 is different from that in Dan 7 in its narrative function.⁶⁶ Unlike the vision in Dan 7, the narrative function of the Dan 2 dream demonstrates the impact of YHWH’s revelation on the foreign king and its consequences. While the readers of Dan 7’s vision are the Jews, the audience in its narrative setting of Dan 2 is the foreign king Nebuchadnezzar (2:28–30).⁶⁷ In this sense, its narrative function is different from the purpose and message of the vision in Dan 7.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Regarding the significance of revealing future events, see Isaiah’s polemic against false gods: “Set forth your case, says the Lord;... Tell us what is to happen.... Declare to us the things to come. Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods” (Isa 41:21–23a).

⁶⁶ Collins argues that “[t]he influence of Daniel 1–6 is evident in chs. 7–12.... Most obviously, the schema of the four kingdoms found in ch. 2 is used again in ch. 7 with some adaptations.... In chs. 7–12 we find the schema of the four kingdoms more neatly applied” (“The Court-Tales in Daniel,” 230).

⁶⁷ Considering the nature of apocalyptic texts, the supposed audience of the apocalyptic visions consists of the people in tribulation—the Jewish oppressed—not the oppressors. The narrative function of the apocalyptic vision, however, is aimed at King Nebuchadnezzar rather than the Jewish characters. Since Nebuchadnezzar himself is the one who perishes in the vision, the apocalyptic vision cannot achieve its original function of giving hope. Instead it rather has a prophetic function for Nebuchadnezzar.

⁶⁸ Based on these verses (vv.28–30), Newsom proposes that “one should inquire as to how their content emphasizes a thematic aspect of the narrative. Daniel minimizes his own wisdom and casts himself as merely the facilitator of a communication from the divine ‘revealer of mysteries’ to King Nebuchadnezzar. Despite many readers’ tendency to focus on the character of Daniel, these verses suggest that the story is primarily about Nebuchadnezzar” (*Daniel*, 74).

Daniel's statements about YHWH's revelation also provide hints regarding the goal of the revelation. Daniel repeats that YHWH ("God in heaven") "has disclosed to King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen at the end of days" (2:28), "the revealer of mysteries disclosed to you what is to be" (2:29), "in order that the interpretation may be known to the king and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind" (2:30), and "[t]he great God has informed the king what shall be hereafter" (2:45). These remarks emphasize that the goal of God's revelation is to "reveal" (be known; disclose) to Nebuchadnezzar "what will happen" (what is to be; what shall be hereafter).⁶⁹ This revelation could serve either to teach foreign king the power of YHWH over history through revealing mysteries, or to inspire repentance through revealing a forthcoming unfortunate fate.⁷⁰ Considering that Nebuchadnezzar neither responds to the content of the interpretation nor is bothered by the ill omen for his kingdom, the revelation likely served the former goal. The previous long dialogue between Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans, which emphasizes the impossibility of the king's mission, also supports the first goal. This purpose of revealing YHWH's sovereignty and educating the foreign king continues to develop in the following stories.

⁶⁹ Revealing what will happen in the future belongs to God's domain. In Isaiah, YHWH contends with foreign (Babylonian) deities, declaring "[t]ell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods" (Isa 41:23).

⁷⁰ Both functions of the revelation have a didactic purpose. Regarding the nature of eschatological visions in Enoch 1–5, Coughenour argues, "[w]hile it is true that this parable has been taken as an eschatological vision of the end in which the fate of the righteous and wicked is predicted, the point of the whole is to teach the sovereignty of 'The Holy Great One,' to sketch the ways of life and of destruction. . . . The compelling purpose of Chapters 1–5 is didactic rather than eschatological" ("The Wisdom Stance of Enoch's Redactor," *JSJ* 13 (1982), 48.

Following Characters

Even though Dan 2 continues the binary opposition that Dan 1 introduces, between the faithful Jewish courtiers and the Babylonian sages, following Nebuchadnezzar reveals some differences and developments between Dan 1 and 2. These developments pertain to the change in the foreign king's attitude toward the Jews, his acknowledgment of YHWH's power and wisdom through the dream revelation, and his doxology that reflects Daniel's understanding of YHWH.⁷¹

Daniel 2 introduces a new figure among the foreign courtiers: Arioch, the king's chief executioner. Similarly to Ashpenaz in Dan 1, the chief executor Arioch (ch.2) is not an antagonistic character who frames the binary. Instead, as in Dan 1, the wise men of Babylon—the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans—are the contestants in the dual-focus narrative. The comparison of the two sides is still the source of the narrative's rhetorical thrust.⁷²

Whereas the foreign sages are unable to perform King Nebuchadnezzar's task, they play an important narrative role in Dan 2 to highlight the wisdom and power of Daniel and YHWH. In their dialogue with King Nebuchadnezzar, it seems unrealistic that the Chaldeans try to persuade or even blame King Nebuchadnezzar. They ultimately ask

⁷¹ Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 83.

⁷² Even though Babylonian sages are in comparison with the Jewish sages providing the binary opposition in the dual-focus narrative, the narrative presents no antagonism between them in this "court-contest" setting in Dan 2. Daniel's dream interpretation rather saves the lives of the Babylonian sages. Collins also notes that "Daniel 2 pointedly contrasts Daniel and his God with the Chaldean wise men (and implicitly their gods). Yet there is no real hostility towards the gentiles. On the contrary, Daniel is grouped with the Chaldean wise men and intervenes so that they will not be put to death.... The superior wisdom of Daniel and his God is readily employed in the service of the king and for the benefit of the other wise men" ("The Court-Tales in Daniel," 220–221).

the king to repeal his decree. Through this unrealistic dispute on the appropriateness of the king's request, however, the narrative emphasizes the impossibility of the king's request. This emphasis on the impossibility again serves to highlight the superior wisdom and power of YHWH.

The Tradition-Historical Approach (Genesis 41)

Another foreign court narrative of Joseph in Gen 41 shares numerous elements with the story in Dan 2 and deserves a comparative, tradition-historical study. From the examination of both narratives in chapter one, this study argues that despite the many similarities between the Joseph and Daniel narratives, there are distinctive differences.⁷³ In a tradition-historical sense, either the author of Dan 2 knew the tradition of Joseph's court narrative, or both narratives reflect a common tradition of dream interpretation or upward social mobility of young exiles. The application of the tradition-historical approach to identify differences between these narratives reveals that the presence of the foreign king's doxology in Dan 2 reflects a substantive difference from Gen 41.⁷⁴

In this regard, Matthew Rindge's comparative study provides a helpful insight. He focuses on the concluding parts of each narrative and emphasizes the difference between

⁷³ Rindge also emphasizes the importance of difference, "[t]he multiple parallels between Daniel 2 and Genesis 41 make the differences between the two narratives all the more significant" ("Jewish Identity," 90).

⁷⁴ Genesis 41:38–44 reads, "[c]an we find anyone else like this—one in whom is the spirit of God?" [רוח אלהים]; cf. Dan 4:5: "spirit of holy gods," [רוח אלהין קדושין].... So Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Since God has shown you all this, there is no one so discerning and wise [נבין וחכם] as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command; only with regard to the throne will I be greater than you.' And Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.' Removing his signet ring from his hand, Pharaoh put it on Joseph's hand.... He had him ride in the chariot of his second-in-command; and they cried out in front of him, 'Bow the knee!'" Even though Pharaoh ordered everyone to "bow the knee" before Joseph, there is no mention about Pharaoh's praising Joseph's God.

Pharaoh's and Nebuchadnezzar's acknowledgment of the superior ability. According to him, the main point of Pharaoh's acknowledgment is Joseph's wisdom, whereas the object of Nebuchadnezzar's praise in Dan 2 is YHWH, Daniel's God.⁷⁵ Rindge concludes that while God made Pharaoh recognize and praise Joseph's superior ability in Gen 41, it is Daniel who "elevates the status of God in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar."⁷⁶

Although Dan 2 has satirical elements to a certain extent, reading the story purely as a satire or comedy overlooks key narrative components that are necessary for a holistic interpretation. The tradition-historical reading of the narratives suggests that the foreign king's doxology is not just an irony or absurd piety, but has the more significant narrative function of presenting the impact of YHWH's revelation on the foreign kings.⁷⁷

Regarding foreign kings' reverence to YHWH, this study explores literary evidence in other postexilic literature in chapter six.⁷⁸

The Legitimacy of the Foreign (Human) Sovereign

In vv. 37 and 38, Daniel praises King Nebuchadnezzar:

You, O king, the king of kings—to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the might, and the glory, into whose hand he has given human beings, wherever they live, the wild animals of the field, and the birds of

⁷⁵ Rindge observes that the foreign kings' confessions in Dan 2, 4, and 6 are a significant motif in the narratives. He also notes that Bel and the Dragon concludes with a confession of the foreign king ("Jewish Identity," 94, n. 43).

⁷⁶ Ibid., 94.

⁷⁷ Conversely, Valeta questions, "[w]hat ideal ancient Near Eastern king would embrace the god of his conquered subjects as against his own?... It seems that kings and leopards perhaps do not change their spots so easily" (*Lions and Ovens*, 86–87). See also Chan, "Ira Regis," 12.

⁷⁸ For examples, see T. L. Donaldson, "Royal Sympathizers in Jewish Narrative," *JSP* 16 (2006): 41–59; S. J. D. Cohen, "Respect for Judaism by Gentiles according to Josephus," *HTR* 80 (1987): 409–430.

the air, and whom he has established as ruler over them all—you are the head of gold. (2:37–38)

Daniel emphasizes again that God is the sovereign who establishes King Nebuchadnezzar.

In addition to all of the kingdom, power, might, and glory, Daniel elaborates that God gave Nebuchadnezzar dominion over all creatures including human beings, the wild animals, and the birds (2:38). This portrayal is reminiscent of Jeremiah’s depiction of Nebuchadnezzar.

It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth, with the people and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever I please. Now I have given all these lands into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, my servant, and I have given him even the wild animals of the field to serve him. All the nations shall serve him and his son and his grandson, until the time of his own land comes. (Jer 27:5–7)⁷⁹

Even though the designation “king of kings” could be a common phrase to reference even foreign kings, it is noteworthy that Daniel acknowledges Nebuchadnezzar’s rule as YHWH-given one.⁸⁰ Does Daniel’s phrase (2:37–38) imply YHWH’s sanction for foreign kings’ ruling over the Jews? While the narrative alludes to Jeremiah’s recognition of Nebuchadnezzar as YHWH’s appointed servant, it also employs God’s commissioning the first human beings, Adam and Eve, in the creation narrative to rule over the creatures in the world (Gen 1:26, 28–29).

⁷⁹ Newsom also notes, “Dan 1–6 is indebted to Jeremiah for its characterization of Nebuchadnezzar and his divinely sanctioned role in the world events. It provides the impetus for Daniel’s novel representation of Nebuchadnezzar as a redeemed Gentile king” (*Daniel*, 41)

⁸⁰ Regarding the designation “king of kings” for foreign rulers: “Artaxerxes, king of kings, to the priest Ezra” (Ezra 7:12); “For thus says the Lord God: I will bring against Tyre from the south King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, king of kings, together with horses” (Ezek 26:7). The designation “king of kings” in Ezra 7:12 is Artaxerxes’ self-designation.

This statement of Daniel has two kinds of implications—the one about YHWH and the other about the king. On the one hand, this statement expresses the sovereignty of YHWH. Daniel explains that YHWH gives the king everything including “the kingdom, the power, the might, and the glory” and all creatures (2:37–38). This statement further develops Daniel’s previous declaration of YHWH’s sovereignty over the establishment and deposal of kings (2:21). At the same time, the allusion to the creation narrative implicitly presents YHWH as the creator of the universe—not only Israel—and thus the sovereign of the world. Presenting YHWH as the creator of the universe is one of the rhetorical devices of Isaiah, which argues for YHWH’s sovereignty over the nations and their rulers.⁸¹

On the other hand, in addition to its theological implication concerning YHWH, Daniel’s statement has another implication for the foreign rulers. Daniel declares that YHWH gave Nebuchadnezzar the entire kingdom, the power, the glory, human beings, wild animals of the field, and the birds of the air. In the end, Daniel confirms that YHWH has established Nebuchadnezzar “as ruler over them all” (2:38). This statement demonstrates and confirms that the foreign king Nebuchadnezzar is a YHWH-appointed ruler over the world. In the absence of the Jewish monarchy, Daniel’s statement—which reflects YHWH’s revelation—has significant implications for the legitimacy of foreign rule in the exilic and the postexilic periods.⁸²

⁸¹ Isaiah 42:5–7; 45:12, 18–91; 48:13. Baltzer argues that “[b]elief in Yahweh as creator and king of the world makes it possible to relativize earthly sovereignty. This corresponds to DtIsa’s position too, and puts him in line with prophetic tradition” (*Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55*, trans. M. Kohl, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001], 225).

⁸² Goldingay argues that “[t]he theme that is central to Daniel as it is to no other book in the OT is the kingdom of God. The book as a whole concerns how the rule of God becomes a reality of this world in contexts where Jews as such lack political power but where the Gentiles who do exercise political power are assumed to have a religious responsibility” (*Daniel*, WBC 30 [Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989], 330).

Daniel Three

The Portrayal of Nebuchadnezzar

Unlike the previous two stories, Dan 3 begins without an incipit about the regnal year.⁸³ Instead, Daniel 3 begins with the event of Nebuchadnezzar's making a golden statue.⁸⁴ Recalling the list of Babylonian sages in Dan 2, the narrative in Dan 3 lists the officials as "the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasures, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces" (3:2), and the names of musical instruments, "the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire music ensemble" (3:5).⁸⁵ Whereas some scholars argue that these lengthy lists "emphasize the

See also J. Boehmer, *Reich Gottes und Menschensohn im Buch Daniel* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899), 16–17; W. H. Joubert, "Power and Responsibility in the Book of Daniel" (PhD diss., University of South Africa, 1980), 211–12. Newsom further argues that the Daniel narratives not only depict Nebuchadnezzar's acknowledgment of YHWH's superior sovereignty but also demonstrate that YHWH entrusts "knowledge of the plan for the epochs of world history that Nebuchadnezzar has initiated" (*Daniel*, 75).

⁸³ The OG and Th versions of Daniel add the regnal year: "in his [Nebuchadnezzar's] eighteenth year." Goswell argues that the addition implies the close connection of Dan 3 with Dan 1 and 2 ("The Divisions of the Book of Daniel," in *The Impact of Unit Delimitation on Exegesis*, eds. R. De Hoop, M. C. A. Korpel, and S. E. Porter, Pericope 7 [Leiden: Brill, 2009], 94).

⁸⁴ Smith-Christopher mentions that historically the great emperors tried to erect their statues or images to honor and celebrate colonial authorities and their acts ("The Book of Daniel," *NIB* 7, ed. L. E. Keck [Nashville: Abingdon, 1996], 65–66). Sweeney specifically connects this story to the historical event of Antiochus IV: "[t]his narrative relates easily to the accounts of Antiochus' attempts to establish pagan cults in the Jerusalem Temple, where he erected an idol of Zeus Olympus or Baal Shamem for worship, forbade the practice of Judaism and decreed death for those who did not obey" ("The End of Eschatology in Daniel? Theological and Socio-Political Ramifications of the Changing Contexts of Interpretation," *BibInt* 9 [2001], 131). Alternatively, Beaulieu argues that this story relates to the historical memory of Nabonidus: "[o]riginally, the tale focused on the memory of Nabonidus's crafting of a new image of the moon-god Sin for the temple of Harran and his effort to impose it as state cult in the Babylonian empire of the sixth century. The tradition eventually substituted Nebuchadnezzar for Nabonidus and transformed the episode into an edifying theological tale of the arrogant attempt of a pagan king to impose the worship of a statue of his own design, a statue embodying imperial hubris" ("The Babylonian Background of the Motif of the Fiery Furnace in Daniel 3," *JBL* 128 (2009), 277).

⁸⁵ Regarding the extended list in Dan 3, Avalos claims that "the iteration of enumerations in Daniel 3 is comedic because it serves to expose the mechanistic and thoughtless behavior of the pagan worshippers, of the pagan government bureaucracy in particular, and because it elicits laughter in the

mindlessness of the entire Chaldean bureaucracy,” they rather represent typical ancient Near Eastern royal inscriptions that present “verbal and visual testimony to the power of the great king.”⁸⁶

Likewise, the lengthy lists of the sages, Babylonian officials, and the musical instruments in the narratives represent the power, sovereignty, and the pride of Nebuchadnezzar.⁸⁷ First Kings 4:22, for example, lists Solomon’s provision for one day as “thirty cors of choice flour, and sixty cors of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty pasture-fed cattle, one hundred sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted fowl,” which demonstrates King Solomon’s power and the scale of his kingdom. First Chronicles uses a similar strategy to describe the procession of the Ark of the Covenant, “[s]o all Israel

process.... The lengthy list emphasizes the mindlessness of the entire Chaldean bureaucracy.” He continues, “Daniel 3 demonstrates the complex and artistic manner in which lengthy and repeated enumerations could be integrated in a socioreligious critique of pagan social institutions such as the Babylonian government bureaucracy” (“The Comedic Function of the Enumerations of Officials and Instruments in Daniel 3,” *CBQ* 53 [1991], 582, 585, 587). Alternatively, Newsom interprets the list as “a staple of ancient Near Eastern royal inscriptions”: “[v]erse 2 introduces one of the signature stylistic features of Dan 3, the lengthy and often repeated lists of functionaries and musical instruments. Elaborate lists of various sorts—of royal titlature, officials, conquered nations, items of booty, materials used in the construction of palaces, and so forth—were a staple of ancient Near Eastern royal inscriptions and iconography and gave verbal and visual testimony to the power of the great king” (*Daniel*, 104). For the study of the “list *Gattung*” in Daniel, see P. W. Coxon, “The ‘List’ Genre and Narrative Style in the Court Tales of Daniel,” *JSOT* 35 (1986), 95–121.

⁸⁶ For the former interpretations, see Avalos, “The Comedic Function,” 585; Valeta, *Lions and Ovens*, 80. Regarding the latter interpretations, see P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*, trans. P. T. Daniels (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 172–73; Newsom, *Daniel*, 104. Collins notes that the list of officials’ names at Nebuchadnezzar’s court is written in the Nebuchadnezzar II prism (*Daniel: A Commentary*, 182).

⁸⁷ Regarding these lengthy lists, Montgomery maintains, “[o]ver against the satirically exaggerated details of the heathen ceremonial and the king’s arrogant defiance to their God, the simple and unflinching faith of the Confessors stands in sharp-drawn contrast and at last evokes the homage of the witnesses” (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ICC 22 [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1927], 193). Similarly, Chan interprets these lists that “[t]he long lists of attendees (Dan 3.2–3, 27), catalogs of musical instruments (Dan 3.5–7, 10, 15), and slavishly obedient royal subjects (Dan 3.4, 7, 29, 31) create a sense of the ideal rhythms of the empire.... through repetition of sounds, words, and content, Daniel 3 satirically reimagines the steady rhythm of imperial bureaucracy” (“Ira Regis,” 14–15); see also Valeta, *Lions and Ovens*, 79–81; Avalos, “The comedic function,” 580–88; E. M. Good, “Apocalyptic as Comedy: The Book of Daniel,” *Semeia* 32 (1984), 41–70.

brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting, to the sound of the horn, trumpets, and cymbals, and made loud music on harps and lyres” (1 Chr 15:28). Another example is Ps 150, which supplies a lengthy list of musical instruments, “[p]raise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!” (Ps 150:3–5). In this manner, the use of these lengthy lists represents the pride and sovereignty of the ruler.

Another characteristic of the portrayal of Nebuchadnezzar that Dan 2 and 3 share is his despotic nature and absolute authority. Daniel 2 depicts King Nebuchadnezzar as non-negotiable when he argues with the Babylonian sages. He is not persuaded by the Chaldeans’ reasonable plea, but asserts that “[t]his is a public decree: If you do not tell me both the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins” (2:5). Moreover, he rages at the Chaldeans for their complaint and commands that “all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed” (2:12). Similarly, in Dan 3, Nebuchadnezzar lets all the officials of Babylon come to the dedication of the golden statue and fall down and worship it coercively. Moreover, he declares that “[w]hoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire” (3:6). This is the same kind of maximum penalty as that in Dan 2: “you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins” (2:5). These penalties demonstrate the despotic and cruel nature of the foreign rulers.

In addition, his rage at the three Jewish young men’s non-compliance that makes him order for “the furnace to be heated up seven times more than was customary” (3:19) is another case that shows the king’s despotic nature. In Dan 3, this tyrannical King

Nebuchadnezzar serves as the foreign side of the dual-focus narrative. Nebuchadnezzar's abrupt and despotic order to worship the statue becomes a great threat to the Jews' faithfulness to YHWH, thus causing a tension between the binary groups. Chan notes the difference of foci between Dan 2 and 3 in that "Daniel 3 is a court conflict which, unlike Dan 2, focuses not so much on the wisdom of the protagonists as on their trust in God and on God's faithful deliverance."⁸⁸ The reading strategy of "following," however, allows the reader to identify narrative developments beyond the foci of wisdom, "trust and deliverance," as well as contest. The main focus of the events in Dan 2 and 3 is, instead, the impact of those events on foreign kings and their acknowledgment or acceptance of YHWH. In this way, the reading strategy of "following" and "framing" provides a key to the unity of the separate stories in Dan 1–6.

Following and Framing

Nebuchadnezzar's decree in Dan 3 has some verbal reminiscence of his response to Daniel's dream interpretation in Dan 2. The herald proclaims, "[w]hoever does not fall down [נפל] and worship [סגד] shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire" (3:6).⁸⁹ The immediacy of the decree presents the king's pride and authority by showing the absoluteness of the order. The description in decree, however, reminds readers of Nebuchadnezzar's submission to Daniel at the end of the previous chapter: "[t]hen King

⁸⁸ Chan, "Ira Regis," 13.

⁸⁹ Sweeney interprets that "Daniel 3 relates directly to the Maccabean period in that it presents Nebuchadnezzar's decree that all in his empire would have to worship a golden statue that he had built or suffer death by burning in a fiery furnace" ("The End of Eschatology," 130).

Nebuchadnezzar fell [נפל] on his face, worshipped [סגד] Daniel, and commanded that a grain-offering and incense be offered to him” (2:46).

This verbal connectedness of נפל and סגד between Dan 2 and 3 invites readers to perceive a “sequence of non-randomly connected events.”⁹⁰ In addition to this verbal parallel, Dan 2 and 3 are also connected by the motif of the golden statue. While Dan 2 depicts Nebuchadnezzar’s identity as the golden head of the great statue in his dream, Nebuchadnezzar himself erects a golden statue in Dan 3. These shared narrative elements show that the stories are neither randomly connected, nor “a pure collage of described events.”⁹¹ Following the foreign king’s actions and speeches leads to a meaningful perception that transcends the individual scenes and stories. In this process, gestalt theory’s perceptual principles also apply to the reading of these stories as a meaningful narrative: “continuity” by verbal and thematic parallels, “proximity” of the immediate stories, and “similarity” of the characters and plots of each story.⁹²

As a result, the focusing on the foreign king’s actions and speeches by the process of “following” and “framing” leads readers to a meaningful perception or message. On the one hand, even though Nebuchadnezzar learned about the destruction of the statue in Dan 2, he still erects a huge golden statue to emphasize his pride and colonial authority. On the other hand, even though he honored and submitted to the superior power and wisdom of the Jews and their God in Dan 2, this fact does not affect his attitude but he

⁹⁰ Toolen, *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic*, 8.

⁹¹ Ibid., 6.

⁹² Hergenhahn, *An Introduction to the History of Psychology*, 482.

commands all his subjects fall down and worship his golden statue. This “unaffectedness” or “arrogance” of the foreign king is a central focus within the narratives.⁹³

Iterative Learning and Its Effect on Nebuchadnezzar

Although the first part of Dan 3 presents Nebuchadnezzar’s unaffectedness and arrogance despite his previous experience and learning, the foreign king undergoes another development in Dan 3. “Following” the foreign king allows readers to notice further changes in his acknowledgment of YHWH and attitude toward the Jews by the end of the story. While Nebuchadnezzar’s tyranny and pride continue in Dan 3, his attitude toward the Jews becomes more favorable than the previous stories. The reader notices this change of attitude from Nebuchadnezzar’s unexpected concern for the Jewish young men, and even more from his advanced doxology at the end of Dan 3.

One example that shows Nebuchadnezzar’s favoritism to the Jews is his delay of the execution. Even though Nebuchadnezzar is in a furious rage, he does not punish the Jews immediately according to the initial proclamation (3:6) but rather tries to persuade them and give them a second chance. This portrayal of the favorable king is a result of the narratives’ character development, and reveals a distinctive aspect of the Daniel narratives: “Now if you are ready ... to fall down and worship the statue that I have made,

⁹³ Valeta mentions this depiction of foreign king that, “[h]e apparently has no memory of the god who revealed his dream and its interpretation to Daniel—or at least any confidence in him. This god may be the God of gods and the Lord of lords who reveals mysteries (Dan. 2.47), but he cannot save one from a fiery furnace. The king’s faith is indeed short-lived and shortsighted” (*Lions and Ovens*, 84).

well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?” (3:15).⁹⁴

Nebuchadnezzar’s persuading statement not only shows his favorable attitude toward the Jews but also has some theological implications. Nebuchadnezzar’s statement comprises an antithetic parallelism. While he guarantees a state of being “well and good” if they worship the statue, Nebuchadnezzar promises “death” should they refuse. This statement reminds the reader of Israel’s Deuteronomic theology, which promises blessings for obedience to YHWH and curses for disobedience (see Deut 28:1, 15; Lev 26:3, 14). Nebuchadnezzar’s statement thus theologically opposes YHWH’s covenant. In this sense, although the narrative in Dan 3 is traditionally categorized as a court conflict between the Jewish sages and the gentiles, it reflects a broader conflict between Nebuchadnezzar’s promise and YHWH’s covenant—between the sovereignties of a human king and YHWH.⁹⁵

Nebuchadnezzar adds to his statement that “who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?” (3:15). Although Nebuchadnezzar asks this rhetorical question assuming that no deity can deliver them, his statement works as a narrative tool to foreshadow what eventually happens. That is, Nebuchadnezzar’s rhetorical question,

⁹⁴ Based on Nebuchadnezzar’s suspicious question, Collins suggests that “the story in Daniel 3 was originally independent of chap. 2 and is linked with it only by the redactional reference to the promotion of the youths at 2:49” (*Daniel: A Commentary*, 187). In addition to Collins’ observation, the absence of the name Daniel in Dan 3 also testifies to the separate-origin theory. Contrary to Collins, however, Dan 3 also reflects parallels to Dan 2 through the golden (head of the) statue and the verbal parallel (e.g., נפל and סגר).

⁹⁵ Newsom similarly argues that “[h]is words also serve the storyteller’s purposes by disclosing to the reader that the true antagonists in the narrative are not Nebuchadnezzar and the three Jews but Nebuchadnezzar and YHWH, as the second intertextual echo underscores. In Deut 32:39 YHWH declares, ‘There is no god besides me. I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and no one can deliver from my hand’” (*Daniel*, 109).

which assumes the impossibility of YHWH's deliverance, conversely comes to emphasize YHWH's delivering power at the end of the story (3:28–29). The conviction of Nebuchadnezzar comes from the pride and confidence in his own power and authority. This conviction and pride of Nebuchadnezzar, however, serves to make his wonder and respect for YHWH's power and authority at the end more dramatic and effective.

After throwing the Jews into the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar finds that they are still alive, walking in the middle of the fire. He further observes the fourth man, “[b]ut I see four men unbound ... and the fourth has the appearance of a god” (3:25). Newsom points out that the narrator does not explain whatever is happening in the furnace. Rather Nebuchadnezzar describes what he witnesses along with the significance that he attaches to his observations.⁹⁶ After Nebuchadnezzar witnesses such a wonder, his attitude changes even more dramatically. He says, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!” (3:26).⁹⁷ Nebuchadnezzar, who asked what god could deliver them out of his hands, now calls the Jews the servants of the Most High God. Moreover, his statement implies that their servanthship for the Most High God precedes the servanthship for Nebuchadnezzar himself, which also illustrates the contest between human and divine governance.

⁹⁶ Newsom, *Daniel*, 112.

⁹⁷ Based on the absence of Daniel in Dan 3, Newsom argues, “Daniel 3 is an originally independent story secondarily adapted for inclusion in the Daniel cycle. Not only does Daniel not figure in it as a character; no effort is even made to account for his absence. At the same time both Dan 1 and 2 have anticipated Dan 3 by including references to Daniel’s three friends, even though they do not play an active role in those narratives” (*Daniel*, 101) Altman’s theory explains this issue by interchangeability. That is, each side of the binary opposites can be filled by a different name. Thus, while each pair of following-units yields to the next, their binary opposition remains balanced and the duality rules the overall structure (*A Theory of Narrative*, 48–49).

Interestingly, the Aramaic name of the last listed Jewish young man is Abednego (עבד-ננו), which means the servant (עבד) of Nego (ננו, or Nabû) —the Babylonian god.⁹⁸ The author of the narrative seems to use a literary skill of parallelism: “Abednego, servants of the Most High God” (עבד-ננו עבדוהי די-אלהא). Despite the Babylonian name—the servant of Nego (Nabû)—Nebuchadnezzar now confesses that they are servants of YHWH, not his Babylonian god Nego (Nabû). Daniel 3 depicts the change in Nebuchadnezzar’s recognition and attitude toward the Jews and their God in various ways. Even though the seemingly static structure of the binary opposition continues from Dan 1 through Dan 3, the slight change on the side of the foreign king allows for the creation of meaning. According to Iser, this perception across the stories “must be pictured and cannot be seen,” and what makes it possible is the process of “following” and “framing.”⁹⁹

The Doxology of Nebuchadnezzar

The doxology of Nebuchadnezzar plays an important role in concluding the narrative in Dan 3: “[b]lessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him” (3:28).¹⁰⁰ Nebuchadnezzar’s

⁹⁸ BDB defines ננו עבד as “servant of (God) Nebo,” instead of servant of Nego. BDB notes, “ננו being corrupt (intent. or unintention.) for נבו” (BDB, 715).

⁹⁹ Iser, *The Implied Reader*, 283.

¹⁰⁰ Collins comments on this doxology that “[t]he historical plausibility of this doxology on the lips of Nebuchadnezzar is nil, especially as the Jews are herein commended for defying the edict of the king.... It is safe to say that these passages are written by Jews for the edification of Jews” (*Daniel: A Commentary*, 191). Collins probably means the importance of faithfulness and the promise of deliverance or rewards by “edification.” This study, however, suggests that Nebuchadnezzar’s doxology presents a vision of a new reality through the education of foreign kings.

statement praises the God of the Jews and confirms that YHWH delivers them.

Nebuchadnezzar's calling the Jews "his [YHWH's] servants" has a significant implication considering that the Jewish young men are Nebuchadnezzar's own servants in his court.

In other words, Nebuchadnezzar admits that YHWH's authority is superior to his own.

The following statement of Nebuchadnezzar confirms this understanding: "[t]hey disobeyed the king's commandment and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God" (3:28b). This statement deals with the contest between human sovereignty and YHWH's sovereignty presented in Dan 3.

Nebuchadnezzar admits the superior power and authority of YHWH.¹⁰¹ This statement more likely comes from the narration on the Jewish side, rather than from the mouth of the foreign king Nebuchadnezzar.¹⁰² He commends the Jews for disobeying his own commandment and their faithfulness to YHWH.

Nebuchadnezzar's statement reflects some similarities with the situation in Dan 2, in which Nebuchadnezzar does not care about the negative interpretation but rather only praises Daniel and his God for the revelation of the dream and its meaning. Like the story in Dan 2, the primary concern of the king in Dan 3 is the Jews' faithfulness and the delivering power of YHWH. Nebuchadnezzar is not interested in the Jewish courtiers'

¹⁰¹ In other words, Nebuchadnezzar's royal power presented at the beginning encounters the "surprising limits" by YHWH's delivering power. Newsom argues, "[t]he story focuses on the way in which Nebuchadnezzar's false perception about the nature and source of power are progressively dismantled during the course of events" (*Daniel*, 101). This dismantling process which as a way of educating Nebuchadnezzar continue and complete in Dan 4.

¹⁰² For examples of the foreign rulers' praising of YHWH: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" (Gen 14:18–20, by Melchizedek); "Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel for ever, he has made you king to execute justice and righteousness" (1 Kgs 10:9, by the Queen of Sheba); see also Exod 18:10–11 for Jethro's blessing of YHWH.

disobedience to his order but only praises YHWH's superior power to deliver his servants. Whereas Nebuchadnezzar shows equal respect to Daniel and his God in Dan 2, he praises YHWH based on God's deliverance in Dan 3. Even though Nebuchadnezzar admits the distinctiveness of the God of the Jews by saying that "there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way" (3:29), Nebuchadnezzar's doxology in Dan 3 does not show his conversion or confession of faith in YHWH yet. Nebuchadnezzar's decree recognizes YHWH's incomparable delivering power and warns of uttering blasphemy against YHWH.¹⁰³

Regarding the foreign kings' doxologies—the first-person speeches of praise—in the Hebrew Bible, Newsom provides a helpful summary of the scholarly discussion. She discusses Cyrus's decrees in Ezra and 2 Chronicles and the question concerning whether the doxologies reflect the Jewish authors' production or whether they have "some parallel in actual imperial rhetoric."¹⁰⁴ She provides some evidence understanding the conquerors' rhetoric in relation to their imperial claims and the will of a local deity. She argues that

¹⁰³ Conversely, Sweeney criticizes Rowley, who views the portrayal of Nebuchadnezzar as positive. Sweeney writes that Rowley "did not account for the satirical aspects of these narratives in which Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian monarch who destroyed the Temple of Solomon in 587 B.C.E., is presented as a positive role model for a gentile monarch who acknowledges the power and sovereignty of YHWH" ("The End of Eschatology," 128). In addition, Valeta argues, "[t]he great majority of commentators read this and other kingly prayers literally. They view this and similar scenes of repentant kings in Daniel as true conversions. This possibility is too good to be true.... This chapter draws a preposterous and laughable portrait of a ruler.... Recognizing the humorous nature of this material is another important clue in recognizing that kings and their power are being thoroughly lampooned within Daniel 1–6" (*Lions and Ovens*, 86–87).

¹⁰⁴ According to Newsom, while Blenkinsopp and Grabbe argue that the doxologies are the composition of Jewish authors, Williamson defends their authenticity (*Daniel*, 16). See J. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 74–76; L. L. Grabbe, "Reconstructing History from the Book of Ezra," *Persian Period*, vol. 1 of *Second Temple Studies*, ed. P. R. Davies, JSOTSup 117 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991), 99–102; H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, WBC 16 (Waco: Word Books, 1985), xxiii – xxxiii.

although no one can prove that the passages in Ezra and 2 Chronicles reflect the historical word of Cyrus, this imperial rhetoric “would have served both imperial power and colonized people.”¹⁰⁵ She continues to suggest, “[s]uch assertions would give dignity to subject peoples, while at the same time helping to secure imperial rule, since rebellion against the king would be rebellion against the decisions of the people’s own deity.”¹⁰⁶ As a result, Newsom argues that the doxologies in Dan 1–6 are “attempts to negotiate the ideological double bind of life under Persian rule.”¹⁰⁷

Change of Nebuchadnezzar

At the end of Dan 3, Nebuchadnezzar makes a decree that “[a]ny people, nation, or language that utters blasphemy against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego *shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins*; for there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way” (3:29). The phrase of penalty in Nebuchadnezzar’s decree is the one that he used to condemn the false sages of Babylon who could not reveal and interpret his dream in Dan 2 (“If you do not tell me both the dream and its interpretation, *you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins*” 2:5b).

Nebuchadnezzar’s use of the same condemning phrase in two quite different situations (see table 3.1) implies the inner change of Nebuchadnezzar’s mind. The first penalty was for the false sages who possibly fool King Nebuchadnezzar himself (“I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time.... You have agreed to speak lying and

¹⁰⁵ Newsom, *Daniel*, 17.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

misleading words to me until things take a turn” [2:8, 9]). In the second case, however, the same penalty is used to condemn the blasphemy against YHWH. Nebuchadnezzar uses this tool to defend the authority and sovereignty of YHWH in Dan 3, whereas he uses this tool to defend his own authority and sovereignty in the previous story.¹⁰⁸

Table 3.1. Comparison of Nebuchadnezzar’s decrees

Nebuchadnezzar’s decrees in Dan 2:5–6; 3:4–7	Nebuchadnezzar’s decree in Dan 3:29
You are commanded, <i>O peoples, nations, and languages</i> , that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum and entire musical ensemble. (Dan 3:4–5)	Therefore I make a decree: <i>Any people, nation, or language</i> that utters blasphemy against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. (Dan 3:29a)
[A]nd <i>who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?</i> (Dan 3:15Bb) ¹⁰⁹	[F]or there is <i>no other god who is able to deliver</i> in this way. (Dan 3:29b)
If you do not tell me both the dream and its interpretation, <i>you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins.</i> (Dan 2:5)	Any people, nation, or language that utters blasphemy against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego <i>shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins.</i> (Dan 3:29a)

As a result, Nebuchadnezzar’s decree testifies that he not only acknowledges and respects YHWH’s power to deliver, but also tries to defend the honor and sovereignty of YHWH with his most powerful tools. In addition, Nebuchadnezzar’s naming of the addressee—“any people, nation, or language” (3:29)—serves as a general designation for his entire kingdom used in the former decree (3:4). Considering that the use of this

¹⁰⁸ Newsom argues that Nebuchadnezzar uses his own power to defend YHWH’s honor and authority and, thus, he positions himself as a protector of the deity, demonstrating his confusion over “the issue of the nature, source, and uses of royal and divine power.” Thus, she interprets correctly that “the truth remains hidden from him. Despite the apparent resolution of the conflict, the education of King Nebuchadnezzar is not yet complete” (*Daniel*, 113.).

¹⁰⁹ This verse is not from Nebuchadnezzar’s decree, but his question to the Jewish courtiers.

designation in the former decree demonstrates that his entire kingdom is subject to worship the golden statue, the use of the same designation in the latter decree shows that his entire kingdom is now subject to defending the honor and sovereignty of YHWH.¹¹⁰

In sum, the change in the foreign king's attitude toward the Jews and YHWH in Dan 3 contributes to the whole process of Nebuchadnezzar's development and change that the narratives present. In addition to the narrative's depiction of the foreign king's favorable attitude toward the Jews and YHWH (3:14–15, 26, 28–30), the author uses literary techniques of verbal correlation between Nebuchadnezzar's two decrees and the same penalty for two opposite cases to present Nebuchadnezzar's change. In this process, for example, Nebuchadnezzar is at first skeptical about the Jewish God's power and ability, asking: "who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?" (3:15). After experiencing the wonder of their deliverance, however, his attitude toward YHWH changes. He confesses, "there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way" (3:29b). Moreover, he calls YHWH "the Most High God" and makes a decree that defends

¹¹⁰ Similar designations occur in Dan 3:4, 7; 4:1; 5:19; 7:14. Regarding the use of this designation, Chan argues, "[t]he exaggeration of contradiction is a basic strategy in humor.... In Daniel 3, the narrative zooms in on a contradiction.... the stark difference between ideology and reality.... The reader is told that all peoples, nations, and tongues paid homage to the image (3:7), and yet the reader knows that only officials are invited to this event (Dan 3:2–3). Is this just the author's attempt to render authentically the typical rhetoric of royal ideology?" ("Ira Regis," 15). Conversely, Newsom observes that the list represents "the many ethnic groups comprising the empire. A prominent aspect of Persian imperial ideology was the representation of the ethnic diversity of the empire. The royal throne was depicted as being upheld by the various peoples of the empire.... The diversity of languages of the empire was also reflected in the multilingual decrees of Darius, such as the Behistun Inscription, which also stipulated that it be publicized throughout the provinces. The politico-ideological purpose of these representations was, as Briant remarks, 'to depict every country and every people of the Empire united in harmonious cooperation organized by and surrounding the king'" (*Daniel*, 104–105; P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*, trans. P. T. Daniels [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002], 178).

YHWH's honor and sovereignty.¹¹¹ All of these events demonstrate a significant change in the foreign king's acknowledgment and attitude toward YHWH.

Sweeney's comments on Dan 3 are notable. He compares the depiction of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 3 to the historical figure Antiochus IV and proposes,

This narrative [Dan 3] relates easily to the accounts of Antiochus's attempts to establish pagan cults in the Jerusalem Temple, where he erected an idol of Zeus Olympus or Baal Shamem for worship, forbade the practice of Judaism and decreed death for those who did not obey.... The presentation of Nebuchadnezzar here represents the ideal model of action that Antiochus should follow according to the author of Daniel 3. Even Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem, repents before the power of YHWH.... They [the court tales in Dan 1–6] present Jews as loyal subjects who do not deserve the enmity of foreign kings, and they call upon foreign monarchs to acknowledge the power and sovereignty of YHWH. Ultimately, they call upon Jews to maintain their Jewish identity and practice like Daniel and his friends.¹¹²

Sweeney argues that the narratives present a model for foreign rulers, including Antiochus IV. They thus call on the foreign kings to acknowledge YHWH. Although Sweeney may be correct, the narratives more directly speak to a Jewish target audience. Every claim of the narratives, even the ones that regard the foreign king, speaks to the Jews' theological and political perspectives: how to perceive, how to understand, and how to act in the imperial context.

¹¹¹ Newsom, however, argues that "Nebuchadnezzar seems to grasp the meaning of the encounter in acknowledging the God who saved those who 'disregarded the word of the king.' But his further action in attempting to use his own power to protect this God from the indignity of blasphemy suggests that he may not have truly understood the relations of power" (*Daniel*, 34). This allusion is identified in the discussion of Dan 4.

¹¹² Sweeney, "The End of Eschatology," 131, 133.

Conclusion

This chapter explores Daniel 1–3 using Altman’s theory of “following” characters and dual-focus narrative, as well as the tradition-historical approach. While each story contains a binary opposition of character groups as its basic structure, the reading strategy of “following” and “framing” reveals how the narratives create meaning across the scenes. Daniel 1–3 illustrate the impact of YHWH’s revelation and delivering power on the foreign king Nebuchadnezzar and portray the role of the Jewish sages’ wisdom and faithfulness in changing the king across the stories. While Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges and rewards the Jewish courtiers’ superior wisdom without noticing YHWH as the source of their wisdom in Dan 1, Nebuchadnezzar comes to recognize and honor YHWH as a source of wisdom and delivering power as the stories continue. The Jewish sages help the development of the foreign king’s understanding and facilitate the change of his attitude toward the Jews and YHWH with their faithfulness and knowledge of secrets. Chapter four explores the narratives in Dan 4–6. Although the narratives have different foreign kings for Dan 5 and 6, the reading strategy of “following” characters and “framing” the events remains valid. Altman’s theory of interchangeability allows the reader to perceive these different actors as a single narrative character.

CHAPTER FOUR

Narrative Reading of Daniel 4–6

Introduction

This chapter continues the exploration of the Daniel narratives with the pericopes in Dan 4–6.¹ Unlike the previous chapters, Dan 4–6 have three different foreign kings (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius). The reading strategy of “following” allows this study to explore the ways in which the new actors are related to and build upon the preceding kings. Altman’s theory of polarity adjustment allows the reader to perceive the same binary despite the change of the actors. That is, although a new figure takes the stage, the binary remains stable and continues its basic structure by simple variation of each polarity.² This chapter interprets the stories in Dan 4–6 in light of the previous

¹ Although the textual history is not the focus of this work, Old Greek (OG) and Theodotion (Th) variations will be discussed occasionally in the notes. Some scholars observe the distinct nature of the OG version of Dan 4–6 and suggest that it is formed the earliest core of the Daniel narratives. Newsom emphasizes that “[t]he OG is particularly important for understanding the development of the book of Daniel, especially chs. 4–6, where the OG and Th differ significantly.... It may be that the version of chs. 4–6 now present in the OG is actually older than that translation as a whole and originally circulated independently as a booklet.... The booklet [Dan 4–6] demonstrated the power of the Most High by featuring three different Gentile kings who were humbled or judged by God” (*Daniel: A Commentary*, OTL [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014], 5, 10). See also R. T. McLay, “The Old Greek Translation of Daniel IV–VI and the Formation of the Book of Daniel,” *VT* 55 (2005), 304–23; Idem, *The OG and Th Versions of Daniel*, SBLSCS 43 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1996), 242; T. L. Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings: The Biblical Daniel Narratives and Ancient Story-Collections*, EANE 1 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 480–481; K. Koch, *Das Buch Daniel*, EdF 144 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980), 18–19; J. J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 216. This theory about the earlier stratum, however, does not affect this study’s synchronic interpretation of Dan 1–6 focused on the overarching plot and message of the final form.

² R. Altman, *A Theory of Narrative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 48–49.

progress and overarching plot, and examines how this overarching plot is finalized in Dan 6 by employing Altman's technique of "framing."

While opening the "booklet" (Dan 4–6) Dan 4 concludes the so-called "Nebuchadnezzar cycle" of Dan 1–4.³ Daniel 4 concludes the process in which Nebuchadnezzar comes to acknowledge YHWH's wisdom and sovereignty, as well as experiences psychological change by the impact of YHWH's revelation. The previous chapter explored the verbal and thematic connections between Dan 1–3, thus identifying the gradual change and development of Nebuchadnezzar's attitude toward YHWH and the Jews. Following the foreign king's actions and speeches leads to a meaningful perception, which transcends the individual scenes and stories.

This chapter continues the examination of the overarching character development across the individual stories in Dan 1–6. The first examination in this chapter explores Dan 4, concluding Nebuchadnezzar's development from Dan 1–3.⁴ This chapter then explores how the stories of Belshazzar and Darius in Dan 5 and 6 and develop the new relationship between YHWH and the foreign kings, which was delineated in Nebuchadnezzar's story in Dan 1–4. This chapter concludes with an interpretation of Dan 1–6 as a whole that results from following the foreign rulers of the stories. The conclusion argues that the narratives envision a new theological and political reality that

³ For the terms "booklet" and "Nebuchadnezzar cycle," see Newsom, *Daniel*, 5, 10, and 149. Newsom argues that Dan 4–6 once formed a distinctive collection of Daniel stories based on the distinctiveness of the OG version and the similar doxologies at the beginning and end of this collection (4:1–3 [MT 3:31–33]; 6:26–27 [MT 6:27–28]).

⁴ For the discussion about the relationship between Dan 4 and the story of the last Babylonian king, Nabonidus, see Newsom, *Daniel*, 127–32; idem, "Why Nabonidus? Excavating Traditions from Qumran, the Hebrew Bible, and Neo-Babylonian Sources," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Transmission of Traditions and Production of Texts*, ed. S. Metso, STDJ 92 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 57; Collins, *Daniel*, 217–19.

legitimizes foreign rule under YHWH's universal sovereignty and confirms an inclusive concept of YHWH's people. The role of Daniel and his companions in relation to the foreign kings' lessons and transformation leads this study to explore the role of the wise, *maškilîm* (11:33; 12:3), in chapter five.

Daniel Four

Human Kingdom and Divine Kingdom

Nebuchadnezzar's doxology at the beginning of Dan 4 presents an important theological implication for the relationship between the divine kingdom and human kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar's doxology demonstrates the impact of YHWH's lesson on his recognition of that relationship. Unlike the previous stories, Dan 4 begins with King Nebuchadnezzar's first-person monologue in the form of a public letter. The Aramaic MT presents the doxology in the first three verses (4:1–3) as a conclusion to Dan 3 (MT 3:31–33).⁵ The "letter" begins with the addresser and the addressees: "King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages that live throughout the earth" (4:1 [MT 3:31]). The first verse of Dan 4 uses the same addressee identification as that in Dan

⁵ Based on the textual evidences from antiquity, Montgomery argues that these three verses originally begin Dan 4 (4:1–3) rather than end Dan 3 (3:31–33 [MT]; *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ICC 22 [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1927], 224). While the Aramaic MT places these verses at the end Dan 3, the OG places them at the end of Dan 4. They seem to maintain the consistency regarding the location of doxologies within the stories. By the way, regarding the function of this doxology in relation to the composition history of Daniel, Newsom explains, "[t]he strikingly similar doxological elements that stand at the beginning and end of this collection in the MT (4:1–3 [3:31–33 MT]; 6:26b–27 [27b–29]) may belong to the redactional shaping of this collection as a booklet. The booklet demonstrated the power of the Most High by featuring three different gentile kings who were humbled or judged by God. At some later point, perhaps in the early Hellenistic period, the Daniel narrative of ch. 2 and the narrative featuring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (ch. 3) were joined to the prior collection, and an introduction was composed that tied the various stories together and explained how Daniel and his three friends came to be in the court of Nebuchadnezzar (ch. 1)" (*Daniel*, 10); Collins also regarded this doxology as forming an inclusion with the other doxology at the end of Dan 6 (*Daniel*, 220).

3 with a minor addition. The addressee in Dan 3—“[a]ny people, nation, or language” (v. 29)—serves as a general designation for his kingdom, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Daniel 4 employs a more comprehensive designation with the addition of “that live throughout the earth” (בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ; 4:1 [MT 3:31]).⁶

After listing the sender, addressee, and the greeting (4:1 [MT 3:31]), Nebuchadnezzar begins the body of the letter by introducing the main topic stating that “[t]he signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me I am pleased to recount” (4:2 [MT 3:32]). Among the “signs and wonders,” the “signs” likely refer to the revelation of the mysteries to Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 2. The “wonders” similarly refer to YHWH’s delivering the Jewish young men from the furnace of blazing fire in Dan 3. Readers, however, realize that the signs and wonders also refer to the events that Nebuchadnezzar experiences in Dan 4.⁷

Nebuchadnezzar’s introductory statement about recounting God’s signs and wonders is reminiscent of a passage from the Songs of the Sage (4Q510–511): “during my appointed times I shall recount Your wonders” (4Q511 63–64 ii 2). Joseph Angel explains that this passage of the Songs of the Sage is a statement from the *maskil* and it is understood in its ritual framework.⁸ The similarity between Nebuchadnezzar’s

⁶ Note the *qere*: דִּירִי. There is no difference between *ketiv* and *qere* in their meanings.

⁷ Newsom proposes a parallel between Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar based on “signs and wonders:” “‘signs and wonders’ ... [are] most frequently used in relation to the exodus tradition, often with specific reference to Pharaoh (Exod 7:3; Deut 6:22; 7:19; 26:8; 29:2–3; 34:11; Jer 32:20–21; Pss 105:27; 135:9; Neh 9:10). Thus the Egyptian Pharaoh and the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar are paralleled as monarchs who experience the power of the Israelite God” (*Daniel*, 134).

⁸ J. L. Angel, “Maskil, Community, and Religious Experience in the Songs of the Sage (4Q510–511),” *DSD* 19 (2012), 3.

introductory remark in recounting his experience to his people and the *maskil*'s initial statement in their ritual setting is notable in relation to the implication of Nebuchadnezzar's account in Dan 4.⁹ That is, at the final stage of Nebuchadnezzar's development, the narrative depicts the foreign king as serving a similar role of the Jewish teacher who teaches people by recounting his experience of YHWH's wonders and signs.

Nebuchadnezzar continues to praise YHWH's wisdom and sovereignty in the following doxology: "[h]ow great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his sovereignty is from generation to generation" (4:3 [MT 3:33]). This doxology not only adopts more elaborated hymnic phrases than in Dan 3, but it also reflects the binary themes—wisdom and power—of Daniel's prayer in Dan 2. As mentioned above, while "signs" represent the wisdom of YHWH revealed through dream interpretation, "wonders" refer to the power of YHWH in delivering his people. Based on his experience of YHWH's power and wisdom, Nebuchadnezzar further confesses the superiority and permanence of YHWH's kingdom and sovereignty over human empires and history. This verbal and thematic dependence of Nebuchadnezzar's speech on Daniel's statement is one of the narratives' rhetorical skills illustrating the revelation's impact on the foreign kings.

Moreover, Nebuchadnezzar employs unprecedented and explicit kingdom terminology in praising YHWH's sovereignty: "[h]is kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his sovereignty is from generation to generation" (4:3 [MT 3:33]). Despite his dream

⁹ For the study of the ritual setting—the annual covenant ceremony—of Maskil's hymn in the Songs of the Sage, see E. Eshel, "Apotropaic Prayers in the Second Temple Period," in *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls; Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 19–23 January 2000*, ed. E. G. Chazon, STDJ 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 83–84.

of the everlasting kingdom of God in Dan 2—“[i]t shall crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand for ever” (v. 44)—there was no recognition of YHWH’s kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar’s doxology in Dan 2. Through his experience in Dan 3 and 4, however, Nebuchadnezzar affirms that YHWH’s kingdom is superior to his own kingdom, like the issue of the Jewish sages’ servanthship in Dan 3.¹⁰

The predictable conflict between his recognition of YHWH’s kingdom and his own imperial ideology attests to Nebuchadnezzar’s development, which leads to his submission to YHWH’s wisdom and power.¹¹ Considering that Nebuchadnezzar addresses this epistle to “all peoples, nations, and languages” of his entire kingdom, his honoring and praising the superior kingdom and sovereignty of YHWH can undermine his own authority over his empire. The only way that does not harm his own power and authority is to admit that his kingdom and sovereignty are given by YHWH (2:37–38), who establishes and deposes the human rulers (2:21). This acknowledgment leads to the ideology arguing that if YHWH sets up Nebuchadnezzar and gives him the kingdom, then the king’s sovereignty is YHWH’s sovereignty and his kingdom is YHWH’s kingdom.¹²

¹⁰ Collins points out that the phrase about an everlasting kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar’s doxology corresponds to Ps 145:13: “[y]our kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations” (*Daniel*, 222). Newsom also notes this parallel and argues that “[w]hat distinguishes divine sovereignty from human sovereignty is its everlastingness. The doxology is repeated almost verbatim in 4:34 (31) at the very moment when Nebuchadnezzar’s reason is restored to him. He has finally understood the significance of the first dream vision in 2:31–35, 44, which visually contrasted the transitory nature of human sovereignties with the eternal quality of divine dominion” (*Daniel*, 135).

¹¹ Koch argues that by proclaiming the eternal kingdom of YHWH, Nebuchadnezzar admits that his own reign will remain temporal and finite (“Gottes Herrschaft über das Reich des Menschen: Daniel 4 im Licht neuer Funde,” in *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings*, ed. A. S. van der Woude, BETL 106 [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993], 113).

¹² This outcome accords with Steck’s argument that the narratives in Dan 1–6 reflect the ideology of a theocratic institution in the context of the world’s empires and illustrate the merging of divine and human governance (“Weltgeschehen und Gottesvolk im Buch Daniel,” in *Kirche: Festschrift für Günther*

Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream

In verses 10–17 (MT vv. 7–14), Nebuchadnezzar recounts his dream to Daniel. Verses 10–12 (MT vv. 7–9) describe a great tree at the center of the earth and vv. 13–17 (MT vv. 10–14) recount the proclamation of the holy watcher to King Nebuchadnezzar regarding the fall of that tree.¹³ The description of a tall and strong tree that reaches to heaven and benefits all people, animals, birds, and living beings reminds readers of Daniel's dream interpretation in Dan 2:¹⁴

You, O king, the king of kings—to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the might, and the glory, into whose hand he has given human beings, wherever they live, the wild animals of the field, and the birds of the air, and whom he has established as ruler over them all. (2:37–38)

The similarity between Daniel's interpretation in Dan 2 and the king's dream in Dan 4 leads readers to presume that the greatness and benefit of the tree are given by YHWH, though it is not mentioned in Dan 4 (see table 4.1).

Bornkamm zum 75. Geburtstag, eds. D. Lührmann and G. Strecker [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1980], 53–78).

¹³ “A holy watcher” (NRSV) is literally “a watcher and a holy one” (עִיר וְקָדִישׁ, JPS, KJV; “an angelic watcher, a holy one” NAS). This set of designation only occurs only in Dan 4 in the MT, but frequently in Qumran texts (Newsom, *Daniel*, 139). While the Th simply translates as ἰρ καὶ ἄγιος (ἰρ is a transliteration of עִיר), the OG translates in a single word, ἄγγελος (angel or messenger, see for discussion Collins, *Daniel*, 224). For the discussion of the “watcher” tradition, see Newsom, *Daniel*, 139–140; H. S. Kvanving, *Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man*, WMANT 61 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1988), 304–312; R. P. R. Murray, “The Origin of Aramaic ‘ir, Angel,” *Or* 53 (1984), 303–17.

¹⁴ “The tree came to be associated with royal power and thus became an important symbol in imperial ideology.... This connection is more pronounced in Neo-Assyrian iconography, where the tree often is positioned under the winged sun-disk that represents the god Ashur and is flanked by images of attendant winged *apkallu* genies. Sometimes the king appears between the genies and the tree, and in some examples the king actually replaces the tree” (Newsom, *Daniel*, 137–38).

Table 4.1. Comparison of two Nebuchadnezzar's dreams/interpretations

Dream interpretation in Dan 2 (2:37–38)	Content of the dream in Dan 4 (4:11–12 [MT 4:8–9])
God of heaven has given the kingdom, the <i>power, the might, and the glory</i>	The tree grew <i>great and strong</i> , its top reached to heaven, and it was <i>visible to the ends of the whole earth</i>
He has given ... the wild <i>animals of the field</i> and <i>the birds of the air</i>	<i>The animals of the field</i> found shade under it <i>the birds of the air</i> nested in its branches
He has established as <i>ruler over them all</i>	From it <i>all living beings were fed</i>

In Dan 4, a holy watcher proclaims the fall of the tall and strong tree. This detail is also reminiscent of that of Dan 2. Nebuchadnezzar dreams in Dan 2 about a large statue, the head of which is King Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom. The dream then illustrates the subsequent destruction of his kingdom by God's kingdom. Daniel 4 similarly presents a tall tree reaching to heaven and its subsequent fall by decree of the watchers and divine decision.¹⁵ The dreams thus reflect similar content—the greatness of King Nebuchadnezzar and the fall of his great kingdom by the hand of YHWH.¹⁶

¹⁵ Seow interprets the meaning of the dream in its context that “[i]n a logic-defying sequence befitting a dream, the images morph into one another. One moment Nebuchadnezzar is a tree (4:12a, 20a), the next moment he is a fettered animal (4:12b, 20b), and then, just as suddenly, a human being with the mind of an animal (4:13). Yet, there is a portentous coherence in this bizarre dream. The tree that used to provide shade and food for animals is now no longer able to provide. Indeed, it has become a needy animal, pitifully tethered and utterly dependent upon others for its survival. Whereas animals had previously found shade under the tree, this animal is now amazingly drenched in dew (טל) from heaven. The similarity of the Aramaic words for “dew” (טל) in 4:12 and “shade” (צל) in 4:9 ironically heightens the difference in the scenarios.... The entire sequence makes the point that human rule is secondary to and dependent upon divine rule” (“The Rule of God in the Book of Daniel,” in *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts*, eds. B. F. Batto and K. L. Roberts [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004], 228–29).

¹⁶ There is a difference, however, regarding the fate of Nebuchadnezzar between Dan 2 and 4. While Dan 2 depicts the destruction of the golden head (Nebuchadnezzar) by a stone cut out not by human hands, Dan 4 leaves its (Nebuchadnezzar's) stump and roots in the ground, which implies the restoration of his kingship.

The watcher declares the purpose of the dream in v.17 (MT v. 15): “the decision is given by order of the holy ones, in order that all who live may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdom of mortals; he gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of human beings” (4:17 [MT 4:14]).¹⁷ This statement of the watcher reveals the distinctive messages of the dream vision in Dan 4. These new messages culminate the development of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 1–4, and its implications.

Three observations demonstrate the lessons of the watcher’s statement. First, the emphasis on “the lowliest of human beings” is a new message that the watcher’s statement presents in Dan 4. While Daniel explains in Dan 2 that the “God of heaven has given the kingdom” to the king (2:37), the watcher proclaims in Dan 4 that YHWH “gives it [the kingdom] to whom he will” and adds that he sets, specifically, “the lowliest of human beings” over the kingdom (4:17 [MT 4:14]). As readers follow the foreign kings, they observe minor differences that develop the foreign king’s acknowledgment of YHWH. These minor differences participate “in the creation of a ‘diegesis.’”¹⁸

In Dan 4, the message that YHWH grants the kingdom to the lowliest of human beings not only creates a difference, thus developing the message of the narratives, but also alludes to the course of events that Nebuchadnezzar will experience. While Nebuchadnezzar receives the message about YHWH’s sovereignty over human kingdoms—especially his own kingdom—in Dan 2, his own statement at the beginning

¹⁷ See also Isa 10:33–34: “[l]ook, the Sovereign, the Lord of hosts, will lop the boughs with terrifying power; the tallest trees will be cut down, and the lofty will be brought low. He will hack down the thickets of the forest with an axe, and Lebanon with its majestic trees will fall.”

¹⁸ Altman, *A Theory of Narrative*, 14. On “diegesis,” see p. 38, n. 115.

of Dan 4 (v. 4 [MT v. 1]) attests that his peaceful mind and opulent life are not disturbed or affected by the previous lessons. Thus, the watcher's message in Dan 4 further demands humility from those who acknowledge God's power and sovereignty. The rest of the story in Dan 4 illustrates how Nebuchadnezzar learns humility.¹⁹

Second, the watcher's statement alludes to the inclusive nature of the message: "all who live may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdom of mortals" (4:17 [MT 4:14]). In Dan 2, Daniel teaches the king that YHWH is sovereign over the kingdoms. YHWH thus gives Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom, power, might, and glory (2:37). In the literary context, YHWH's lesson has just Nebuchadnezzar for its target audience—"God has informed the king what shall be hereafter" (2:45). In Dan 4, however, the watcher proclaims that the revelation informs "all who live" that YHWH is sovereign over the empires. This difference reflects a development in the message of the narratives and attests to the progressive nature of YHWH's revelation in Dan 1–4.

In addition, the expanded target of YHWH's revelation explains the distinctive structure of Dan 4—the first-person monologue—and why Nebuchadnezzar recounts all of his experiences to "all peoples, nations, and languages that live throughout the earth" (4:1 [MT 3:31]). That is, upon his own learning and converting, Nebuchadnezzar himself delivers YHWH's lesson and message to his subjects according to the proclamation of the

¹⁹ Newsom argues that the story in Dan 4 originally relates the historical records of Nabonidus: "[t]he longstanding suspicion of scholars that Daniel 4 was originally a narrative about Nabonidus received additional support from the discovery of 4Q242 Prayer of Nabonidus" ("Why Nabonidus?" 57). Collins explains about 4Q242 that "[t]his document purports to give 'the words of the prayer which Nabonidus, king of Babylon, the great king, prayed when he was stricken with an evil disease by the decree of God in Teman.' The fragments that have survived do not include the words of a prayer but contain a first-person account of the experience. Nabonidus was smitten for seven years, while he prayed to idols. His sin was forgiven, and a Jewish diviner told him to recount these things to give honor to the name of God. Another fragment refers to a disturbing dream of the king" (*Daniel*, 217).

watcher. The fact that Dan 4 adds the modifying phrase, “that live throughout the earth” (רִידָרִין בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ), to the addressee of the king’s decree also relates to the watcher’s designating “all who live” as the addressee. This difference implies that YHWH’s message for the foreign king now applies to all the gentiles.

Third, the watcher’s lesson has an implication for YHWH’s universal kingship. The inclusive nature of the revelation connects with the concept of YHWH as a ruler of the whole earth, which is reflected in the phrase “the kingdom of mortals” (מַלְכוּת אֲנָשָׁא, 4:17).²⁰ Newsom correctly highlights the expectation of the “universal imperium” implied in the phrase *malkūt ’ānāšā’*, which considers all of humanity as a single domain.²¹ According to Newsom, a universal kingship under a single superior deity is the royal ideology of the Achaemenid Empire. Thus, Dan 4 presents an attempt to reflect the new context of the Achaemenid royal ideology and to incorporate it into its own theological claim of YHWH’s universal sovereignty.²²

Daniel’s Interpretation

Daniel 4 depicts Nebuchadnezzar as having a conviction about Daniel’s ability to interpret his dream. Nebuchadnezzar does not ask if Daniel can interpret his dream, but just orders, “[n]ow you, Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are unable to tell me the interpretation. You are able, however, for you are

²⁰ Note the *ketiv*: אֲנָשָׁא. There is no difference between *ketiv* and *qere* in their meanings.

²¹ Newsom, *Daniel*, 142. See also K. Koch, *Die Reiche der Welt und der kommende Menschensohn: Studien zum Danielbuch*, ed. M. Rösler, *Gesammelte Aufsätze 2* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1995), 83, 114.

²² Newsom, *Daniel*, 142.

endowed with a spirit of the holy gods” (4:18 [MT 4:15]). Nebuchadnezzar’s conviction can be explained based on the story in Dan 2. Nebuchadnezzar comes to have a faith, through his experience in Dan 2, that Daniel can interpret the dream even when other advisers in his kingdom cannot accomplish the task. The continuity of the king’s designation for Daniel from the “chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon” (2:48) to “chief of the magicians” (4:9) also testifies to the continuity of the king’s recognition of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar’s statement demonstrates that he comes to believe that YHWH reveals the mystery that no other can know or reveal.²³ Nebuchadnezzar’s doxology at the end of the chapter further reflects this faith.

Daniel’s emotional response to the king’s dream is also notable: “[t]hen Daniel ... was severely distressed for a while. His thoughts terrified him” (4:19a [MT 4:16a]). The following statement of Daniel explains why Daniel is distressed and terrified: “[m]y lord, may the dream be for those who hate you, and its interpretation for your enemies!” (4:19b [MT 4:16b]). Daniel is distressed over the ill omen for Nebuchadnezzar. Moreover, although Daniel is a chief courtier who is supposed to serve King Nebuchadnezzar, it attracts readers’ attention that Daniel calls the gentile king Nebuchadnezzar “my lord.”

The declaration, “may the dream be for those who hate you,” raises the question concerning the identity of these “haters.” Henze asks, “[h]ow can Daniel call

²³ Van der Toorn’s argument explains the impact of superior wisdom on Nebuchadnezzar: “the Mesopotamian scribes and scholars began to speak of the tradition as having been revealed, they started to emphasize its secret nature. An early literary expression of the turn to esoteric knowledge is the standard version of *Gilgamesh*.... The notion of revelation and secrecy are intimately connected in the cuneiform tradition, both in time and in their reference to written lore. I would suggest that they both are related to the shift from the oral to the written. To legitimize the written tradition, the Mesopotamian scholars qualified it as divine revelation; to preserve their privileged position as brokers of revealed knowledge, they declared it to be secret knowledge” (*Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007], 219–20).

Nebuchadnezzar ‘my lord?’... Who else would this opponent be other than Israel herself?”²⁴ For this reason, according to Henze, Jewish rabbis interpret Daniel’s call as an address to YHWH—not Nebuchadnezzar. The title “my lord” refers to YHWH. Thus the subsequent phrase “those who hate you” refers to YHWH’s enemies.²⁵ Daniel’s problematic statement, however, has an implication for a new relationship between the foreign king and the Jews. This relationship no longer reflects antagonism or conflict. This depiction reflects a new concept of YHWH’s people that includes gentile converts. Rather than subservience, Daniel’s statement thus alludes to a new identity of the foreign king. Daniel’s attitude toward King Nebuchadnezzar relates to the gradual development of the foreign king, an advanced recognition and legitimization of foreign rule, and a new portrayal of the relationship between foreign rulers and the Jews.²⁶ This new identity of foreign kings in relation to YHWH also legitimates the Jews’ service of the foreign king.

Although the decree of the Most High is a disaster for the foreign king, the purpose of the decree is not to destroy him and his kingdom but rather to teach the sovereignty of YHWH found in the previous remarks in 4:17 (MT 4:14) and 2:21. While

²⁴ M. Henze, *The Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar: The Ancient Near Eastern Origins and Early History of Interpretation of Daniel 4*, JSJSup 61 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 111.

²⁵ Ibid., 109–111. See S. A. Berman, *Midrash Tanhuma-Yelammedenu: An English Translation of Genesis and Exodus from the Printed Version of Tanhuma-Yelammedenu with an Introduction, Notes, and Indexes* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1996), 478–79.

²⁶ Newsom interprets Daniel’s attitude toward Nebuchadnezzar that “Daniel’s reaction and the mutually solicitous exchange between the king and Daniel suggest a degree of genuine affection between them (cf. Neb 2:1–2). The function of these details appears to be to orient the reader’s attitude toward the king. In the preceding chapters Nebuchadnezzar has been ambivalently portrayed. The dream of judgment implies divine displeasure, and yet the purpose of the narrative is to depict the redemption of the king. Thus Daniel’s concern for the king encourages a sympathetic inclination toward him, which will be rewarded by the king’s confession at the end” (*Daniel*, 143). Conversely, Valeta argues that Daniel’s subsequent “scathing interpretation that portends woe and judgment (vv. 20–26)” proves that Daniel’s terror and worry for the king is not from his genuine concern (*Lions and Ovens*, 92).

the contents of the dream visions in Dan 2 and 4 have characteristics of the apocalyptic genre, such as the destruction of the worldly powers and God's final judgment, they also serve a didactic function to teach God's sovereignty in the narrative context.²⁷ For the readers of the narratives, these dream visions likely give a message of hope for the restoration to the exiles, which relates to the apocalyptic visions in Dan 7–12. In the narrative context, however, the revelation warns Nebuchadnezzar of his arrogance and teaches him about YHWH's sovereignty.²⁸ This dual function of the dream visions in Dan 2 and 4 raises a question about the characteristic of the apocalyptic visions in Daniel.²⁹

The interpretation continues: “[a]s it was commanded to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be re-established for you from the time that you learn that Heaven is sovereign” (4:26 [MT 4:23]).³⁰ The re-establishment from the stump and roots

²⁷ According to Collins, apocalypse is “a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.” Then, he further argues that “[i]n all there are also a final judgment and a destruction of the wicked” (*The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 5–6). For further discussion, see pp. 244–248 in Chapter Six; see also L. DiTommaso, “Apocalypse and Apocalypticism in Antiquity (Part 1),” *CurBR* 5.2 (2007), 239–42.

²⁸ In his study on the wisdom stance of 1 Enoch, Coughenour observes that “[t]he introductory parable (Chapters 1–5) sets forth what may be expected by the elect, on the one hand, and the godless on the other. While it is true that this parable has been taken as an eschatological vision of the end in which the fate of the righteous and wicked is predicted, the point of the whole is to teach the sovereignty of ‘The Holy Great One,’ to sketch the ways of life and of destruction.... The compelling purpose of Chapters 1–5 is didactic rather than eschatological” (“The Wisdom Stance of Enoch’s Redactor,” *JSJ* 13 [1982], 48).

²⁹ In this sense, the dream visions in the Daniel narratives are not typical apocalyptic texts, but, instead, its use in the narratives has a distinct purpose of teaching foreign kings, the oppressor and the powerful, that YHWH is the sovereign with its didactic and prophetic function.

³⁰ This phrase about leaving “the stump and roots of the tree” repeats in 4:15, 23, 26. See Isa 6:11–13: “Then I said, ‘How long, O Lord?’ And he said: ‘Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people and the land is utterly desolate; until the Lord sends everyone far away, and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land. Even if a tenth part remains in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains standing when it is felled.’ The holy seed is its stump.”

is a motif found in Isaiah in relation to Jesse and Judah (Isa 11:1–10). By employing this symbolism of a tree stump, the dream vision in Dan 4 reminds readers of the prophecy of Davidic restoration in Isaiah. Considering that this prophecy of the restoration of the Davidic monarchy is not fulfilled, however, applying this image to the gentile king likely troubled the readers. While the expectation for a restored kingdom of Judah remains unfulfilled, the narrative portrays YHWH as teaching the gentile king the sovereignty of YHWH by revealing signs and wonders, and by deposing and reinstating Nebuchadnezzar.

The following lesson from Daniel attests to YHWH's will for the gentile king. Daniel advises the foreign king Nebuchadnezzar to “atone for your sins with righteousness, and your iniquities with mercy to the oppressed, so that your prosperity may be prolonged” (4:27 [MT 4:24]).³¹ Since the previous revelations move the foreign king only to acknowledge and honor YHWH's wisdom and power, Dan 4 introduces further actions that are required following the king's recognition and praise. Through the statement of the watcher, the narrative instructs Nebuchadnezzar that YHWH requires humility—he “sets over it the lowliest of human beings” (4:17 [MT 4:14])—and Daniel teaches him the covenantal morality of the Hebrew Bible.³²

³¹ “In several passages in the *Rule of the Community*, the notion of ‘walking in perfection’ is inextricably linked with the priestly atoning function of the community. For example, ‘[t]hey shall atone for iniquitous guilt and for sinful unfaithfulness, so that (God’s) favor for the land (is obtained) without the flesh of burnt-offerings and without the fat of sacrifices. The proper offerings of the lips of judgment (is as) a righteous sweetness, and the perfect of the way (are as) a pleasing freewill offering. At that time the men of the community shall separate themselves (as) a house of holiness for Aaron, for the community of the most holy ones, and a house of the community for Israel; (these are) the ones who walk perfectly’ (1QS 9:4–6)” (Angel, “Maskil, Community,” 15).

³² The messages of the watcher (humility) and Daniel (righteousness, mercy) coheres with the words of Micah—“[h]e has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Mic 6:8).

This new message is related to the relationship between the foreign king and YHWH. The foreign king's acknowledging and praising of YHWH's wisdom and sovereignty develop into YHWH entering into a covenant with the foreign king by requiring a certain moral standard and promising rewards and punishments. The formation of Daniel's statement—"atone for your sins with righteousness, and your iniquity with mercy to the oppressed, so that your prosperity may be prolonged" (4:27 [MT 4:24])—is reminiscent of the Deuteronomic covenant between YHWH and Israel: "[t]hen you shall again obey the Lord, observing all his commandments ... and the Lord your God will make you abundantly prosperous" (Deut 30:8–9a).³³ The other statement that "[y]ou shall be driven away from human society.... until you have learned that the Most High has sovereignty over the kingdom of mortals and gives it to whom he will" (4:32 [MT 4:29]) also appears as a punishment in the covenantal relationship.³⁴ This covenantal statement for the foreign king alludes to a new relationship between YHWH and the king, thus suggesting that YHWH makes the foreign king and gentiles, his people.

³³ While NRSV translated as "mercy to the oppressed," the Aramaic word for "the oppressed" is עֲנִי (plural), which means "the poor." Considering that צַדִּיקָה also means "almsgiving" or "beneficence," the "almsgiving" parallels with "mercy to the poor" referring to the same act. According to Newsom, almsgiving was "the premier social virtue" in the Second Temple period (Sir 3:30; Tob 4:5–10; 12:6–10; *Daniel*, 145).

³⁴ "The focus on the transformation of the king in Dan 4 is also part of a broader interest in Persian and Hellenistic understanding. The closest parallel to the dynamics of this narrative are to be found in the Chronicler's account of Manasseh's captivity, suffering, and recognition that 'YHWH indeed was God' (2 Chr 33:10–16; cf. Prayer of Manasseh; Newsom, *Daniel*, 149).

Nebuchadnezzar's Doxology

Nebuchadnezzar's doxology in Dan 4 (4:1–3, 34–35, 37 [MT 3:31–33; 4:31–32, 34]) shows the king's development and change (see table 4.2).³⁵ Three observations are notable regarding Nebuchadnezzar's doxology in Dan 4. First, the minor change in the designation of the addressee displays the narratives' concern for YHWH's universal sovereignty that appears in Nebuchadnezzar's decree. While Nebuchadnezzar addresses his decree to "peoples, nations, and languages" (3:4) when it pertains to his own authority and kingship, he addresses to "all peoples, nations, and languages *that live throughout the earth*" (4:1 [MT 3:31]). The modifying phrase of "that live throughout the earth" demonstrates the inclusive nature of this statement. The narrative illustrates that YHWH reigns not only over Judah, but also over the gentile rulers, and even anyone who lives throughout the earth. This modification likely reflects the watcher's proclamation stating that "the decision is given ... in order that all who live may know" (4:17 [MT 4:14]).³⁶

Second, the elaborated phrases describing YHWH in Nebuchadnezzar's doxology show not only that the king acknowledges YHWH's superior wisdom but also that he submits to YHWH's sovereignty.³⁷ Considering the narratives' presentation of a binary

³⁵ Based on the comparison with 4QPrNab (Prayer of Nabonidus), Collins argues that "[t]he relevance of this document to Daniel 4 is obvious. In both, a Babylonian king is afflicted for a period of seven years (literally, 'times,' in Daniel). In both, a Jew interprets his situation.... Although the extant fragments do not include Nabonidus's confession of the Most High God, there can be no doubt that this is the focus of the composition, as in Daniel 4" (*Daniel*, 217). However, as in the case of Joseph's story, the absence of Nabonidus's doxology in 4QPrNab tradition-historically supports the argument that the distinctiveness and focus of Dan 4 is Nebuchadnezzar's confession at the end.

³⁶ Interestingly, when the verbatim phrase occurs at the end of Dan 6 (6:25 [MT 6:26]), the NRSV translates it differently as "all peoples and nations of every language *throughout the whole world*."

³⁷ Regarding Nebuchadnezzar's development, Altman's explanation is illuminating: "[i]n Roland then fundamentally the same from beginning to end? In one sense we must say that it is, for here there is little of the education that characterizes the Bildungsroman, little of the quest and discovery common in

between the divine and human kingdoms, the human sovereign Nebuchadnezzar's submission to YHWH presents the integration of the binary opposition.³⁸

Table 4.2. Comparison of the doxologies in Daniel 3 and 4

3:4, 28–29	4:1, 34–35, 37 (MT 3:31; 4:31–32, 34)
<i>O peoples, nations, and languages</i>	<i>... to all peoples, nations, and languages that live throughout the earth</i>
Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, <i>who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him</i>	I blessed the Most High, and praised and honoured <i>the one who lives for ever.</i> For his sovereignty is an everlasting sovereignty, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation.
<i>There is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.</i>	<i>He does what he wills with the host of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can stay his hand or say to him, 'What are you doing?'</i> Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, <i>for all his works are truth, and his ways are justice; and he is able to bring low those who walk in pride.</i>

In addition, Nebuchadnezzar addresses the issue of theodicy in his final doxology:

“[t]here is no one who can ... say to him, ‘What are you doing?’” (4:35 [MT 4:32]); “all his works are truth, and his ways are justice” (4:37 [MT 4:34]). By the praise of the

romance, little of the mystery and solutions of the detective novel. In another sense, however, Roland is constantly evolving, constantly redefining its terms as adjustments are made in the identity of its polarities. Each section of the text presents a conflict between polar opposites, but from one section to another the specifics of the polarity may shift, isolating a new variable” (*A Theory of Narrative*, 49).

³⁸ “The text’s structure resembles that of an equal-arm balance. When a member of one group changes sides or refuses to fight, the balance of power is destroyed and the plot is set in motion. The text ends when the two sides are reduced to one, by death or expulsion, or through marriage or conversion” (*Ibid.*, 55).

gentile ruler, the author acknowledges YHWH's justice and truth, a vexing concern since the fall of Jerusalem.

This theodicy statement has double implications. On the one hand, it presents Nebuchadnezzar's acknowledgment of YHWH's justice and fairness. On the other hand, this statement addresses the implied Jewish readers who might question the validity of the message of the narratives regarding the education and conversion of the gentile rulers. Nebuchadnezzar's theodicy statement presents how the narratives imagine the just and truthful YHWH, especially in relation to the possible conversion of gentile rulers and the inclusion of them into YHWH's people.³⁹ This implied readers' suspicion and negation against the just and truthful YHWH is reminiscent of Jonah's suspicion and negation against the merciful and just God.

Third, Nebuchadnezzar not only acknowledges and praises YHWH's sovereignty but also confesses that YHWH is "able to bring low those who walk in pride" (4:37 [MT 4:34]). This acknowledgment reflects the watcher's statement that "he ... sets over it [the kingdom of mortals] the lowliest of human beings" (Dan 4:17 [MT 4:14]) and Nebuchadnezzar's experience of being deposed and humbled (4:31–33 [MT 28–30]). In

³⁹ Collins evaluates Nebuchadnezzar's final doxology in Dan 4 that "[i]n Daniel 4, as in Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar is cast in a very unfavorable light. He is accused of neglecting the true god, and his kingdom is taken away. After he has been humbled and made like a beast of the field, he repents and worships the true god. This conversion does not indicate ultimate approval of (or confidence in) the Gentile ruler by the Jewish author. It is simply a demonstration of the superior power of God over human hybris, analogous to the final kingdom in Daniel 2" ("Court-Tales in Daniel and the Development of Apocalyptic," *JBL* 94 [1975], 228). Collins explains the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar at the end of Dan 4 as a result of working with the story of Nabonidus who actually returned to Babylon. Collins argues that both Dan 4 and 5 portray very negative pictures of foreign kings. Thus, he proposes that those chapters reflect a hostile relationship later in history (*ibid.*). Considering Nebuchadnezzar's development in Dan 1–4, however, the restoration of the foreign king based on his learning and repentance marks the highlight of his development and transformation. The fact that there is no death or deposal of Nebuchadnezzar at the end of Dan 4 also testifies to the successful education of Nebuchadnezzar. In this sense, *contra* Collins, these stories present the most powerful way of legitimating foreign rule and affirming the universal sovereignty of YHWH.

relation to this acknowledgment of the foreign king, Frey calls Dan 4 (and Dan 9) “*Gerichtsdoxologie*.” According to him, *Gerichtsdoxologie* is a biblical genre “in which a confession of human frailty is added to the confession of sin.”⁴⁰ According to Frey, these two ideas of confession of human frailty and the confession of sin were already related in other wisdom traditions, for example in Job 4:17–21; 14:1–4; 15:14–16.⁴¹

The Progressive Nature of Dream Revelations

The interpretation of the story in Dan 4 reveals the progressive nature of dream revelation in the narratives. While Dan 4 has a similar dream vision and court-contest plot to Dan 2, there are two differences between these chapters.⁴² First, Nebuchadnezzar tells the sages his dream and asks for its interpretation in Dan 4, whereas he orders the assembled interpreters to tell both his dream and its interpretation in Dan 2. Second, Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar’s dream without asking YHWH for assistance in Dan 4, which accords with the depiction of Daniel in 1:17 as one who has the insight to interpret dreams and visions. Daniel 2, however, depicts Daniel as receiving YHWH’s help in uncovering the dream and its interpretation.

⁴⁰ Jörg Frey, “Flesh and Spirit in the Palestinian Jewish Sapiential Tradition and in the Qumran Texts: An Inquiry into the Background of Pauline Usage,” in *The Wisdom Texts from Qumran and the Development of Sapiential Thought*, eds. C. Hempel, A. Lange, and H. Lichtenberger, BETL 159 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 397–98.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 398.

⁴² Nebuchadnezzar’s initial response to his own dream is also similar to that of chapter 2: “his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him” (2:1b); “I saw a dream that frightened me; my fantasies in bed and the visions of my head terrified me” (4:5). Valeta argues that this description of king’s feelings ridicules the foreign kings: “The idea that a conquering, brazen, egocentric, grandiose, and raging king should admit to anyone that he is afraid is preposterous. Again, the depiction of the king is satirical” (*Lions and Ovens and Visions*, 90). We can find that, however, Daniel himself is also terrified at his own dream and vision: “As for me, Daniel, my spirit was troubled within me, and the visions of my head terrified me” (7:15). Moreover, at the story of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, “Daniel ... was severely distressed for a while. His thoughts terrified him” (4:19).

This plot distinction between Dan 2 and 4 testifies to the different functions of revelations in those two chapters. While Dan 2 uses the dream-interpretation as a means to reveal Daniel's and YHWH's superior wisdom and ability, thus not concerning about the content and its fulfillment, Dan 4 emphasizes the content and message of the dream and how the dream is fulfilled in Nebuchadnezzar's life. For this reason, the difficulty of the task or the contest between Daniel and the Babylonian sages, which is important to show YHWH's superiority, is insignificant in Dan 4. In addition, the plot of the foreign king's threat to kill every sage or the lengthy dispute between the king and the Chaldeans is absent in Dan 4. Moreover, these two revelations have different implications for YHWH's activity in history. While YHWH's revelation in Dan 2 concerns the distant future without a real impact on Nebuchadnezzar's existence, YHWH's revelation in Dan 4 affects the present. In this way, the revelation in Dan 4 completes the development of Nebuchadnezzar in his recognition of YHWH and the subsequent transformation.

Nebuchadnezzar's initial statement in Dan 4 supports this understanding about the progressive nature of the revelation and its effectiveness. At the beginning of the letter's body, Nebuchadnezzar states, "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was living at ease in my home and prospering in my palace" (4:4 [MT 4:1]). Considering that he experienced a disturbing revelation about his future in Dan 2, his peaceful mind and prospering look irrelevant. Consequently, this unaffected peaceful and secure condition of Nebuchadnezzar necessitates another dream revelation or lesson later in Dan 4. Coxon notes that

As the head of gold he might have thought himself immune from the destruction foretold against those kingdoms represented by inferior metals.... Ch. 4 is the

third lesson in the king's education: the status of golden head is not a cosy [*sic*] sinecure to protect him from the winds of fortune.⁴³

This problem of Nebuchadnezzar's unaffectedness relates to the case of the next king, Belshazzar. In Dan 5, Daniel blames Belshazzar for his unaffected arrogance, hedonism, and sacrilege (5:1–4) despite his knowledge of the experiences of his “father.”⁴⁴ In this sense, the story of Belshazzar in Dan 5 builds upon the message on humility in Dan 4.

Following Nebuchadnezzar

Following Nebuchadnezzar's attitude and speeches reveals the development of the foreign king's acknowledgment of YHWH's wisdom and power—the diegetic level of meaning. Five stages summarize the development of Nebuchadnezzar who is featured in Dan 1–4. First, in Dan 1 Nebuchadnezzar recognizes the superiority of the Jewish courtiers' wisdom but does not know YHWH. Although the narrator depicts YHWH as the agent of all events of the story—giving Judah to Nebuchadnezzar's hand (1:2), making Ashpenaz give favor to Daniel (1:9), and giving knowledge and wisdom to Daniel and his companions (1:17)—the king does not know YHWH's roles and actions.

⁴³ P. W. Coxon, “Another Look at Nebuchadnezzar's Madness,” in *The Book of Daniel: In the Light of New Findings*, ed. A. S. Van der Woude, BETL 106 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 221.

⁴⁴ Contra to the historical succession of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, the Daniel narratives present Nebuchadnezzar as Belshazzar's father. Goldingay explains, “Belshazzar's actual father (v 2) was Nabonidus, who had come to the throne through a coup and did not belong to the royal line,” and continues to suggest that “[i]f the story in chap. 4 really concerns Nabonidus, for instance, Belshazzar *is* his son. Alternatively, the motif may connect with the violent death of Nebuchadnezzar's actual son and successor Evil-merodach, with whom Belshazzar was identified by many commentators (e.g., Keil) before his identity and position became clear from cuneiform texts.... The two chief points in neo-Babylonian history are the empire's rise under Nebuchadnezzar and its fall under Nabonidus/Belshazzar, so that ‘Nebuchadnezzar the father of Belshazzar’ summarizes and reflects the general historical facts of the period (*Daniel*, WBC 30 [Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989], 108). See also J. D. Prince, “Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin: A Historical Study of the Fifth Chapter of Daniel” (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1893), 11.

Second, in Dan 2 Nebuchadnezzar recognizes part of YHWH's nature through the first dream interpretation. Through this interpretation, Daniel teaches Nebuchadnezzar that YHWH reveals the future events (2:28–29) and grants the kingdom, power, might, and the glory (2:37–38). These two lessons pertain to the wisdom and power of YHWH respectively. Nebuchadnezzar, however, reflects only the first lesson—YHWH's superior wisdom—in his praise as there is no mention about YHWH as the source of his own sovereignty. Thus, the king recognizes the superior wisdom of YHWH without acknowledging his sovereignty (2:37–38, 47). Moreover, even though Daniel emphasizes that “this mystery has not been revealed to me because of any wisdom that I have more than any other living being” (2:30), the king falls down and worships Daniel. The king's response at the end of Dan 2 shows that his acknowledgment is not yet fully developed.

Third, the making of the golden statue and commanding all his subjects to worship it at the beginning of Dan 3 attests that there is no subsequent and corresponding change in Nebuchadnezzar's attitude and action (3:1–5).⁴⁵ He, however, makes some progress in his recognition of YHWH through experiencing the delivering power in Dan 3. Nebuchadnezzar comes to acknowledge and praise the superiority of YHWH's power and sovereignty over his own in Dan 3 (3:28–29).

⁴⁵ Regarding Nebuchadnezzar's statue in Dan 3, Collins argues that “Judith attributes to Nebuchadnezzar an attempt ‘to destroy all the gods of the land, so that all nations should worship Nebuchadnezzar only, and all their tongue and tribes should call upon him as god’ (Jdt 3:8). Against this, the Aramaic text of Dan 3:12, 14, 18 (‘they do not serve your god and they do not worship the statue’) strongly favors the view that the statue represents a god. The two interpretations are not necessarily incompatible” (*Daniel*, 182). See also N. Porteous, *Daniel: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), 57; L. F. Hartman and A. A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, AB 23 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 161.

Fourth, despite the previous lessons, Nebuchadnezzar's unaffected peaceful mind and opulent life indicate that his acknowledgment of YHWH's wisdom and power does not affect his thoughts and actions (4:4 [MT 4:1]). As a result, the watcher teaches another lesson that YHWH gives the kingdom to the lowliest of human beings (4:17 [MT 4:14]). Daniel 4 depicts the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar through his deposal and being "driven away from human society" (4:32–33 [MT 4:29–30]). On this stage, Nebuchadnezzar learns that once he acknowledges YHWH's wisdom and power, there should be a subsequent and corresponding humbleness and submission to YHWH.

Lastly, the fact that Nebuchadnezzar's response at the end of Dan 4 lacks any praises or rewards for Daniel, in contrast to Dan 2, further evinces the development of the foreign king. This difference attests to the progress of Nebuchadnezzar's recognition of YHWH's wisdom and power. He realizes that human interpreters serve as God's messengers who are not to be praised or worshipped. Nebuchadnezzar recognizes that the ultimate source of all wisdom and power is YHWH. This understanding leads the foreign king to acknowledge that only YHWH is to be praised.⁴⁶ "Following" the foreign king and

⁴⁶ In contrast to this positive depiction of Nebuchadnezzar in the MT, the OG version adds some negative description of the foreign king. For example, the OG-Dan 4:22 [MT 4:19] adds the fact of desolating the house of God to Daniel's condemnation of Nebuchadnezzar—"our works were seen, how you ravaged the house of the living God pertaining to the sins of the sanctified people"—and v. 23 [MT v. 20] omits the phrase about leaving the tree's (Nebuchadnezzar's) stump and roots in the ground (trans. R. T. McLay, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint: And the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under that Title*, eds. A. Pietersma and B. G. Wright [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007], 1005). Meadowcroft argues that "[t]he version's [OG's] attitude towards the king is more adversarial, perhaps reflecting the setting behind chs. 7–12" (*Aramaic Daniel and Greek Daniel: A Literary Comparison*, JSOTSup 198 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995], 55).

“framing” his experiences in Dan 1–4 reveal the development of Nebuchadnezzar in recognizing YHWH’s sovereignty, which is the message of the narratives in Dan 1–4.⁴⁷

Dual to Single-Focus Narrative

Daniel 4 explicitly presents the author’s single-focus concern in contrast to the previous narratives. The stories in Dan 1–3 present the binary opposition of dual-focus narrative at the foreground with the implicit single-focus concern of the foreign king’s development. Daniel 4, on the contrary, places single-focus factor in the front by emphasizing Nebuchadnezzar’s first-person recounts and confession, while putting the dual-focus factor of court contest at the background. The use of Nebuchadnezzar’s first-person narration in Dan 4 leads readers to focus on the foreign king. From the beginning, readers experience the excitement of Nebuchadnezzar through his hymnic praise. As he narrates his dream interpretation and his experience, readers participate in Nebuchadnezzar’s fear, anxiety, exhilaration, and other psychological states. As a result, the focus on Nebuchadnezzar’s mind and attitude makes Dan 4 an effective conclusion to the so-called Nebuchadnezzar cycle.⁴⁸

This sudden change of view and the plot structure leads readers to question the validity of Dan 4’s dual-focus nature. In Dan 4, the contest around the dream

⁴⁷ Koch argues that Nebuchadnezzar’s confession in Dan 4 makes it clear that not only the existence of the one God is conceded, but also the sovereignty of this deity stands in the center (“Gottes Herrschaft,” 133).

⁴⁸ In addition, the place of Nebuchadnezzar’s doxology at the beginning of Dan 4 also illustrates the concluding nature of Dan 4. Foreign kings’ doxologies usually appear at the end of each story as a conclusion of each narrative. Even though Dan 4 has its own concluding doxology at the end, Nebuchadnezzar’s doxology at the beginning of the chapter presents Dan 4 as a final stage of his development in Dan 1–4.

interpretation takes up only four verses (4:6–9 [MT 4:3–6]), whereas the contest between the Jewish and gentile sages in Dan 2 occupies 27 verses (2:2–28).⁴⁹ Consequently, Nebuchadnezzar’s experiences and speeches occupy a majority of the story in Dan 4. The narrative’s concern in Dan 4, expressed by Nebuchadnezzar’s monologue, is thus different from that of Dan 2. Daniel 4 focuses on the punishment and reinstatement that Nebuchadnezzar experiences as a fulfillment of his dream, and the subsequent transformation of Nebuchadnezzar, which is implied in his final doxology. In this sense, Dan 4 has characteristics of a single-focus narrative. Although it has all the characters of the previous stories—Jewish sage(s), gentile sages, and the foreign king—and the same issues of dream interpretation and court contest, its main topic is Nebuchadnezzar, the individual. The binary opposition between the two sides, and even Daniel, forms the backdrop for the individual foreign king.

This understanding coheres with the meaning identified through the reading strategy of “following” in the previous stories. That is, even though Dan 1–3 presents a binary opposition between the Jewish and gentile sages, who are protagonists and antagonists respectively, this study’s process of “following” shows that the narratives focus across the stories on the foreign king, and his development. Daniel 4, which concludes the Nebuchadnezzar stories, makes this focus explicit even without the strategy of “following” by changing its literary structure into that of a single-focus narrative. Nebuchadnezzar’s development and transformation, which is implicit in Dan 1–3,

⁴⁹ Daniel 4:6–7 (MT 4:3–4), which describes Nebuchadnezzar’s summoning the Babylonian sages, is not in OG, but does appear in Th. Newsom explains that this scene “is apparently a redactional element in the MT designed to increase the similarity between Dan 2 and 4” (*Daniel*, 136). This evidence supports the idea that the story is originally not about a court-contest.

becomes explicit in the conclusion in Dan 4 where his acknowledgment and praise of YHWH reaches its culmination.

Why Nebuchadnezzar?

This study questioned the purpose of using the specific name, Nebuchadnezzar, in Dan 1–4. This study draws four observations concerning the function of the name Nebuchadnezzar in these chapters. First, the name represents the foreign rulers in general. Newsom argues that Nebuchadnezzar “serves as a figure for Gentile monarchs in general.”⁵⁰ The fact that Nebuchadnezzar was probably the most well-known and the most infamous name to the Jews supports this argument.

Second, the use of Nebuchadnezzar’s name in the narratives maximizes the effectiveness of the message. For the Jews, the name Nebuchadnezzar functions as a symbol of an archenemy of the Jews and YHWH who destroyed the temple. By showing that the archetypal image of an arrogant and despotic gentile king can acknowledge YHWH’s superiority and submit to the power of YHWH, the narratives demonstrate the transformative power of YHWH’s wisdom and the possible conversion of foreign kings.⁵¹ The use of the name Nebuchadnezzar thus highlights the power of YHWH.⁵²

⁵⁰ Ibid., 64.

⁵¹ Based on inscriptions, Harper argues that “Nebuchadnezzar’s piety is shown in all his works, and his prayers are the best that have come down to us.” One of Nebuchadnezzar’s prayers reads, “O, Eternal Ruler! Lord of everything that exists!... Thou didst create me, and Thou hast intrusted to me rule over everything. According to thy mercy, O Lord, which thou bestowest on all, Make me to love they exalted rule. Cause the fear of thy divinity to exist in my heart” (“Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon [604–561 BC],” *BW* 14 [1899], 9). The text of prayer is from EIH: H. C. Rawlinson, “East India House Inscription” in *A Selection from the Historical Inscriptions of Chaldaea, Assyria, and Babylonia*, vol. 1 of *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* (London: Bowler, 1861), 53–64, cols. i, 55–ii, 1. Jastrow also notes that “Nebuchadnezzar’s inscriptions are characterized by the prayer.... Whether erecting a sanctuary, or building a canal, or improving the walls of Babylon, he does not fail to add to the description of his

Third, the narratives present a new perspective on King Nebuchadnezzar that extends beyond previous depictions of him in prophetic literature. For example, Dan 2:37–38 alludes to Jer 27:5–17 (see table 4.3). The Daniel narratives further develop the prophecy of Jeremiah about Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah depicts Nebuchadnezzar as the agent of YHWH’s punishment on the nations and Judah. YHWH’s calling Nebuchadnezzar as “my servant,” however, was presumably a vexing claim for some of the Jews. Moreover, Jeremiah states that YHWH, who created the earth (הָאָרֶץ) and everything on it, gave all these lands (כָּל-הָאֲרָצוֹת) to Nebuchadnezzar to serve him (Jer 27:5–6). The Daniel narratives develop this portrayal of Nebuchadnezzar in Jeremiah and illustrate that the gentile king is not just a rod of YHWH, but a prospective people of YHWH in an inclusive paradigm of God’s kingdom and its people.⁵³

achievements a prayer to some deity, in which he asks for divine grace and the blessings of long life and prosperity” (*The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, HHR 2 [Boston: Ginn, 1898], 295).

⁵² Concerning the use of Nebuchadnezzar’s name, Newsom writes that “[d]epicting Nebuchadnezzar as an arrogant king who ultimately was humbled and came to recognize the power of the Most High God addresses a deep wound of cultural memory. Moreover, the fact that the end of the Neo-Babylonian Empire did not see the restoration of an independent Judean kingdom but incorporation into yet another gentile empire, that of the Persians, meant that the underlying theological problem of how to understand the sovereignty of YHWH in relation to the power of the gentile monarchs remained a live issue for Jews” (*Daniel*, 9–10).

⁵³ Isaiah similarly tries to legitimate foreign rule. Ackroyd interprets the new covenant in Isa 55 as “a promise reapplied to the whole people.” (*Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century B.C.*, OTL [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968], 125). Baltzer also claims that “we can assume that for listeners the declaration of the anointing established the link with the Davidic dynasty and its claim. To put it somewhat drastically: Cyrus is the new David! The dignity of the ‘anointed one’ is transferred to a foreign ruler. According to 44:24–28, this ruler was Cyrus as founder of the temple; here it is Cyrus as sovereign” (*Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55*, trans. M. Kohl, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001], 225). See also Fried who suggests that Second Isaiah tries to legitimate Cyrus as heir to the Davidic monarch, and that the line of the Persian kings would now replace the Davidides (“Cyrus the Messiah? The Historical Background to Isaiah 45:1,” *HTR* 95 [2002], 374).

Table 4.3. Comparison between the depictions of Nebuchadnezzar in Jeremiah and Daniel

Jer 27:5–6, 9, 14, 17	Dan 2:37–38
<p>It is I who ... have made the earth, with the people and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever I please. Now <i>I have given all these lands into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, my servant,</i></p> <p>and I have given him even <i>the wild animals of the field</i> to serve him</p> <p>You, therefore, must not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your soothsayers, or your sorcerers, who are saying to you, ‘<i>You shall not serve the king of Babylon.</i>’ ... Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are telling you not to <i>serve the king of Babylon</i>, for they are prophesying a lie to you.... Do not listen to them; <i>serve the king of Babylon and live.</i></p>	<p>You, O king, the king of kings—to whom <i>the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the might, and the glory, into whose hand he has given human beings, wherever they live,</i></p> <p><i>the wild animals of the field,</i> and the birds of the air,</p> <p>and <i>whom he has established as ruler over them all.</i></p>

Lastly, the use of the historical name of Nebuchadnezzar has a symbolic significance as Newsom suggests,

But even fictional stories ... draw on materials from and make reference to the real world. In so doing, they are a means of action upon the real world, a means of exercising power by encouraging readers to perceive reality differently. For this reason artists are often feared by oppressive regimes. Thus it is not simply the king’s perception of power that are transformed but also those of many readers.⁵⁴

By employing Nebuchadnezzar from the real world, the narratives illustrate the foreign kings’ transformation by YHWH’s wisdom and power in a fictional but powerful way. This illustration not only encourages readers “to perceive reality differently,” but also presents a vision of a new reality—the inclusive kingdom of

⁵⁴ Newsom, *Daniel*, 102.

YHWH—through the education of the foreign kings.⁵⁵ At the same time, the narratives accomplish its second goal to affirm the superiority of YHWH's wisdom and sovereignty in the imperial context, by depicting the transformation of such a despotic and powerful foreign ruler.

Daniel Five

The Story of the New Foreign King Belshazzar

Daniel 5 presents a new king Belshazzar. The strategy of “following” a character allows Belshazzar to literarily serve as the continuation of the foreign king character in place of Nebuchadnezzar. This study employs this strategy of “following” to concentrate attention on Belshazzar in Dan 5, just as it focused on Nebuchadnezzar in the previous chapters. Since the character is followed “from action to action and scene to scene,” Belshazzar's actions, speeches, and thoughts are understood in the context of the previous events of the foreign king, even though Belshazzar appears in Dan 5 for the first time. Thus, the reading strategy of “following” assumes that a new actor exists not in isolation but in relation to the previous units. In this sense, the “following” generates a sense of continuity that is necessary for developing meaning across the stories and characters.

Daniel 5 begins with Belshazzar's great festival for which he summons the temple vessels of gold and silver that Nebuchadnezzar took from Jerusalem. He drinks from the

⁵⁵ Hartman interprets this new reality as already realized in the present: “Daniel's revelation had referred to a future assertion of God's rule. Paradoxically, it actually effects a realization of God's rule even now. Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges that God already rules, ‘on earth as in heaven,’ and by giving God's servants authority over the sages and over the Babylonian political affairs he institutes another indirect form of divine rule in Babylon itself.... The fact that there is to be a new future makes it possible to hope for a new present. It does not mean we cease to have any hopes for the present” (*The Book of Daniel*, 61).

temple vessels along with his lords, wives, and concubines, which is an act of pride and blasphemy against YHWH.⁵⁶ The readers understand Belshazzar's action in connection with the previous stories of Nebuchadnezzar in three ways. First, Belshazzar drinks from the temple vessels that YHWH let Nebuchadnezzar bring and keep "in the treasury of his gods" (1:2). Second, Belshazzar's action constitutes blasphemy, which Nebuchadnezzar forbid in an earlier narrative: "[a]ny people, nation, or language that utters blasphemy against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins" (3:29). Third, Belshazzar's act of blasphemy couples with his praising "the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone" (5:4). All the materials are depicted in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Dan 2 as representing perishable powers that are ultimately destroyed by YHWH's kingdom (2:32–35, 44–45). These intratextual connections make the process of "following" between different kings smooth and feasible.⁵⁷

Following the blasphemy, YHWH's revelation appears to Belshazzar, which stands in contrast to the previous dream revelations. Belshazzar expresses greater distress over the revelation than observed in Nebuchadnezzar—"the king's face turned pale, and his thoughts terrified him. His limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together" (5:6). As no one can read and interpret the letters on the wall, the queen introduces Daniel to

⁵⁶ Redditt claims that in Dan 5, "[t]he second-century readers of Daniel almost surely would have recognized in Belshazzar the same characteristics they saw in Antiochus IV for his actions against the temple and Jewish customs" ("The Community behind the Book of Daniel: Challenges, Hopes, Values, and Its View of God," *PRS* 36 [2009], 329).

⁵⁷ In this sense, the reading strategy of following is not exclusively reader-oriented methodology in that textual elements necessitate and facilitate the reader's following of a character.

Belshazzar as one who can interpret the writing.⁵⁸ She introduces Daniel as one “who is endowed with a spirit of the holy gods” (5:11).⁵⁹ This is the same phrase that Nebuchadnezzar uses to refer to Daniel in Dan 4 (4:8, 9, 18 [MT 4:5, 6, 15]). This verbal parallel also helps the process of “following.” The readers thus suppose that the new characters in Dan 5 (Belshazzar and the queen) have knowledge about the previous events. The setting and plot of Dan 5 resembles that of Dan 2 by presenting the terrifying sign to the foreign king, establishing the contest between the Jews and Babylonian sages, and presenting a divinely revealed ill omen regarding the king’s future.

The Nature of YHWH’s Revelation to Belshazzar

YHWH’s revelation to Belshazzar in Dan 5 reflects both similarities and differences to the previous revelations. Four observations present the distinct nature of the revelation to Belshazzar. First, unlike the visions in Dan 2 and 4, Dan 5 employs an unusual phenomenon of human fingers writing on the wall.⁶⁰ The main difference

⁵⁸ Communicating a god’s message in a form of divine writ was a typical Mesopotamian concept. “This means of communicating the divine will is sharply different from what prevails in preexilic Israelite and Judean contexts.... The Jewish author should represent divine communication in this fashion suggests the ways in which a Diaspora people in an imperial setting might appropriate and hybridize aspects of the dominant religion” (Newsom, *Daniel*, 170–71). This study argues that the narrative appropriates the dominant culture in order to find a proper means to deliver YHWH’s message to the gentiles within the stories. The use of sages instead of prophets, and apocalyptic dream visions or coded writings instead of prophetic oracles has the purpose of delivering YHWH’s message to the gentiles.

⁵⁹ According to Newsom, Nabonidus’ mother and Belshazzar’s grandmother, Adad-guppi, was a very influential woman who supported Nabonidus’ reign and his devotion to the moon-god Sin (*Daniel*, 172). Herodotus praises her wisdom: “[t]he second queen, whose name was Nitocris, was a wiser woman than the first. She left such monuments as I shall record” (*The Persian Wars*. 1.185 [Godley, LCL]). Van Deventer interprets that the queen does not only introduce Daniel to Belshazzar but also rebukes Belshazzar as a wise woman (“Another Wise Queen (Mother) - Women’s Wisdom in Daniel 5:10–12?” in *Prophets and Daniel*, ed. A. Brenner, FCB 8 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001], 258).

⁶⁰ Regarding the writing on the wall, Broida argues that “the authors of Dan 5 apply mantic techniques to a sacred text for the first time in the Bible—the writing on the wall ‘sent by God.’ Several features of the writing on the wall are shared by Mesopotamian and later Jewish texts suggesting that

between a dream vision and a sign of letters is the immediacy. The writing on the wall appears “immediately” as “they drank the wine and praised the gods” (5:4–5). Moreover, the writing’s function does not relate to any warning or teaching like the cases of Nebuchadnezzar. Instead, the writing is a written condemnation against Belshazzar’s arrogance and blasphemy without a second chance or opportunity to learn lessons as seen in the previous stories of Nebuchadnezzar.⁶¹ This immediacy of revelation becomes obvious when Belshazzar dies that night without any chance to learn, atone, or change.⁶²

The second difference between Dan 5 and the preceding pericopes derives from the fact that YHWH’s revelation in Dan 5 attests that the gentiles are under the same moral standards before YHWH as the Jews.⁶³ A part of the meaning of the letters, “you have been weighed on the scales and found wanting; your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians” (5:27–28), is reminiscent of the Hebrew Bible passages that are related to YHWH’s judgment of his people: “in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath” (Ps 62:9); “let me be weighed in a just balance, and let

Jewish scribes adapted to their own uses Mesopotamian techniques for unriddling sacred writing” (“Textualizing Divination: The Writing on the Wall in Daniel 5:25,” *VT* 62 [2012], 3).

⁶¹ Building upon Arnold, Newsom states that “[t]he only hint the reader receives is the choice of the verb *nēpaq* to describe the appearance of the hand, since that verb was twice used in a different conjugation in vv. 2–3 to refer to the ‘bringing out’ of the temple vessels. The wordplay is a signal that the mysterious hand is a direct response to Belshazzar’s blasphemy” (*Daniel*, 169); see also B. T. Arnold, “Wordplay and Narrative Techniques in Daniel 5 and 6,” *JBL* 112 (1993), 482.

⁶² As Collins points out, “[i]n Daniel 5 the king is even more harshly treated. Belshazzar has no redeeming feature. His conduct is marked by arrogance and blasphemy from the beginning. He does not even acknowledge the God of Daniel at the end” (“Court-Tales in Daniel,” 228).

⁶³ Barton states that “[w]hat is still more striking in Daniel is that there are assumed to be ethical norms binding also on non-Jews” (“Theological Ethics in Daniel,” in vol. 2 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, eds. J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint, 2 vols., VTSup FIOTL 83,2 [Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001], 664).

God know my integrity!” (Job 31:6); “I will surely tear the kingdom from you and give it to your servant” (1 Kgs 11:11); “[s]ee, I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon, and will give you ten tribes” (1 Kgs 11:31).⁶⁴ Applying the symbolism of weighing on a scale, which usually relates to the Jews, to the gentiles also has an implication for the new relationship between YHWH and the gentiles.

The application of the same moral and religious standard and punishment can be explained by the covenantal language in Dan 4. This study examined how Dan 4 introduces a new relationship between YHWH and the foreign kings based on the Deuteronomic covenantal language. Even though the use of Deuteronomic covenantal language does not necessarily mean that YHWH makes a new covenant with the gentiles, it shows that the Daniel narratives envision an unprecedented relationship between YHWH and the gentiles.

This new covenantal relationship continues in Dan 5, and the story of Belshazzar presents a case in which the covenanter disregards the stipulation and is subject to penalty. YHWH’s lessons in the previous stories include the prohibition of blasphemy (3:29), the acknowledgment of YHWH’s sovereignty (4:26 [MT 4:23]), the atonement for one’s sins with righteousness and showing mercy to the oppressed (4:27 [MT 4:24]), the avoidance of pride and arrogance (4:30–31, 37 [MT 4:27–28, 34]), and humility (4:37 [MT 4:34]). The narrative assumes that Belshazzar already knew everything related to his father

⁶⁴ The OG and Th represent different readings for the writing on the wall. While Th is close to MT, the OG reads: “[t]his is the interpretation of the writing. The time of your kingdom is counted. Your kingdom leaves off being shorten. Your kingdom is finished given to Mede and Persia” (The present author’s translation). Compared to the OG version, the MT’s use of biblical reference in Daniel’s interpretation emphasizes the prophetic nature of Daniel’s interpretation.

Nebuchadnezzar, but he disregarded his father's lessons and passed over the opportunities to change and recognize YHWH.⁶⁵

The third difference that distinguishes Dan 5 from the preceding chapters is that the revelation receives its fulfillment immediately after it is delivered. Belshazzar's story exemplifies the consequence of disregarding YHWH's message in Dan 4: "he [YHWH] is able to bring low those who walk in pride" (4:37 [MT 4:34]). In this sense, the story of Belshazzar in Dan 5 is not an isolated story of an arrogant and blasphemous foreign king, but builds upon the new relationship between YHWH and the foreign king in Dan 4 and presents a negative consequence of disregarding that relationship.⁶⁶ Thus, the narrative portrays Belshazzar as under the influence of the new relationship, regardless of his own will, based on his knowledge of the lessons from Dan 4. This assumption within the text reveals that these stories reflect an intentional sequence.

Daniel reproaches Belshazzar for his self-exaltation against YHWH, praising other gods, and not honoring YHWH. This rebuke resembles a preexilic prophecy against the Israelite kings.⁶⁷ Although this rebuke against the foreign king is improbable in a real

⁶⁵ "The underlying assumption must be that they can have enough knowledge of the true God for them to be culpable when they arrogate to themselves the sovereignty over the world which belongs only to him" (Barton, "Theological Ethics in Daniel," 666).

⁶⁶ This is evident from Daniel's accusation: "[a]nd you, Belshazzar his [Nebuchadnezzar's] son, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this! You have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven! The vessels of his temple have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them. You have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know; but the God in whose power is your very breath, and to whom belong all your ways, you have not honored" (5:22–23). See also Deut 32:7: "[r]emember the days of old, consider the years long past; *ask your father, and he will inform you; your elders, and they will tell you.*"

⁶⁷ "Criticism of a stubborn nature that refuses to submit to discipline and correction is a staple of Israelite moral discourse" (C. A. Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran*, STDJ 52 [Leiden: Brill, 2004], 124).

world, the previous stories provide a narrative context in which this situation makes sense to readers. The narrative, however, does not move forward without a development. In Dan 4, the holy watcher and Daniel teach Nebuchadnezzar to atone for his sin with righteousness, mercy, and humility. Daniel 5 goes further by urging the gentile king to honor YHWH and not to serve other gods (5:23). Daniel even makes a monotheistic claim as a reason for reproaching Belshazzar: “[y]ou have praised the gods ... which do not see or hear or know” (5:23).⁶⁸ Daniel’s claim implies that Belshazzar should have praised and worshiped YHWH alone.⁶⁹

The fourth difference between Dan 5 and the previous stories about Nebuchadnezzar is that God’s revelation to Belshazzar contains more focus on the fate of Belshazzar as an individual than the end of the empire. Although Daniel proclaims that “your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians,” it is depicted as a consequence of Belshazzar’s fate. This sentence does not mean the end to the foreign imperial rule.⁷⁰ Rather another foreign king (Darius) receives the kingdom (5:31). The narrative focuses on the fate of the individual Belshazzar who faces the end with his

⁶⁸ For similar claims in the Hebrew Bible, see “[t]here you will serve other gods made by human hands, objects of wood and stone that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell” (Deut 4:28); “it cannot move from its place. If one cries out to it, it does not answer or save anyone from trouble” (Isa 46:7); “[y]our children have forsaken me, and have sworn by those who are no gods” (Jer 5:3); “[b]eaten silver is brought from Tarshish and gold from Uphaz.... They are all the product of skilled workers. But the Lord is the true God” (Jer 10:9–10); “Can mortals make for themselves gods? Such are no gods!” (Jer 16:20).

⁶⁹ According to Nock’s classification, Daniel’s accusation alludes to the narratives’ claim for the “conversion” of the gentiles instead of “adhesion” (*Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* [London: Oxford University Press, 1933; reprinted Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998], 6–7).

⁷⁰ Frisch maintains that “King Belshazzar is killed at the end of the story.... Despite this ending, the stability of empire is still confirmed.... The fact that his rule is immediately passed onto Darius the Mede underscores the endurance of the foreign imperial phenomenon” (*The Danielic Discourse on Empire in Second Temple Literature*, JSJSup 176 [Leiden: Brill, 2017], 106).

death on that night (5:30) as a result of YHWH's judgment on his arrogance and pride.⁷¹

The relationship that the narratives envision is not between YHWH and any national or ethnic entities, but between YHWH and individuals.

The Role of the Jewish Sages

In the Daniel narratives, the Jewish sages play an important role of delivering YHWH's messages to the foreign kings. Daniel is thus depicted as a prophet for the gentiles in foreign imperial settings.⁷² YHWH's messages in the oracle against the nations and the visions in Daniel are very similar. In the narrative setting of Daniel, however, the target audience of the message is the gentiles, not the Jews; the agents are the sages, not the prophets; and the context is the foreign imperial rule, not in the preexilic Israel and Judah. The narratives employ the apocalyptic visions and signs in order to deliver the message to the gentiles. This study argues that the narrative's depictions of the Jewish sages who give understanding to the gentiles and lead them to righteousness provide the

⁷¹ Wooden points out the verbal parallel between Isa 10:12, 15 and Dan 11:36–37 centered on foreign kings' "arrogant boasting" and "haughty pride" ("The Book of Daniel and Manticism: A Critical Assessment of the View that the Book of Daniel Derives from a Mantic Tradition" [PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 2000], 286); see Isa 10:12–13, 15: "he will punish the arrogant boasting of the king of Assyria and his haughty pride. For he says: 'By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I have understanding.' . . . Shall the axe vaunt itself over the one who wields it, or the saw magnify itself against the one who handles it?" Belshazzar's pride and arrogant blasphemy also present a thematic connection between the narratives and the apocalyptic visions.

⁷² Newsom observes that "[t]he most striking difference [between MT and OG versions], however, is the recasting of Daniel and his address to the king [in the MT version]. In this version Daniel's surpassing wisdom is described more fully by the queen, a description repeated by Belshazzar. But Daniel himself is cast as much in the role of prophet as sage. . . . He also delivers a lengthy prophetic indictment of Belshazzar, contrasting him with his father, Nebuchadnezzar, and retelling much of the story of ch. 4" (*Daniel*, 163). She notes that "Daniel's indictment of the king is evocative of other biblical stories of prophet-king conflict (1 Sam 2:27–36; 15:13–26; 2 Sam 12:7–12; 1 Kgs 21:20–24; 22:19–23)" (*Ibid.*, 164).

examples of the prophets for the gentiles in the context after the exile.⁷³ The prophetic function of the sages will be discussed more in chapter six.

By comparing these messages to the foreign kings with the oracle against the nations, this study maintains that the apocalyptic visions in the Daniel narratives serve to teach and transform the foreign kings. The message thus does not pertain to the empires or human history, but rather focuses on the decision and fate of individuals.⁷⁴ The Jewish sages inherit the role of the Israelite prophets with a new target of the gentiles in a new context of foreign empires. Daniel 4 and 5 depict the covenantal stipulation and other moral standards as applied to the gentile kings who had a chance to learn about YHWH. The narratives, therefore, make an inclusive and individual claim pertaining to a new paradigm of YHWH's people and covenant.

Daniel Six

The Issue of the Conflict

Daniel 6 begins with King Darius, the Mede. The narrator identifies Daniel as one of three “presidents” (NRSV, סרבין) stationed over one hundred and twenty satraps throughout the kingdom. As Daniel distinguishes himself above the other officials, they

⁷³ So, Dan 5:21: “until he learned that the Most High God has sovereignty over the kingdom of mortals, and sets over it whomever he will.” See also Ezek 18:23, “[f]or I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live”; Ezek 18:4, “it is only the person who sins that shall die.”

⁷⁴ The non-nationalistic perspective is present in the latter part of the book as well. Collins argues that “the group to which the author of Daniel belonged did not wish to identify with the nation Israel either in a political or ethnic or geographical sense.... Those who are raised to life are not identified with the nation Israel.... The author may be said to have an incipient sectarian attitude in so far as he identified with ‘the wise’ rather than with the nation Israel” (“Mythology of Holy War in Daniel and the Qumran War Scroll: A Point of Transition in Jewish Apocalyptic,” *VT* 25 [1975], 603).

conspire against Daniel (6:4 [MT 6:5]). Against the king's interdict conceived by other officials, Daniel continues to pray to YHWH three times a day through the window opened toward Jerusalem (6:10 [MT 6:11]).⁷⁵ The narrator explains that although Daniel knows about this interdict and its corresponding punishment (being thrown into a den of lions), he does not stop praying to his God. This story reminds the reader of Dan 3 in which Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden statue despite the penalty of being thrown into a furnace of blazing fire.

The nature of the conflict in Dan 6, however, is different from that in Dan 3. While the king provides a pretext for persecuting the Jews in Dan 3, it is the other courtiers' jealousy that leads to the construction of a scheme against Daniel in Dan 6: "the king planned to appoint him [Daniel] over the whole kingdom" (6:3 [MT 6:4]). The narrative also portrays Daniel as faithful not only to YHWH, but also in his official responsibilities in service to the empire. The narrative depicts Daniel as "faithful" with "no negligence" and "no corruption" (6:4 [MT 6:5]). The presidents and the satraps thus construct a plan to position the law of YHWH against a commandment of the king, knowing that Daniel will always obey the law of YHWH and thus disobey the king.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Regarding the prayer in the foreign imperial context, Berquist argues that "[a]longside these religious innovations are two very important practices for Second Temple Yehudite religion—prayer and the observance of Sabbath. Prayers became more commonplace as part of the literature.... In the book of Daniel, prayer appears explicitly as an anti-imperial practice that resists the law of the king and the rule of the empire" ("Resistance and Accommodation in the Persian Empire," in *In the Shadow of Empire: Reclaiming the Bible as a History of Faithful Resistance*, ed. R. A. Horsley [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008], 55). Newsom also notes that "[t]he development of daily prayers by laity occurred gradually during the Second Temple period as a custom of popular piety, not a requirement of torah.... The orientation toward Jerusalem appears to have developed in the wake of the exile and is well attested (1 Kgs 8:30, 35, 38, 42, 44, 48; 2 Chr 6:34; 1 Esd 4:58), and Tob 3:11 also attests the open window of an upper room as a place for prayer" (*Daniel*, 197).

⁷⁶ Sweeney argues that "[t]he narrative [Dan 6] relates once again to Antiochus, who demanded worship of himself as a god and forbade the practice of Judaism on pain of death. The presentation of

Even though the officials set up King Darius's unchangeable interdict so that it may conflict with the law of YHWH, that interdict cannot interrupt or change Daniel's faithfulness. The narrative emphasizes the unchangeableness of the king's interdict repeatedly (6:8*, 12, 15, 17 [MT 6:9*, 13, 16, 18]). The emphasis on this unchangeable nature of the interdict thus stands in contrast to the unshakable loyalty of Daniel to the law of YHWH. While no one can change or revoke the interdict, the firm interdict cannot undermine the power and effect of the law of YHWH.

Characterization of the Foreign King Darius

Three observations regarding the depiction of Darius support reading Darius as the most developed character in the sequence of court tales. First, upon hearing the charge against Daniel, the narrative describes that the king was "very much distressed," "determined to save Daniel," and "made every effort to rescue him" (6:14 [MT 6:15]). Before throwing Daniel into the den of lions, Darius says, "[m]ay your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!" (6:16 [MT 6:17]), which ultimately undermines the effectiveness of his interdict. This statement invites comparison with Nebuchadnezzar's statement in a similar context in Dan 3 asking, "who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?" (3:15). Darius's statement shows a more positive attitude toward YHWH and the Jews, while Nebuchadnezzar's statement invokes a contest between the king's

Darius the Mede in this story is again to be read as a foil for Antiochus. Like Nebuchadnezzar, Darius submits to YHWH, but Antiochus does not.... Their present form and context within the book of Daniel certainly indicate that they are meant to be read in relation to the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus IV.... They satirically present Nebuchadnezzar and Darius the Mede as ideal models for the behavior of a Gentile king in marked contrast to Antiochus IV.... They do not call for Jews to accommodate themselves to pagan rule.... and they call upon foreign monarchs to acknowledge the power and sovereignty of YHWH" ("The End of Eschatology in Daniel? Theological and Socio-Political Ramifications of the Changing Contexts of Interpretation," *BibInt* 9 [2001], 132–133).

and YHWH's powers. Even though Darius appears in Dan 6 for the first time, the reading strategy of following identifies him as continuing the development of Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of the narratives in Dan 1–6, Darius represents the most developed—or learned—character who has a positive attitude toward the Jews' piety and acknowledges YHWH's power even at the expense of his own authority.⁷⁷

The second observation concerning the developed position of Darius relative to the preceding narratives is that after Daniel is thrown into the den of lions, Darius “went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no food was brought to him, and sleep fled from him” (6:18 [MT 6:19]). This phrase also invites comparison with the case of David when he fasted to save his child: “David fasted, and went in and lay all night on the ground.... nor did he eat food with them” (2 Sam 12:16–17).⁷⁸ Moreover, Darius rises early the next morning and hurries to Daniel. He cries out anxiously, “[o] Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you faithfully serve been able to deliver you from the lion?” (6:19–20 [MT 6:20–21]). “The living God” as a designation for YHWH from the foreign king is notable (6:20, 26 [MT 6:21, 27]).⁷⁹ This is the first occurrence of “the living God”

⁷⁷ Conversely, Erich Gruen interprets the depiction of Darius in Dan 6 that “Darius is meekly misled and deceived by his advisers, condemns Daniel when they force him into corner, awaits helplessly the fate of his favorite, and nearly collapses in relief when his fears prove unfounded.... Darius the Mede was as much a pushover as his counterpart in 1 Esdras” (“Persia through the Jewish Looking-Glass,” in *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers*, eds. T. Rajak et al., HCS 50 [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007], 66).

⁷⁸ Considering that David's response comes from the concern for his one and only son, it is notable that the narrative describes Darius's concern for Daniel in a similar way, even without a direct allusion to 2 Sam 12.

⁷⁹ This is the only occurrence of “the living God” used by the gentiles in referring to YHWH. Newsom explains that “[t]he phrase ‘living God’ is relatively common in other biblical texts, but normally in the mouth of an Israelite, often in contexts of tension between Israelite and Gentile powers or idols (e.g., Josh 3:10; 1 Sam 17:26; 2 Kgs 19:4; Jer 10:10). Here, even though it seems premature for the king to say it, the phrase aptly captures what is at stake: the issue of the effective power of Daniel's God” (*Daniel*, 199).

in the Daniel narratives, and it contrasts with the false gods that Belshazzar served in Dan 5. Darius's recognition of YHWH as "the living God" shows the most developed stage of the foreign kings' acknowledgment of YHWH.⁸⁰

The third observation concerning Darius's developed nature derives from Darius's command to lift Daniel up from the den of lions on the next morning (6:23 [MT 6:24]). Darius then has those who accused Daniel thrown into the den of lions with their families. The description that "[b]efore they [officials and their families] reached the bottom of the den the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces" (6:24 [MT 6:25]) recalls Nebuchadnezzar's penalty for blasphemy against YHWH: they "shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins" (3:29). That is, when the officials who conspired against Daniel were thrown into the lion's den, they were "torn limb from limb" (3:29) as the lions "broke all their bones in pieces" (6:24 [MT 6:25]). Moreover, when their whole families were "brought and thrown into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives" (6:24 [MT 6:25]), their "houses were laid in ruins" (3:29). As a result, Darius's sentence implies that the foreign officials' conspiracy against Daniel and YHWH's law deserves the penalty for blasphemy against YHWH. Daniel 6 also presents a foreign ruler that defends YHWH's sovereignty in the foreign court, and a narrative in which YHWH's law ranks higher than the unchangeable interdict of foreign kings.

In this sense, while Dan 6—the last pericope of the narrative cycle—deals with the conflicts between the Jews and the foreign officials as well as between the king's

⁸⁰ Regarding this designation, "the living God," Goldingay argues "in its Old Testament usage, the title suggests not merely that God is alive rather than dead, but that he is active and powerful, awesome and almighty, involved in judgment and blessing" ("The Stories in Daniel: A Narrative Politics," *JSOT* 37 [1987], 102).

interdict and YHWH's law, its primary focus is on presenting the foreign king Darius as the most developed and transformed character. Daniel's response to the king employs the same phrase used by the foreign officials at the beginning of the story: "[o] king, live forever!" (מַלְכָּא לְעַלְמִין חַיִּי) (6:21 [MT 6:22]; cf. 6:6 [MT 6:7]). This honorific phrase is a sign of acknowledging foreign rule. The whole story illustrates that even though Daniel refuses to obey the interdict against YHWH's law, Daniel serves and respects the foreign king. He only disobeys the king concerning the matter of YHWH's law.⁸¹

Darius's Decree and Doxology

Darius writes a decree to "all peoples and nations of every language throughout the whole world" (6:25 [MT 6:26]).⁸² The narrative employs this designation as a sign of an inclusive and universal perspective, though some scholars argue that this reflects imperial rhetoric.⁸³ Darius orders that "in all my royal dominion people should tremble

⁸¹ See also Jer 27:8, 17, "But if any nation or kingdom will not serve this king, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.... I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, says the Lord.... Serve the king of Babylon and live."

⁸² The NRSV's translation of the two verbatim Aramaic phrases (4:1 [MT 3:31] and 6:25 [MT 6:26]) in a different way is notable: "to all peoples, nations, and languages that live *throughout the earth* [רִידְאָרִין בְּכָל-אַרְעָא] (4:1 [MT 3:31]) and "to all peoples and nations of every language *throughout the whole world* [רִידְאָרִין בְּכָל-אַרְעָא] (6:25 [MT 6:26]). These translations seem to reflect some changes in perspective, if not development, that the narratives present through the foreign kings. Cf. JPS, KJV, OG, ASV, and NKJ consistently translate these phrases, whereas NAS ("in all the earth" [4:1]; "in all the land" [6:25]) and NIV ("in all the world" [4:1]; "throughout the land" [6:25]) translate the phrase differently.

⁸³ Chan conversely argues that "the narrative zooms in on a contradiction that is native to most imperial pageantry and ideology in the Near East: the stark difference between ideology and reality. Rulers throughout the Near East claim that they are global rulers of worldwide empires. This claim is present, for instance, in titles like *shar kishshati* ("king of the world") and in monumental architecture like the Apadana reliefs at Persepolis or Darius I's tomb at Naqsh-e Rostam.... The reader is told that *all* peoples, nations, and tongues paid homage to the image (3.7), and yet the reader knows that only officials are invited to this event (Dan 3.2–3). Is this just the author's attempt to render authentically the typical rhetoric of royal ideology?... I would argue that this discrepancy between rhetoric and reality is intended to draw attention to the contradiction between the cold realities of governance and the ideological claim of Near Eastern rulers" ("Ira Regis," 15–16).

and fear before the God of Daniel” (6:25 [MT 6:26]).⁸⁴ This verse alludes to 5:19, in which Daniel mentions that all people trembled and feared before Nebuchadnezzar because of YHWH-given greatness.⁸⁵ By this cross-reference, the narrative affirms that ultimately YHWH is worthy to receive the honor and worship beyond the human sovereign whom YHWH sets up and deposes.

The language of “fear” (יִרָא) and “tremble” (חִיל) in Darius’s decree frequently occurs together in the Hebrew Bible in reference to the act of acknowledging, believing, serving, and worshipping YHWH.⁸⁶ In this sense, even though Dan 6 maintains the seemingly static dual-focus narrative on a surface level, it provides a distinctive focal

⁸⁴ See Ps 2:10–11, “[o] kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, with trembling kiss his feet.” Interestingly, this Darius’s decree resembles an Edict of Theodosius in 380 CE: “[i]t is our pleasure that all the nations which are governed by our clemency and moderation should steadfastly adhere to the religion which was taught by St. Peter.... Let us believe the sole deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost” (R. F. Hodinott, *Early Byzantine Churches in Macedonia and Southern Serbia: A Study of the Origins and the Initial Development of East Christian Art* [London: Macmillan, 1963], 75). Even though Darius’s claim is not a monotheistic one, the order that all “should” tremble and fear (worship) YHWH is a claim of one who has a faith in YHWH.

⁸⁵ For biblical references to “fear the Lord,” see Gen 22:12; 42:18; Ex 1:17, 21; 14:31; 18:21, Lev 19:14, 32; 25:17, 36, 43; Deut 4:10; 5:29; 6:2, 13, 24; 8:6; 10:12, 20; 13:4; 14:23; 17:19; 25:18, 58; 31:12, 13; Josh 4:24; 1 Sam 12:24, 18, 24; 2 Sam 23:3; 2 Kgs 4:1; Isa 11:2, 3; 19:16; 25:3; 33:6; 50:10; 59:19; Jer 2:19; 5:22, 24; 10:7; 26:19; 32:39, 40; Hos 10:3; Jonah 1:16; Mic 7:17; Hag 1:12; 3:5; Ps 15:4; 19:9; 22:23; 25:12; 33:8; 34:9, 11; 66:16; 102:15; 111:5, 10; 112:1; 115:1; 128:4; 135:20; 147:11; Prov 1:7, 29; 2:5; 3:7; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:2, 26, 27; 15:16, 33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17; 24:21; 31:30; Job 1:1, 8, 9; 2:3; 4:6; 15:4; 28:28; Eccl 5:7; 7:18; 8:12, 13; 12:13; Neh 5:9; 15; 7:2; 2 Chr 19:9; 26:5. For “tremble before the Lord,” see Isa 19:1, 16; 64:2; 66:2, 5; Jer 5:22; Ps 96:9; 99:1; 114:7; 119:120; Ezra 9:4; 10:3; 1 Chr 16:30.

⁸⁶ Regarding “trembling” before YHWH, Collins cites Isa 66:2—“[b]ut this is the one to whom I will look, to the humble and contrite in spirit, who trembles at my word”—and explains that “[t]he tremblers (*hārēdīm*) have given their name to apocalyptically oriented ultraorthodox Jews in modern Israel” (“From Prophecy to Apocalypticism: The Expectation of the End,” in *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, vol. 1 of *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, ed. J. J. Collins [New York: Continuum, 2000], 132). For biblical references to “fear” and “tremble,” see: “Do you not fear me? says the Lord; Do you not tremble before me?” (Jer 5:22a); “[w]ho would not fear you, O King of the nations? For that is your due; among all the wise ones of the nations and in all their kingdoms there is no one like you” (Jer 10:7); “[o] kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, with trembling kiss his feet” (Ps 2:10–11); “[t]he nations will fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth your glory” (Ps 102:15).

point. Daniel 6, located at the end of the Daniel narratives, carries out the development of the foreign kings to its culmination.⁸⁷ Following the foreign king Darius reveals that Dan 6 concludes a newly defined portrayal of God's sovereignty as well as a new relationship between YHWH and the foreign rulers. Serving only YHWH and keeping YHWH's commandments are the primary marks for the people of YHWH in a foreign and imperial context. In addition, the accessibility to and acceptance of YHWH's mystery is the mark of his covenant people regardless of national and ethnic identity in a new religious and

⁸⁷ Altman's interpretation of *The Song of Roland* gives an interpretive insight and parallel to the interpretation of the Daniel narrative regarding the dual-focus structure and the construction of the message: "[t]hough *Roland* initially appeared to be about religious difference, its second and third battles together offer a new interpretation. By matching adversaries marked by equivalent strength or similar nationality and religion, the final encounters shift the text's emphasis from religion to group orientation. The first battle repeatedly invokes the differences between the combatants' religions, but it also stresses the surprise nature of the Saracen attack and the overwhelming superiority of Marsile's forces.... Though it began as a religious epic, *The Song of Roland* ends as a feudal fable stressing fealty, a cautionary tale warning against the elevation of personal concerns about respect for the welfare of the group. While it stresses Christianity throughout, Roland's shift from narrow nationalism to a more inclusive concern for the entire empire displaces the emphasis from religion as such to a broad concept of Christendom, along with allegiance to Christian leaders. Making a similar point in another way, we may say that the effect of *Roland*'s polarity adjustment is to transfer emphasis from the primacy axis of symmetry, dependent on religious difference, to the integrative axis, with its accent on the relationship between the individual and the group" (*A Theory of Narrative*, 54). Similarly this study proposes that even though the Daniel narratives present the primary axis of symmetry of religious difference and the superiority of one group, the narratives reveal their integrative axis of the relationship between YHWH and foreign rulers concerning the legitimacy of foreign rule and the new concept of YHWH's kingdom and people. Regarding "polarity adjustment," Altman gives an example of *An Ephesian Tale*, also with an implication for reading the Daniel narratives, saying, "[a]t first, this simplicity appears representative of dual-focus narrative as a whole—we always seem to be alternating between Romans and barbarians, Christians and pagans, friends and foes, men and women. Because each new following-unit apparently involves a 180-degree reversal, we have the sensation of always returning to the exact same location, thus repeating the same opposition. A closer look suggests that more is going on in dual-focus texts. As we move through a series of replacement operations, instead of exactly repeating the same opposition again and again we encounter small but meaningful differences in the parameter of opposition. This "polarity adjustment" offers a minimalist but powerful method of making meaning, characteristic of the dual-focus narrative" (Ibid., 83). Returning to *The Song of Roland*, Altman claims, "[i]n *The Song of Roland*, the importance of the Christian-pagan opposition is eventually compromised by the introduction of additional dualities: group orientation versus individualism, humility versus pride, strength versus weakness, and so forth" (Ibid.). Similarly, the Daniel narratives' concern also includes universalism versus nationalism, group orientation versus individualism (regarding "true Israel" or "God's people"), humility versus pride, and the relationship between wisdom and power.

political context of Daniel. The narratives envision an inclusive and universal concept of YHWH's people that expands to include even foreign rulers and the gentiles.⁸⁸

This new portrayal has three significant implications for the Jews under foreign rule. First, by depicting YHWH as the “living God” (5:23; 6:20, 26 [MT 6:21, 27]) the narratives contrast YHWH to the “gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone” (5:4), which “do not see or hear or know” (5:23). By this portrayal, the narratives present a compelling argument that YHWH is still the only sovereign over the world despite the fall of Judah. Second, this portrayal includes the gentiles as God's people. The narratives describe YHWH's concern for the foreign rulers' acknowledgment, and further that they are bound to the relationship—with moral and religious standards—with YHWH. Third, the YHWH-given authority of foreign rulers requires the Jews to acknowledge, honor, and serve their rule. This implication is reminiscent of Jeremiah's prophecy:

But if any nation or kingdom will not serve this king, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon ... then I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, says the Lord... Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live.... Do not listen to the words of your prophets who are prophesying to you, saying, ‘The vessels of the Lord's house will soon be brought back from Babylon,’ for they are prophesying a lie to you. Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon and live. (Jer 27:8–17)

This Jeremiah prophecy has a thematic link with the Daniel narratives regarding the service of Nebuchadnezzar and “the vessels of the Lord's house” (כלי בית-יהוה) [Jer 27:16]; כלי בית-האלהים [Dan 1:2]). The Daniel narratives further develop the relationship

⁸⁸ Edelman lists two different cases in which “YHWH's family circle ... expanded to include other peoples and nations.” First is the case in which Israel maintains its special status among the nations: Isa 2:2–4; 45:22–23; 56:3–8; Jer 3:17; Mic 4:1–5; Zech 8:22–23; 14:16–19. Second is the case in which Israel is regarded just like the other nations: Amos 9:7; Zech 11:10 (“YHWH's Othering of Israel,” in *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple Period*, eds. E. Ben Zvi and D. V. Edelman [London: Bloomsbury, 2014], 66, 69).

with the foreign rulers by depicting them not as simply YHWH's tools in his salvation history, but rather as God-appointed human sovereigns. The dream visions in Dan 2 and 4 thus do not simply present the destruction of the foreign empires. Instead, these visions concern the redemption and growth of the individual gentile kings.⁸⁹

Darius's doxology continues, "he is the living God, enduring forever. His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion has no end" (6:26 [MT 6:27]). Darius confirms and emphasizes his earlier confession in v. 20 (MT v. 21) about the living God. In addition, the narrative employs another cross-reference about YHWH's kingdom. Darius states that "[h]is kingdom shall never be destroyed [ומלכותה דיי-לא תחחבל], and his dominion has no end." This praise echoes Daniel's dream interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar explaining, "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed (מלכו די לעלמין לא תחחבל)... and it shall stand for ever" (2:44). Darius's

⁸⁹ Plöger's argument about double-resurrection, true Israel, and separatism (individualism) is helpful in explaining the theology of the Daniel narratives, though he still excludes the gentiles from the discussion: "The revival of the people of God, as portrayed in Ezek. xxxvii, for instance, is, within the ideas of the Old Testament, primarily an eschatological hope, which could now only be applied to themselves in the sense of a personal-individual expectation by those who were convinced by the eschatological understanding of the present as the last time. This indicates the cleft which had begun to divide the Jewish community, which was based on cult and law. It originated, so far as we have been able to trace, when, as a result of Hellenization, the cleavage between those who were loyal to the Law and those who scorned the covenant was already a frightening reality. The idea of a double resurrection [Dan 12:2] was necessary because the prophetic hope of Israel's restoration applied to the whole people of God but in the sense of a resurrection to life was to be expected only by those who were prepared to register their own decision for the ancestral faith and who by reason of this personal decision could also be assured of a personal reward in the sense of resurrection to life; the others were not excluded from resurrection but could only expect resurrection to eternal shame.... Hence in Dan. xii. 3 the wise receive special emphasis, in order to make clear that only in laying claim to the eschatological interpretation taught by these wise was there to be found the exclusive and distinctive sign of the people of the 'Saints of the Most High,' i.e., membership of the true Israel.... The Book of Daniel ... reveals the conventicle-spirit of deliberate separatism in that membership of the 'true' Israel is made to depend on the acknowledgment of a certain dogma, namely the eschatological interpretation of historical events, which meant, in effect, membership of a particular group" (*Theocracy and Eschatology*, trans. S. Rudman [Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1969], 18–19). Based on the Daniel narratives' concern for teaching the foreign kings the eschatological interpretation of historical events, with the implication of YHWH's sovereignty and wisdom, this study argues that the concept of double-resurrection and true Israel in the book of Daniel do not exclude the gentiles.

acknowledgment coincides with Daniel's declaration of YHWH's eternal dominion. These cross-references confirm that the narratives have an overarching plot with a concern for the foreign kings' acknowledgment and development. Moreover, Darius's doxology summarizes all of the previous events in the narratives by mentioning "the living God," "kingdom that shall never be destroyed," "he delivers and rescues," "he works signs and wonders," and "he has saved Daniel" (6:26–27 [MT 6:27–28]).⁹⁰

The last statement that "Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (6:28 [MT 6:29]) has three implications.⁹¹ First, the remark about Daniel's prosperity under the reigns of different foreign kings implies the effectiveness of YHWH's power and sovereignty, which transcends different kings and empires. Second, the theme of prospering Jews serving foreign rule depends on other prophetic traditions: "these nations shall serve the king of Babylon for seventy years" (Jer 25:11b); "[b]uild houses and live in them.... Multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile.... for in its welfare you will find your welfare"

⁹⁰ Newsom also mentions that "Darius passively accepts a temporary status that exalts him over all gods and humans but is grieved by the consequences and utters the strongest confession of the Most High's sovereignty in the whole cycle of narratives. Although the story functions well as an independent narrative, it has been fashioned by the redactor to serve as the conclusion to the cycle of chs. 1–6" (*Daniel*, 89). Henze emphasizes the role of Darius's (Nebuchadnezzar's) doxology that "[t]he distinctive religious quality of the tales is underscored further by the composition of the narrative frame as a whole. Nebuchadnezzar's two great doxologies clearly stand out in this respect, strategically placed by the redactor in Dan 3:31–33 and 6:27–28" ("The Narrative Frame of Daniel: A Literary Assessment," *JSJ* 32 [2001], 21).

⁹¹ Newsom interprets the meaning and function of this statement: "the author alludes back to the notice with which ch. 1 concluded, tying Daniel to the reign of Cyrus, the king who would bring an end to the exile, with which the cycle of Daniel stories began (1:21). This comment, when taken together with the characterization of Darius as the king most well disposed to a Jewish character and the content of his exceptional decree requiring respect and awe for the God of Daniel, serves to give a strong sense of closure to the narratives cycle. The tension that were introduced have largely been resolved through the iterative but progressive accounts of the confrontation between the Gentile kings and the power of the God of the Jews" (*Daniel*, 201)

(Jer 29:5–7). Third, by using the name Cyrus as an *inclusio* of the narratives (Dan 1:21; 6:28)—who returns the exiles, restores the temple vessels to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:7), and who is called YHWH’s anointed (Isa 45:1)—the narratives allude to a continued succession and development of foreign rulers that extend beyond the stories on Dan 1–6.⁹² The narratives deal with the issue of the legitimacy of foreign rulers as well as the inclusion of the gentiles into YHWH’s people.⁹³

Conclusion: Message of the Narratives

The narratives maintain a dual-focus between the two groups of characters throughout the stories. This binary structure manifests itself through the conflicts between Jewish and Babylonian sages, the foreign kings’ interdicts and YHWH’s law, and between human and divine kingship. This study concentrated on the foreign kings’ development—which makes a single-focus narrative—through the reading strategy of “following.” Through the interpretation of the stories, this study argues that the Daniel narratives are interwoven with both dual-focus and single-focus narratives. On the one hand, in the foreground, it presents a dual-focus narrative structure that consists of a conflict between Jewish and Babylonian sages, as well as between human and divine

⁹² For biblical references to Cyrus’s work, see Ezra 1:7, “King Cyrus himself brought out the vessels of the house of the Lord that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods”; Ezra 6:5, “Moreover, let the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and brought back to the temple in Jerusalem, each to its place; you shall put them in the house of God.”

⁹³ Regarding the depiction of Cyrus in the Hebrew Bible, see R. L. Braun, “Cyrus in Second and Third Isaiah, Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah,” in *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, eds. M. P. Graham, S. L. McKenzie, and G. N. Knoppers, JSOTSup 371 (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 146–64.

kingships. On the other hand, this study identifies a single-focus narrative that illustrates the foreign kings' transforming experiences and development.⁹⁴

According to Altman, a dual-focus narrative only ends “when the two sides are reduced to one, by death or expulsion, or through marriage or conversion.”⁹⁵ Readers find in Darius's decree at the end of Dan 6 a conclusion to the narratives in Dan 1–6. Darius finally calls YHWH “the living God” and decrees that all people and nations of the world should tremble and fear before Him. In this sense, the end of the dual-focus concludes by envisioning something beyond the destruction of worldly powers. Rather it reveals that while the future of worldly nations and powers will follow the ways that YHWH determined as shown in dream visions, individuals are called to acknowledge, fear, and tremble before YHWH whose kingdom has no end, as stated in Darius's decree.

Although scholars traditionally find the themes of the superior power and sovereignty of YHWH and a call for faithfulness to YHWH in the context of worldly empires, the narrative function of the foreign kings has been overlooked. The interpretation of the narratives following the foreign kings, however, reveals three literary functions behind the sequencing of these stories. First, the narratives depict the transformative power and impact of wisdom and knowledge from YHWH. Second, the narratives envision a newly defined relationship between YHWH and foreign sovereignty, as well as an inclusive concept of YHWH's people in the foreign imperial context. Third,

⁹⁴ Altman explains the characteristics of a single-focus narrative that “[s]tressing internal states, this system constantly asks individuals to discern, among the data collected by their senses, patterns implying a particular kind of meaning.... The process of analysis is necessary, for without it the narrative cannot reach the level at which the single-focus system locates knowledge and value” (*A Theory of Narrative*, 174–75).

⁹⁵ Ibid., 55.

the narratives illustrate the role of the sages (*maškilim* in Dan 11:33; 12:3) in giving understanding to many, including the gentiles, and leading them to righteousness in a new historical context of the Jews.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ In this sense, the book of Daniel's universal and inclusive perspective that did not gain a significant following among the postexilic Jews, together with other sectarian ideas, has presumably influenced the central principle of Christianity that seeks to reformulate the people of God and convert the gentiles. In contrast, Judaism protects its exclusive perspective to keep their religious and ethnic identity by inheriting exclusive perspectives of the Second Temple Judaism. If we consider the assumed historical context of the final composition of the book of Daniel in the second century BCE, it could be a revolutionary idea to depict foreign rulers as a legitimate YHWH-given authority and as prospective people of YHWH. Davies' point is noteworthy: "[w]hat can be inferred from the text of Daniel, then, is its authorship by a group who see themselves as endowed with special understanding, as divinely appointed to teach their 'righteousness' to the Judeans, and as undergoing suffering in the process" ("The Scribal Schools of Daniel," in vol. 1 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, eds. J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint, 2 vols., VTSup FIOTL 83,1 [Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001], 255–56). This study argues that the endowed special understanding relates to the inclusive concept of YHWH's people and kingdom.

CHAPTER FIVE

Who are *Maškilîm*?

Introduction

Maškilîm (משכילים) is a *hiphil* plural participle of the verb שכל and occurs five times in the book of Daniel: once in Dan 1 (1:4) and four times in Dan 11 and 12 (11:33, 35; 12:3, 10). Translators render *maškilîm* as “the wise” (NRSV) or “those who have insight” (NAS) and commentators occasionally identify them as the author group behind the composition and compilation of the book of Daniel.¹ Scholars often conclude that, as the successors of the Israelite wisdom tradition, these *maškilîm* compiled the book of Daniel in the context of imperial persecution in the second century BCE. In addition to its implications for authorship, the use of *maškilîm* at the beginning and the end of Daniel suggests that this term contains thematic significance reading the whole book together. Thus this term likely provides insight into the unity of the final form of the book.²

¹ P. R. Davies, “The Scribal Schools of Daniel” in vol. 1 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, eds. J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint, 2 vols., VTSup FIOTL 83,1 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 252; R. G. Wooden, “The Book of Daniel and Manticism: A Critical Assessment of the View that the Book of Daniel Derives from a Mantic Tradition” (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 2000), 292; J. J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 66–67, 385–86; R. Albertz, “The Social Setting of the Aramaic and Hebrew Book of Daniel” in vol. 1 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, eds. J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint, 2 vols., VTSup FIOTL 83,1 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 193; P. L. Redditt, “Daniel 11 and the Sociohistorical Setting of the Book of Daniel,” *CBQ* 60 (1998), 463–74.

² A. E. Gardner, “שכל in the Hebrew Bible: Key to the Identity and Function of the *Maškilîm* in Daniel” *RB* 118 (2011), 498–99; Collins, *Daniel*, 35; Davies, “The Scribal School of Daniel,” 251–52.

The importance of the term *maškilîm* for understanding the final redaction and thematic unity of Daniel leads this study to explore the meaning and function of *maškilîm*. This chapter examines the meaning and usage of the root שכל in the Hebrew Bible, a broader literary context of the book of Daniel. Through this research on *maškilîm*, this chapter contextualizes the preceding interpretation of Dan 1–6 in light of the broader concerns of the book as a whole. This study argues that the message of the Daniel narratives about foreign kings’ education and transformation expands the concept of the “many” (*rabbîm*, 11:33 and 12:3) beyond the national and ethnic boundaries of Second Temple Judaism. Thus, the primary concern and role of the authors—the *maškilîm*—is not only to teach YHWH’s will in history and inspire faithfulness to YHWH, but also to envision the universal sovereignty of YHWH that includes the gentiles into YHWH’s people in the foreign imperial context.³

As a result, this chapter demonstrates that Daniel’s *maškilîm* present the characteristics of biblical שכל. The Jewish sages in the Daniel narratives teach YHWH’s sovereignty over history by revealing mysteries and eschatological knowledge. This teaching leads the people to comply with YHWH’s will and moral standard as shown in Daniel’s lesson to Nebuchadnezzar.⁴ This knowledge and the subsequent compliance

³ Clements argues that wisdom’s claim to provide universal truths without national boundaries “made wisdom so important to Israel in the post-exilic period” (*Wisdom for a Changing World: Wisdom in Old Testament Theology*, Berkeley Lectures 2 [Berkeley, CA: Bibal, 1990], 18).

⁴ For an example of the importance of knowledge of YHWH’s sovereignty and mystery, and its impact on the individual’s fate in other literature, see Collins: “[t]he other two sections (1–5 and 10–19) [in the Wisdom of Solomon] illustrate the way in which this wisdom affects the destiny of individual and the course of history.... The fate of each is ultimately determined by their understanding of God and the world. The impious are those who ‘reasoned not rightly’ (2:1) and ‘knew not the mysteries of God’ (2:22)” (“Cosmos and Salvation: Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic in the Hellenistic Age,” *HR* 17 [1977], 126).

become the qualification for the new people of YHWH. In Daniel, these new criteria open the way for the gentiles to enter into YHWH's people. In addition, from the observation of שכל in Isaiah, this study argues that the portrayal of the *maškilîm* in Daniel is a reflection and application of the role of Isaiah's suffering servant for their time. The authors and compilers of Daniel reinterpret the theological tradition of Isaiah, specifically its perspectives on religious leaders and the gentiles.

Škl (שכל, Maškil) in the Hebrew Bible

The study of שכל's occurrences in the biblical books other than Daniel attests to the broad semantic range of the word. The examination of this semantic range also reveals a chronological development of the meaning and usage of שכל. Throughout the semantic study of שכל in the Hebrew Bible, this chapter explores the literary context, within the Hebrew Bible, in which the use of שכל in Daniel is located. This examination illuminates the identity and role of the *maškilîm* in Daniel in light of the meaning and usage of שכל in the Hebrew Bible.

Torah

The occurrences of שכל in Torah refer to knowledge or wisdom in various senses. They include knowledge as related to the observance of Torah and "what the end would be" (Deut 32:29), both of which are related to the wisdom in Daniel. The verb שכל occurs four times in Torah (Gen 3:6; 48:14; Deut 29:9 [MT 29:8]; 32:29). The first occurrence is in the story of the tree of knowledge: "and that the tree was to be desired to *make one wise* [להשכיל]" (Gen 3:6). The serpent explains within the narrative that this wisdom will open Adam and Eve's eyes allowing them to "be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen

3:5). In this passage, the verb שכל has a negative connotation of “becoming like God” as a result of becoming wise.

Genesis 48:14 employs this verb to refer to Israel (Jacob)’s action of “crossing his hands” knowing that Ephraim was on his left-hand side. This verb uses the *piel* form meaning “cross,” but the JPS translates it as “guiding his hands wittingly” implying that the meaning of the verb still relates to knowing or understanding.⁵ In this sense, the use of שכל in Genesis implies general knowledge or wisdom about what is right and wrong.

The NRSV translates שכל as “to succeed” in Deut 29:9 (MT 29:8), but the translational footnote mentions that it can mean “to deal wisely” (see also ἵνα συνῆτε πάντα ὅσα ποιήσετε “in order that you *may understand* all things that you shall do” [OG]).⁶ The implication of this translation means that if one diligently observes the words of this covenant, then one will “understand” what to do, or will “deal wisely” in all that one does. The warning that the audience still lacks “a mind to understand” (לב לדעת) in Deut 29:4 (MT 29:3) reveals the pressing need to gain understanding by “diligently observing the words of this covenant” (Deut 29:9a [MT 29:8a]). This connection between “understand” (“deal wisely”) and “be successful” has the implication that diligently observing Torah leads to the wisdom necessary to act and be successful (see also Dan 1; 3; 6).

The verb שכל also occurs in Deut 32:28–29: “[t]hey [the Israelites] are a nation void of sense; there is no understanding [תבונה] in them. If they were wise [חכמי], they

⁵ Jacob’s crossing hands appeared to be wrong to Joseph, but it was a right or proper action intentionally corrected by Jacob—and implicitly YHWH.

⁶ Considering that the OG translates all the occurrences of שכל as “to understand” or “to be wise” except for Gen 48:14, the OG seems to maintain the consistency rather than to supply interpretive insight into the MT.

would understand [ישכיליו] this; they would discern [יבינו] what the end would be.”⁷ In addition to שכל, these verses contain other wisdom-related terms (חכמה and בינה), which frequently occur in the book of Daniel.⁸ The verbs (ישכיליו and יבינו) in this passage serve the purpose of leading to “what the end would be”—that is, the eschatological knowledge or insight—which also parallels YHWH’s revelation in Daniel: “the revealer of mysteries disclosed to you *what is to be*” (Dan 2:29); “[t]he great God has informed the king *what shall be hereafter*” (Dan 2:45).⁹

In sum, the occurrences of שכל in Torah refer to knowledge or wisdom in various senses. Two occurrences are notable in relation to שכל in the book of Daniel. First, Deut 29:9 (MT 29:8) shows the relationship between observing YHWH’s words and gaining understanding. The book of Daniel likely develops the relationship between Torah observance and wisdom by depicting the Jewish sages as receiving knowledge and wisdom as a reward of the faithfulness to YHWH and, in case of the foreign kings, having knowledge of YHWH leads one to submit to YHWH and comply with his moral standards. Second, שכל in Deut 32:29 relates to the understanding of “what the end would be.” The knowledge about the end—“mystery” (רז, Dan 2:18, 19, 27–30, 47)—is a main motif in

⁷ For the use of שכל and בינה together, see Isa 44:18; Ps 94:8; Dan 1:4, 17; 9:22; 11:33; 12:10; Neh 8:8; 1 Chr 22:12; 2 Chr 2:12 [MT 2:11]; see also Deut 32:29.

⁸ For the occurrences of בינה: Dan 1:20; 8:15; 9:22; 10:1; חכמה: Dan 1:4, 17, 20; שכל: Dan 1:4, 17; 8:25; 9:13, 22, 25; 11:33, 35; 12:3, 10.

⁹ The phrase “what the end would be” in Deut 32:29 is probably not about “the end of days” in a narrow eschatological sense. It rather refers to the individual or communal fate which depends on one(s)’s eschatological decision—a decision that determines one’s own end.

the Daniel narratives, through which YHWH reveals his wisdom and power.¹⁰ The fact that this knowledge about the end relates to the individual or communal way of life has relevance to the Daniel narratives, which depict YHWH's revelation of "what will happen at the end of days" and its impact on the foreign kings.

*The Former Prophets (The Deuteronomistic History).*¹¹

The Former Prophets generally employ שָׁכַל to mean "to succeed" and "to prosper" as a result of keeping the Mosaic law in the context of military conquest. Joshua 1:7 articulates a similar phrase to Deut 29:9 (MT 29:8).¹² Joshua 1:7 reads, "[be] careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you ... so that you may be successful wherever you go" (לִמְעַן תִּשְׁכִּיל בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵךְ).¹³ The comparison between Deut 29:9 (MT 29:8) and Josh 1:7 demonstrates that Josh 1:7 confines the

¹⁰ Gladd explains the Aramaic noun רִז that "רִז differs from סִדֵּר [secret; council] in that the former term signals *eschatological revelation*" (*Revealing the Mysterion: The Use of Mystery in Daniel and Second Temple Judaism with Its Bearing on First Corinthians* BZNW 160 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008], 22; italics are Gladd's).

¹¹ The root שָׁכַל occurs in Josh 1:7, 8; 1 Sam 18:5, 14, 15, 30; 25:3; 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 18:7.

¹² In addition to Noth's argument that the Deuteronomists constructed Josh 1 in light of Deuteronomy, Smend argues that Josh 1:7–9 is a "nomistic" (DtrN) redactional layer which emphasizes the obedience of the Mosaic Law ("The Law and the Nations: A Contribution to Deuteronomistic Tradition History," in *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History*, eds. G. N. Knoppers and J. G. McConville, trans. P. T. Daniels, SBTS 8 [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000], 96–98. While Butler and van der Meer maintain that Josh 1:7–9 is chief evidence for Smend's DtrN redactor, Lohfink rejects Smend's argument. See T. C. Butler, *Joshua 1–12*, WBC 7A (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 218–219; M. N. van der Meer, *Formation and Reformation: The Redaction of the Book of Joshua in the Light of the Oldest Textual Witnesses*, VTSup 102 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 174, n. 28; N. Lohfink, *Theology of the Pentateuch: Themes of the Priestly Narrative and Deuteronomy*, trans. L. M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 239–41.

¹³ Cf. Deut 29:9: לִמְעַן תִּשְׁכִּילוּ אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּ ("in order that you may succeed in everything that you do").

meaning of *תשכיל* to “you may be successful” rather than “you may understand” by changing the modifying phrase to “wherever you go” (*בכל אשר תלך*, see table 5.1).¹⁴

In a new context in which Joshua encourages the Israelites to take possession of the land, this minor change demonstrates the author’s concern for the success in the conquest of the land. Moreover, a parallel verse in 1:8 confirms that one should translate *שכל* as “to succeed” by adding a synonymous phrase “make your way prosperous.” That is, when Joshua repeats the message in verse 8, it adds the synonym *צלח* (“to make prosperous”) to clarify the meaning of *שכל* as “to succeed” or “to prosper.”

Table 5.1. Joshua’s use of the Deuteronomic passage

Deut 29:9 (MT 29:8)	Josh 1:7	Josh 1:8
		This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night,
Therefore, <i>diligently observe the words of this covenant</i> ,	... being careful to <i>act in accordance with all the law</i> that my servant Moses commanded	so that you <i>may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it</i> .
in order that you <i>may succeed [deal wisely]</i> in everything that you [shall] do.	... so that you <i>may be successful</i> wherever you go.	For then you shall <i>make your way prosperous</i> , and then <i>you shall be successful</i> .

First Samuel 18:5 and 30 read, “David went out and was successful [*ישכיל*] wherever Saul sent him,” and “David had more success [*שכל*] than all the servants of Saul.” First Samuel 18:14–15 uses the *hiphil* participle of *שכל* (*משכיל maskil*) twice in

¹⁴ The OG, however, translates this verse as “you may be wise in whatsoever you may do.” The translation choice of the OG is likely for consistency rather than from an interpretive insight.

reference to either David's success ("had success" [NRSV]; "had great success" [JPS]) or prudence ("was prudent" [OG]; "behaved himself wisely" [KJV]). Regarding this usage, Koenen notes that "1 Sam 18:14–15 already refers to David twice as *maskil*."¹⁵ In all occurrences in 1 Sam 18, David's success refers to his military victory over the Philistines. This meaning coheres with the use of שָׂכַל in the military context of Josh 1:8. First Samuel 25:3 uses שָׂכַל in a noun form with the adjective טוֹבָה in reference to Abigail, a woman "of good understanding" (JPS, OG) or "clever" (NRSV).

In 1 Kgs 2:3, David relays to Solomon the message of Deut 29:9 and Josh 1:7–8 to keep God's statutes, commandments, ordinances, and testimonies in the law of Moses, "so that *you may prosper* [תִּשְׁכַּל] in all that you do and wherever you turn." First Kings employs both phrases "in all that you" and "wherever you turn" from Deut 29:9 (MT 29:8) and Josh 1:7 at the same time.¹⁶ Second Kings 18:7 uses שָׂכַל to describe King Hezekiah's prosperity: "[t]he Lord was with him; wherever he went, he prospered." As Gardner observes, the Hebrew Bible utilizes שָׂכַל to describe only three "good" kings: David (1 Sam 18:5, 14, 15, 30; 1 Chr 28:19), Solomon (1 Kgs 2:3; 1 Chr 22:12; 2 Chr 2:12 [MT 2:11]), and Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:7).¹⁷ This observation suggests that the Former Prophets relate the word שָׂכַל with the characteristics and consequence of good leadership.

¹⁵ K. Koenen, "*śākal; śēkel; maskil*." *TDOT* 14:115. This understanding, however, seems to have no implication for understanding Daniel's *maskilīm*.

¹⁶ First Kings 2:3b can be translated as "so that you may know everything that you should do and everywhere you should turn." The following verse, 1 Kgs 2:4's mention of "take heed to their way" also accords with "know[ing] ... everywhere you should turn" in 1 Kgs 2:3.

¹⁷ Gardner, "שָׂכַל in the Hebrew Bible," 505.

Regarding the usage of שָׁכַל in the Former Prophets (DtrH), this study draws three observations. First, שָׁכַל primarily appears in a verbal form (89% of usages) referring to success and prosperity.¹⁸ In most cases, the success relates to the military context of Joshua or David. Second, when it relates to individuals, it predominantly relates to royal figures—David, Solomon, and Hezekiah—focusing on their good leadership. Third, the success or prosperity (or understanding) results from keeping the law of Moses. In sum, the passages that include שָׁכַל in the Former Prophets (DtrH) echo the foundational passage in Deut 29:9, which relates success and prosperity to keeping the law. While the meaning of שָׁכַל as “to succeed” or “prosper” only implicitly relates to military success in Deut 29:9, the Former Prophets develop the usage to apply to Joshua’s conquest and the “good” leaders’ (David, Solomon, and Hezekiah’s) success and prosperity.

The Latter Prophets

The Latter Prophets generally employ שָׁכַל to mean “to understand” and its object is the knowledge of YHWH that he is the only true God, his power and sovereignty, and his works in the future. This section assesses the use of שָׁכַל in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Amos. Even though שָׁכַל does not occur in Ezekiel, this section deals with the scholarly discussion on the relationship between Ezekiel and Daniel.

¹⁸ This fact contrasts to the use of שָׁכַל in Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah as noun referring to “discretion” or “discernment” (Ezra 8:18; Neh 8:8; 1 Chr 22:12; 26:14; 2 Chr 2:12 [MT 2:11]) or as a verb meaning “to understand,” “to teach,” or “to study” (Neh 8:13; 9:20; 1 Chr 28:19). In some cases, שָׁכַל occurs together with בִּינָה (“understanding,” Neh 8:8; 1 Chr 22:12; 2 Chr 2:12 [MT 2:11]). In another case, it relates to the temple service—the role the Levites (2 Chr 30:22).

Isaiah. Isaiah employs שָׁכַל in a verbal form to mean “to understand” YHWH’s sovereignty and works—the knowledge of YHWH. שָׁכַל occurs in Isaiah three times (41:20; 44:18; 52:13).¹⁹ Isaiah 41:20 speaks of understanding YHWH’s works in the future, thus illustrating the power and sovereignty of YHWH: “so that all may see and know, all may consider and understand [וַיִּשְׁכִּילוּ], that the hand of the Lord has done this, the Holy One of Israel has created it” (41:20). The object of שָׁכַל invites comparison with YHWH’s revealing of the future to the foreign kings in the Daniel narratives.²⁰ Isaiah 44:18 uses this verb, stating that idol makers “cannot understand” that idols are mere wood that cannot act or save. Even with this negation of “understanding,” the connotation presents YHWH as the only true God. Connected with the previous monotheistic statement, “besides me there is no god” (44:6), which YHWH proclaims against “all who make idols” (44:9), the verb שָׁכַל relates to the knowledge about YHWH.²¹

Scholars interpret Isa 52:13 in two ways. While some translate שָׁכַל as “to prosper,” others prefer “to understand.”²² On the one hand, translating this verb in the *hiphil* form

¹⁹ Most scholars recognize all three of these texts as part of the core material of the exilic edition of Isaiah that includes much of Isa 40–55 (See U. Berges, “The Literary Construction of the Servant in Isaiah 40–55: A Discussion about Individual and Collective Identities,” *SJOT* 24 [2010], 28–38; K. Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55*, trans. M. Kohl, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001]; J. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 19A [New York: Doubleday, 2002]; A. Laato, *The Servant of YHWH and Cyrus: A Reinterpretation of the Exilic Messianic Programme in Isaiah 40–55*, ConBOT 35 [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992]).

²⁰ Even though the object of the verb שָׁכַל is the כִּי clause, “that the hand of the Lord has done this,” which seems to refer to the past, the mentioned works of YHWH is still the future event from the narrator’s—prophet’s—perspective.

²¹ The phrase in Isa 44:6 is reminiscent of Cyrus’s confession in the Bel and the Dragon: “there is no other beside you [YHWH]” (v. 41).

²² “See, my servant shall prosper” (NRSV, NAS); “deal prudently” (KJV); “act wisely” (NIV); “understand” (OG). For translating שָׁכַל in Isa 52:13 into “to understand,” “to deal wisely,” or “to teach,” see S. Freyne, “The Disciples in Mark and the *Maskilim* in Daniel: A Comparison,” *JSNT* 16 [1982], 9;

שכיל as “to prosper” coheres with the subsequent phrase: “he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high” (52:13b). On the other hand, the following verse (v. 15) makes the meaning “understand” or “act wisely” more plausible. Verse 15 states that “he shall startle many nations” and that the kings will “shut their mouths” because of the servant. This response stems from their encounter with a new and unexpected experience—“for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.”

The servant’s role of startling the foreign nations with something new recalls the role of the Jewish sages in the Daniel narratives. The Daniel narratives portray the foreign kings as terrified (4:5; 5:6, 10), astonished (3:24), and troubled (2:1, 3) by YHWH’s revelation and delivering power. The superior wisdom and knowledge of the sages startles and amazes the foreign kings. Moreover, the description in Isa 52:15 accords with Daniel’s stories in which the knowledge and wisdom of the Jewish sages leads the foreign kings to “see” and to “contemplate” YHWH’s wisdom and power.²³

Gardner, “שכיל in the Hebrew Bible,” 505; F. F. Bruce, “The Book of Daniel and the Qumran Community,” in *Neotestamentica et Semitica: Studies in Honour of Matthew Black*, eds. E. E. Ellis and M. Wilcox (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1969), 228, n. 17; R. G. Wooden, “The Book of Daniel and Manticism: A Critical Assessment of the View that the Book of Daniel Derives from a Mantic Tradition” (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 2000), 291–92; S. Thompson, “Those Who Are Wise: The Maskilim in Daniel and the New Testament,” in *To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea*, ed. D. Merling (Berrien Springs, MI: Institute of Archaeology, Andrews University, 1997), 216.

²³ “The broader context of *Dan* also applies in that Daniel ‘teaches’ kings, and through their pronouncements, he teaches the Babylonian and Persian nations” (Wooden, “The Book of Daniel,” 292. *Italics and bold in original*). For the relationship between Isaiah’s suffering servant (52:13–53:12) and the *maskilim* in the book of Daniel, see Gardner, “שכיל in the Hebrew Bible,” 505; Bruce, “The Book of Daniel,” 228, n. 17; Wooden, “The Book of Daniel,” 291–92; Freyne, “The Disciples in Mark and the *Maskilim* in Daniel,” 9; Ginsberg, “The Oldest Interpretation”; C. A. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 352.

In this regard, Ginsberg argues for the *maskîlîm*'s identification with Isaiah's suffering servant:

These men were not content to be merely Maskilim in the sense of Enlightened and to keep their knowledge to themselves, but became Enlighteners and instructed the Many (Dan xi 33a); and many of the Many joined them (xi 34b).... But why, then, doesn't our author call the Maškîlîm 'Servants' or 'Servants of God'? Because he doesn't need to, since the Servant himself is called a Maškîl right at the beginning of the Servant Pericope (Isa lii 13).²⁴

Wooden, moreover, translates Isa 52:13 as "[b]ehold my servant will instruct (or will have insight)."²⁵ Wooden insists that this translation links with Isa 53:11, which says that the servant will justify many by his knowledge ("he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous").²⁶

In addition to the use of שכל in Isa 52:13, Brownlee focuses on the shared motifs of suffering and martyrdom between Daniel's *maskîlîm* and Isaiah's suffering servant as well as the verbal parallel between Dan 12:3 and Isa 53:11—יצריק ... לרבים (Isa 53:11); ומצדיקי הרבים (Dan 12:3). He argues that those thematic and verbal echoes support the *maskîlîm*'s identification with Isaiah's suffering servant.²⁷

²⁴ H. L. Ginsberg, "The Oldest Interpretation of the Suffering Servant," *VT* 3 (1953), 403. Ginsberg translates the *maskîlîm* as "the Enlightened" or "Enlighteners" in several places (*Ibid.*, 402). The term "Enlighteners" is used to refer to the modern Jewish leaders (*maskîlîm*, enlighteners) in the modern Jewish Enlightenment movement. The word "Enlighteners" has some implication for their role. Considering the enlightening teaching of *maskîlîm* in Daniel, which, this study argues, is to envision a new relationship between YHWH and foreign kings and a new concept of YHWH's people and kingdom, "enlightener" serves as more specific translation of *maskîlîm* than the "wise men" or "sages."

²⁵ Wooden, "The Book of Daniel," 291–92.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 292.

²⁷ W. H. Brownlee, "The Servant of the Lord in the Qumran Scrolls, I," *BASOR* 132 (1953), 12. Fishbane also maintains that the *maskîlîm* are depicted as the reinterpretation or fulfillment of the servant passage of Isa 52:13–53:12 (*Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* [Oxford: Clarendon; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985], 493). See also J. A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*

This connection between the *maskîlîm* of Daniel and Isaiah's suffering servant raises the question concerning the purpose behind the *maskîlîm*'s appropriation of the suffering servant imagery. The *maskîlîm* of Daniel likely identified with Isaiah's passages because of the many similarities between them. For example: the importance of knowledge in his ministry (52:15; 53:11), his role as a teacher (53:11), the unidentified multitude (52:14, 15; 53:11), the role of his suffering and its consequence (52:14; 53:3–4, 7), and his impact on "many nations" (52:15).²⁸ These motifs serve the purpose of the Daniel narratives that depict the *maskîlîm*'s identity and role in transforming the foreign kings by the power of YHWH's wisdom.²⁹

Jeremiah. Jeremiah employs שכל to mean variously "to understand," "to succeed," and "to deal wisely." The subjects of these usages are also diverse, including shepherds, the wise, stupid shepherds, persecutors, and a king ("righteous Branch"). In Jeremiah, שכל occurs six times (3:15; 9:24 [MT 9:23]; 10:21; 20:11; 23:5; 50:9). Jeremiah 3:15 reads, "I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge

on the Book of Daniel, ICC 22 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1927), 422; Ginsberg, "Oldest Interpretation," 402–403.

²⁸ Wooden argues that in Isaiah "many" includes the nations and kings (52:14–15) and the Servant helps them to see and understand ("The Book of Daniel," 291).

²⁹ Gammie, in his study of the thematic and theological parallels between Dan 1–6 and Isa 40–55, draws four conclusions: "(1) The authors of the stories drew on the theological ideas and vocabulary of, *inter alia*, Deutero-Isaiah. (2) ... Dan i–vi ... show how a number of the sentences of Deutero-Isaiah furnished examples of 'prophecies fulfilled' among Isaiah's sons who served in foreign courts ... (3) ... One of the intentions of the authors was to show the sons of Israel that their call to servanthship in foreign court included being a light to the nations (Isa. xlii 6, xlix 6) so that foreign monarchs might acknowledge Yahweh's sovereignty and his power to save just as the kings acknowledge Yahweh in the paradigmatic stories of Daniel" ("On the Intention and Sources of Daniel I–VI," VT 31 (1981), 291–92). Wooden argues that as the servant in Isaiah helps 'many'—the nations and kings (52:14–15)—to see and understand, the Jewish sages in Daniel also teach kings and the Babylonian and Persian nations ("The Book of Daniel," 292). See also Davies, "The Scribal Schools of Daniel," 251–52.

and understanding [דעה והשכיל].” Although the “knowledge” and “understanding” word pair is דעה והשכיל in Jeremiah, unlike שכל ובינה in Chronicles (1 Chr 2:11; 22:12), the role of shepherds is still “to give understanding” or “to teach.” In this sense, shepherds share some aspects with the Isaianic servant or Danielic *maskîlîm* in their roles.

Jeremiah 9:24 (MT 9:23) says, “but let those who boast in this, that they understand [השכל] and know [ידע] me, that I am the Lord.” This verse shows the same combination of שכל and דעה (ידע) as Jer 3:15 in relation to the “knowledge of YHWH.” As this verse stands in contrast to the previous verse—“[d]o not let the wise boast in their wisdom” (v. 23 [MT v. 22])—this phrase demonstrates that the “knowledge of YHWH” is the true wisdom as opposed to the wisdom of the false and boastful wise. These verses invite comparison with the Daniel narratives in which the true wisdom—the knowledge of YHWH—transforms the foreign kings in contrast to the false sages of Babylon.

While Jer 3:15 mentions true shepherds whom YHWH will send and who will feed Israel with knowledge and understanding, Jer 10:21 depicts false shepherds saying, “[f]or the shepherds are stupid, and do not inquire of the Lord; therefore [על-כן] they have not prospered [השכילי], and all their flock is scattered.” In this passage, שכל is translated into “to prosper” (JPS, KJV, NAS, NRSV) as in the Deuteronomistic literature. Considering the context, however, where the על-כן phrase provides a conclusion or consequence, the consequence of being stupid and not inquiring of YHWH is more likely connected to a lack of understanding rather than “hav[ing] not prospered.” Consequently, the reason why “all their flock is scattered” is not because the shepherds have not prospered, but because the flock is not provided with proper knowledge and

understanding. This lack of understanding in these false shepherds contrasts with the true shepherds who “feed with knowledge and understanding” (Jer 3:15).³⁰

The literary context of Jer 10 also supports this interpretation. Jeremiah 10 is full of wisdom and creation terms, and recalls phrasing from the Daniel narratives:³¹

Who would not fear [יראך] you, O king of the nations?
For what is your due;
among all the wise ones [חכמי] of the nations
and in all their kingdoms
there is no one like you.
They are both stupid and foolish;
the instruction [מוסר] given by idols
is no better than wood! (vv. 7–8)

But the Lord is the true God;
he is living God and everlasting King....
It is he who made the earth by his power,
who established the world by his wisdom [בחכמתו],
and by his understanding [בתבניתו] stretched out the heavens....
Everyone is stupid and without knowledge [מדרעת]; (vv. 10, 12–14)

For the shepherds are stupid,
and do not inquire of [דרשו] the Lord;
therefore, they have not “understood [השכילו],”
and all their flock is scattered. (v. 21)
Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not “know you [ידעוך]” (v. 25)

Jeremiah 20:11 has the same issue of translating השכילו: “They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed [השכילו]. Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten” (NRSV). In this case, שכל means “to succeed.” The OG, however, translates it as “to

³⁰ This translation, which depicts knowledge and understanding as an essential factor of YHWH’s shepherds or servants, serves as a supporting evidence for translating Isa 52:13 as “See, my servant shall understand” (or “give understanding”).

³¹ “Do not learn the way of the nations, or be dismayed at the signs of the heavens; for the nations are dismayed at them. For the customs of the peoples are false: a tree from the forest is cut down, and worked with an axe by the hands of an artisan; people deck it with silver and gold.... Their idols ... cannot speak; they have to be carried for they cannot walk” (Jer 10:2–5).

understand” or “to perceive” together with the following line: “they were greatly confounded, for they perceived not their disgrace, which shall never be forgotten.”³²

Jeremiah 23:5 reads, “[t]he days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely [השכיל], and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land” (NRSV). Here, “deal wisely” reflects the *hiphil* of שכל, which can be translated more naturally as “prosper” (“he shall reign as king and prosper” [JPS, KJV]). The following phrase explains this translation: “and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.” In relation to this just and right judgment of the king, שכל may be translated as “to deal wisely.” This verse thus supports the use of שכל to reference a leader’s necessary factor or qualification.

As a result, Jeremiah primarily uses שכל to describe certain leaders such as shepherds (3:15) and the “righteous Branch” (23:5). Jeremiah characterizes true leaders by their knowledge and understanding, which leads to their primary role of “feeding” the people with knowledge and understanding (3:15; 10:21). Moreover, Jeremiah presents the knowledge of YHWH as the true wisdom that stands in contrast to the false wisdom. The use of שכל in Jeremiah thus has many similarities with the use of the word in Daniel in relation to the role of the *maskîlîm*.

Ezekiel. Ezekiel lacks the word שכל. Some scholars, however, interpret the Daniel *maskîlîm* in relation to the image of the prophet in the book of Ezekiel. Daewoong Kim argues that “the depiction of the *maskîlîm*’s ministerial activities and eschatological fate

³² The OG translates all as νοέω (“to understand”).

in Daniel 11–12 are anchored in the account of Ezekiel’s prophetic office (Ezek 2:2–3:21).³³ Based on his reading of Ezek 3:16–21, Kim maintains that “Ezekiel’s Jewish audience ... is the one that lacks confidence in prophetic oracle and its God as well,” and argues that “Ezekiel’s ministry is characteristic of collapse of the covenant relationship between God and God’s people” caused by the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem.³⁴ Kim argues that the same consequence occurs in Daniel based on the observation that Dan 11 takes Ezekiel’s motif of a foreign nation’s violation of the temple as its source text.³⁵

In addition, Kim insists that the two different audiences from the Israelite exiles in Ezekiel—“the doomed wicked” and “the backsliding righteous” (3:18–20)—also connect to Daniel’s two groups among the Jews—“those who violate the covenant” and “the people who are loyal to their God” (Dan 11:32).³⁶ In this argument, Kim explains that “the author’s intention is to envision the *maškîlîm* as an incarnation of Ezekiel’s duty to warn God’s people.... Ezekiel served as a ministerial “paradigm” for the *maškîlîm* to whom the author belonged.”³⁷

³³ D. Kim, “Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Daniel: Literary Allusions in Daniel to Genesis and Ezekiel” (PhD diss., Rice University, 2013), 219.

³⁴ Ibid., 222.

³⁵ Ibid., 223.

³⁶ These terms, “the doomed wicked” and “the backsliding righteous,” are originally used by Moshe Greenberg (*Ezekiel 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 22 [New York: Doubleday, 1983], 87), and cited by Kim (“Biblical Interpretation,” 221).

³⁷ Kim, “Biblical Interpretation,” 234–35. Ezekiel’s “God’s people” still refers to the Israelites. Ezekiel’s positive attitude toward the gentiles (presumably due to the criticism of the Israelites), however, is present. In addition, his attitude toward the sinners who would repent and return is notable in relation to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel: “[b]ut if the wicked turn away from all their sins that they have committed and keep all my statutes and do what is lawful and right, they shall surely live; they shall not die” (Ezek 18:21). Although this phrase also refers to the Israelite sinners, the idea of individual responsibility and retribution in Ezek 18 provides a theological basis for the individual and inclusive perspective.

Even though the texts of Daniel and Ezekiel similarly present the Jewish sages as continuing the work of the prophets, at least three differences are worth noting between the depictions of sages in these books. First, the concept of *maškilîm* in Daniel takes up and modifies the source text of Ezekiel.³⁸ For example, the collapse of the covenant relationship between YHWH and his people is not just a problem for Daniel's *maškilîm* but a turning point of Israelite religion and theology. The *maškilîm* serve in Daniel (in contrast to Ezekiel) to present a new concept of the covenant that emphasizes individually practiced and universally assessable characteristics in aftermath of the loss of the previous covenantal relationship. Although Ezekiel also calls for individual decision and salvation among the Israelites, Daniel extends this call to include the gentiles.

The second difference between the sages in Daniel and Ezekiel is that Ezekiel's message places the temple at the center of restoration hopes for the return of the glory of God (Ezek 43:1–5). Daniel's restoration vision, however, contains a throne (Dan 7:9) and kingdom (Dan 7:22, 27), but no temple.³⁹ The narratives also presuppose the absence of

³⁸ Fishbane argues that “[t]he epigonal character of Dan. 9–12, particularly of chapters 11–12, thus presents an imposing concatenation of prophetic authorities used by the author of our apocalypse.... Certainly, a proclivity to compose such a prophetic patchwork attests both to a scholarly attentiveness to authoritative sources received in the prophetic traditum and to a sense of apocalyptic immediacy. And, surely, just this is the desired impact of the concatenation upon the reader. By strategically and cumulatively assembling numerous prophetic pronouncements the author leads us into the mental world of wise believers, Daniel's *maškilîm*, and the tangle of authoritative texts which encoded their universe and provided an atmosphere of confidence in the inevitability of the apocalyptic forecast” (*Biblical Interpretation*, 493–94).

³⁹ Regarding the temple, Davies argues that “[t]he Temple in Daniel is ambiguously evaluated, it seems to me. It is present in the book of Daniel essentially in its absence. In the visions it is, from the point of view of the author, desecrated and destroyed; in the tales it is distant.... in the absence of the Temple cult, what effects atonement?... Prayer replaces the Temple sacrifice, replaces the Temple.... Daniel is no priest, and yet he intercedes; in the absence of the Temple he is the priestly figure, as are the *maškilîm*”

the temple and provide a means of practicing piety, as illustrated by Daniel's illicit prayer three times a day (6:10).⁴⁰ Daniel's stories and practices present an inclusive and universal vision of the kingdom of YHWH, which is viable without the temple and the Davidic monarchy. Leuchter supports this view when he writes that "Daniel's recognition that the Jerusalem temple had been compromised led to a new understanding of how scribalism could survive as a conduit to the divine beyond its precincts."⁴¹

The third distinguishing feature between Daniel and Ezekiel concerns the role of the sages in offering warnings. While Ezekiel warns the exiles in Ezek 3 ("you shall give them warning [הזהרת] for me," 3:17; "But if you warn (הזהרת) the wicked," 3:19; "because they took warning [נזהר]," 3:21), the wise in Daniel teach the foreign kings about the sovereignty of YHWH—or lead them to righteousness—with eschatological knowledge. Although the purpose of the warning is to lead people to righteousness in the case of Israel, a warning is quite different from teaching or leading them to righteousness when it comes to the gentiles. The warning alone cannot lead the gentile into righteousness. Rather, they must acknowledge YHWH and then transform their attitude and actions accordingly themselves. Altman's reading strategy reveals that the narratives

("Reading Daniel Sociologically," in *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings*, ed. A. S. van der Woude [Leuven: Peeters, 1993], 359–60).

⁴⁰ Horsley states that "[a]t the end of the visions, finally, the sacrifices in the Temple are apparently superfluous for the maskilim, since their own suffering and martyrdom have become the means of purification, at least for themselves" ("The Politics of Cultural Production in Second Temple Judea: Historical Context and Political-Religious Relations of the Scribes Who Produced 1 Enoch, Sirach, and Daniel," in *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism*, eds. B. G. Wright III and L. M. Wills, SBLSymS 35 [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005], 144). See also P. R. Davies, "Reading Daniel Sociologically," in *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings*, ed. A. S. van der Woude (Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 360.

⁴¹ M. Leuchter, "From Levite to Maškîl in the Persian and Hellenistic Eras," in *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition*, eds. M. Leuchter and J. M. Hutton, SBLAIL 9 (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 229.

in Dan 1–6 illustrate the process through which the foreign kings learn and acknowledge YHWH’s sovereignty, before following the way of righteousness.

Regarding the new concept of YHWH’s people in Daniel, Ezekiel provides a theological foundation. Ezekiel 33:17–20 reads,

Yet your people say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just,’ when it is their own way that is not just. When the righteous turn from their righteousness, and commit iniquity, they shall die for it. And when the wicked turn from their wickedness, and do what is lawful and right, they shall live by it. Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, I will judge all of you according to your ways!

In dealing with the same message, Ezek 18:29 reads, “[y]et the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is unfair.’ O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?” Moreover, reading Ezek 3:6 together—“[s]urely, if I sent you to them [foreign nations], they would listen to you. But the house of Israel will not listen to you, for they are not willing to listen to me”—allows room for the possible conversion of the gentiles only if one turns from wickedness and lives by YHWH’s law. This message presents a new theological vision that caused resistance from the “house of Israel” who questioned YHWH’s justice. In this sense, Nebuchadnezzar’s statement is worth noting: “[t]here is no one who can ... say to him, ‘What are you doing?’ ... for all his works are truth, and his ways are justice” (Dan 4:35, 37).

Amos. Amos has one occurrence of שָׂכִיל in a *hiphil* singular participle form, מִשְׁכִּיל *maškil*, which means “the prudent” (JPS, KJV, NAS, NRSV) or “the wise.” The verse reads “[t]herefore the prudent (מִשְׁכִּיל) will keep silent in such a time; for it is an evil time” (5:31). In Amos 5, “an evil time” refers to the injustice and transgression of “the house of Israel.” Amos prophesies that in such a time the wise will keep silent. The occurrence of

this term in Amos presents the closest usage in form (*hiphil* participle) and meaning (the prudent or the wise) to that of Daniel.

In sum, the Latter Prophets generally employ שכל to mean “to understand,” with the knowledge of YHWH serving as the object. This characteristic contrasts to that of the Former Prophets, which employ שכל to mean mainly “to succeed” and “to prosper” in the military context as a result of Torah observance. In this sense, the usage of שכל in the Latter Prophets is closer to that in the book of Daniel, which refers to understanding rather than success. In addition, the comparison between the roles of Daniel’s *maškilîm* and Isaiah’s suffering servant draws several similarities including the importance of knowledge in their ministries, their roles as a teacher, and their impact on the nations. The Latter Prophets’ depiction of various religious leaders—“a righteous branch,” “shepherds,” “the wise,” “the prudent,” and “the suffering servant”—who are characterized by their knowledge, teaching, and suffering, invites comparison with the portrayal of in *maškilîm* Daniel.

Writings

The Writings generally employ שכל to mean “to understand” or “to instruct,” and when it occurs in the participle form, it means “the wise” or “discernment.” Most characteristic usage is found in Psalms, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, which employ this term to mean “to instruct”—“to help others to understand.” The following section assesses the use of this term in Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

Psalms. Psalms employs שכל to mean “to understand” or “to teach,” often in relation to the fear of God and keeping of God’s precepts.⁴² God’s work or commandments often serve as the objects of understanding. This understanding and teaching makes one fear, serve, and worship YHWH properly (Pss 2:10; 14:2; 32:8; 36:4; 53:2 [MT 53:3]; 64:10; 94:8; 101:2; 106:7; 111:10; 119:99). The first occurrence of שכל in the Psalms (Ps 2:10) invites comparison with the Daniel narratives. The Psalmist proclaims to the kings of the earth that “[o] kings, be wise [השכיל]; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, with trembling kiss his feet” (Ps 2:10–12). The *hiphil* imperative “be wise” (השכיל) is translated in other versions as “understand” (OG), “be instructed” (KJV), or “show discernment” (NAS). The use of שכל in commanding foreign kings to understand God’s power and sovereignty is reminiscent of Daniel’s agenda. Moreover, the psalmist’s mentioning of “fear” (יראה) and “trembling” (רעדה) in serving and worshipping YHWH is notable in relation to Darius’s decree in Dan 6: “in all my royal dominion people should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel” (v.26).

Based on Ps 14:2 (53:2 [MT 53:3]), Gardner maintains that “the use of שכל relates to one’s attitude to God in some way.”⁴³ For example, in Ps 14:2 (53:2), מִשְׁכִּיל (“who are wise” [NRSV] or “man of understanding” [JPS]) is described as one “who seek after God.” Likewise, all other uses of שכל in the Psalms have the meanings of “being wise,” “to understand,” or “to instruct (to make someone understand)” without exception. In addition to the use of שכל meaning to “be wise” or to “understand,” some of the Psalms

⁴² Gardner, “שכל in the Hebrew Bible,” 504.

⁴³ Ibid.

have “*maskîl*” in the superscriptions.⁴⁴ In these cases, *maskîl* means “instruction” or “teaching.”

To summarize, the use of שכל in the Psalms has three characteristics. First, the psalmist uses the verb שכל (“be wise” or “to understand”) as a virtue that leads people to serve, fear, or seek after YHWH (Pss 2:10; 14:2; 36:4; 53:2; 64:10; 94:8; 101:2; 106:7; 111:10). Second, שכל means “to teach” or “to instruct,” which leads people to follow YHWH’s way (32:8) including the gentile rulers (2:10–12). Third, שכל relates to Torah in a way that the object of שכל (understanding) is YHWH’s commandments (Ps 119:99).

Proverbs. Proverbs employs שכל in the participle form to mean “the wise” or “discernment.” The word שכל occurs 19 times in Proverbs (1:3; 3:4; 10:5, 19; 12:8; 13:15; 14:35; 15:24; 16:20, 22, 23; 17:2, 8; 19:11, 14; 21:11, 12, 16; 23:9). Gardner notes that “most concern how שכל manifests itself in various ways in everyday life (e.g. 10:5, 19; 12:8; 16:23; 17:2; 19:11; 23:9) with the implication that it leads to the well-being of the individual and/or the approbation of others.”⁴⁵ Among others, שכל occurs seven times in the *hiphil* participle form, משכיל.⁴⁶ In these cases, participle form משכיל is used to refer to “the wise” or “discernment,” but not necessarily in a religious sense. Proverbs 17:8

⁴⁴ “*Maskîl* of David” (Pss 32; 52; 53; 54; 55; 142); “*Maskîl* of Korah” (Pss 42; 44; 45); “*Maskîl* of Asaph” (Pss 74; 78); “*Maskîl* of Haman the Ezrahite” (Ps 88); “*Maskîl* of Ethan the Ezrahite” (Ps 89).

⁴⁵ Ibid., 502–503.

⁴⁶ Each phrase reads: “A wise son [בן משכיל] gathers in summer” (10:5 JPS); “the prudent [משכיל] are restrained in speech” (10:19 NRSV); “The king’s favor is toward a wise servant [עבד משכיל]” (14:35 KJV); “The path of life leads upward for the wise [משכיל]” (15:24 NAS, NIV); “Those who are attentive [משכיל] to a matter will prosper” (16:20 NRSV); “A wise servant [עבד-משכיל] will rule over a disgraceful son” (17:2 NIV); “a prudent wife [אשה משכלת] is from the Lord” (19:14b NRSV, JPS).

employs שכל to mean “to succeed” or “to prosper:” “A bribe is like a magic stone in the eyes of those who give it, wherever they turn they prosper” (NRSV).⁴⁷

Job. Job employs שכל four times (17:4; 22:2; 34:27, 35) to mean variously “the wise,” “insight,” “to consider,” or “to succeed.” In Job 17:4, Job says that YHWH has closed the mockers minds to understanding (שכל). In Job 22:2, the *hiphil* participle form משכיל occurs in reference to a “wise man,” but again this word does not have any specific reference to any kind of wisdom or knowledge: “[c]an a mortal be of use to God? Can even the wisest be of service to him?” (22:2). Job 34:27 mentions that the wicked “had no regard [השכילו, ‘not consider’ KJV] for any of his [God’s] ways,” and v. 35 remarks that “Job speaks without knowledge, his words are without insight [השכיל].” שכל in Job describes either Job or the wise in contrast to the wicked. This term refers to understanding either God’s work or knowledge in general.

Ezra and Nehemiah. Ezra and Nehemiah employ שכל to mean “to understand,” “to study,” “to instruct,” or “discretion.” Ezra 8:18 refers to Sherebiah as “a man of discretion [איש שכל].” After realizing the lack of descendants of Levi among the returnees, Ezra asks Iddo to send some Levites (“ministers for the house of our God” 8:17). Iddo sends Sherebiah along with his family. The designation “man of discretion” apparently relates to his role as a “minister for the house of our God” (8:17).

⁴⁷ In other cases, we can find that the noun שכל refers to “wisdom” in a general sense: “To receive the discipline of wisdom [שכל], justice, and right, and equity” (1:3 JPS); “Wisdom [שכל] is a fountain of life to one who has it” (16:22a NRSV); “Whoever wanders from the way of understanding [שכל, wisdom] will rest in the assembly of the dead” (21:16 NRSV); “Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, who will only despise the wisdom [שכל] of your words” (23:9 NRSV).

Nehemiah 8:7 employs **בין** in relation to the Levites' work: "the Levites, *helped* the people *to understand* [מבינים] the law." Although this role of teaching the law is different from ministering in temple service, both are depicted as the roles of the Levites. In the following verse, while still using the verb **בין**, the noun **שכל** occurs: "and they *gave the sense* [שום שכל], so that the people understood [יבינו] the reading" (8:8). Whereas **בין** is used in a *hiphil* participle form to refer to "help them understand (teach)" in 8:7, verse 8 employs a *qal* verb meaning "they understood."

Nehemiah 8:13 reads, "[o]n the second day the heads of ancestral houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to the scribe Ezra to study [להשכיל] the words of the law." In this occurrence, the verb **שכל** means "to understand" or "to study." At the same time, this act relates to both the Levites and Torah. Nehemiah utilizes the words **שכל** and **בין** in relation to the Levites' role of studying and teaching Torah. Ezra's prayer in Neh 9:20 states "[y]ou gave your good spirit to instruct them, and did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and gave them water for their thirst." The correlation between "[YHWH's] good spirit [רוחך הטובה]" and instructing the people (להשכילם) is reminiscent of the story of Daniel, which connects wisdom with the spirit of the holy gods (רוח אלהין קדישין; Dan 4:8, 9, 18; 5:11, 16, see also 5:12; 6:3). Both Nehemiah and Daniel associate wisdom with the spirit of God and understand intellectual ability as a God-given talent. The depiction of Joseph in Gen 41:38 also presents this connection: "[c]an we find anyone else like this—one in whom is the spirit of God?... Since God has shown you all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you" (Gen 41:38–39).

Chronicles. In 1 Chr 22:12, David charges his son Solomon to build a temple and reminds him of God’s covenantal promise, “[o]nly, may the Lord grant you discretion [שכל] and understanding [בינה], so that when he gives you charge over Israel you may keep the law of the Lord your God.” Although this passage employs the context of שכל as part of David’s instruction to Solomon as in 1 Kgs 2:3, the Chronicler uses שכל with a unique nuance. In *Chronicles*, שכל appears as a noun referring to “discretion” or “wisdom,” a virtue that helps Solomon to keep the law of YHWH. While 1 Kgs 2:3 employs שכל to mean “being successful” as a result of keeping the law, God-given שכל (wisdom or discretion) in 1 Chr 22:12 helps one to keep the law.

The שכל and בינה often appear together in the chronologically later writings (see Isa 44:18; Ps 94:8; Dan 1:4, 17; 9:22; 11:33; 12:10; Neh 8:8; 2 Chr 2:12 [MT 2:11]; see also Deut 32:29). These words represent a character or virtue that helps one keep the law, and—in most cases—they are endowed by YHWH.⁴⁸ Wooden suggests that this verse does not merely mean that Solomon would himself keep the law, but also that “he would ‘guard’ its observance in Israel.”⁴⁹ This connotation and usage of the verb in 1 Chr 22:12 accords with the role of *maškilîm* giving understanding to many and leading many to righteousness in Dan 11 and 12. This observation suggests that the role of *maškilîm* was originally assigned to the royal figures, although it is transmitted to the Levites in the *Chronicles*’ depiction of the postexilic period.

⁴⁸ Gardner provides an example of the YHWH-endowed discernment in 1 Chr 22:12: Solomon says, “[o]nly the Lord give you discernment [שכל],” thus echoing the Isaianic passages which signal that God alone can give שכל or withhold it” (“שכל” in the Hebrew Bible,” 505).

⁴⁹ Wooden, “The Book of Daniel,” 295.

First Chronicles 26:14 shows another usage of שכל. It reads, “[t]hey cast lots also for his son Zechariah, a prudent counselor [ייעץ בשכל], and his lot came out for the north.” This verse uses the noun שכל to mean “discernment” or “wisdom” with the preposition ב (thus, “a counselor in discernment” or “a counselor of wisdom”). In this case, the noun is used in relation to one of the gatekeepers “ministering in the house of the Lord” (26:12) from the Korahites. This usage referring to the Korahites—a Levitical group—stands in contrast to the use of שכל for the kings in the Deuteronomistic history. Moreover, the noun שכל in 1 Chr 22 and 26 refers to “discernment,” “understanding,” or “wisdom,” as opposed to the cases in Deuteronomistic history where it usually means “to be successful” or “prosper.” This observation suggests that the usage and meaning of the word שכל develops over the course of the composition of the biblical books.

In 1 Chr 28:19, David explains to Solomon that YHWH gave David all the instructions for the temple building and the temple vessels: “[a]ll this, in writing at the Lord’s direction, he *made clear* [השכיל] to me—the plan of all the works.” In this passage, the verb שכל means “make clear” (NRSV), “make one wise” (JPS), “give one knowledge” (OG), or “make one understand” (KJV, NAS). In 2 Chr 2:12 (MT 2:11), King Hiram of Tyre praises God saying, “[b]lessed be the Lord God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, who has given King David a wise [חכם] son, endowed with discretion and understanding [שכל ובינה], who will build a temple for the Lord, and a royal palace for himself.” Hiram’s praise employs שכל and בינה as attributes of wisdom (חכם). These attributes relate to the building of YHWH’s temple. In addition, these words still relate to the God-given abilities or virtues of a king. Wooden maintains that the next verse describes Hiram-abi using only בינה, but not שכל, because “Hiram-abi was not from

Israel (and not a king or Levite), he could not have insight into what the God of Israel wanted; he was not one who was obedient to this God.”⁵⁰

In 2 Chr 30:22, שכל references either the knowledge of YHWH or skill in the temple services (לִיהוָה שְׂכָל־טוֹב: “discerning ones with good understanding of YHWH” or “who showed good skill in the service of the Lord” [NRSV]). Considering the Levites’ role in YHWH’s service, this knowledge or skill likely relates to their knowledge about Torah.⁵¹ Moreover, as Gardner points out, “this is the only occurrence of מַשְׂכִּיל in the plural in the Hebrew Bible, apart from in Daniel.”⁵² This observation supplies an important insight into the role of *maškilim* in Dan 11 and 12 pertaining to the identity of the authors. Second Chronicles 30:22 presents the Levites as helping people keep the practices correctly according to the law of Moses. This role of teaching relates to the function of the *maškilim* in Daniel, who lead many to the correct knowledge of God and the subsequent compliance.

In sum, the usage of שכל Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah shows four differences from its function in the Deuteronomistic History. First, the root שכל appears in a verbal form eight out of nine times (89%) in the Deuteronomistic history, but only four out of ten times (40%) in Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah. Second, whereas the root שכל means to “succeed” or “prosper” without exception in the Deuteronomistic History, it refers to

⁵⁰ Wooden, “The Book of Daniel,” 295.

⁵¹ See M. Leuchter, “From Levite to Maškil in the Persian and Hellenistic Eras,” in *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition*, eds. M. Leuchter and J. M. Hutton, SBLAIL 9 (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 215–32.

⁵² Gardner, “שכל in the Hebrew Bible,” 509.

intellectual activities including “knowledge,” “discretion,” or “skill” related to Torah in Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah.⁵³ Third, this word predominantly functions to describe kings (six out of nine occurrences) in the Deuteronomistic History, whereas it mostly relates to the Levites (six out of ten occurrences) in Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah.⁵⁴ Fourth, שָׁכַל (to succeed; to prosper) results from keeping the law in the Deuteronomistic History, whereas שָׁכַל (discretion; discernment; wisdom) serves as the condition or means to teach people to keep the law in Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah. As a result, this examination finds affinity in the usage of שָׁכַל between Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah and the book of Daniel in that the word שָׁכַל pertains to the role of teaching the people to understand and obey the law of YHWH by God-given wisdom and knowledge. The Levites’ role in Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah accords with the book of Daniel’s description of the role of *maškîlîm*.⁵⁵

⁵³ For the use of שָׁכַל in 1 Samuel and Jeremiah, see W. McKane, *Prophets and Wise Men*, SBT 44 (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1965), 67–68; For the usage in Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah, see Wooden, “The Book of Daniel,” 294.

⁵⁴ Both שָׁכַל and תּוֹרָה relate to the Levites. According to Gardner, “[t]hree passages specifically connect Levites with שָׁכַל. Ezra noticed that amongst the people who had assembled to go up to Jerusalem from Babylon (Ezra 8:1) there were no Levites (Ezra 8:15). He, therefore, called for some and amongst them was ‘a man of discernment (אִישׁ שָׁכַל)’ (Ezra 8:18). It is possible that this was a proper name but שָׁכַל appears unambiguously as a description of Levites in 2 Chr 30:22 where it is said, ‘And Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites’ who are then described as ‘discerning ones who brought about a good discernment of the Lord (הַמְשַׁכִּילִים שָׁכַל-טוֹב לַיהוָה).’ In what way or how they did this is not made explicit, but the verse is in the context of the celebration of Passover in the second month rather than the first. . . . A further example of the Levites displaying שָׁכַל in connection with the scriptures appears in Neh 8:8. The context is that of Ezra reading the Law to the people. Neh 8:7 says, ‘the Levites caused the people to understand the law’ while 8:8 tells us ‘They (the Levites) read in the book, in the law (תּוֹרָה) of God, distinctly (מִפְרָשׁ), and they gave the discernment (שָׁכַל) so that they could understanding the reading’” (“שָׁכַל” in the Hebrew Bible,” 505–507).

⁵⁵ Leuchter argues that “Daniel may be compared to Chronicles in terms of its understanding of scribal exegesis as a vehicle of ordering and sustaining national integrity under strained condition” (“From Levite to *Maškîl*,” 228).

Škl (שכל, Maškil) in the Book of Daniel

Based on the survey of שכל in the Hebrew Bible, this section explores the usages of שכל in the book of Daniel. The book of Daniel employs this term to reference Daniel's ability to interpret or understand dreams and visions (1:17; 5:12; 9:22) that reveal YHWH's sovereignty in history. This study thus argues that the *maškilîm* conceptualized their role as revealing YHWH's mystery, instructing on YHWH's superior wisdom and sovereignty over the nations, as well as espousing an inclusive vision for the people of God. The book embraces the gentiles in order to claim the universal YHWH and, thus, the "many" (הרבים, 11:33; 12:3) includes not only the Jews but also the gentiles. This understanding coheres with the interpretation of the narratives, which illustrates the Jewish sages' role of instructing and leading the foreign kings to the true knowledge YHWH.

Meaning of the Root שכל in Daniel

The book of Daniel employs שכל to refer to God-given insight or wisdom to interpret dreams and understand their mysteries.⁵⁶ The Jewish sages use this wisdom in the Daniel narratives to instruct the foreign kings on the knowledge of YHWH. The Hebrew root שכל occurs ten times in the Hebrew portions of Daniel.⁵⁷ Every occurrence

⁵⁶ Based on the study of the Sapiential Work, Collins argues that the mystery refers to "the entire divine plan, from creation to eschatological judgment." He explains that "[i]f it has an eschatological thrust, this is because the marvelous mysteries only become clear in the end.... The mystery encompasses 'the coming of the years and the going of the periods' (4Q418 123 ii 2–8)" ("Wisdom Reconsidered, in Light of the Scrolls," *DSD* 4 [1997], 273–74).

⁵⁷ Daniel 1:4, 17; 8:25; 9:13, 22, 25; 11:33, 35; 12:3, 10.

of this root describes Daniel, except for Dan 8:25. Daniel 8:25 reads, “[b]y *his cunning* (שכל) he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall be great.” The subject of שכל is “a king of bold countenance” (8:23) and the word means “cunning” in a negative sense instead of “wisdom.”

In the Aramaic part of the book (2:4–7:28), the Aramaic noun שכלתנו (‘‘understanding’’ [NRSV, JPS], ‘‘insight’’ [NAS], or ‘‘intelligence’’ [NIV]) occurs three times in 5:11, 12, and 14, all of which pertain to Daniel. The noun occurs together with other wisdom-related words like ‘‘enlightenment’’ (נהירו) and ‘‘wisdom’’ (חכמה; 5:11); ‘‘excellent spirit’’ (רוח יתירה) and ‘‘knowledge’’ (מנדע; 5:12); ‘‘enlightenment’’ (נהירו) and ‘‘excellent wisdom’’ (חכמה יתירה; 5:14) in referring to Daniel’s outstanding knowledge and wisdom. In Dan 5:12 the queen elaborates that these characteristics enable Daniel to ‘‘interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems,’’ which is the main motif of the narratives. The Aramaic verb occurs once in *hithpaal* (*hithpaal*) participle form, משתכל, in 7:8 in reference to Daniel’s action of considering or contemplating his dream.⁵⁸ Considering the thematic importance of שכל in the Hebrew portion of Daniel, the association in the Aramaic portion between שכל and Daniel supplies a unifying literary thread.⁵⁹

Within the Hebrew section of the book (1:1–2:3; 8:1–12:13), the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar ordered his palace master Ashpenaz to ‘‘bring in certain of the children of Israel ... skillful in all wisdom [משכילים בכל-חכמה], and skillful in knowledge [דעת]

⁵⁸ Koenen, ‘‘*šākal*; *šēkel*; *maškil*.’’ 14:127.

⁵⁹ It is also notable that most of the Aramaic שכל—all of the Aramaic nouns—occur in Dan 5.

ידעי], and discerning in thought [מביני מדע], and such as had ability to stand in the king's palace" (1:3–4 JPS). In this passage, *maskîlîm*—"skillful"—refers to one of the qualifications for the Jewish courtiers as a pair with חכמה. Some scholars argue that this usage of משיכילים בכל-חכמה ("versed in every branch of wisdom" [NRSV]) is understood in a secular sense, or at least in a general sense, which contrasts to the YHWH-given wisdom in Dan 1:17: "[t]o these four young men God gave knowledge [מדע] and skill [השכל] in every aspect of literature and wisdom [חכמה]; Daniel also had insight [הבין] into all visions and dreams" (NRSV).⁶⁰

Regarding Nebuchadnezzar's specification of the qualifications, Newsom interprets, "[t]he piling up of the terms rather serves to underscore the superlative aptitude and excellent previous training of the young men to be selected. The emphasis, however, is thematically important, for knowledge plays a crucial role in the book."⁶¹ Moreover, the use of *maskîlîm* at the beginning (1:4) and the end of the book (11:33, 35; 12:3, 10) as an *inclusio* implies the thematic significance of this word for the whole book of Daniel and provides some clue to the editorial process of the book.⁶² While concluding

⁶⁰ "[I]n Dan 1, the use of שכל moves from a non-religious, to a theological usage: although one might be considered שכל by others, to be truly שכל one must be obedient to God and be divinely endowed with שכל" (Wooden, "The Book of Daniel," 295); See also Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 137; Gardner, "שכל in the Hebrew Bible," 497.

⁶¹ C. A. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 42.

⁶² Although Gardner discovers a disjunction between the *maskîlîm* in Dan 1 and Dan 11–12, she maintains that "whatever the term משיכילים meant in Daniel 1 underlies its meaning in Daniel 11–12 and vice versa" ("שכל in the Hebrew Bible," 498). See also Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 35; Davies, "The Scribal School of Daniel," 252. Freyne explains the significance of the occurrence of *maskîlîm* in Dan 1: "By using the same designation the author wishes to suggest that Daniel is the *maskil*, par excellence, and though the activity and role of the other *maskilim* is not so highly developed, we may safely assume that Daniel is intended as typical of the group as a whole, both in his life-style and in the consequences that

the book with a specific description of the *maskîlîm*'s role in Dan 11 and 12, which alludes to the authors' self-identification, the scribes connect the role of the *maskîlîm* with the illustrative stories of the Jewish sages. For the literary and thematic connection, the authors employ their self-designation—משכילים—in describing the Jewish sages' characteristics in the introductory chapter.

In Dan 9:22, Daniel narrates that “[h]e came and said to me, ‘Daniel, I have now come out to give you wisdom [השכילך] and understanding [בינה]” (NRSV, cf. 1 Chr 22:12). Fishbane notes that the wisdom and understanding that the angelic being offers concerns the fate of Israel. He maintains that this wisdom and understanding stand “in marked contrast to Israel’s ancient historical inability to understand (להשכיל) the truth of God’s way and repent of their evil actions.”⁶³ This study further argues that the foreign kings’ acknowledgment of YHWH and the corresponding changes in the narratives also contrast with the non-listening and disobedient rulers of Israel and Judah.

Scholars understand the word משכילים in Dan 11 and 12 “within the context of Jewish society at the time of the Maccabean Crisis.”⁶⁴ In Dan 10–12, “the one in human form” (10:18) teaches Daniel “what is inscribed in the book of truth” (10:21). While explaining the future of the kings of Persia and Greece, the one in human form states, “[t]he wise [משכילי] among the people shall give understanding [יבינו] to many; for some days, however, they shall fall by sword and flame, and suffer captivity and plunder”

accrue to him as a result of his superior knowledge of God’s plan for the end of days” (“The Disciples in Mark and the *Maskilim* in Daniel: A Comparison,” *JSNT* 16 [1982], 9).

⁶³ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 488.

⁶⁴ Gardner, “שכיל in the Hebrew Bible,” 498.

(11:33). The association between this understanding (יְבִינִי) and future events in history reveals that the *maškîlîm*'s role involved revealing YHWH's "mystery" (רִזְ, Dan 2:18, 19, 27–30, 47) in a time of tribulation. This revelation serves to confirm YHWH's sovereignty over history even in a time of tribulation.

The text continues to explain that "[w]hen they fall victim, they shall receive a little help, and many shall join them insincerely" (11:34). Scholars interpret the "little help" as referring to Mattathias and his son Judas.⁶⁵ Collins, however, rather interprets that "the *maškîlîm* receive little real help, from any party."⁶⁶ Newsom explains that "[m]ore likely the phrase 'little help' is a comment on the inability of this group [*maškîlîm*] to develop a stable following. This is suggested by the following complaint that many who join them act 'deceitfully' or 'insincerely.'"⁶⁷ In any case, this phrase likely presents the fact that this group behind Daniel and its perspective received little support among the Jewish factions.

The next occurrence of *maškîlîm* states, "[s]ome of the wise [משכילים] shall fall, so that they may be refined, purified, and cleansed, until the time of the end, for there is still an interval until the time appointed" (11:35). This sentence interprets the persecution as having refining effects. Some scholars argue that this phrase presents the martyrdom of the wise as an atonement for the people.⁶⁸ Others, however, suggest that the persecution

⁶⁵ Hartman and Di Lella, *Daniel*, 300.

⁶⁶ Collins, *Daniel*, 386.

⁶⁷ Newsom, *Daniel*, 353.

⁶⁸ Montgomery, *The Book of Daniel*, 459; A. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 256–58.

directly refines the people in general, or the wise in particular.⁶⁹ This study argues that Dan 11:35 speaks of the purification of those who are persecuted. The text illustrates that the sages give understanding to many and lead them to righteousness. Anyone who chooses to suffer persecution, based on their understanding, undergoes refinement. This interpretation leads to an individualized purification based upon individual decisions and actions.⁷⁰

The last occurrence of the מַשְׁכִּילִים appears in a short remark on the wise in Dan 12:3. The one in human form explains that “[t]hose who are wise [הַמַּשְׁכִּילִים] shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness [מְצַדִּיקִי], like the stars for ever and ever” (12:3).⁷¹ This verse contains a synonymous parallelism in which הַמַּשְׁכִּילִים and מְצַדִּיקִי refer to the same group.⁷² This sentence shows that the *maškilîm*

⁶⁹ Bevan argues, “[t]he suffix in בָּהֶם, to judge by chap. xii. 10, must refer to the people at large, not only to the מַשְׁכִּילִים; the meaning therefore seems to be that the death of some of ‘the teachers’ is no excuse for despair, but is necessary in order that their adherents, ‘the many,’ may be duly tested.” (*A Short Commentary on the Book of Daniel for the Use of Students* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1892], 195); See also Collins who argues, “[c]loser to the context of Daniel is the example of Taxo and his sons in the *Testament of Moses* 9, who purify themselves by fasting for three days and resolve to die rather than transgress the commandments of the Lord. The purification bespeaks an interest in individual salvation as distinct from (though not opposed to) the deliverance of the nation. The death of the martyrs is not vicarious. They are the ones who are purified. The *maškilîm* has their effect on the *rabbîm* by instructing them” (*Daniel: A Commentary*, 386).

⁷⁰ “The purification bespeaks an interest in individual salvation as distinct from (though not opposed to) the deliverance of the nation” (Collins, *Daniel*, 386).

⁷¹ See Prov 10:21: “The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of sense.”

⁷² See also Montgomery, *The Book of Daniel*, 471; E. W. Heaton, *The Book of Daniel: Introduction and Commentary*, TBC (London: SCM, 1956), 248; O. Plöger, *Das Buch Daniel*, KAT 18 (Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 1965), 171; M. Delcor, *Le Livre de Daniel*, SB (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1971), 225–56; L. F. Hartman and A. A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 23 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 309. For the views differentiating these two groups, see R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929), 330; A. Jeffrey, “The Book of Daniel,” in vol. 6 of *The Interpreter’s Bible*, eds. G. A. Buttrick et al., 12 vols (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956), 543.

(“the wise”) serve to “lead many to righteousness.” Eternal life thus awaits them as a reward. In addition, Dan 12:10 also mentions *maškîlîm* and רבִּים: “[m]any [רבִּים] shall be purified, cleansed, and refined, but the wicked shall continue to act wickedly. None of the wicked shall understand [יְבִינִי], but those who are wise [הַמְשַׁכְּלִים] shall understand [יְבִינִי].”⁷³ This sentence presents a synonymous parallel in which “many” corresponds to “those who are wise.”⁷⁴ This parallel demonstrates that the acts of the wicked result from their inability to understand, while many will be refined based on their understanding. In this case, understanding, as well as the persecution, has refining effects. Many who accept *maškîlîm*’s teaching and come to have understanding shall be purified and refined, thus being led to righteousness.

In sum, in Daniel, שָׂכַל (“understanding” or “insight”) pertains to the ability to interpret or understand dreams or visions (1:17; 5:12; 9:22). These dreams and visions reveal YHWH’s sovereignty in history. Through its ability to read and interpret signs and wonders, שָׂכַל enables one to understand YHWH’s will in history and his sovereignty over the nations. This understanding leads to three outcomes. First, שָׂכַל makes one experience YHWH’s superior wisdom, which reveals eschatological knowledge and mysteries.

Second, שָׂכַל makes one acknowledge that YHWH is sovereign over the world (nations

⁷³ Collins argues that “[t]here is no doubt that the visionary identifies with the maskilim. If the ‘people of the saints of the Most High’ are to share in the victory of Michael and receive a kingdom, this ‘people’ is not co-extensive with the state of Judah but is confined to the wise teachers and the section of the populace which responds to them and provides ‘a little help.’ It is highly important to note how this elect group is defined. It is not by race, geography or nationality, but by wisdom and understanding. It is not enough to belong to the undifferentiated mass of the rabbim, although these are not accused of violating the covenant. Further, the maskilim do not guide the people simply by exhorting them to justify, but by making them understand” (*The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel*, HSM 16 [Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1977], 168).

⁷⁴ This sentence presents the structure of A–B–B’–A’.

and rulers) and history. Third, שכל calls one to an eschatological decision and, thus, to submit oneself to the power and wisdom of YHWH and even to suffering and martyrdom.

Social Classification of the Maškilîm

Scholars argue for various identifications of *maškilîm*: such as the scribes in the Seleucid bureaucracy, learned scribes among the high priest's administration, mantic visionaries, a group with close links to prophecy, small apocalyptic visionary conventicles, Hasidim, or a teacher of righteousness in the Qumran community.⁷⁵ In addition, scholars often regard "the wise" (*maškilîm*) as the group behind the book of Daniel. Scholars argue that they, as the successors in the Israelite wisdom tradition,

⁷⁵ For scribes in the Seleucid bureaucracy, see Redditt, "Daniel 11 and the Sociological Setting," 472; P. R. Davies, "The Scribal Schools of Daniel," in vol. 1 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, eds. J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint, 2 vols., VTSup FIOTL 83,1 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 257–58; Newsom, 23. For learned scribes among the high priest's administration, see Newsom, 23; For Hasidim, see M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, trans. J. Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 1:175–180, 202–203; M. Delcor, "Le Milieu d'origine et le développement de l'apocalyptique juive," in *La littérature juive entre Tenach et Mishna: quelques problèmes*, ed. W. C. van Unnik, RechBib IX (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 101–17; A. Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel*, trans. D. Pellauer (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), 10–12; idem, *Daniel in His Time*, SPOT (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 27–31; idem, "The Socio-Spiritual Formative Milieu of the Daniel Apocalypse," in *The Book of Daniel: In the Light of New Findings*, ed. A. S. van der Woude, BETL CVI (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 320–25; Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 43–45; N. Porteous, *Daniel: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), 15; V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, trans. S. Applebaum (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959), 125–126, 196–198; W. S. Towner, *Daniel*, IBC, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 6–8; Brownlee, "The Servant of the Lord in the Qumran Scrolls," 13. For mantic visionaries, see H.-P. Müller, "Mantische Weisheit und Apokalyptik," in *Congress Volume, Uppsala, 1971*, VTSup 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 268–93; S. B. Reid, *Enoch and Daniel: A Form Critical and Sociological Study of Historical Apocalypses*, BMS 2 (Berkeley, CA: Bibal, 1989), 132–36; For a group with close links to prophecy, see R. R. Wilson, "From Prophecy to Apocalyptic: Reflections on the Shape of Israelite Religion," *Semeia* 21 (1981), 92; For small apocalyptic visionary conventicles, see Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology*; P. Vielhauer, "Apocalypses and Related Subjects," in *Writings Relating to the Apostles; Apocalypses and Related Subjects*, vol. 2 of *The New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. W. Schneemelcher (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963–65), 582–607; P. D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).

compiled the book of Daniel to present their own perspective in response to the imperial persecution in the second century BCE.⁷⁶

This section explores the identity of *maškîlîm* based on the scholarly conversation. Davies understands the *maškîlîm* in Dan 11:33, 35 and 12:3, 10 as a specific circle or class.⁷⁷ Other scholars focus on the context of foreign courts, identifying the *maškîlîm* as Seleucid court officials who were ousted by Antiochus IV.⁷⁸ More specifically, Plöger reconstructs a postexilic Judean community consisting of the priestly temple establishment and a small conventicler that produced eschatological apocalyptic literature.⁷⁹ Plöger's reconstruction associates the author(s) of Daniel with this small conventicler with apocalyptic visions. Similarly, Fishbane defines the *maškîlîm* as a Hellenistic-Jewish conventicle. He argues that, based on the content in Daniel, this conventicle of *maškîlîm* had a confident trust in God's plan based on their knowledge of the future secrets. They thus would have taught many and faced martyrdom.⁸⁰

While concurring with the identification of the *maškîlîm* as a kind of conventicle, Hempel focuses on Dan 11:33–35 and argues that “the boundaries between those who are with us and those who are against us seem to be relatively fluid and low.”⁸¹ She suggests:

⁷⁶ Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 66–67; Newsom, *Daniel*, 21–28.

⁷⁷ Davies, “Scribal Schools of Daniel,” 251.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 257–58; Redditt, “Daniel 11,” 467.

⁷⁹ O. Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology*, trans. S. Rudman (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1969), 19.

⁸⁰ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 493.

⁸¹ C. Hempel, “Maškîl(im) and Rabbim: From Daniel to Qumran,” in *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Michael A. Knibb*, eds. C. Hempel and J. M. Lieu, JSJSup 111 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 140.

It is characterized by a certain elitism that is nevertheless willing to admit the right kind of aspirants into the fold. This non-insular generosity is indicated by the fact that this group is said to instruct (יבִּינֵי) the many and welcomes those who join them as long as they do so sincerely... Maybe we could describe the portrayal of the wise here as advocates of *aspirational elitism*.⁸²

Hempel's point supports this study's argument that the "many" includes not only the Jews but also the gentiles. This function of *maškîlîm* derives from an inclusive and universalistic perspective concerning YHWH's people.

Focusing on the contemporary political situation makes some argue for the resistant nature of the *maškîlîm*. Portier-Young insists that the *maškîlîm* in Dan 11 and 12 are wise teachers who advocated resistance to the persecution of Antiochus IV with knowledge and understanding.⁸³ She argues that "[b]y instructing the persecuted in (and by) the practice of Torah ... and the apocalyptic vision revealed to Daniel, the *maškîlîm* impart knowledge of God's faithfulness, God's sovereignty, and God's will for the Judean people."⁸⁴ She explains that in this way the *maškîlîm* lead the many to righteousness and suffer persecution and death as a result. While agreeing with the resistant nature of *maškîlîm*, this study argues that the *maškîlîm* proclaim YHWH's superior wisdom and sovereignty over foreign rules and legitimate foreign rule. They thus embrace the gentiles in light of the universal YHWH.

Gardner identifies *maškîlîm* with the Aaronite priest or Levites. She argues that "instructing many" in Dan 11:33 coheres with the role of priests and Levites in Neh 8:8

⁸² Ibid., 140–41.

⁸³ Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 236–37, Similarly, Smith-Christopher, "Book of Daniel," 151.

⁸⁴ Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 256.

where they “gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.” Gardner also argues that the role of the shepherd in Jer 3:15 (“who will feed you with knowledge [דעה] and discernment [שכל]”) is connected to the Levitical role of 2 Chr 30:22.⁸⁵ From these observations, she argues that the *maskilim* are “identified as being of the line of Aaron, both in their function (2 Chr 30:22) and as far as their names are concerned (Neh 8:4, 7; 10:26; Ezra 8:2).”⁸⁶

Conclusion

The preceding assessment reveals a development in the meaning of שכל within the Hebrew Bible. In Torah, שכל refers to knowledge as it relates to the observance of Torah and “what the end would be” (Deut 32:29). Both of these concerns relate to wisdom in Daniel. שכל primarily appears in the Deuteronomistic history as a verb, meaning to “succeed” or “prosper.” These uses predominantly refer to the Israelite kings. This success or prosperity results from keeping the law of Moses. The nominal form of שכל in Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah identifies the God-given “discretion” or “understanding,” which either helps the king keep the law of YHWH and guard people’s observance (1 Ch 22:12, see also Dan 12:3), or helps the Levites study and teach the law of YHWH (Neh 8:8, 13; 9:20). The usage of שכל in Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah accords with the role of Danielic *maskilim*.

⁸⁵ Gardner, “שכל in the Hebrew Bible,” 511.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 514.

Scholars compare the *maškilîm* in Daniel with either the prophetic ministry of Ezekiel or the suffering servant in Isaiah.⁸⁷ The main difference between the Danielic *maškilîm* and other prophetic figures is the universal perspective of the *maškilîm* in Daniel. While the prophetic ministries of Isaiah and Ezekiel target the Israelites, the Danielic *maškilîm*'s ministry includes foreign kings and embraces the gentiles as potential additions to the people of YHWH's promise and covenant.

This chapter concludes that the *maškilîm* in Daniel reinterpret the role of Isaiah's suffering servant for their time and impose a new perspective about the gentiles. The *maškilîm*'s agenda in Daniel legitimizes foreign sovereignty under YHWH's universal sovereignty. At the same time, they envision an inclusive regrouping of YHWH's people with confessing and converting individuals.⁸⁸ The identification of the people of YHWH thus comes to transcend ethnic lines. In this sense, while the restoration of Judah or the Davidic monarchy is not their current concern, the restoration or establishment of YHWH's kingdom is already in progress in the Danielic *maškilîm*'s inclusive concept of the people of YHWH.

Scholars identify the *maškilîm* in Daniel as either a Hellenistic Jewish conventicler with apocalyptic visions, or as wise teachers advocating resistance to the

⁸⁷ See Ginsberg, "The Oldest Interpretation," 400–404; Brownlee, "The Servant of the Lord," 12–15; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 493; Wooden, "The Book of Daniel," 290–292; Newsom, *Daniel*, 77–78, 106, 289–307.

⁸⁸ Westermann argues in his commentary on Isaiah 40–66 that to be the people of God becomes a decision of individuals: "[n]o longer is it thought of in national but in individual terms. The chosen people has turned into the confessing community" (*Isaiah 40–66: A Commentary*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker, OTL [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969], 310, 313). See also J. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 19B (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 136. For the postexilic confessional community, see M. Weber, *Ancient Judaism*, trans. and eds. H. H. Gerth and D. Martindale (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1952), 29, 93.

empires.⁸⁹ According to this study's reading of the narratives and the survey of שכל in the Hebrew Bible, the *maškîlîm* of Daniel are enlighteners who suggest an inclusive paradigm for their religious and political identity. They present a universal and inclusive perspective embracing the gentiles into YHWH's people of promise. Jew and gentile alike now enter into (the group of) righteousness (Dan 12:3) via the individuals' acquaintance with the eschatological knowledge (mystery), the confession of the sovereignty of YHWH, and the observance of YHWH's covenantal condition. The story of the Jewish sages in Dan 1–6 who teach the foreign kings to acknowledge and praise YHWH through the transformative power of YHWH-given knowledge fits in the ideal of the authors behind the book of Daniel: the *maškîlîm*.

⁸⁹ “As a working hypothesis, then, consider the writer(s) of Daniel *hasidim*, spiritual ancestors of the Qumran community on the one hand, and of the early Pharisees on the other.... The *hasidim* who completed the Book of Daniel drew from the wisdom tradition of their people for the stories about Daniel and his fellow heroes. The wisdom circles of Israel carried on their didactic function by telling stories. . . . The stories deal with the problem of theodicy, exhibit an inter-cultural and international perspective, and display human beings making decisions in mature and responsible ways—all of which are themes at home in the wisdom tradition of Israel” (W. S. Towner, *Daniel*, IBC [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012], 7–9).

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion and Implications

Summary

This study began with the question about whether the Daniel narratives satirize the foreign kings, or portray them in a positive manner. This study argues that the narratives display a development of foreign kings' attitude toward the Jewish sages. These kings thus come to acknowledge and praise YHWH for his power and wisdom. This positive presentation of the foreign kings further legitimizes the foreign rulers and leads the gentiles to become a part of YHWH's people. Because of the distinct nature of the narratives as a story-collection featuring three different foreign kings, this study employs Altman's narrative theory. Altman's theory makes it possible to read the narratives as a whole and explore the overarching message, instead of focusing on separate stories. By employing the reading strategy of "following" and "framing," and the concept of single-focus and dual-focus narratives, this study explores the process through which the foreign kings come to acknowledge YHWH and experience transformation through the eschatological knowledge (mystery) of YHWH.

The narratives demonstrate how the revelation of YHWH's mystery leads the foreign kings to acknowledge the superiority of the wisdom of YHWH and his sovereignty over rulers, nations, and history. Through the progressive revelations and lessons of YHWH in Dan 1–4, Nebuchadnezzar comes to recognize YHWH's sovereignty and his everlasting kingdom. This development of Nebuchadnezzar leads to his praise of

YHWH's truth and justice. Based on the requirements and expectation for the foreign kings, which develops in Dan 1–4, Belshazzar's arrogance and blasphemy are judged in Dan 5. The case of Belshazzar assumes the new relationship between YHWH and foreign kings, and demonstrates that the gentiles, who receive YHWH's lessons, are under the same governance and moral standard before YHWH as the Jews. The story of Darius in Dan 6 builds upon the development of Nebuchadnezzar, which reaches its apogee in Darius's recognition of YHWH as "the living God" when he decrees that "all peoples and nations of every language throughout the whole world" should tremble and fear before YHWH.¹

Based on this reading of the narratives, this study argues that these narratives illustrate the role of the *maskîlîm* in Dan 11 and 12. The study of the root שכל in the Hebrew Bible demonstrates that in the chronologically later biblical books שכל means the YHWH-given knowledge to help people understand the law and to lead them to correct observance of the covenant and commandments. This meaning coheres with the role of the *maskîlîm* in Dan 11 and 12, and the Jewish sages' role in the narratives. In addition, the presentation of Daniel's *maskîlîm* shares vocabulary and themes with the suffering servant in Isa 52 and 53 as well as the Jeremiah prophecy that emphasizes the importance

¹ Berquist proposes that the vision of embracing the gentiles into YHWH's people is rooted earlier in the Persian period: "[a]s the Yehudite religion expanded, it began to lose its strict association with ethnicity. The Hebrew bible shows traces of redefining the religion outside ethnic boundaries. For instance, Isaiah understands the faithful people as a 'light to the nations' (42:6; 49:6; cf. 60:3) and says that the nations will run to Jerusalem because of God's glorious presence (55:5; cf. 2:2, 4). The prophet even claims that foreigners can worship God in the same way that natives do (56:3, 6). Later in history, the religion became even more accepting of outsiders who joined as God-fearers, and this practice may have its roots in the Persian period.... At the same time, these changes were controversial, and books such as Ezra and Nehemiah claim a much higher value in ethnicity for the purity of the chosen community" ("Resistance and Accommodation in the Persian Empire," in *In the Shadow of Empire: Reclaiming the Bible as a History of Faithful Resistance*, ed. R. A. Horsley [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008], 55).

of knowledge in their ministries and their impact on foreign nations and rulers (Jer 3:15; 9:24 [MT 9:23]; 10:7–25). This dissertation concludes by arguing that the final authors (compilers) of Daniel succeed some of the exilic prophets' favorable attitude towards the foreign kings, legitimizing foreign rules by affirming the universal sovereignty of YHWH over the nations and history.

Implications and Further Discussions

The above conclusions have three implications for the interpretation of the Daniel narratives. The first implication concerns the relationship between wisdom and apocalypticism² in Daniel. This discussion leads readers to the second implication: the prophetic function of the sages. This discussion examines the relationship between the prophetic and apocalyptic traditions in Daniel. The third implication relates to the inclusive and individualistic nature of the apocalyptic perspective of Daniel. This discussion concerns the theological implication of the authors' distinct perspectives in the postexilic period.³ These three implications illuminate the rationale for the unity of the book of Daniel.

² Collins's distinction among "apocalyptic," "apocalypticism," and "apocalypse" is helpful. He argues that "[m]ore recent scholarship has abandoned the use of 'apocalyptic' as a noun and distinguishes between apocalypse as a literary genre, apocalypticism as a social ideology, and apocalyptic eschatology as a set of ideas and motifs that may also be found in other literary genres and social settings" (*The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 2).

³ Becking categorizes people's reaction to fundamental religious and political changes in the postexilic period into four groups, and one of them is "[a]n attempt to reformulate Yahwism in the religious, political and social context." Then, he lists the examples of this group: "[t]he Books of Ezra and Nehemiah reflect a form of religion that can be labeled as fundamentalistic. Second Isaiah, the final redactions of the Pentateuchal traditions and the Deuteronomistic history writing as well as the rewriting of the Story of Ancient Israel in the Books of Chronicles form good examples of the creative process of reformulation of the tradition" ("Continuity and Discontinuity after the Exile: Some Introductory Remarks," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times*, eds. B. Becking

The relationship between wisdom and apocalypticism. In his *Old Testament Theology*, Gerhard von Rad argues that the apocalyptic genre originated from the Israelite wisdom tradition rather than the prophetic tradition. Scholars who view the apocalypticism as “the child of prophecy,” however, notably criticize this position.⁴ Müller presents a closer relationship between apocalypticism and wisdom by differentiating mantic wisdom from didactic wisdom. He defends von Rad’s argument for the wisdom origin of the apocalyptic genre by insisting that some of the essential characteristics in which apocalypticism seems to contradict wisdom can be understood more in terms of mantic wisdom.⁵ Despite the rejections and criticism, Von Rad’s theory succeeded in initiating the scholarly discussion on the relationship between wisdom and apocalypticism.

The book of Daniel contributes to the understanding of the relationship between wisdom and apocalypticism. On the one hand, the book of Daniel has characteristics of apocalyptic literature. According to Collins’ definition,

“Apocalypse” is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient,

and M. C. A. Korpel, *OtSt* 42 [Leiden: Brill, 1999], 4–5). This study argues that the book of Daniel also presents a distinctive and creative reformulation of the tradition.

⁴ H. H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic: A Study of Jewish and Christian Apocalypses from Daniel to the Revelation* (London: Lutterworth, 1963). See also H. Najman, “The Inheritance of Prophecy in Apocalypse,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. J. J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 36–51; J. J. Collins, “From Prophecy to Apocalypticism: The Expectation of the End,” in *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, vol. 1 of *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, ed. J. J. Collins (New York: Continuum, 2000), 129–161.

⁵ H.-P. Müller, “Mantische Weisheit und Apokalyptik,” in *Congress Volume, Uppsala 1971*, VTSup 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 280.

disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involve another, supernatural world.⁶

Nel differentiates two subgenres of the apocalypse, one with an otherworldly journey and the other supplying a historical overview.⁷ According to Nel's categories, the book of Daniel reflects the historical apocalypse, which explores the course of history and eschatological salvation without a heavenly or supernatural journey.

On the other hand, Dan 1–6 depicts Daniel as a wise man. The narratives characterize Daniel and his companions by their wisdom and knowledge. The text specifically presents Daniel as an interpreter of dreams and visions. Moreover, the text compares Daniel and his companions with the Babylonian wise men. Von Rad argues,

Daniel is educated as a wise man (Dan. I. 3ff.), and in consequence he is enrolled among the wise men (Dan. II. 48); charismatic wisdom gives him his ability to interpret dreams (Dan. II. 30, V. 11)... Enoch designates himself as a unique representative of true wisdom (Enoch XXXVII. 2–4), and Ezra, who had apocalyptic knowledge granted him, is called “scribe of the knowledge of the Most High” (IV Ezra XIV. 50)... These apocalyptists were scholars and researchers. Certainly, they were aware that all human striving after knowledge, especially where it is directed upon the things of God, the future, and what lies beyond the end, requires revelation, and that it can only exist as charismatic knowledge.⁸

By emphasizing the charismatic nature of wisdom, as well as calling Daniel as both an apocalyptist and a wise man, von Rad presents a close relationship between wisdom and apocalypticism in these texts.

⁶ J. J. Collins, “Introduction: Toward the Morphology of a Genre,” *Semeia* 14 (1979), 9.

⁷ M. Nel, “Daniel 9 as Part of an Apocalyptic Book?” *VerEcc* 34 (2013), 6.

⁸ G. von Rad, *The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions. Vol. 2 of Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1965), 2:306–307.

While Daniel's wisdom is charismatic and endowed by YHWH, as von Rad notes, the book of Daniel also presents Daniel's wisdom as an eschatological knowledge.⁹ This eschatological knowledge ("mystery" [רֵז] in Dan 2 and 4) forms a significant motif in the book of Daniel.¹⁰ Both the charismatic and the eschatological natures of the knowledge characterize the narratives in Dan 1–6. These narratives depict the mystery of YHWH—the eschatological knowledge revealed through the Jewish sages—as having a didactic impact on the recipients: the foreign kings.

In sum, three observations support the close relationship between wisdom and apocalypticism in the Daniel narratives. First, Jewish sages mediate the content of the apocalyptic visions, which consists of eschatological knowledge. Although Daniel needs interpretative assistance from otherworldly beings in the apocalyptic visions of Dan 7–12 ("one of the attendants" in Dan 7; "Gabriel" in Dan 8 and 9; "a man clothed in linen" in Dan 10–12), Daniel himself interprets the revelations—with YHWH's help in Dan 2 and

⁹ Regarding the charismatic nature of wisdom, van der Toorn argues that different versions of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* of Babylonia demonstrate the change of the concept of wisdom from wisdom attained from experience to a wisdom derived from divine revelation. He observes that the Standard Babylonian additions call wisdom a secret of the gods ("Let me disclose, O Gilgamesh, a matter most hidden. To you I will tell a secret of the gods" [Gilg. XI 9–10]). Van der Toorn further argues that the emergence of scribalism leads to the concept of wisdom as a secret ("Why Wisdom Became a Secret: On Wisdom as a Written Genre," in *Wisdom Literature in Mesopotamia and Israel*, ed. R. J. Clifford, SBLSymS 36 [Leiden: Brill, 2007], 21–29, esp. 23–24). In the case of Daniel, the wisdom is the latter kind of wisdom, which God or divine intermediaries provide. See also Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 219.

¹⁰ Wisdom as a mystery is an important concept which connects Daniel with the Qumran literature. Harrington argues, "the most striking contribution of the Qumran wisdom texts is their insistence on wisdom as a gift from God and on the need for understanding the 'mystery that is to be/come.... The 'mystery' appears to be a body of teaching that involves creation, ethical activity, and eschatology" (*Wisdom Texts from Qumran*, LDSS [New York: Routledge, 1996], 83). Regarding the eschatological nature of the knowledge, see J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel*, HSM 16 (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1977), 170.

without it in Dan 4 and 5—for the foreign kings. Thus, the sages play the role of a mediator and interpreter of apocalyptic revelation.

Second, the content of the revelation—the eschatological knowledge—has a didactic function in the Daniel narratives.¹¹ The role of the apocalyptists is not merely to reveal or interpret the dreams and visions, but rather to teach YHWH’s lessons and messages through the interpretation. The development of the foreign kings across the stories testifies to this didactic nature of the revelation. Regarding the *maskîlîm* in Dan 11 and 12, Newsom argues that “[i]n Daniel the critical element appears to be the teaching rather than death in martyrdom, though the willingness to die may itself be a testimony that will ‘make the many righteous.’”¹²

Third, the kings serve as the audience of the revelation in the narratives. Smith argues that “[a]pocalypticism is Wisdom lacking a royal court and patron and therefore it surfaces during the period of Late Antiquity not as a response to religious persecution but as an expression of the trauma of the cessation of native kingship.”¹³ Smith argues the role of court scribes and sages in the ancient Near East was to create texts of political propaganda associated with celebrating a victory or coronation in service of their kings. These scribe-sages presented their king as the fulfillment of the earlier prophecy in order

¹¹ Von Rad categorizes Daniel and 1 Enoch as “didactic” as well as “apocalyptic” writings (*Wisdom in Israel*, trans. J. D. Martin [Nashville: Abingdon, 1978], 268).

¹² C. A. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 352–53. See also: B. A. Jones, “Resisting the Power of Empire: The Theme of Resistance in the Book of Daniel,” *RevExp* 109 (2012), 547.

¹³ J. Z. Smith, “Wisdom and Apocalyptic,” in *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses*, ed. P. D. Hanson, IRT 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 115.

to legitimize the king.¹⁴ According to Smith, when native rules ceased in the Greco-Roman period, however, the tradition became “a prophecy against foreigners rather than in favor of a specific king.... The king may be utterly cosmicized (a tendency always present in the various ideologies of divine kingship) in a thoroughgoing apocalypse.”¹⁵

Even though the Daniel narratives positively depict the foreign rulers, the stories still work as the scribe-sages’ propaganda cosmicizing their native kingship through the affirmation of divine sovereignty. At the same time, the sages of Daniel present a distinct ideology of legitimizing foreign rulers by depicting their sovereignty as given and controlled by YHWH. In this sense, the Daniel narratives continue the tradition of native court scribe-sages’ propaganda in the context of foreign courts. This scenario explains both the didactic nature of the revelation and the reason for featuring foreign kings as recipients of the revelation and lessons in the narratives.

This close connection between wisdom and apocalypticism appears in other literature at Qumran. Goff explains,

4QInstruction is widely and justly regarded as sapiential in terms of genre. The composition is explicitly pedagogical, written by a teacher ... who is called a *mebin* (“understanding one”).... At the center of 4QInstruction stands the *raz nihyeh*, which can be translated the “mystery that is to be.”... While the trope is alien to biblical wisdom, the apocalypses and other early Jewish texts use the term *raz* to denote revealed, supernatural knowledge. Not unlike 4QInstruction, Daniel 2 repeatedly uses the term to denote heavenly revelation in the story of

¹⁴ Ibid., 110–11.

¹⁵ Ibid., 111. See also VanderKam who argues that “texts of this kind [apocalyptic writings] begin to surface after the conquest of the Near East by Alexander III ‘the Great,’ and during the dominion of the Hellenistic and Roman empires. In those centuries native rule, wherever it still existed, ceased with a finality that left little hope for reversal” (*From Revelation to Canon: Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature* [Leiden: Brill, 2000], 261).

Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and the word has a similar function in the Aramaic Enoch scrolls (4QEn^C 5 ii 26–27; 1 En. 106:19; cf. 1QS 3:23; 1QpHab 7:4–5).¹⁶

While arguing that both wisdom and apocalyptic literature are scribal phenomena, Smith explains that the purpose of these scribal phenomena relates to the persistent quest for paradigms and the application of them to a new context.¹⁷ This understanding of the apocalyptic situation accords with the interpretation of the narratives in this study. Smith suggests that this scribal phenomenon does not relate to the religious persecution, but rather to the absence of native kingship. Exploring a viable paradigm in the situation of foreign domination and the absence of native kingship was the agenda of the Jewish scribe-sages behind the book of Daniel.

The merging of wisdom and apocalypticism. According to Goff, the distinction between wisdom and apocalypticism collapsed in the late Second Temple period, as some wisdom texts “emphasize supernatural revelation.”¹⁸ This study suggests that the book of Daniel exemplifies this merging of wisdom and apocalyptic literature in that the wisdom

¹⁶ M. Goff, “Wisdom and Apocalypticism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. J. J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 56. Regarding the similarity between 4QInstruction and Daniel, see also: T. Elgvin, “Early Essene Eschatology: Judgment and Salvation according to Sapiential Work A,” in *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Conference on the Texts from the Judean Desert, Jerusalem, 30 April 1995*, eds. D. W. Parry and S. D. Ricks [Leiden, Brill, 1996], 131. In addition, the designation “mebin” has its precedent in the Hebrew Bible: “Ezra is further aided in his task by levitical instructors who bring Torah understanding (*mēbînîm*) to the people (Neh 8:7, 9) and convey to them the sense (*šekel*) of the text being studied (v 8; cf. v 13, *lēḥaškîl*)” (M. A. Fishbane, “From Scribalism to Rabbinism: Perspectives on the Emergence of Classical Judaism,” in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, eds. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 441; see also: J. Blenkinsopp, “The Sage, the Scribe, and Scribalism in the Chronicler’s Work,” 311, n.12 in the same volume).

¹⁷ Smith, “Wisdom and Apocalyptic,” 115.

¹⁸ Goff, “Wisdom and Apocalypticism,” 60–61.

of the Jewish sages is characterized as divinely revealed eschatological knowledge.

Regarding the boundary between wisdom and apocalypticism, Nickelsburg argues,

Jewish wisdom and apocalypticism cannot be cleanly separated from one another.... Because both are the products of wisdom circles that are becoming increasingly diverse in the Greco-Roman period. Thus, apocalyptic texts contain elements that are at home in wisdom literature, and wisdom texts reflect growing interest in eschatology. Moreover, claims to revelation, inspiration, or divine enlightenment can be found in both ‘sets’ of texts. Our subject matter is complex and the issues are often not clear.¹⁹

Thus, Perdue names the scribe-sages behind the apocalyptic literature as “apocalyptic sages,” and argues that these sages are teachers “who combine typical wisdom forms and teachings with apocalyptic thought and language.”²⁰ He states that the apocalyptic features that they stressed include rewards and punishments on the righteous and wicked, the righteous’ immortality, and the knowledge of YHWH. Perdue concludes, “[i]n the merging of traditions during the Hellenistic period, one finds the blending of wisdom and apocalyptic in the thought of some Jewish circles prior to the Essenes who founded the community of Qumran.”²¹ The book of Daniel similarly reflects this merging of wisdom and apocalypticism, suggesting that the character of Daniel represents an “apocalyptic sage” who precedes the Qumranic *Maškil*.

¹⁹ G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “Wisdom and Apocalypticism in Early Judaism: Some Points for Discussion,” in *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism*, eds. B. G. Wright III and L. M. Wills. SBLSymS 35 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 20015), 19–20. See also: J. J. Collins, “Wisdom, Apocalypticism, and Generic Compatibility,” in *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie*, eds. L. G. Perdue, B. B. Scott, and W. J. Wiseman (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 165–85. S. J. Tanzer, “Response to George Nickelsburg, ‘Wisdom and Apocalypticism in Early Judaism,’” in *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism*, eds. B. G. Wright III and L. M. Wills. SBLSymS 35 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 20015), 39–49.

²⁰ L. G. Perdue, “Wisdom and Apocalyptic: The Case of Qoheleth,” in *Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Biblical Tradition*, ed. F. G. Martínez, BETL 168 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 247.

²¹ Ibid.

Daniel as a Prophet

Although the character Daniel reflects a wise sage, he still performs the prophetic function of delivering and proclaiming YHWH's message. Nickelsburg writes,

The three youths and Daniel are God's spokesmen, preaching, on the basis of revealed information, against the arrogance of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar and announcing God's judgment. The role is prophetic, even if they are not called prophets.²²

The prophetic role of Daniel and its relationship with the Mesopotamian political oracles illuminate the relationship between the foreign kings and Jewish sages that this study suggests: the narratives depict the Jewish sages as the prophets for the gentiles who deliver YHWH's message through the interpretation of dreams and signs.

The prophetic role of Daniel. The prophetic function of the apocalyptic visions in the Daniel narratives demonstrates the continuity between both traditions. Perdue argues that "[e]merging apocalyptic seers were primarily the successors of the classical prophets."²³ Horsley also claims, "their [scribe's] authority came directly from the Most High.... They also understood themselves as the successors of the prophets, as well as

²² Nickelsburg, "Wisdom and Apocalypticism," 281. Orton also notes that "it is striking that in Daniel he is not described as a 'prophet,' though in its concern with the 'true' meaning of prophetic texts, the work is clearly preoccupied with prophecy" (*The Understanding Scribe: Matthew and the Apocalyptic Ideal*, JSNTSup 25 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989], 100).

²³ Perdue, "Wisdom and Apocalyptic," 240. Barton also argues for the prophetic role of Daniel to the foreign kings which, he views, is similar to "typical prophetic oracles against the nations." He argues that "[t]hey have to learn that only the true God has sovereignty over the world. And Daniel is commissioned to make this clear to them" ("Theological Ethics in Daniel," in vol. 2 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, eds. J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint, 2 vols., VTSup FIOTL 83,2 [Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001], 664); See also: M. A. Knibb, "Prophecy and the Emergence of the Jewish Apocalypses," in *Israel's Prophetic Tradition: Essays in Honour of Peter R. Ackroyd*, eds. R. Coggins, A. Phillips, and M. Knibb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 155–80; Fishbane, "From Scribalism to Rabbinism: Perspectives on the Emergence of Classical Judaism," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, eds. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 443, n. 10.

their interpreters, speaking by divine inspiration.”²⁴ The relationship and continuity between prophecy and apocalypticism is not only related to the functions of the prophets and the apocalyptic sages, but also to the media that they used. That is, the development of written prophecy paved the way for the development of apocalyptic literature. While arguing that the prophetic books (written prophecy) replaced the prophets and their prophecies in the second century BCE, van der Toorn argues that the scribes take the role of the prophets:

This new conception of prophecy [a collection of scrolls] comes to the fore in the apocalyptic literature of the late third and the early second centuries B.C.E.... When the Hebrew scribes adopted the revelation paradigm in connection with the prophetic literature, they took the vision (*ḥāzôn*) to be the classic mode of prophetic revelation.... This particular construction of the prophetic experience is related to the legitimizing accounts contained in the prophetic scrolls.... The scribes have turned this element of the prophetic experience into a kind of dogma of prophetic revelation.... The scribes developed the notion of the prophet as a scribe, and of his message as a secret revealed by heavenly figures, to legitimate the fact that the prophets had become books. Prophets were men of the past; the scribes had taken their place.²⁵

In addition to the comparison between the role of classical prophets and that of Daniel, the comparison between Daniel and Joseph in Gen 41 demonstrates the prophetic nature of Daniel.²⁶ While both stories contain a similar dream-interpretation motif, the

²⁴ R. A. Horsley, *Revolt of the Scribes: Resistance and Apocalyptic Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 12.

²⁵ K. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 229–231. See also: Najman, “The Inheritance of Prophecy,” 37.

²⁶ For examples of the comparison between the prophets and Daniel, see Leuchter: “[t]he abstraction of Priestly teaching for exilic audiences in Ezekiel’s oracles served as a template for the authors of Daniel to abstract authoritative scriptural tropes in support of their own interests.... the lexemes of Dan 12:3 present the authors of Daniel as inheritors of the role of the Servant in Isa 52–53 (see esp. Isa 52:13; 53:11)” (“From Levite to Maškil in the Persian and Hellenistic Eras,” in *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition*, eds. M. Leuchter and J. M. Hutton, SBLAIL 9 [Atlanta: SBL, 2011], 229), or Collins: “[t]here is here a certain blurring of the distinction between sage and prophet, and the apocalyptic sages bear greater resemblance to Ezekiel or Zechariah than to Sirach or Ecclesiastes, but they are sages

functions of the interpretation and revelation are different. Daniel's interpretation includes YHWH's messages—lessons, admonitions, or condemnations—to the foreign kings, whereas Joseph's interpretation provides Pharaoh only with the information about a future event. This comparison demonstrates the prophetic nature of Daniel's role and message, which instructs and warns about the end of days and calls for action.²⁷ Barton further explains the relationship between the prophets and scribe-sages:

A prophet is a practitioner of what is sometimes called 'mantic wisdom': someone who can understand a mystery.... I am seeking not only to undermine the usual distinction between prophets and 'apocalyptists'—a tendency which should by now be clear—but even to blur that between prophets and 'wise men.' And indeed it seems to me that in our period neither distinction can easily be maintained.... The 'wise men' ... are *inspired* figures to whom insight into supernatural mysteries has been granted: and the practical difference between a wise man of this kind and a prophet is not clear to me.²⁸

nonetheless." ("The Sage in the Apocalyptic and Pseudepigraphic Literature," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, eds. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 343). See also: R. R. Wilson, "From Prophecy to Apocalyptic: Reflections on the Shape of Israelite Religion," *Semeia* 21 (1981), 92; J. Goldingay, *Daniel*, WBC 30 (Dallas, TX: Word books, 1989), 284; D. Kim, "Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Daniel: Literary Allusions in Daniel to Genesis and Ezekiel" (PhD diss., Rice University, 2013); R. S. Hendel, "Isaiah and the Transition from Prophecy to Apocalyptic," in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, eds. C. Cohen et al., 2 vols (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008). 1:269–71.

²⁷ Grabbe compares Daniel with the prophets Amos and Jeremiah, and proposes that: "I would make apocalyptic a subdivision of prophecy. In other words, we do not necessarily have to decide whether Daniel or another apocalyptic writing is a form of prophecy: by my categorization Daniel is a special form of prophecy. The resemblances between prophetic and apocalyptic literature noted above occur because we are not dealing with two separate categories but with a single category that can be subdivided" ("Daniel: Sage, Seer ... and Prophet?" in *Constructs of Prophecy in the Former and Latter Prophets and Other Texts*, eds. L. L. Grabbe and M. Nissinen, ANEM 4 [Atlanta: SBL, 2011], 94).

²⁸ J. Barton, *Oracles of God: Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel after the Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 129. Conversely, Bedenbender differentiates mantic sages from the prophets: "a mantic sage was a kind of craftsman. In order to fulfill his duties and to solve the problems he encountered, he had to undergo a special training, very much as a weaver or a scribe had to do," whereas "Daniel ... receives a special revelation of the God of Israel, just like other biblical prophets. This is not like anything that customarily happened to mantic sages." As a result, Bedenbender also argues for the prophetic nature of Daniel's role ("Seers as Mantic Sages in Jewish Apocalyptic (Daniel and Enoch)," in *Scribes, Sages, and Seers: The Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean World*, ed. L. G. Perdue, FRLANT 219 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008], 261).

In sum, three observations support Daniel's prophetic role. First, the eschatological knowledge is revealed by YHWH. Second, this knowledge carries YHWH's message to a certain audience rather than providing universal principles. Thus, the sage serves as the messenger or deliverer of YHWH's words as the prophets do. Third, the revealed knowledge carries the prophetic message of YHWH's sovereignty, critiquing sin, proclaiming YHWH's judgment, and calling for action, as prophecy does.²⁹

Then, why apocalyptic visions? Even though the sages assumed the role of prophets in the early second century BCE, it is still necessary to ask why they employed apocalyptic visions as a means of communication. This study argues that the apocalyptic vision and its interpretation served as a familiar medium in the Babylonian and Persian cultural context.³⁰ In order to deliver YHWH's message to the gentiles, the Jewish scribe-

²⁹ Sneed argues that "[t]he clear-cut distinctions biblical scholars make between prophets, priests, and sages, and their respective literatures does not fit the broader ancient Near Eastern pattern" ("Grasping After the Wind": The Elusive Attempt to Define and Delimit Wisdom," in *Was There a Wisdom Tradition?: New Prospects in Israelite Wisdom Studies*, ed. M. R. Sneed, SBLAIL 23 [Atlanta: SBL, 2015], 47). Conversely, Koch distinguishes the significance of Daniel from other prophets: "[c]learly there is an underlying and determinative conception of a two-stage revelation: The prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are indispensable but preliminary spokesmen of the Word of God; it is only with Daniel that the final stage begins. So he is more than a prophet; he is 'a man greatly beloved' (Dan. 10:11, 19) and not a prophet" ("Is Daniel Also Among the Prophets?" 125).

³⁰ Shalom Paul argues that "[t]he book of Daniel, though authored and compiled at a very late date (with Dan 1–6 dating from the Hellenistic period and chapters 7–12 from the eve of the Maccabean revolt), nevertheless bears noticeable linguistic, philological, and typological Mesopotamian imprints.... These influences on Daniel ... are just one facet of the remarkable continuity of Babylonian cultural, societal, and linguistic norms that were preserved and maintained not only in their original cuneiform garb, but were also transferred and transformed into Aramaic, the new *lingua franca*. There was no break in the vitality of the cultural milieu after Cyrus's conquest of the neo-Babylonian empire.... Some have even called the Seleucid period the 'final flowering of Babylonian culture' ("The Mesopotamian Background of Daniel 1–6," in vol. 1 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, eds. J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint, 2 vols., VTSup FIOTL 83,2 [Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001], 55, 65); see also "Transcription and use of divinatory texts continued into the Seleucid period and beyond" (M. Broida, "Textualizing Divination: The Writing on the Wall in Daniel 5:25," VT 62 [2012], 4); "The genre of the apocalypse, so characteristic of Daniel 7–12, may likewise be traced back to Mesopotamia" (K. van der Toorn, "Scholars at the Oriental Court: The Figure of Daniel against Its Mesopotamian Background," in vol. 1 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and*

sages adopted an oracular form familiar to the people in the Babylonian culture context. In this sense, it is instructive that the Daniel narratives continue to compare the wisdom of the Jewish sages with that of the Babylonian court sages.³¹ Nickelsburg notes that “[t]he chief quality of Daniel and his friends, apart from their faithfulness to their God (1:7), is their wisdom as inspired interpreters of dream visions, similar to, but vastly superior to their Babylonian counterparts.”³²

Collins argues that even though Babylonian provenance cannot fully account for the Jewish apocalypse, it serves as an important contributing factor:

Apocalyptic revelation resembles divination in the decoding of mysterious signs. To be sure, divination and dream interpretation were not exclusively Babylonian phenomena.... However, it is reasonable to assume that the affinities between

Reception, eds. J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint, 2 vols., VTSup FIOTL 83,1 [Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001], 38; W. G. Lambert, *The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London: Athlone, 1978).

³¹ J. Z. Smith explains, “Berossus was a learned Babylonian priest during the Seleucid period at a time when the Babylonian ‘schools’ were world famous and the major activities of a Babylonian intellectual were astronomy, astrology, mathematics, historiography and the recovery of archaic ritual lore. These Babylonian intellectuals.... stood in continuity with ancient Babylonian scribalism, and unbroken tradition from the Sumerian period to the sages of the Babylonian Talmud. It is to this scribalism that Berossus directs us for our first clue as to the interrelationship of wisdom and apocalyptic.... The scribes were an elite group of learned literate men, an intellectual aristocracy which played an invaluable role in the administration of their people in both religious and political affairs. They were dedicated to a variety of roles: guardians of their cultural heritage, intellectual innovators.... magicians, scientists, court functionaries, linguists, exegetes, etc.... and they guarded and transmitted their teachings.... They projected their scribal activities on high, on a god who created by law according to a written plan, on a god who was a teacher in his heavenly court. They hypostatized the scribe and scribal activities in the figure of Divine Wisdom” (“Wisdom and Apocalyptic,” 103). As a result, Smith argues that “wisdom and apocalyptic are related in that they are both essentially scribal phenomena. It is the paradigmatic thought of the scribe—a way of thinking that is both pragmatic and speculative—which has given rise to both” (Ibid., 106).

³² Nickelsburg, “Wisdom and Apocalypticism,” 281. Similarly, Horsley argues, “[w]ith regard to ‘mantic’ wisdom of dreams and their interpretation, Daniel resembles, while excelling, all the wise men of Babylon, all the ‘magicians, enchanter, sorcerers, and Chaldeans’ (1:17, 20; 2:2, 10, 12, 19, 27, 28; 4:6, 9; 5:7, 8, 11–12)” (“The Politics of Cultural Production in Second Temple Judea: Historical Context and Political-Religious Relations of the Scribes Who Produced 1 Enoch, Sirach, and Daniel,” in *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism*, eds. B. G. Wright III and L. M. Wills, SBLSymS 35 [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005], 141–142).

apocalyptic revelation and mantic wisdom are due in some part to Babylonian influence.³³

Collins further maintains that mantic wisdom became more prominent than a typical Jewish wisdom in the period after the exile.³⁴ Perdue also emphasizes the tradition of diviners in Mesopotamia and argues, “[p]robably after 587 BCE, the wise men of Judah came into contact with Babylonian sages, although their encounter with the Egyptian wise men could have gone back to the days of Solomon in the tenth century BCE.”³⁵

The Babylonian influence on Jewish apocalyptic literature, however, does not fully explain the phenomenon of Jewish apocalypse and its functions in relation to the book of Daniel. The Jewish apocalyptic sages’ strategic adoption of the Mesopotamian oracular form likely relates to the political nature of the Mesopotamian oracles. Reid observes the parallel between Babylonian dynastic prophecy and Dan 11–12, arguing, “[t]he fact that the dynastic prophecy (11:3–45) dominates the passage indicates that the genre of the passage should be understood as dynastic prophecy.”³⁶ Collins states the purpose of adopting the Babylonian political oracle:

³³ J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 28–29.

³⁴ Collins argues, “[t]he wisdom of Daniel and Enoch has close affinities with the mantic wisdom of the Babylonians. The quest for higher wisdom by revelation is well attested in the Hellenistic age, and it is significant that the biblical wisdom book that shows most correspondence with the apocalypses is the Hellenistic (deuterocanonical) Wisdom of Solomon” (Ibid., 21). See also M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period. Volume One: Text. Volume Two: Notes & Bibliography*, trans. J. Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 1:210–18.

³⁵ Perdue, “Wisdom and Apocalyptic,” 239.

³⁶ S. B. Reid, *Enoch and Daniel: A Form Critical and Sociological Study of Historical Apocalypses*, BMS 2 (Berkeley, CA: Bibal, 1989), 109. See also: A. K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, TSTS 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 21; W. G. Lambert, *The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London: Athlone, 1978), 9–10.

The Jewish redactor of Daniel 2 chose a Babylonian political oracle ... because such oracles and dream interpretation played a large part in the profession of a wise man at the Babylonian (or other Near Eastern) court. The political dimension of the dream is not, therefore, entirely coincidental, although it is subordinated here to the superior wisdom of Daniel and his God.³⁷

These observations demonstrate that the apocalyptic sages behind the book of Daniel adopted and developed the literary form of the Babylonian political oracles.³⁸

These Babylonian political oracles were prevalent even in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.³⁹ The Jewish scribes employed this literary tradition that was native to the gentile neighbors in order to communicate their theological and political claims in the

³⁷ J. J. Collins, "Court-Tales in Daniel and the Development of Apocalyptic," *JBL* 94 (1975), 224. Regarding the wise men at the Babylonian court, see: Diodorus Siculus, 2.29, *Library of History, Volume I: Books 1–2.34*, trans. C. H. Oldfather, LCL 279 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 445–47. See also S. K. Eddy, *The King Is Dead: Studies in the Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism, 334–31 B.C.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), 65–71; Broida, "Textualizing Divination," 12.

³⁸ Regarding the Akkadian prophecy, Grabbe argues, "[i]t has been argued that some of the literary prophecies are actually *vaticinia ex eventu*—descriptions of historical events as if they were prophecies in advance.... The Marduk and Šulgi prophecies seem to relate to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I in the twelfth century BCE. The Dynastic Prophecy clearly describes the rise of the neo-Babylonian dynasty, Persian rule, and the coming of the Greeks; it was probably composed in the Seleucid period. The Uruk prophecy has been variously assessed. The reign of the eleven kings of Babylon described by it may end with Amel-Marduk, Nebuchadnezzar II, or the son of Merodach-Baladan II, though it may have been composed by a Seleucid scribe who saw parallels between Nebuchadnezzar and Antiochus I.... The Akkadian literary prophecies generally take the format of describing the reigns of a succession of unnamed kings, usually in terms of good or bad.... They differ in overall structure from most of the OT prophetic literature. On the other hand, they are strikingly parallel with some of the later Jewish apocalypse. The *ex eventu* prophecies remind one very much of such passages as Daniel 11 and the "Animal Apocalypse" (1 Enoch 85–90). Indeed, it has been argued that these Near Eastern prophecies are a forerunner of Jewish apocalypticism, and some even prefer the term 'Akkadian apocalypse' in place of 'Akkadian prophecies'" (*Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* [Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995], 93–94.

³⁹ Collins, "Court-Tales in Daniel," 222, n. 22; Collins also notes that "[t]he figure of Enoch is to some degree modeled on Enmeduranki, founder of the guild of *bārûs*, or Babylonian diviners. There is also a general similarity between the methods of apocalyptic revelation and of divination, insofar as both involve the interpretation of mysterious signs and symbols, and both carry overtones of determinism" (*The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 26). See also Müller, "Mantische Weisheit und Apokalyptik," 268–93; Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision*, 67–88; J. C. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, CBQMS 16 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984), ch. 3. Regarding the Hellenistic and Roman periods, see Eddy, *The King Is Dead*; H. Fuchs, *Der geistige Widerstand gegen Rom in der antiken Welt* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1938); H. Windisch, *Die Orakel des Hystaspes* (Amsterdam: Uitgave van der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1929), 46–49.

foreign imperial context. The literary form, including dream and vision-interpretations, was familiar to both foreign audiences and the Jewish populations living in the Hellenistic world.⁴⁰ The development of the Jewish apocalypse reflects the strategic adoption of the Babylonian literary tradition. Through the use of the Babylonian political oracles, these scribes could communicate their claims about the universal sovereignty of YHWH and the legitimacy of foreign rules under divine sanction.⁴¹

Based on the above examinations, this study argues that the narratives depict the Jewish sages as the prophets for the gentiles who deliver YHWH's message through the interpretation of dreams and signs.⁴² They adopt the literary form that was familiar to the gentiles in order to deliver YHWH's messages in the narratives.⁴³ By demonstrating the superior wisdom of the Jewish sages over the Chaldeans, they maximized the impact of the revelation upon the foreign rulers. The narratives thus portray the prophetic role of these sages in the foreign context, which leads the foreign rulers to acknowledge and worship YHWH.

⁴⁰ Regarding the education of divination and omen interpretation in ancient Mesopotamia, see J. J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 138–39; E. Reiner, "Fortune-telling in Mesopotamia," *JNES* 19 (1960), 23; A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 206–27.

⁴¹ When the revelation targets the gentiles, they are the prophets for the nations (cf. "Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the gentiles" [Rom 11:13]).

⁴² The fact that apocalyptic visions deal with world history, rather than the salvation history of Israel, supports the view of apocalyptic visions as a prophecy for both the gentiles and the Jewish people under the Hellenistic influence.

⁴³ For Rowland, a direct communication is an important factor of apocalypticism: "the common factor is the belief that God's will can be discerned by means of a mode of revelation which unfolds directly the hidden things of God. To speak of apocalyptic, therefore, is to concentrate on the theme of the direct communication of the heavenly mysteries in all their diversity" (*The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* [New York: Crossroad, 1982], 14).

Literary Context of the Inclusivism

When John Gammie explores the “internationalism” of the Israelite sages and its influence against xenophobia and ethnocentrism, he argues that the OANs are under the influence of the sages’ internationalism with the conviction that “God is the God of all peoples whose principles of righteousness and mercy apply to all equally.”⁴⁴ Moreover, he explains Dan 1–6 as reflecting the sages’ internationalism:

The foreign court as a place of service is not despised.... The king is distressed when the death decree falls on his Judaic courtier and four times a foreign monarch utters praises of Daniel’s God (Dan 2:20–23, 4:1–3 [MT 3:31–33], 4:34–35 [MT 4:31–32], 6:25–27 [MT 6:26–28]).⁴⁵

The Daniel narratives, however, go a step further than the OANs by embracing the gentiles as God’s prospective people of promise and covenant. Daniel’s message to the foreign kings is not just warning of God’s judgment on them, but rather a calling for the foreign rulers to acknowledge God’s sovereignty, repent, and atone for their sins.

The inclusive and universal perspective of the book of Daniel was not a stand-alone phenomenon of the Second Temple period. In order to understand the theological claim of the book of Daniel, as well as to assess this study’s interpretation and argument, it is necessary to locate the perspective of the book of Daniel in the inclusive literary

⁴⁴ J. G. Gammie, “From Prudentialism to Apocalypticism: The Houses of the Sages amid the Varying Forms of Wisdom,” in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, eds. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 491. Sneed also argues for the inclusive and universal characteristic of the Israelite wisdom tradition: “the truths and knowledge about living wisely promoted in the wisdom literature cannot be parochial, for sectarian ‘truth’ is no truth at all. The instructions that wisdom literature promulgates must be true for any individual, not just a particular ethnicity or nationality.... The inclusion of the advice of king Lemuel’s mother (Prov 31), Agur, and the characterization of the Edomite Job and his three (four) friends are good examples of this strategy. The inclusion of foreigners in these texts serves to legitimate the truth of texts whose veracity one might suspect as parochial. Outside the wisdom corpus, it is found in the story of the Queen of Sheba, who acknowledges Solomon’s great wisdom (1 Kgs 10)” (“Grasping After the Wind,” 54–55).

⁴⁵ Gammie, “From Prudentialism,” 491–92.

context of that time period.⁴⁶ Terence Donaldson finds that foreign kings venerate YHWH in eight narratives from the Second Temple period.⁴⁷ He explains,

Jewish literature from this period provides many examples of narratives in which kings eventually conform to the ideal—that is, they eventually recognize and venerate the God of Israel—but only after undergoing some transformation, a transformation that has its own part to play in the completed process of change that is effected by the narrative as a whole.⁴⁸

From his typological study, Donaldson provides four models of transformation illustrating “how foreign kings came to admire Judaism and venerate the God of Israel”: “subjugation of an adversary,” “conversion to monotheism,” “recognition of Israel’s true character and excellence,” and “deliverance from deception.”⁴⁹

Two of Donaldson’s models bear significance for the present study. First, Donaldson finds it “surprising” that the arch-enemy of the Jews, Antiochus IV, is depicted as being transformed to acknowledge and venerate Israel’s God.⁵⁰ According to 2 Macc 9, Antiochus IV promises that he “would become a Jew and visit every inhabited place to proclaim the power of God” (9:17). Even though his death prevented the fulfillment of his promise, Antiochus IV’s acknowledgment of YHWH’s sovereignty and

⁴⁶ For example, Kaminsky and Stewart claim that “a greater receptivity to the inclusion of some Gentiles within the elect group appears ... within the late texts of Third Isaiah in chapters 56 and 66” (“God of All the World: Universalism and Developing Monotheism in Isaiah 40–66,” *HTR* 99 [2006], 162).

⁴⁷ Eight narratives include: Daniel; Bel and the Dragon; OG Esther; 2 Maccabees; 3 Maccabees; 4 Maccabees; Letter of Aristeas; Josephus Antiquities 11.325–339; 20.34–53 (“Royal Sympathizers in Jewish Narrative,” *JSP* 16 [2006], 43, n. 4).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 44–56.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

the willingness to proclaim YHWH's power reminds readers of the story of Nebuchadnezzar who acknowledges YHWH's sovereignty and proclaims it to all peoples.

Even though this study does not deal with the Greek additions to the MT of Daniel, the story of Cyrus in Bel and the Dragon also provides an example of a foreign king's transformation. The story in Bel and the Dragon continues the stories in Dan 1–6 by depicting Daniel in the foreign court, employing the same court-conflict plot, and featuring Cyrus (cf. Dan 6:28). The story in Bel and the Dragon, furthermore, continues the development of the Daniel narratives that this study explores.⁵¹ This development is discernible in two respects. First, the story depicts the Babylonians as conspiring against Cyrus that “[t]he king has become a Jew” (v. 28). Even though the conspiracy relies upon a false witness, the declaration that “the king has become a Jew” is notable in relation to the development of foreign kings in Dan 1–6. Second, Cyrus confesses that “there is no other [god] beside you [YHWH]” (v. 41).⁵² Even though this study cannot prove that the author of Bel and the Dragon carries out the development of the previous narratives to the

⁵¹ Donaldson states that “the defining feature of this story is that the king undergoes a real transformation in his attitude towards Israel's God” (Ibid., 48).

⁵² The occurrence of Cyrus in the Daniel narrative and Bel and the Dragon is not unrelated to the role of Cyrus in Isaiah and Chronicles-Ezra. For the discussion on Cyrus in Isaiah, see C. C. Torrey, ‘Isaiah 41,’ *HTR* 44 (1951), 124; J. van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion: eine literarkritische und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, BZAW 206 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 88; R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 104; A. Laato, *The Servant of YHWH and Cyrus: A Reinterpretation of the Exilic Messianic Programme in Isaiah 40–55*, ConBOT 35 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992); B. S. Childs, *Isaiah*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 353–54; J. L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1968), lxvi; R. G. Kratz, *Kyros im Deuterokjesaja-Buch: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Entstehung und Theologie von Jes 40–55*, FAT 1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 15–17; J. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 248–49; K. Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55*, trans. M. Kohl, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 160–61; L. S. Fried, ‘Cyrus the Messiah? The Historical Background to Isaiah 45:1,’ *HTR* 95 (2002): 373–374.

point of monotheistic claim, it appears that the story of Cyrus presents the most developed acknowledgment of the foreign king in relation to Dan 1–6.⁵³

The literary depiction of foreign rulers' acknowledgement of YHWH's sovereignty and the subsequent transformation of their actions has two implications. First, this depiction legitimizes foreign rule. Presenting foreign kings as YHWH's anointed legitimizes the service to both YHWH and the foreign ruler. Moreover, this legitimacy of the foreign kings responds to the long unanswered question about the restoration of a Davidic king. Regarding the narratives' depiction of Nebuchadnezzar, Goldingay argues that "if God's kingship is acknowledged, human kingship can then find its place. Even the majesty and the glory of human kingship are affirmed, in the context of that confession which is the fruit of personal abasement."⁵⁴

The second implication of development of the foreign kings in Dan 1–6 is the inclusion of the gentiles into YHWH's people. This study argues that the "many" (*rabbîm*) in Dan 11:33 and 12:3 includes the gentiles based on the fact that Daniel gives understanding to foreign kings and leads them to righteousness through the revelation of YHWH's mystery.⁵⁵ The depiction of universal YHWH who governs nations and rulers in

⁵³ Regarding the purpose of the narratives, Donaldson argues that "[t]he establishment of an ideal state of affairs, such as we find at the end of these narratives, was aimed more at a confirmation of Jewish self-understanding than at the transformation of Gentile attitudes. Even so, since many circles of Jewish readers had their own penumbrae of Gentile admirers and adherents, we should probably reckon with the probability that many such Gentiles were reading over their shoulders" ("Royal Sympathizer," 58). See also: J. M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 148; J. J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2d ed., BRS (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 271–72.

⁵⁴ J. Goldingay, "The Stories in Daniel: A Narrative Politics," *JSOT* 37 (1987), 106.

⁵⁵ Based on his study of the OG-Dan, Bruce argues that the OG-Dan interprets "the people" in Dan 11:14, 33 as having inclusive and universal connotation ("The Oldest Greek Version of Daniel," in *Instruction and Interpretation: Studies in Hebrew Language, Palestinian Archaeology and Biblical*

the narratives also supports the inclusive concept of YHWH's people. The Animal Apocalypse in 1 Enoch (83–90) presents similar inclusive rhetoric to Daniel's contemporary literary convention. Tiller argues,

It has become clear that the allegory is a political allegory. The story begins with cattle, which represent people differentiated only as Sethite and non-Sethite. It then moves to the birth of all kinds of animals, each of which represents a nation or ethnic group, and in the end returns to the transformation of all animals back into white cattle. This must be understood as the ultimate elimination of the separate identities of different nations. Even Israel does not survive as Israel, but it persists in the form of the original patriarchs of the Sethite line. There is no restored temple in the rebuilt Jerusalem.... He [Enoch] represents the pious individual, not of Israel, but of generic humanity.⁵⁶

Contra Davila, who suggests that Daniel lacks “the conversion of the Gentiles” as found in the Animal Apocalypse, this study argues that universal sovereignty of YHWH and the foreign kings’ acknowledgment illustrate the inclusion of gentiles into YHWH’s people.⁵⁷ Collins argues that whereas the history of Israel provides an example of a righteous

Exegesis, ed. A. S. Van der Woude, OTS 20 [Leiden: Brill, 1977], 22–40). Conversely, Jeansonne argues, “the OG does not necessarily give us any consistent indication of greater universalism” (*The Old Greek Translation of Daniel 7–12*, CBQMS 19 [Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1988], 118).

⁵⁶ P. A. Tiller, “Israel at the Mercy of Demonic Powers: An Enochic Interpretation of Postexilic Imperialism,” in *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism*, eds. B. G. Wright III and L. M. Wills, SBLSymS 35 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 120.

⁵⁷ J. R. Davila, “The Animal Apocalypse and Daniel,” in *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection*, ed. G. Boccaccini (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 35–36. Edelman lists two cases in which “YHWH’s family circle ... expanded to include other peoples and nations.” First is the case in which Israel maintains its special status among the nations: Isa 2:2–4; 45:22–23; 56:3–8; Jer 3:17; Mic 4:1–5; Zech 8:22–23; 14:16–19). Second is the case in which Israel is regarded just like the other nations: Amos 9:7; Zech 11:10. (“YHWH’s Othering of Israel,” in *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple Period*, eds. E. Ben Zvi and D. V. Edelman [London: Bloomsbury, 2014], 66, 69).

people, “wisdom and righteousness are not necessarily confined to Israel.”⁵⁸ In this sense, the book of Daniel reflects the extended concept of righteousness and God’s people.

The Theology of Individual Responsibility

Scholars currently debate the relationship between the apocalyptic deterministic theology and the Deuteronomic retribution theology in Dan 9. While Dan 9 interprets history under the Deuteronomic reciprocal sin-punishment logic, thus emphasizing individual responsibility, Gabriel explains that history follows a pre-determined plan of YHWH. Some scholars argue that Gabriel’s response ignores or rejects the content of Daniel’s prayer and affirms the predestined calamity, whereas others insist that there is a Deuteronomic theology of history in Gabriel’s interpretation.⁵⁹

DiTommaso argues that “any theory which advances such a homogeneity [of Dan 9] but which cannot explain the resultant disparity with the deterministic theology of the other reviews of history of the book of Daniel is fundamentally misconstrued.”⁶⁰ Thus, he states the relationship between both views:

⁵⁸ J. J. Collins, “Cosmos and Salvation: Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic in the Hellenistic Age,” *HR* 17 (1977), 127.

⁵⁹ For the former interpretation, see: B. W. Jones, “The Prayer in Daniel IX,” *VT* 18 (1968), 493; W. S. Towner, “Retributional Theology in the Apocalyptic Setting,” *USQR* 26 (1971), 213; Collins, *Daniel*, 359–60; idem., *The Apocalyptic Vision*, 185–187; L. DiTommaso, “4QPseudo-Daniel^{A-B} (4Q243–4Q244) and the Book of Daniel,” *DSD* 12 (2005), 122–27; For the latter, see O. H. Steck, “Weltgeschehen und Gottesvolk im Buch Daniel,” in *Kirche: Festschrift für Günther Bornkamm zum 75. Geburtstag*, eds. D. Lührmann and G. Strecker (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1980), 53–78; G. Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History, from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 181–82; Other scholars agree with the former, but still find that the sin of Israel has a historical consequence. See L. Dequeker, “King Darius and the Prophecy of Seventy Weeks,” in *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings*, ed. A. S. van der Woude, BETL 106 (Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 187–201.

⁶⁰ DiTommaso, “4QPseudo-Daniel^{A-B},” 124.

The Book of Daniel proposes that there exists a fundamental distinction between God's relationship with individuals, which preserves the ideas of responsibility and reciprocity, and God's involvement with the larger process of world history, which while retaining its focus on Israel's destiny is no longer a direct function of Israel's actions. Implicit within the conceptual contours of the Danielic theology of history, too, are certain assumptions about the role of individual free will in a comparatively more deterministic system, and perhaps even some positions concerning theodicy. In effect, the Danielic theology of history is a new and perhaps more mature understanding of the way God acts in history and, by extension, of God's relationship with human beings, who are both the subject and object of history.⁶¹

DiTommaso thus argues that "the Book of Daniel deliberately rejects the retributive Deuteronomistic theology of history in favour of a more deterministic Danielic one."⁶²

Alternatively, this study argues that the Deuteronomistic retribution theology extends beyond Dan 9 across Dan 1–6 for two reasons. First, the story of Nebuchadnezzar illustrates that the Deuteronomistic covenantal theology is at work in a new relationship between YHWH and the gentiles, along with the deterministic perspective of the visions. Moreover, the contrasting fates of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar support the idea of individual responsibility, which supersedes ethnic or national identity.⁶³ In addition, the role of *maškîlîm* in Dan 11 and 12, which gives people understanding thus leading them to righteousness, alludes to the individual choice and

⁶¹ Ibid., 132–133.

⁶² Ibid., 127.

⁶³ "The wise men ... have almost nothing to say about institutional religion, or about this special relationship of Yahweh and Israel, past or present. They do not address Israel as such, at all. They make no direct appeal to the authority of a revealed religion, though their occasional exhortation to piety toward Yahweh (e.g., Prov xvi) presuppose an accepted belief. They speak to and about men primarily as individuals" (R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs. Ecclesiastes*, AB 18 [Garden City: Doubleday, 1965], xvi); see also J. L. Crenshaw, "Method in Determining Wisdom Influence upon 'Historical' Literature," *JBL* 88 (1969), 142.

responsibility that ultimately leads “some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (12:2).

Second, Daniel’s prayer in Dan 9 illustrates how Daniel acquires an understanding of YHWH’s mystery.⁶⁴ Daniel 9 demonstrates that seeking mercy through confessing and repenting of sin leads one to receive YHWH-given knowledge (Dan 2:18; see also the implication in Dan 4). In this sense, Dan 9 is not theologically isolated from the rest of the book, but rather demonstrates how apocalyptic determinism and individual responsibility interrelate within the paradigmatic thought of the *maškilim*. Regarding the compatibility between the apocalyptic deterministic view and individual responsibility, Barton argues,

It is probably fair to describe Daniel as deterministic in its attitude to history, as is generally the case in apocalyptic writings. The outcome of history does not depend on human decisions, but is already fixed in God’s purposes. But this does not lead to the conclusion that it does not matter what human beings do. On the contrary, there is a clear imperative to co-operate in God’s purposes by submission to his will... Those not doing so risk finding themselves on the wrong side when the end comes.⁶⁵

As a result, this study argues that the interpretation of Dan 1–6 coheres with the claim in Dan 9. In the narratives, YHWH rewards the faithful individual and calls the foreign kings to repent and transform, while revealing a pre-destined plan for history. The narratives also depict the foreign kings as being deposed, restored, or killed according to

⁶⁴ “Daniel’s divinely acquired knowledge ... has social value, establishing boundaries by defining ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders.’ Those who possess and accept the divine knowledge are on the inside, and those who do not are on the outside” (R. A. Werline, “Prayer, Politics, and Social Vision in Daniel 9,” in *The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, vol. 2 of *Seeking the Favor of God*, eds. M. J. Boda, D. K. Falk, and R. A. Werline, 3 vols, EJS 22 [Leiden: Brill, 2007], 24).

⁶⁵ Barton, “Theological Ethics in Daniel,” 666–67.

their own attitudes and actions.⁶⁶ Most importantly, the narratives present the fates of the individual foreign kings apart from the fate of their kingdoms. The book of Daniel, by juxtaposing the importance of the individual's choice and YHWH's determined plan for history, presents the compatibility between the apocalyptic deterministic view and individual responsibility.⁶⁷ In other words, while the revelation of mystery—"what is to come in the end"—testifies to YHWH's determined plan for history, it also becomes an eschatological call to individuals for, what Bultmann calls, an existential decision.⁶⁸ The history—the fate of the nations—will follow the revealed mystery, but the individual's fate depends on their own choice.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Even though one of the narratives' claims is that YHWH deposes and sets up kings, the narrative presents this YHWH's action depends on the individual king's attitudes and actions, as in the cases of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar.

⁶⁷ Boccaccini argues that the rejection of individual predestination, while affirming historical determinism, is the distinct characteristic of Enochic Judaism (*Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 170–78).

⁶⁸ Gammie explains that while the older wisdom tradition describes the "*future destinies* of the 'righteous' and 'ungodly,'" Daniel and other apocalyptic authors describe "their *eschatological destinies*" ("Spatial and Ethical Dualism in Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature," *JBL* 93 [1974], 384).

⁶⁹ Flusser argues that "[c]lassical prophecy believed in the efficacy of repentance for reversing a heavenly decree, while apocalyptic authors did not think decrees could be altered but that those who repent will be spared the inevitable punishment" (*The Jewish Sages and Their Literature*, vol. 1 of *Judaism of the Second Temple Period*, trans. A. Yadin [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 37). Najman articulates that "[w]ith respect to content, apocalypses are also largely concerned with judgment and consequences in this world, but also with the judgment of the individual after death, which is not found in the prophets." ("The Influence of Prophecy," 37).

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