The Theology and the Function of the Prayers in the Book of Daniel

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Andrews University

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Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

THE THEOLOGY AND THE FUNCTION OF THE PRAYERS
IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Paul Birch Petersen
November 1998
THE THEOLOGY AND THE FUNCTION OF THE PRAYERS
IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

A dissertation
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of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Paul Birch Petersen

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March 3, 1995
Date approved
ABSTRACT

THE THEOLOGY AND THE FUNCTION OF THE PRAYERS
IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

by

Paul Birch Petersen

Adviser: Jacques Doukhan
This dissertation investigates the theology and the function of the prayers in the Book of Daniel.

The introduction reviews the scholarly literature in regard to the prayers of the Old Testament in general and the prayers in the Book of Daniel in particular. Recent studies of prayers in the Old Testament have focused on their theological function in their final literary setting. They have also turned their attention to prayer as part of a process of communication, of a divine-human dialogue, and consequently this study is structured from the aspect of interpersonal relationships.

Chapter 1 deals with Daniel and his friends. First, prayers, references to prayers, and allusions to prayers are identified in Dan 2, 3, 6, 9, and 10. Next, the prayers are situated in the structure and in the plot of each of these chapters. Exegesis is performed on
the thanksgiving by Daniel in 2:20-23 and his confession in 9:4b-19, the only two recorded prayers, and their semantic and thematical links with their respective context are described.

Centering on the gentile kings, chapter 2 follows a similar outline, identifying situations of prayer in Dan 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, and performing exegesis on the royal doxologies of Dan 3:33; 4:31b-32; 4:34; and 6:27-28.

Chapter 3 presents a synopsis of prayers in the book. The various references to prayer are compared, and they are positioned in the structure of the book as a whole and viewed in relation to the progression of its events. The function of the prayers is described in three areas: the thematic relationship between the prayers and the various sections of the book, the contribution of the prayers to the depiction of its characters, and the theological implications of the prayer-events as part of a divine-human dialogue.

The dissertation is completed by a summary of the results of the study.
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<td>AB</td>
<td>Anchor Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>AJSL</td>
<td>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUSS</td>
<td>Andrews University Seminary Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>BASOR</td>
<td>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bib</td>
<td>Biblica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHS</td>
<td>Biblica hebraica stuttgartensia</td>
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<tr>
<td>BZ</td>
<td>Biblische Zeitschrift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBQ</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBQMS</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>DBSup</td>
<td>Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCH</td>
<td>The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOTL</td>
<td>The Forms of the Old Testamental Literature</td>
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<td>HAR</td>
<td>Hebrew Annual Review</td>
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<td>HUCA</td>
<td>Hebrew Union College Annual</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Critical Commentary</td>
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<td>Int</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
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<td>JANES</td>
<td>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society (of Columbia University)</td>
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<td>JAOS</td>
<td>Journal of the American Oriental Society</td>
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<td>JATS</td>
<td>Journal of the Adventist Theological Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>JB</td>
<td>Jerusalem Bible</td>
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<td>Journal of Biblical Literature</td>
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<td>JPS</td>
<td>Jewish Publication Society</td>
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<td>JSOT</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</td>
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<td>JSOTSup</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament—Supplement Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSJ</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSP</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</td>
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<td>LXX</td>
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<td>NIV</td>
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<td>NKJ</td>
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<td>NRSV</td>
<td>New Revised Standard Version</td>
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<td>OT</td>
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<td>OTS</td>
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<td>SJOT</td>
<td>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</td>
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<td>TDOT</td>
<td>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLOT</td>
<td>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ThStK</td>
<td>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</td>
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<td>TLZ</td>
<td>Theologische Literaturzeitung</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tru</td>
<td>Theologische Rundschau</td>
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<td>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</td>
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<tr>
<td>TynB</td>
<td>Tyndale Bulletin</td>
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<td>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the Book of Daniel, prayer is related to both gratitude and patient waiting. Coming to the end of a long journey in prayer, the words of thanksgiving by Daniel also fully express my feelings of gratitude: "May the name of God be blessed from age to age" (Dan 2:20).

My thanksgiving is extended to many people whose support has guided me towards the goal. First, I would like to mention the three members of my committee. My adviser, Dr. Jacques Doukhan, took over following the tragic death of Dr. Gerhard Hasel, and his inspirational guidance was always a challenge to reflect anew and to constantly dig deeper. In the same way, my gratitude goes towards the other members of the committee: Dr. Richard Davidson for his kind and at times pastoral support, yet also for succinct comments on many details of the work, and Dr. Bjørnar Storjell for friendship and for close reading with the keen eye of a trained archaeologist. I wish to thank also Dr. David Merling, the fourth reader, as well as Dr. André Lacocque from the University of Chicago for his willingness to be the external examiner—and for helpful suggestions on pertinent questions.

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In their support, all of these in some way have resembled the God to whom my prayers have been directed, and Who at times has listened in silence, yet always in His love has provided an answer and revealed the destination of the future.

Nihil difficile tarn amato.
INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to study the theology and function of the prayers within the Book of Daniel. Such an investigation is significant both because of the development in the general study of prayers in the Old Testament and because of the state of the present research into the Book of Daniel.

Recent studies of prayer have turned their attention to the theological function of prayers in the Old Testament as part of a process of communication, a divine-human dialogue.¹ And several biblical studies have pointed to the way a subgenre, like prayer, may function in its literary context.²

¹For this concept, see in particular Samuel E. Balentine, Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Divine-Human Dialogue, Overtures to Biblical Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), but also Patrick D. Miller, They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994) emphasizes the function of prayers.

There are both literary and theological reasons for choosing the Book of Daniel for such an investigation. The book belongs to the apocalyptic genre which in itself is a composite of many different subgenres of which prayer could be an important one.¹ One of the essential literary features is revelation from God to man, as expressed in a peculiar way through dreams and visions.² But as part of the communication process, the human response also plays an important role. Throughout, the book contains not only recorded prayers (e.g., 2:20-23 and 9:4b-19) and prayers without the words noted (e.g., 6:12), but also other specific references or allusions to prayer (e.g., 2:18 and 10:12) and worship (e.g., 3:7, 6:21, and 7:14).

These references express a deep theological concern for divine-human dialogue which makes it relevant to ask for the function of prayer within the book. Furthermore, the main

³1 John J. Collins adequately describes this aspect of apocalyptic literature: "The Jewish apocalypses commonly embrace various distinct literary forms—visions, prayers, legends, etc. . . . The complexity of the apocalypses has two distinct aspects. First, literary forms are used in a subordinate way within a larger whole—e.g., prayers and exhortations within a vision. Second, many apocalypses juxtapose formally distinct units which are not clearly subordinate to eachother (e.g., the visions in Daniel 7-12 and the Similitudes of Enoch). . . . Such complexity is the norm rather than the exception, at least in Jewish apocalypses. It cannot be adequately explained by source-critical theories. Even where independent sources are incorporated, we must still account for the composition of the final work. The complex apocalypse is a literary phenomenon in its own right" (John J. Collins, Daniel with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature, The Forms of The Old Testamental Literature [FOTL] 20 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984], 3).

²The definition chosen by Collins and co-workers to describe the genre underlines the aspect of revelation, "'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" (John J. Collins, "Towards the Morphology of a Genre," in Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre [Semeia 14. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979], 9).
character of the book, Daniel, is presented both as the unique receiver of divine information¹ and as a "man of prayer."² It is therefore natural to study the role of his personal relationship with God as expressed through his prayers.

In the following section the scholarly literature is reviewed in more detail with regard to prayers of the Old Testament as well as to the Book of Daniel, with special reference to the prayers it contains.

Review of Literature

Prayer in the Old Testament

Only in recent years has the study of the prayers of the Old Testament moved towards a more theological and functional approach. Earlier there had been a tendency to separate text and theology. Prayers could be studied from a theological or a philosophical aspect without much reference to the text. This conclusion is reached by Henning Graf Reventlow after a lengthy assessment of the role of prayer in the theologies of the last two centuries: "It was typical for the major part of the described modern theories of prayer that they paid little or no attention at all to the biblical foundation."³ But scholars have also investigated the

¹Recently Steinmann has suggested a definition of 'historical apocalypses' that enlarges the one proposed by Collins. According to Steinmann, in this subgenre revelation does not have to be mediated by an otherworldly being only. It can be done by another human being, if that person is regarded as a heavenly representative (Andrew Erwin Steinmann, "The Shape of Things to Come: The Genre of the Historical Apocalypse in Ancient Jewish and Christian Literature" [Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1990], 20). This change in definition is relevant for the Book of Daniel because Daniel is presented as the mediator of divine revelation to the pagan kings.


prayer-texts from a purely formal angle without relating them to the more general theological issues. Thus Balentine, after a review of the Old Testament theologies of this century, deplores what he calls "the general neglect of the subject 'prayer' in Hebrew Bible theology."1

Biblical prayers have been approached from three basic perspectives:2 a historical that includes the History-of-Religion approach, a literary that includes the form-critical studies,3 and a theological4 that includes the devotional works.5 Of these three, the two former

1Balentine (Prayer, 225; see also 13-18). The present review of literature owes much to Balentine's splendid treatment. It is perhaps significant of the lack of general concern for the topic that a prestigious work like The Anchor Bible Dictionary, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), does not contain any entry on the prayers of either the Old or the New Testament.

2Jack W. Corvin divides studies of prayers into five categories: the devotional, the descriptive, the psychological or sociological, the theological, and the form-critical. “A Stylistic and Functional Study of the Prose-Prayers of the Old Testament” (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1972), 3-6. For my choice of categorization, see the comments on the following pages with footnotes.

3In this category I also place what Corvin calls the descriptive category, which is concerned with the phenomena surrounding the prayers, such as the time of prayer, the gestures, and the physical posture. One example of such a study is D. R. Ap-Thomas, "Notes on Some Terms Relating to Prayer," VT 6 (1956): 225-241. As the study of prayers of the Bible is concerned with texts, such descriptive analysis is closely related to the literary context in which the prayers are found. They therefore naturally belong to the literary category.

4The category labeled by Corvin as theological does not encompass all theological reflections on prayer, but is limited to a specific approach concerned with the theological beliefs of the person praying. One example is Norman Johnson, Prayer in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series (SBLMS) 2 (Philadelphia: SBL, 1948).

5The devotional study is but one aspect of a theological approach, and it is by far the largest. But devotional studies are only rarely precise and consistent in their use of definitions and categories, and in spite of their pastoral value they are in general not relevant for the present purpose. Typical examples are Herbert Lockyer, All the Prayers of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), Elinore M. Pierce, The Prayers of the Bible (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1944), and D. A. Carson, ed., Teach Us to Pray: Prayer in the
categories have until recent years almost entirely dominated the scholarly discussion, and their major representatives are presented first, followed by a review of the recent development in the study of the prayers in the Old Testament.

The History-of-Religion School

In the History-of-Religion School prayer was viewed as a phenomenon of religion, and its function was investigated on the basis of its supposed historical development within the religions of mankind.\(^1\) The most primitive form of prayer was here related to magic.\(^2\) The life-situation was cultic.\(^3\) The attitude of the pray-er, that is, the person praying, was that of petition.\(^4\) From such originally very selfishly motivated prayers, "in accordance with primitive man's childlike selfishness," one line of development was supposed to have led to prayer as "the spontaneous, personal communion with the Godhead," which was experienced by men like Moses, Zoroaster, and the great Old Testament prophets.\(^5\)

\(^1\)One example is *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 1919 ed., s.v. "Prayer," 10:154-205. Entries on the prayers of the various religions are written by different authors, preceded by an introductory description of the general development from primitive religion to advanced monotheism.

\(^2\)See, for instance, E. N. Fallaize, "Prayer (Introductory and Primitive)," ibid., 10:154.

\(^3\)"It may be defined as an act of cult by which man enters into communion with a higher, superhuman, supersensous being" (R. Arbesmann, "Prayer," *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1967 ed., 11:667).


\(^5\)Arbesmann, 667, 669.
The most comprehensive and most influential of such studies was done by Friedrich Heiler.¹ To him, the personal, spontaneous prayer was the only genuine prayer and formal, literary prayers a petrified form, "merely the weak reflection of the original, simple prayer of the heart."² This attitude seemed unconsciously influenced by a general Protestant dislike for the formal and the cultic aspects of religion.³ In a paradoxical way it also excluded the possibility of a study of "true" prayers because all prayer-texts of Antiquity, by being written down, have lost their very spontaneity and thereby no longer can be regarded as the genuine, "simple prayer of the heart."⁴

The approach of the History-of-Religion school has been very influential. It has also been the object of much criticism, particularly because it linked the development of religion and religious phenomena directly to a specific theory of the historical evolution of human society, a theory now outdated.⁵ Furthermore, by viewing prayers in light of a general historical development and studying the function in relation to their place in such a scheme, the approach has been subject to criticism.


²Heiler, xviii. In this aspect we find the reason for the label employed by Corvin, the psychological. As Heiler's approach was an attempt to support and illustrate a particular point of view of the historical development of prayer within religion, I have chosen to categorize it as historical.

³So criticized by, for instance, Johannes Hempel, Gebet und Frömmigkeit im Alten Testament (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1922), 3.

⁴As expressed by Sam D. Gill, "Prayer," The Encyclopedia of Religion, 1987 ed., 11:490: "Heiler's study of prayer, therefore, was a failed effort from the outset in the respect that he denigrated his primary source of data for his study of prayer."

⁵Note the remarks by Gill, 11:489: "These developmental aspects are no longer considered valid nor are they of much interest in the study of religion."
this approach did not analyze the function of the individual prayers in their literary context. Nor did it pay much attention to the function of the prayers in their specific historical or social setting.

Form-Criticism

The form-critical method was introduced by Hermann Gunkel.\(^1\) With the focus primarily on the Psalms, Gunkel and followers set out not only to study the individual forms of the psalms, but also from these forms to understand the function of the psalms in their original social setting, their *Sitz im Leben*, primarily understood as a cultic setting in the context of Israelite worship. While thus being a literary approach, form-criticism tried by its very literary analysis to bridge the gap to the historical reality, in this case the social setting. This aspect of the methodology has been heavily debated.\(^2\) For this present task of studying the prayers of Daniel, it is, however, less important because an understanding of their function is being pursued within the closed literary unit of the Book of Daniel.\(^3\)

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2Giving proper due to, among others, the studies by Gerstenberger and Albertz, Balentine still concludes that "in the main, however, a comprehensive presentation of the function of the Psalms within the living worship of ancient Israel has not yet been done" (*Prayer*, 17). References are to Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Der bittende Mensch: Bitrivial und Klagelied des Einzelnen im Alten Testament*, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testamenten (WMANT) 51 (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980), and Rainer Albertz, *Persönliche Frömmigkeit und offizielle Religion* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1978).

3The study of prayers or psalms placed in a narrative framework, as are the prayers in Daniel, presents obviously another challenge than the study of the individual psalms in the Psalms. But it is interesting from this present perspective to note how Peter Craigie stresses the need for a more functional approach to the biblical psalms: "To establish a type, in the sense of genre, one must build upon the commonalities of formal structure that may be determined by the data, namely the psalms as such. . . . The essential commonality
more significant are the contributions by form-critics to form and genre, although these have been suggested primarily on the basis of the study of the psalms, not of prayers.¹

Most form-critical studies of prayers have maintained the psalms as their main reference.² This is also true for the work by Wendel,³ the most comprehensive study of Old Testament prose prayers until the recent book by Patrick Miller.

The approach of form-criticism has been very helpful in many respects. For this paper, the importance of the study of the forms of the prayers in the Old Testament lies in the communicative situation. When an author employed particular forms, the associations with similar forms known to him and his readers might have conveyed a specific message, related to the content of the prayers. By studying the forms of prayer we are searching for analogies by which our understanding of meaning is enhanced. For that reason, studies of between any given type lies in the function, not in form and structure. And thus a method is required which is sensitive to the functional study of the psalms, but takes seriously the particularities and peculiarities of poetic and literary structure in the analysis of particular psalms" (Peter Craigie, Psalms 1-50, Word Biblical Commentary 19 [Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1983], 47-48).

¹The basic genres proposed by Gunkel with regard to the Psalms were the hymn (or praise), the lament of the people, the royal psalm, the lament of the individual, and the individual psalm of thanksgiving. They were to some degree modified by Sigmund Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien, 6 vols. (Kristiania: J. Dybwad, 1921-1924); cf. idem, The Psalms in Israel's Worship, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962) = Offersang og sangoffer: Salmedikningen i Bibelen (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1951).

²As, for instance, L. Krinetzki, Israel's Gebet im Alten Testament (Aschaffenberg: Paul Pattloch, 1965), and Reventlow.

³A. Wendel, Das freie Laiengebet im vorexilischen Israel (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1931). An earlier study that treats the prose prayers to some degree is A. Greiff, Das Gebet im Alten Testament (Münster: Aschendorff, 1915), a work done before the real development of the form-critical method. The basic genres of prose prayer listed by Wendel are: the petition, the promise, the lament, the penitence, the praise, and the thanksgiving. In addition to Gunkel, Wendel describes what he labels the oracle, the omen, and the ordal (3-4).
genre and also the more detailed formal analysis of the communicative elements of the prayers, like address, petition, thanksgiving, etc., are important.¹

Nevertheless, the method has had its severe limitations. The attempt to conclude directly from the literary form to the theological content or to the historical/social setting has often been futile. Because these studies primarily have been occupied with the forms, the prayers have often been totally separated from the context in which they appear, and the larger literary function has been ignored.² Moreover, the studious pursuit of the minor details of the forms has tended to push aside the theological issues involved.³ Thus both the theological and the literary function of the prayers has been partly neglected.

Recent Studies

Several works investigate prayers that are found in broader sections of the Old Testament.⁴ A major criticism of the form-critical approach appears with Jack Corvin who

¹One such significant, but usually overlooked, form-critical work is Barbara Hornig, "Das Prosagebet der nachexilischen Zeit" (Ph.D. dissertation, Karl Marx-Universität Leipzig, 1957), analyzing the prayer in Dan 9:4-19 on pp. 81-90. An abstract is Barbara Hornig, "Das Prosagebet der nachexilischen Zeit," TLZ 83 (1958): 644-646.

²The emphasis on the psalms to the exclusion of the prose prayers of the Old Testament has also made it more difficult to investigate their literary function; see Balentine (Prayer, 25).

³As observed by Balentine in the chapter "Prayer in the Theology of the Hebrew Bible," ibid., 225-259.

⁴Helpful studies have also been made in particular prayers. Besides the already mentioned work by Griffin on the prayers of Tobit, I take note of Carl Roy Anderson, "The Formation of the Levitical Prayer of Nehemiah 9" (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1987), and E. Talstra, Solomon's Prayer: Synchrony and Diachrony in the Compositions of 1 Kings 8:14-61, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 3 (Kampen, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993), the latter remarkable for its use of newer linguistic methodology. He combines the methods of synchronical (linguistic and stylistic) and diachronical (literary and redactional) approaches.

The study by Michael E. W. Thompson (I Have Heard Your Prayer: The Old
makes an attempt to establish some stylistic and functional criteria in his analysis of the forms of prose prayer.\(^1\) He makes a basic distinction between contextual and formal prayers. Contextual prayers naturally belong in their narrative context; the more formal prayers do not. By his attempt to emphasize the contextual function of the prayers, Corvin has opened new doors.\(^2\)

In his discussion of the forms of prayer, Henning Graf Reventlow approaches the issues from a more theological perspective.\(^3\) Although his outline is partly historical, it is less dependent on a development scheme for the history of prayers. The central part of his work is four chapters on what he regards as the main genres of prayer.\(^4\) Anneli Aejmelaeus employs a form-critical method and combines it with a specific idea of the historical development of prayer.\(^5\) The traditional element is petition, regarded as the original prayer-

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\(^1\) Corvin, 6-15.

\(^2\) It remains doubtful whether he has provided a more profound analysis of the forms of prose prayer than hitherto. Note the evaluation implied in the statement by Moshe Greenberg: "The most weighty study of some of the data remains A. Wendel, . . . even after J. Corvin" (Biblical Prose Prayer [Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983], 60).

\(^3\) Reventlow, Gebet.

\(^4\) The praise (the hymn), the petition (in which the lament is placed), the thanksgiving, and the intercession.

type. The most valuable contribution for this study is found in her refined description of the communicative elements of the prayers.¹

Approaching the prayers from a completely different perspective, Moshe Greenberg studies the communicative background for the prayers. He argues that, although found in a literary context, the prose prayers are still reflecting real prayers.² The prayers are paralleled by interhuman discourse as it is found elsewhere in the Scriptures.³ In opposition to Heiler, Greenberg therefore does not accept a dichotomy between spontaneous, free prayer and preformulated, prescribed prayer. He rejects the theory of a single-lined development of Hebrew prayer, arguing that the short, spontaneous prayer and the more formal prayer are found contemporary throughout the history of Israel.⁴ His discussion is particularly relevant for the prayers of Daniel in 2:20-23 and 9:4b-19 because these prayers, although containing a variety of traditional elements from the psalmody of Israel, yet in the book are presented as the private prayers of one individual.

In recent years two major breakthroughs in the theological study of Old Testament prayers have appeared.⁵ The work by Patrick Miller contains a detailed analysis of the

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¹She finds that the pattern of imperative petition, address, and motivation found in, for instance, cultic forms of prayer most likely sprang out of a similar simple pattern of interhuman communication in everyday speech (88-91). For the opposite view, see Gerstenberger, who in Der bittende Mensch looks at the biblical prayers in light of Babylonian incantation prayers and concludes that they were originally composed by experts.

²Greenberg, 8-9.

³Called the "social analogy," ibid., 19-37.

⁴Ibid., 38-57.

⁵Mention should also be made of two other works, though their focus is more on New Testament times. James H. Charlesworth, ed., with Mark Harding and Mark Kiley, The Lord's Prayer and Other Prayer Texts from the Greco-Roman Era (Valley Forge: Trinity
forms of the prayers of the Old Testament, adding significant observations regarding the prayers of the New Testament. In a way it summarizes the best results of the form-critical approach. But the purpose of his study is to go beyond mere forms in order to investigate what the prayers tell about the God to whom they are directed. Miller recognizes as a basic assumption of prayers the conviction that a higher power "is in touch with human lives." At the same time he realizes how the theology of the believing community is influenced by its practice of prayer. This understanding of prayer as part of a divine-human dialogue is even more emphasized in the study by Balentine. With the premise that all prayers are directed to God, he sets out to investigate in the Old Testament what it is in "the nature and character

Press, 1994) is the fruit of a working group of SBL. It contains a comprehensive bibliography with references also to the Old Testament. Recently published is Oscar Cullmann, Prayer in The New Testament, Overtures to Biblical Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), a translation of the German original by John Bowden, Das Gebet im Neuen Testament (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1994). The work approaches the subject from a theological angle, arguing throughout against the theology of Dorothea Sölle. Cullmann notes some basic systematic and philosophical problems related to prayer before he plunges into the texts. In the study of the texts of the New Testament, Cullmann provides a richness of exegetical and theological reflections, as he leads the reader through the synoptic gospels, the works by Paul, and the Johannite literature, before finally and more briefly reviewing the other writings. For this study the major weakness of Cullmann's work is due to the lack of literary perspective. The function of the prayers within the larger literary units, i.e., the individual books of the New Testament, is hardly touched upon.

1P. Miller, They Cried, 1.

2Ibid.

3For the sake of clarity it should be noted that the term 'dialogue' here is used in a broader sense, not as a form-critical category by which to identify dialogue in narrative discourse.
of God" that "both summons forth and enables the response to prayer," and he asks the question, "What does the fact of prayer suggest about the nature and character of God?"\(^1\)

Incorporating the results of modern literary methodology, Balentine in the subsequent chapters shows how the prayers are a means to depict characters, the character of the prayerer as well as the character of God:\(^2\)

As discourse between people and God, prayer plays an important role in portraying both human and divine character. What people say to God reveal motives, attitude, and morality. Likewise, the ascriptions addressed to God in prayer—their petitions and their praise, their desires and the life situations that bring them into articulation—reveal assumptions about divine character and divine receptiveness to human concerns, assumptions that a narrative situation may confirm, modify, or refute by supplying or withholding a divine response. It is part of the art of Hebrew narrative that such recorded dialogues enable the reader to witness the two-way traffic between heaven and earth and thus enter into the process of understanding the character of the parties involved.\(^3\)

These concepts are further elaborated upon by studies of the prayers for divine justice, the lament tradition, and the praise.\(^4\)

This review of the scholarly literature on the prayers of the Old Testament has revealed a growing interest in the literary and theological function of prayers. With the appearance of the works by Miller and Balentine, the foundation is laid for a clearer concept of what is meant by such a function. The prayers are here no longer studied as separate from their theological and literary context within the Old Testament. Nor are they used

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\(^1\) Balentine (*Prayer*, 33-34). This investigation is found in chap. 3, "In the Beginning God," 33-47.

\(^2\) Ibid., chaps. 4 and 5.

\(^3\) Ibid., 48.

\(^4\) Ibid., chaps. 6-8. In his concluding chapters, Balentine suggests a dialectical or bipolar approach to Old Testament theology. In such a dialectical approach, the sadly neglected subject of "prayer" as part of the divine-human dialogue will gain the position it deserves within Old Testament theology (*Prayer*, 237-239).
only as information to establish a schema of historical development, whether by way of psychological insight or through their formal characteristics. According to the recent studies by Miller and Balentine, the literary and theological setting of the prayers of the Old Testament presupposes a view of a God who reveals himself to man. We should therefore always understand prayers in some way as part of a dialogue with this God. In the study of any prayer in the Old Testament, we should relate its depiction of the character of God to the specific concept of God contained in the literary context in which the prayer is placed.

As it is the purpose here to study the theology and the function of prayers within the literary framework of one particular book, the study continues by evaluating the pertinent literature on the Book of Daniel.

The Book of Daniel

As was the case with the scholarly studies on prayers, the historical and the literary studies on the Book of Daniel by far outnumber the theological ones.\(^1\) When the prayers of Daniel have been touched upon, in most cases the questions raised have been form-critical or redaction-historical rather than theological.

This situation is, of course, partly due to the complex literary composition of the book. During the greater part of the nineteenth century, a consensus reigned among both conservative and critical scholars with regard to its basic unity,\(^2\) whether they, like

\(^{1}\)Observed by Jacques B. Doukhan in "Allusions à la création dans le livre de Daniel," in *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings*, ed. A. S. van der Woude (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 285. This observation is confirmed by a brief look at the remaining titles in this recent work in which a number of scholars have contributed with shorter articles.

conservative scholars, were dating the book to the sixth century B.C.\(^1\) or whether they, like critical scholars, placed its final redaction in the Maccabean times.\(^2\) Around the turn of the century several influential critical scholars\(^3\) still defended the unity of the book, but critical scholarship of the twentieth century has mounted such a heavy case for the book as a

dedicates the second part of his introduction (72-123) to this history. Although at this point only spending three pages (121-123) on critical scholarship, the first part of the introduction shows Collin's mastery of the critical literature on Daniel in dealing with the text, the language, the composition, and the genre of the various parts of the book, see especially 34-38. A review of the issues related to the unity of the book is also found in Pablo S. David, "The Composition and Structure of the Book of Daniel: A Synchronic and Diachronic Reading" (Th.D. dissertation, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1991), 1-40.


\(^3\)Such as Karl Marti, *Das Buch Daniel*, Kurzer Handkommentar zum Alten Testament 18 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1901), and August Freiherrn von Gall, *Die Einheitlichkeit des Buches Daniel* (Giessen: J. Ricker'sche Buchhandlung, 1895). The only portion admitted by von Gall to be a later inserted piece was the prayer in chap. 9: "The prayer in 9:4-20 is a sprout from foreign soil. It is the only major section of our book, which can be shown not to belong to its original. . . . Not only can the unity of the Book of Daniel now be ascertained to any unbiased observer, but it can further be stated that hardly any other Old Testament book is so unified and written with one plan as it is" (6, 8-9)
composite work that only a few,¹ apart from conservative scholars,² maintain this unity today.

As a consequence, a large part of critical studies on Daniel has been concerned with some aspect of its redactional history.³ It is against this background that we must understand most of the scattered and usually very brief commentaries to the prayers in the Book of Daniel. Scholars have been eager to place the various pieces in their proper historical function in the editorial development of the book.⁴ As the following review illustrates, interest in the prayers has not been caused mainly by their theological content or their literary function in the final canonical product.


³A review of basic arguments that point to a literary development of the origin of the Book of Daniel, as well as an evaluation of some of the theories put forward, is found in Collins, Daniel, 26-29 and 33-38.

⁴Conservative scholars have shared the primary interest in the historical function of the book because of their desire to defend its historicity. For that reason they, too, have shown comparatively less interest in theological aspects, such as prayers.
Redaction Criticism

While the idea of the Book of Daniel as a fragmentized work was not completely new,¹ form-criticism provided Gustav Hölscher with new tools for his theory on the development of the book.² To solve the problems perceived in regard to its unity,³ H. L. Ginsberg in 1948 suggested the following basic sequence in the production of the Book of Daniel:⁴

1. Chaps. 1-6 were composed between 292-262 B.C.

2. Chap. 2 was reworked with some new insertions between 246-220 B.C.

3. Chap. 7 was written in the early part of the Maccabean period.

4. Chaps. 10-12 were composed by another Maccabean author.

5. Chap. 8 was written by a third Maccabean author between 166 and 165 B.C.

6. Chap. 9 was added slightly later.


In this reconstruction, other poetic pieces of the narratives in the first part of the book (as for instance Dan 3:33 and 4:32) were supposed to be composed independently of the hymnic prayer of Daniel in chap. 2, and the prayer in chap. 9 was supposed to be a final editorial element. Any basic unity was questioned.

H. H. Rowley contested this construction and made the last major critical attempt to defend the unity of the Book of Daniel. He accepted an oral tradition behind the stories in chaps. 1-6, but claimed a final literary form of the whole work by one Maccabean author.¹

Although Ginsberg has been the inspiration for several scholars,² there is no agreement on the levels of the redaction of the Book of Daniel.³ The Anchor Bible acknowledges the dependency on Ginsberg, but provides its own sequence of the stages.⁴

¹A similar point of view was taken by Aage Bentzen, *Daniel*, Handbuch zum Alten Testament 19, 2d ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1952), 9. Rowley refrained from including the prayer in Dan 9 in his evaluation: the question of the originality of Dan 9:4-20 “will not be discussed in the present article” (“The Unity,” 241).

²A valuable review of the different positions up till 1980 is given by Klaus Koch, *Das Buch Daniel*, Erträge der Forschung 144 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980), 55-77.

³John Gammie places less of the production of the book in the time of Antiochus IV, "The Classification." His division contains three stages: (1) 2:4b-7:18, except for the glosses, 7:7b-8,11a,12, was composed in the Ptolemaic period during the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-204/3). (2) 1:1-2:4a; 10; 12:1-4 were written in the period of the Seleukids, just before the rule of Antiochus IV. (3) 7:19-28; 8; 9; 11; 12:5-13 plus the glosses 7:7b-8,11a, and 12 were written and the book in its final form edited during the time of Antiochus IV. This stage may include several layers, as for instance the later inserted prayer in 9:3-19.

⁴Louis F. Hartman and A. A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, Anchor Bible (AB), vol. 23 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978), 9-19. The stages are presented on pp. 13-14. In this reconstruction the final editor or redactor wrote chap. 9 without the prayer in the autumn of 165 B.C., combining it with the stories and adding the remaining glosses from chaps. 7, 8, 11, and 12, except for 12:11, 12. A yet later hand (or several hands) inserted 9:4-20 plus 12:11, 12.
Yet another evaluation of the different layers of the Book of Daniel is presented by André Lacocque. Lacocque also acknowledges his debt to Ginsberg and treats the literary levels in accordance with the latter's division of the book into Daniel A (chaps. 1-6) and Daniel B (chaps. 7-12). He begins with a discussion of Daniel 2 where he finds (especially in verses 41-43) "evidence of successive reinterpretations of the original text—that is, they are superimposed literary strata" because these verses add further details to the dream report in vss. 31-35. These reinterpretations are then put into a chronological setting during different phases of the historical events following the death of Alexander the Great. The insertion of Dan 2:16-23 containing the prayer of Daniel is placed in 166 B.C., where a fourth and final edition of Daniel A and the combination of Daniel A and B is supposed to have taken place.

These are only examples. Some scholars concentrate on the narratives in the first six chapters or on the Aramaic part only. But these intricate theories regarding the origin of


2Ibid., 65.

3Ibid., 66-67.


5Most notable is here the comprehensive work by Reinhard Gregor Kratz, Translatio imperii: Untersuchungen zu den aramäischen Daniel erzählungen und ihren theologischgeschichtlichen Umfeld, WMANT 63 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991). Kratz takes the position that an original Aramaic version originally constituted a book in itself. So also Odil H. Steck, "Weltgeschehen und Gottesvölker im Buche Daniel," in Kirche: Festschrift für Günther Bornkamm, ed. D. Lührmann and G. Strecker (Tübingen: Mohr, 1980), 56-78. A similar suggestion has been made by Rainer Albertz, Der Gott des Daniel: Untersuchungen zu Daniel 4-6 in der Septuagintaussage sowie zu Komposition...
the different parts of the Book of Daniel illustrate the problem one faces when doing a theological study of the book. By its very nature the redaction-critical method is diachronic rather than synchronic. It is historical rather than theological.\(^1\) Form-critical studies attempt to find the *Sitz im Leben* of the various pieces, not their *Sitz im Literature*.

Redaction-criticism has been looking for the historical function of the elements of the texts within the framework of a proposed historical development and growth. But with the prevailing uncertainty and the confusing variety of historical reconstructions, the method at present provides an uncertain basis for a study of the theology and function of the prayers of Daniel. Such a study must be a synchronic investigation of the prayers in the text as we have it, independent of their possible pre-history.

**Literary Studies**

Most often literary studies have been related to the discussion of form and genre.\(^2\)

The debate on the genre\(^3\) of the stories in Dan 1-6 may be important for an understanding of

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\(^1\)The valuable attempt by R. Stahl to trace the history of the theology of Daniel is still based on a particular theory regarding the redactional development. R. Stahl, *Vom Weltengagement zur Weltüberwindung: Theologische Positionen im Danielbuch*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 4 (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994).

\(^2\)Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction*, is the standard work on the forms of Daniel.

the context for prayer in the first half of the book, the discussion of vision-reports\(^1\)
significant especially for the setting in the second part of Daniel.

Within the last decade several scholars have made use of recent developments in
methodology in dealing primarily with the narrative part of Daniel. Toews has studied the
discourse grammar of the Aramaic section.\(^2\) Other scholars have employed concepts
defined by systematic literary studies. One of the purposes of these studies has been by way
of a general literary paradigm to reach a definition of the genre of the narratives.\(^3\) Niditch

\(^1\)See Kenneth Orville Freer, "A Study of Vision Reports in Biblical Literature"
(Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1975); Susan Niditch, The Symbolic Vision in Biblical
Tradition, Harvard Semitic Monograph Series 30 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980); Klaus
Koch, "Vom profetischen zum apokalyptischen Visionsbericht," in Apocalypticism in the
Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on
Apocalypticism, Uppsala, August 12-19, 1979, ed. David Hellholm (Tübingen: Mohr-
Siebeck, 1983), 413-446; Dennis Pierce McEntire, "The Dream-Report as a Literary Unit:
A Form-Critical Study of Daniel 2" (Th.M. thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,
1970); and Paul A. Porter, Metaphors and Monsters: A Literary-Critical Study of Daniel 7

\(^2\)Brian Gregory Toews, "A Discourse Grammar of the Aramaic in the Book of Daniel"

\(^3\)Many definitions have been suggested through the years, such as "Jewish romances":
Scribner's Sons, 1916), 75; "midrash": C. Gaide, Le Livre de Daniel (Tours: Maison
and Di Lella, 55, a label rightly rejected by Collins, Daniel, 39-40; "Märchen": Hermann
Gunkel, Das Märchen im Alten Testament (Tübingen: Mohr, 1921), 106, 142; Walter
Baumgartner, "Ein Vierteljahrhundert Danielforschung," TRu 11 (1939): 59-83, 125-144,
201-208; Hans-Peter Müller, "Märchen, Legende und Enderwartung: Zum Verständnis des
Buches Daniel," VT 26 (1976): 338-350; "short story": Fewell, 10; "wisdom court
legends": Lawrence Mitchell Wills, The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King: Ancient
Jewish Court Legends, Harvard Dissertations in Religion 26 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press,
1990), 12-19. The most commonly used definition is "court tales"; see Collins, Daniel, 42,
who builds on the works by W. Lee Humphreys, "A Life-Style for Diaspora: A Study of the
This genre is then again by Humphreys and Collins divided into two sub-genres, the "court-
conflict" and the "court-contest." A basic problem with this definition is the mixture of
thematical and structural features in the classification; see the discussion by Milne, 195-196.
and Dolan have used the approach by Aarne and Thompson and their *Types of the Folktale*.¹ Fewell employs deconstruction and reader-response methods in her work.² Milne sets out to explore the usefulness of Propp's morphology for the folktales on Dan 1-6.³ In comparison,⁴ she is the most cautious about her methodology and refrains from drawing any conclusions on that basis regarding the original unity of the literary entities. She is not willing to use these general definitions of genre as criteria for an emendation of the historical text or for a decisive evaluation of its editorial process.

**The Prayers of the Book**

The persons involved in prayer and worship in the book are primarily Daniel and his friends, and the kings with their wise men or officials. While the two recorded prayers by Daniel in 2:20-23 and 9:4-19 have received scholarly attention, other references to Daniel (like 10:12) or to the kings in prayer have in general not been treated independently, but only in the course of general commentary or in connection with these two prayers.

The royal decrees are all found in narratives of the first part of the book. They share important themes with Daniel's praise in 2:20-23 and are also, at least in part, expressed in poetry. No individual study has investigated the depiction of the character of the kings on the basis of prayer. From the references to the doxologies by Nebuchadnezzar in 3:31-33

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²Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty*.

³Milne, *Vladimir Propp*.

⁴Milne criticizes Niditch and Doran because in her view they presuppose their concept of "story" and assume that "Daniel 1-6, Esther, Joseph, and Ahiqar" were "tales which all belonged to the same literary type, the court tale" (191).
and 4:31.34, the question may be raised whether the words of his prayers are present or not.¹

W. Sibley Towner has in a short study discussed these poetic sections in the first part of Daniel in an attempt "to demonstrate the logical and theological coherence of the narratives of Daniel 2, 4 and 6 with the short poetic prayers or psalms imbedded in them."² Although he accepts an editing of the Book of Daniel over a longer period of time, Towner reaches a conclusion of thematic coherence:

All of them . . . appear to be created for the same specific purpose, namely, to function as theological epitomes of the significance of that experience of the speaker which is recounted in the narrative context.³

Venter and Prinsloo also deal with some of these texts and approach them from their function as poetry.⁴ Hans-Peter Mathys includes 2:20-23; 3:31-33; 4:31f.; and 6:26-28 in his assessment of the theological significance of these poetical passages.⁵ They are


²Towner, "Poetic Passages," 317.

³Ibid., 321. Towner goes on to explore a little further the theological issues involved and finds in the poetic sections a universalistic aspect connected with the question of theodicy. Collins understands these poetic passages as redactional elements, lending "coherence to the originally disparate tales." But he also finds that "the doxology in 2:20-23 stands apart from the others because of its greater emphasis on the theme of revelation." It therefore "may have been added at a different stage" (Daniel, 35).


understood to fulfill a "common function: they express the grateful response to God's reign of salvation."¹

These studies share an interest in the function of these sections of Daniel, but except for the one by Mathys, they have viewed the texts only as poetry, not as prayers. For that reason they have been less concerned with the depiction of the characters praying or with the divine-human dialogue of which the prayers may be a part.

As the two stated prayers by Daniel have been almost exclusively the focus of scholarly studies of prayer in the Book of Daniel, we turn to a review of the literature concerned with Dan 2:20-23 and 9:4-19. Each of these prayers illustrates a particular problem that scholarship has attempted to solve: the thanksgiving in chap. 2 the issue of the redaction of Daniel, the confession in chap. 9 the question of the theological unity of the book.

Daniel's prayer in 2:20-23

The prayer in Dan 2:20-23 has not received much attention.² None of the scholars referred to in this section spend more than a couple of pages on the textual arguments and only seldom are the opposing views discussed. The fundamental question has been whether the prayer historically, literary, and theologically fits the context of the narrative. Various

¹Ibid., 124.

strata have been detected in the Book of Daniel, and several arguments have been presented
to support the thesis that the prayer is part of a section of chap. 2 (most often 2:13-23) that
only later was added to the original chapter.

First of all, by many scholars vss. 16 and 25 are seen as contradictory.1 In Dan 2:16, Daniel enters the king’s presence directly whereas in Dan 2:24-25 he has to go through an
mediator, Arioch. One solution is the acceptance of the existence of two original accounts:2
in one Daniel belongs to the wise men (chap. 1 and 2:13-23), in the other he is an unknown
Jew (the remaining part of chap. 2).3 This would explain the perceived chronological
discrepancy between chaps. 1 and 2. There is not complete agreement on the delineation of
the secondary passage in the text.4


2Hartman and Di Lella see in the chapter a conflation of two separate and divergent accounts (139). P. R. Davies understands "the dual presentation as evidence of redactional activity on the part of the compiler of the cycle and author of chap. 1 rather than the existence of two recensions of one tale" ("Daniel Chapter Two," JTS 27 [1976]: 392).

3Davies, Daniel, 46.

Other arguments have been added. Daniel's friends play no part in the story and the 
reference to them in 2:17 is taken as an addition. The section is redundant and can be 
 omitted "without causing any interruption to the story proper." "It is inescapable that the 
song is not original within the chapter of the whole." 

Several interpreters, however, question the secondary nature of the prayer in Dan 
2:20-23. Towner's statement is typical: "I see no reason to separate the prayer from the 
lexical and dramatical context to which it so obviously is bound, and so will assume that it 
emanates from the same pen as does the rest of chapter 2." 

Conservative as well as critical scholars have attempted to explain the difficulties by 
referring to the historical context implied by the story itself. Archer states somewhat 
contrary to the text that the captain in vss. 15-16 "at Daniel's request . . . took him in 

\[1\] Other additions in the chapter could include 2:29-30, because they are repetitive, 
2:40-43 that contain elements not present in the dream-account in 2:31-36, and 2:49 which 
once again mentions the friends (Hartman and Di Lella, 139).

\[2\] R. A. Anderson (14). He finds the prayer "overloaded" in vs. 23 (17).

\[3\] T. J. Meadowcroft, Aramaic Daniel and Greek Daniel: A Literary Comparison, 
JSOTSup 198 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 172. So also Sigmund 
Mowinckel, "Psalms and Wisdom" in Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East: 
217.

\[4\] According to Lacocque an "original composition" (The Book of Daniel, 43). "There 
is no good reason to doubt its originality" (R. A. Anderson, 17). See also Walther 
Zimmerli, "Altestamentliche Prophetie und Apokalyptik auf dem Wege zur 'Rechtfertigung 
des Gottlosen'," in Rechtfertigung: Festschrift für Ernst Käsemann, ed. J. Friedrich et al. 

\[5\] Towner, "Poetic Passages," 318. Towner acknowledges the likelihood of an oral 
tradition behind the narratives in chaps. 1-6 (319). M. Delcor finds that vss. 14-23 are 
difficult and "at first glance give the impression of being an addition," yet he concludes that 
the spirit behind the section is the same as is behind the rest of the chapter, and the whole 
therefore stems from the same hand (Le Livre de Daniel [Paris: Gabalda, 1971], 71).
before Nebuchadnezzar himself."¹ Leopold simply finds that the account "quite evidently is condensed at this point by the omission of certain obvious details of court etiquette. For everyone still knows, and most assuredly knew in Daniel's days, that it was quite unthinkable that any man should venture into the king's presence unannounced or unsummoned."²

Von Gall understands Daniel as belonging to the wise men, yet he finds no contradiction between the completion of the three years in 1:5 and the second year of the king's reign in 2:1.³

Several scholars also point to the literary context for an explanation. Bentzen asserts that the "song of thanksgiving" in drawing out the revelation of the content of the dream builds up suspense.⁴ The speed of vs. 16 could be understood as deliberately adding to the tension. To Goldingay, the contrast between vss. 16 and 25 is partly explained by such dramatic aspects.⁵ He also briefly notes that the circular movement from Arioch to Daniel

¹He speculates that at the next instance in vss. 24-25 "Arioch may not have known that Daniel had already asked the king for a stay of execution, unless vs. 16 merely implies a request with Nebuchadnezzar through a secretary—or else Arioch may simply have forgotten this" (Archer, 42 and 44).

²H. C. Leopold, Exposition of Daniel (Grand Rapids: Wartburg Press, 1949; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), 96. So also Young, "there probably was an official intervention" (64) and Maier, "most likely through mediators" (107).

³Von Gall, 118-119. Fewell, on the contrary, sees Daniel and friends as "future advisors" to the king (52).

⁴Bentzen, 7. Milne acknowledges concerning vss. 24-25 that "this unit must be regarded as one of the rough seams in the present text," yet concludes that "both sections (vss. 13-19 and 24-25) may be regarded as connectives in their present context" and "each of these passages serves to accomplish" their functional requirements (213).

⁵Repetitiveness and discontinuity could stem from an author just as well as from an editor. Goldingay, Daniel, 44. Baldwin finds that what is not told is related to "the storytellers artistry" (88). To Fewell, suspense and curiosity are good literary explanations for
and back has a parallel in 2:1-12, which moves from king to wise men and back, thus supporting the literary unity of the chapter.¹

Turning to the theological context there is, however, a general consensus that the theological themes of the prayers are to the very point of its story-context, in spite of any redactional history. This is well summarized by Montgomery, who states that Dan 2:20-23 is "an original composition, entirely to the point of the story."²

Goldingay, for instance, points to the link between the ironic references to changing times in the words of Nebuchadnezzar in vss. 9 and 21.³ Lacocque observes how the prayer connects the divine gift of wisdom to wise men with God’s Lordship over history. Both of these are important themes throughout the book.⁴ Anderson sees the thematical bonds between the prayer, the activity of the little horn that changes times and seasons (Dan 7:21), and the description of the enemy in chaps. 7-12. He concludes that "the content of the poem is not at all alien to its present setting."⁵

In a study of psalms in narrative context, James W. Watts has made an attempt to combine diachronic and synchronic perspectives. In his treatment of Daniel’s praise, he

¹Goldingay, Daniel, 41.
²Montgomery, 157.
³Goldingay, Daniel, 42.
⁴Lacocque, The Book of Daniel, 43.
⁵R. A. Anderson, 16-17. Lacocque, too, makes a point of the link between 2:21 and 7:25 (Daniel in His Time, 66).
reaches the conclusion that "by adapting liturgical poetry, the Book of Daniel could best express its theological point briefly and convincingly."

Neither Watts nor Towner, however, includes all the poetical sections in their comparison. Their studies have been concerned with the function of the prayer because of its poetic form, and it has been compared to other pieces of poetry embedded in the narratives. But the prayers remain to be studied as prayers, that is, in comparison with other prayers or allusion to prayers, and as part of the divine-human communication within the book.

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1 Watts, 154.


Daniel's prayer in 9:4-19

The royal decrees and the prayer of Daniel in 2:20-23 have been compared with regard to their common function within the narrative section of Daniel. But the prayer in chap. 9 is found in the visionary section of the book and has in general been discussed only in its narrow context within chap. 9.¹ No study has been concerned with its relation to the prayers or allusions to prayer in the book in general or with its role in the divine-human communication of the book as a whole.

Besides the commentaries, the major exegetical work on Dan 9:4b-19 has been done by Walter Rast.² The historical development³ of exilic and post-exilic prayers has been the

¹Exceptions are studies that structurally link chaps. 9 and 10 and take note of the similarities in prayer and fasting, as, for instance, Jacques B. Doukhan (Le soupir de la terre: etude prophétique de livre de Daniel [Dammarie les Lys Cedex: Vie et Santé, 1993], 224), and David (187-193).


concern of several studies of the prayer. Closely connected is the discussion of the setting of the prayer within the redactional history of the Book of Daniel. Scattered references to the prayer are often found in articles that utilize the chapter to describe the historical development of the religious thoughts of post-exilic times. Since the time of von Gall, the prayer most often has been understood as a later addition to the text. Other scholars, however, have maintained the conviction that the prayer came from the same hand as the rest of the chapter.

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1 André Lacocque has tried to establish its origin and setting and suggests that the prayer in Dan 9 originally was an exilic prayer originating at Yom Kippur, later developing into the great prayers in Ezra and Nehemiah (“The Liturgical Prayer in Daniel 9,” HUCA 47 [1976]: 119-142).

2 “The relation of the prayer to its context presents one of the major issues in the interpretation of Daniel, as it has far-reaching implications for the theology of the book” (Collins, Daniel, 347). The origin of the prayer is by critical scholars generally found in Palestine, so B. W. Jones, “The Prayer in Daniel IX,” VT 18 (1968): 488-493.


4 As by Marti, 64-65; Charles, 226-227; M. A. Beek, Das Danielbuch (Leiden: Ginsberg, 1935), 75; Ginsberg, Studies, 33, 38, 41; Klaus Baltzer, Das Bundesformular, WMANT 4 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964), 57; Bentzen, 41-43; Hartman and Di Lella, 241-246; Benedikt Otzen, Daniels Bog fortolket (Copenhagen: Det Danske Bibelselskab, 1995), 84.

5 These scholars include P. Edmund Bayer, Danielstudien (Münster: Aschendorff, 1912), 154; Montgomery, 362; Ivan Engnell, "Daniels bok," in Svensk Bibliskt Uppslagsverk, ed. Ivan Engnell (Stockholm: Nordiska Uppslagsböcker, 1962), 1:393-394; Porteous, 139; Goldingay, Daniel, 237; A. Jeffery and G. Kennedy, "The Book of Daniel," Interpreter’s Bible, ed. G. A. Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956), 6:484; E. W. Heaton, The Book of Daniel (London: SCM, 1956), 203-206; and Maurice Gilbert, "La Prière de Daniel: Dan 9:4-19," RTL 3 (1972): 290-292; and Delcor, 186. Collins takes a cautious view, stating that "although the prayer was not composed for the present context, it was included purposefully by the author of Daniel 9 and was not a secondary addition" (Daniel,
The reasons for treating the prayer as an independent unit is, however, not so much based upon historical considerations, but on linguistic, literary, and theological arguments. In its linguistic and literary context, the arguments for the prayer as an addition are the completely Hebrew style of the prayer, without any Aramaisms; the duplications detected in 9:3-4a and 9:20-21a; and the presence of the name YHWH. Jones, on the other hand, has shown how many of the phrases and motifs of the prayer also occur in the angelic discourse. Jacques Doukhan has argued for a basic literary and thematic correspondence between the prayer and the revelation with the fate of the people and of the city as the key motifs. Another literary link between chaps. 8 and 9 has been suggested by Otto Plöger who finds a common pattern: (1) dream/vision in chaps. 7 and 8 or prayer in chap. 9, and (2) interpretation.

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1See the general discussion in Collins (Daniel with an Introduction, 89-96, especially 90-91, and Daniel, 347-348); Rast (1-14 and 169-185); Goldingay (Daniel, 235-237); and Jones ("The Prayer," 488-493).

2So Charles, 226. But Jones understands this feature as natural in view of the fact that the prayer is penetrated by traditional elements from other prayers and texts in the Old Testament ("The Prayer," 489-490).

3Supposed to reflect redactional seams (Hartman and Di Leila, 246). This view is called into question by Bruce W. Jones, "Ideas of History in the Book of Daniel" (Ph.D. dissertation, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, 1972), 261-262.

4Found in the Book of Daniel only in chap. 9 (Bentzen, 75).

5Jones, "The Prayer," 491. In this article, Jones had added to his arguments from his treatment of the prayer in "Ideas of History," 260-270. See also Gilbert, "La prière," 284-310, and Bayer, 53.


7Plöger, Das Buch Daniel, 135.
Classifying the prayer, most scholars stress the element of confession. It is called a "communal confession of sin,"¹ or "a long communal prayer of confession."² Towner labels it a "prose prayer of penitence,"³ a type of prayer found elsewhere in the Old Testament only in Ezra 9:6-15 and Neh 1:5-11 and 9:6-37.⁴ Carl Roy Anderson includes the same prayers in the genre labeled "post-exilic penitential prose prayer."⁵ Many scholars connect the prayer with lament.⁶ Particularly interesting is the approach by Rast, who not only investigates the prayer, but views the chapter as a unity with a lament in 9:4-19 followed by a divine oracle in 9:20-27. He is able to point to similar patterns in the Psalms and in the prophetic writings, not least in the book of Jeremiah.⁷

Having reviewed some literary issues, we now turn to the problems of the theological context of the prayer. The main issue in the evaluation of the prayer is the theological question of its relationship not only to chap. 9, but to the book as a whole. The prayer is regarded by some as incongruous in its context because we would expect a prayer for illumination, not a communal confession of sin.⁸ In addition, its clear Deuteronomic

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⁵Carl Roy Anderson, 109.

⁶Tracing the development of the communal lament throughout the Old Testament, Westermann places it among late prose laments ("Die Rolle der Klage," 250-268); Reventlow calls it a "lament of the people" (281-286), and finds in it also an element of prophetic intercession.

⁷Rast, see especially 41-74.

⁸So Charles (226), and Hartman and Di Lella (245).
theology with its emphasis on the sin and responsibility of Israel stands in marked contrast to
the apocalyptic determinism found in the rest of the book.¹

Other scholars claim, however, that we do not know very much about how such a
prayer of illumination was supposed to look,² or that Daniel in the context of the story
actually understood and therefore did not need illumination of the meaning of the prophecy
of Jeremiah,³ or that Daniel was not primarily seeking a hidden meaning of that prophecy.⁴

Several suggestions have been put forward to solve the theological tension between a
Deuteronomic view of the prayer and the seemingly deterministic theology of the rest of the
book, chap. 8 and the angelic message in 9:24-27 included.

According to Jones, the heart of the chapter's message is a changed interpretation of
history, where apocalypticism takes over from the covenant-concept.⁵ Another attempted
solution is presented by Towner who finds the content of the prayer to be less important
than the very act of prayer. The prayer is present in the book to characterize Daniel as a

¹Collins, Daniel with an Introduction, 95; Otzen, 84.


³So Goldingay (Daniel, 237), who dates the book to the Maccabean times. A
conservative scholar like Archer has no problem with understanding the text in its exilic
context: "So he (Daniel) implored the Lord God to reckon those years from the year of his
own exile and to ensure the establishment of the Commonwealth of Israel in the land of
promise by seventy years from the first Palestinian invasion of King Nebuchadnezzar"
(107).

⁴Gerald H. Wilson suggests for instance that the prayer results rather from a reflection
of the 'letters' of Jeremiah to the exilic community recorded in Jer 29 ("The Prayer of

⁵Jones, "The Prayer," 492. Jones maintains that it is seen as intentional that Gabriel
ignores the content of the prayer and in his answer brings in the deterministic view of
history that replaces the idea of retribution implied by the covenant.
person; it is not placed in the chapter to indicate that the prayer in some way may influence the will of God.¹

A completely different view is taken by O. H. Steck, who attempts to link Daniel to the Deuteronomistic tradition with its greater emphasis on the human responsibility and human participation in the development of history. He finds elements of such a view of history even in Dan 9:24-27.² Collins and Rast discuss this thought—Collins in direct relation to Steck's thesis—and they both reject it.³

This debate about the view of history and the relationship between the Deuteronomistic view of the prayer and the apocalyptic prophecy of the oracle in 9:24-27 raises several important theological questions. Is it true that the classification of the genre of the Book of Daniel as an apocalyptic work per definition make the book deterministic?⁴ How do we define determinism? Does it consist of different levels?⁵

¹Towner, "Retributional Theology," 213. Collins seems to follow the same approach in Daniel with an Introduction, 96.

²Already indicated by the theme of the wrath of God in Dan 8:19 (Steck, "Weltgeschehen," 65-75). In this article Steck is drawing upon his comprehensive study of the tradition of the Deuteronomistic view of history in the Old Testament, Judaism, and Early Christianity (Israel und das Gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten, WMANT 23 [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967]). In this work Steck repeatedly comments on the prayer in Daniel 9, 113-114, 121-127, and 131.

³Collins, Daniel with an Introduction, 94-95; Rast, 175-179.

⁴Rex A. Mason criticizes scholars who have "made up their minds already that there is such a genre as 'apocalyptic'" and bring "to it pre-programmed ideas of the characteristics which allegedly mark it off from 'prophetic' literature" ("The Treatments of Earlier Biblical Themes in the Book of Daniel," in Perspectives in Religious Studies: Essays in Honor of Walter J. Harrelson, ed. James L. Crenshaw [Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988], 99).

These questions are related to the function of the prayer in the context to which it actually belongs. Is the prayer contributing to the book in the area of theology, or only present to characterize Daniel as a person? Is its theological content congruent with the rest of the book, or is the prayer placed as a contrast to indicate that its Deuteronomistic theology now is replaced by an apocalyptic and, per definition, deterministic outlook?

For this dissertation, dealing with the theology and the function of the prayers within the Book of Daniel, it is necessary to ask whether the overall theology of the book as a whole would be drastically changed if the prayer were not present. Even if it originally was a foreign element, we have to ask what the prayer in its present position is doing to "the whole of the Book of Daniel and its message" with which it, according to Johannes Pedersen, is "so closely connected?"¹

Finally, an observation should be made regarding the study of prayers in the visionary part of the book that was true also for the literature on the prayers of the narrative section of the book: the prayer in Dan 9 has not yet been studied from the perspective of the divine-human dialogue within the book as a whole, relating it also to other prayers and allusions to prayers within the book.

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quoting the statement by John J. Collins: "The fate of the individual is not predetermined" ("Pseudonymity, Historical Reviews and the Genre of the Revelation of John," CBQ 39 [1977]: 336). Different levels of determinism are acknowledged by Collins in his comparison between Dan 9 and the prayer in Ezra 4, (Daniel with an Introduction, 96).
Methodology

Justification for the Study

A preliminary look at the content of the Book of Daniel pointed out the importance of the prayers of the book in relation to both the literary feature of revelation and to the theological issue of divine-human communication within the book. The need for a study of the theology and function of the prayers has been confirmed by a more comprehensive review of the recent development of the studies of prayers of the Old Testament, as well as by an evaluation of the present situation within scholarship with regard to the Book of Daniel. No such study has yet been done.

Limitations

The review of literature has also provided suggestions for the necessary limitations of such an investigation. The study must be synchronic. Questions related to the editorial process of the book are not addressed. The function described is limited to the function of the prayers within the final canonical shape of the text.

The canonical text chosen is the Masoretic text.1 The discussion of the relationship between the Hebrew-Aramaic Daniel and the Greek translations is still ongoing,2 but there is

1The Masoretic text being part of the Jewish and Protestant canon, the Greek additions of course belonging to the Catholic Bible, too. Collins in his recent commentary (Daniel) deserves the credit of including the Greek translations in his commentary. He discusses the relationship between the versions on pp. 3-11.

2See recently Dean Orrin Wenthe, "The Old Greek Translation of Daniel 1-6" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1991). He compares the Masoretic text (MT), the Old Greek (OG), Theodotion (Th), and Qumranic texts and concludes that there originally were two Semitic editions of the stories in 4-6, "the parent of MT and the Vorlage of OG," pointing "to an earlier common core legend." Also Tim McLay finds that Th must be regarded as an independent translation of Daniel (LXX: The OG and Th Versions of Daniel, Septuagint and Cognate Studies 43, SBL [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996], 242). Another important study is S. Pace Jeansonne, The Old Greek Translation of Daniel 7-12, Catholic
definitely a historical as well as a literary difference between the Hebrew text and the Greek versions that justifies this choice of text.

Definitions

To carry out this investigation, two areas need clarification. To be able to locate prayer in the text, a working definition of prayer must be provided. Moreover, it is necessary to know which questions to raise in order to describe the function of the prayers.

Prayer, References to Prayer, and Allusions to Prayer

A working definition

The task of defining prayer at first may seem easy, yet scholars deliberately avoid being too narrow or simplistic. "The subject of prayer is a vast field which cannot be identified by a simple and regular definition," says Staudt. In his study of Deuteronomistic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series (CBQMS) 19 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1988). Some newer literary studies have emphasized the Greek version, but also share valuable observations on the Hebrew Daniel, such as Meadowcroft, and Marti J. Steussy, Gardens in Babylon: Narrative and Faith in the Greek Legends of Daniel, SBL Dissertation Series 141 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993).

1Steussy concludes that there is a basic literary difference between the narratives in the Greek and the Hebrew Daniel (191).

2The Greek versions of the Book of Daniel add in chap. 3 the Prayer of Azariah to the prayers of the Book. I concur with the evaluation by Collins who holds "the extant Aramaic text" of the chapter to be a "coherent unit", and finds that the "prayer . . . certainly not" was "composed for this context" (Daniel, 180, 198).

3See the recent reflections by both Balentine (Prayer, 30-31), and P. Miller (They Cried, 4).

4Staudt, 53.
prayers, he acknowledges the necessity of being flexible when dealing with the specific
texts. From the angle of systematic theology he reaches a three-point working definition:

The working definition of prayer is as follows: Prayer is 1) explicit communication with
God (the speech can be audible or inaudible); 2) communication initiated by an
individual or the people as a whole (the emphasis here is on initiated by); 3) such
communication that brings response from God.

This definition is helpful in several ways. First of all, it limits the classification to
explicit or verbal address to God. Not all communication with God should be regarded as

1Ibid., 54-55.

2Approached from a systematic theological perspective, prayer is often understood as
communion or communication. It has been defined in a larger sense as "speaking with
11:671. "Prayer is a dialogue, in which the religious man is brought together with personal
divine beings." A. Gonzalez, "Prière," DBSup, ed. Henri Cazelles and André Feuillet
(Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1972), 8:556. A similar definition is given by Ernest Lussier,
Biblical Prayer (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1977), 2: "Prayer is a dialogue
between man and God." Abraham Heschel objects to this way of defining prayer: "Prayer
is not a soliloquy. But is it a dialogue with God? Does man address Him as person to
person? It is incorrect to describe prayer by analogy with human conversation; we do not
communicate with God. We only make ourselves communicable to Him. Prayer is an
emanation of what is most precious in us towards Him, the outpouring of the heart before
Him. It is not a relationship between person and person, between subject and subject, but
an endeavor to become the object of His thought." Man's Quest for God: Studies in Prayer
and Symbolism (New York: Carl Scribner's Sons, 1954), 10. A summary introduction to
the role of prayer in modern theological thought is found in Perry LeFevre: Radical Prayer:
Contemporary Interpretations (Chicago: Exploration Press, 1982), and Understandings of
the relationship between verbal and non-verbal prayer, and the question whether prayer is
monologue, dialogue, or neither.

3Staudt, 58. In this quotation, I have for the sake of convenience placed the footnotes
by Staudt in parenthesis in his text. Staudt is, for this definition, expressing his dependency
upon the systematic philosophers William James (Varieties of Religious Experience [New
York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1928]) and Auguste Sabatier (Esquisse d'une philosophie
de la religion, abridged ed. [Paris: Fischbacher, 1897]).

4"It takes two things to make prayer come to pass," says Heschel, "a person and a
word" (23). He further elaborates on the significance of the word in relation to prayer (23-46).
prayer, such as, for instance, acts of sacrifice or self-humiliation.\(^1\) Prayer is only one part of communication with God.\(^2\) Next, it underscores the address, the direction.\(^3\) Prayer is directed towards God.\(^4\)

Two issues should, however, be raised in order to qualify the definition proposed by Staudt. First, while the question of divine response is obviously appropriate for the texts of his study, prayer could be recognized even where no divine response is taken for granted. Prayer describes the human address whether God or the gods answer or not.

Second, while initiated by humans, Old Testament prayers are found in a literary and theological climate in which God is understood as having already in some way spoken to man.\(^5\) Therefore, prayer in this group of texts is always also a response to the God who is perceived or believed to be present or to have intervened in human history.\(^6\) In his study, Staudt, for instance, takes it for granted that the Old Testament (and the whole Bible . . .) is concerned about a relationship (covenant) of God to people: how God relates to and deals with the people, and conversely, how the people relate to and deal with their God. . . . The people’s place in

\(^1\) It would be “a limitless classification” and render ‘prayer’ “meaningless” (Staudt, 58).

\(^2\) Staudt’s guidelines attempt not only to “identify prayer as communication with God,” but also to “segregate prayer from all other types of communication with God” (ibid., 5).

\(^3\) This should not, as mistakenly understood by Corvin (23), be taken to mean that this address to God from a grammatical point of view is expressed in the second person only.

\(^4\) In his discussion of the definition proposed by Staudt, Balentine also emphasizes the element of intentionality. He wants to avoid classifying simple, casual conversation or dialogue with God as in Gen 3:9-13 and 4:9-15 as prayer. This is done for instance by Michael Thompson (13-14). For Balentine, in prayer something ‘crucial is at stake’ for the pray-er who approaches God ‘not casually but purposeful, intentionally’ (Prayer, 31).

\(^5\) This is the context for the New Testament as well; cf. Heb 11:6.

\(^6\) As reflected in the discussion by Balentine (Prayer, 33-49).
this relationship with their God is to be discovered at the point of closest contact between the people and God, i.e., the point of prayer.\footnote{Staudt, 4-5.}

In other words, prayer is not just an abstract concept. Prayer is always part of an interpersonal relationship, and to grasp the full significance of any prayer-passage, it should be studied along with the contextual role and function of the partners in prayer, i.e., the pray-er and God. When, for instance, Daniel is praising God in 2:20-23, it is important to observe whether the narrative context in its description of divine activities gives any additional clues that may identify the nature and the character of the God to whom Daniel is addressing his prayer.

\textit{Identifying prayer in the text}

Having wrestled with the issue of definition, we turn to the question of locating passages of prayers in the text. Staudt uses the expression ‘stated’ and ‘unstated’ to separate the recorded prayers from the prayers mentioned without the words being present.\footnote{Ibid., 68-69. To Staudt, ‘unstated’ prayers in the Deuteronomist are prayers explicitly introduced by one or several words, usually verbs. An example from the Book of Daniel would be Dan 6:12. In his definition, allusions to prayers or the topic of prayers are not included among ‘unstated prayers.’} As historical, religious phenomena, both these groups would be labeled explicit prayers. As part of literary texts, however, only the ‘stated’ prayers are actual passages of prayer whereas ‘unstated’ prayers in the texts are references to the fact of prayer.

Recognizing the words spoken is obviously important. Yet the ways in which both stated and unstated prayers are mentioned may vary greatly according to the specific context. Stated prayers may be introduced by a shorter or longer introduction formula, like ‘and x spoke and said.’ Unstated prayers contain a phrase or a word indicating that a prayer

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Recognizing the words spoken is obviously important. Yet the ways in which both stated and unstated prayers are mentioned may vary greatly according to the specific context. Stated prayers may be introduced by a shorter or longer introduction formula, like ‘and x spoke and said.’ Unstated prayers contain a phrase or a word indicating that a prayer
is spoken, but in other cases we may only more indirectly infer from the narrative context that a prayer has been offered. An example from the Book of Daniel of such a narrative reference to the fact of prayer is found in 2:18 where the text indicates that Daniel and his friends are praying. Yet the prayer as such is never explicitly introduced. To identify the specific kind of prayer present, it is therefore necessary to study the narrative context in which it is mentioned.¹

While these unstated prayers as well as prayers implied by the narrative context are references to the fact of prayer, especially narratives may contain allusions to the issue of prayer by various literary techniques. Among these are petitions addressed to human beings in such a way that they formally share the nature of prayers, but because of the narrative context are understood not to be prayers (an example is the address from the satraps to king Darius in 6:9). The importance of such allusions will depend on the narrative context.

Where the words of the prayers are not recorded, the term *references to prayer* will consistently be employed to point to the fact of prayer, while the term *allusions to prayer* refers to textual indications of the issue of prayer.

In the present study, prayers will be categorized not only because of formal criteria, but also on the basis of their function. Therefore, prayer is consistently identified also on the basis of the *interactions between God and man* as described in the narrative context in which we find the prayers of the book.

¹I have already commented upon another distinction, suggested by Corvin (6-15), between contextual and formal prayers. If proceeding with such classification, however, we will have determined the function of the prayers before the study of the prayers in their actual narrative context. This problem is not related to the classification by Corvin only. Literary forms are simply not sufficient in themselves to describe the function of prayers in their literary and theological context. Any categorization made on the grounds of form only predetermines the function within the narrative and is for that reason insufficient.
Function

In this study, the focus is the Book of Daniel in its final canonical shape. For that reason, the concern is not with the historical function of the prayers in the editorial process of the book, but with the literary and theological function within the book. These are the issues to which the recent studies of prayer have turned their attention.¹

The studies by Watts and Staudt provide some guidelines for such an investigation of the function of prayer. I will follow the lead of Watts in identifying links between prayer and context. He searches for connections between insert hymns and their narrative context at three levels:² their narrative function within the plot, the semantic and thematical connections between psalm and context, and finally the psalms’ contribution to the characterization of its speakers and at times to other characters in the narrative. The last of these three levels has to do with the persons involved in praising and praying. As noted in the review of recent literature on prayer,³ prayers not only help to describe the pray-ers, they also depict the character of God.

Watts is primarily concerned with poetic passages, with hymns. This study is, however, concerned with prayer. And it is inherent in the very nature of prayer that its function reaches beyond its role in the structure and the plot, its thematic relationship to the narrative context, and its depiction of the characters. Prayer is not just a theological theme, but always part of an interpersonal relationship, and the prayer brings a message simply by

²Watts, 17.
³Especially Balentine (Prayer, 89-117).
taking place, because of the event of prayer as such. This dissertation therefore investigates also the function of prayers as prayer, that is, as part of a divine-human dialogue.\(^1\)

The rationale for this is found primarily in the study by Balentine. But the investigation by Staudt on prayers in the Deuteronomist also illustrates how prayer may function as part of a process of a two-way communication between heaven and earth. Staudt studies the prayers in their relation to the description of God's revelation and intervention. He especially underlines their link to the 'word of God' as referred to in the Deuteronomistic texts.\(^2\) In the present study, therefore, the human initiative in addressing God in prayer is studied in relation to the divine revelation to which the prayers may be a response and to the divine intervention which may be effected by the prayers.

Purpose and Procedure

In this section, the basic purpose of the study is expressed by raising the pertinent questions to be answered, and the procedure chosen to reach the answers is described.

The first question is that of identification: which are the prayers of the book? What is in each case their genre, and how is the relationship between the recorded prayers, the references to prayers, and the allusions to prayers? The second question is concerned with the function within the more narrow literary setting: what is the relationship between these prayers and the narratives in which they are found? The third question deals with the function of prayer within the Book of Daniel in its totality: how are the prayers situated in the overall structure, and what is their contribution to the theology of the book?

\(^1\)The broader paradigm is made up by the prayers in the Old Testament at large, against the background of which the prayers of the Book of Daniel are viewed.

\(^2\)Staudt, 8-16.
With regard to procedure, I build on the premise that prayers always are related to persons. They are not just abstract themes. Prayers are offered by people. Also in literary settings, prayers reflect real interpersonal communication and characterize the persons involved in the prayer event.

In the Book of Daniel, the major participants in prayer can be divided into two basic groups, and the investigation of prayer in the Book of Daniel is structured accordingly. The first group consists of believing Jews. Daniel is its major character, but his three friends are naturally associated with him. Daniel and his friends are described in situations of prayer and worship in chaps. 2 (vss. 18 and 20-23), 3 (vs. 7), 6 (vss. 11-12), 9 (vss. 3-19), and 10 (vs. 12). In the second group we find the gentiles, first of all the various kings, but also, for instance, the wise sages of Babylon. Persons from this group are found in situations related to prayer and worship in chaps. 2 (vs. 11 and 47), 3 (vss. 7 and 27), 4 (vss. 31-32 and 34), and 6 (vss. 27-28).

Chapter 1 of the dissertation looks at the first group in prayer. In each of the situations of prayer in which Daniel and his friends are found, the chapter analyzes recorded prayers, references to prayers, and allusions to prayers against the background of the interactions between God and man, thus identifying the prayers on both formal and functional grounds. Exegesis is performed on the recorded prayers, the prayer-passages, in order to deduce the theological content of the prayers, and in each literary unit (chapter), the relationship between the prayers and their context is studied with regard to narrative plot and structure, words, themes and persons referred to, the depiction of the characters of the pray-ers and the addressee, and the significance of the event of prayer in light of the divine-human communication taking place. Chapter 2 deals with the second group, the gentile kings and wise men, employing an identical outline.
Chapter 3 studies the theology and the function of the prayers in the book as a whole. All the prayers, references to prayers, and allusions to prayers relating to the two groups are compared with regard to functional and formal identification. Next, they are positioned in relation to the structure and the general movements within the book. Finally, the combined function of the prayers within the book in its totality is discussed, focusing on the areas of theology, the depiction of characters, and the prayer event as part of a process of divine-human communication.

A summary with the conclusions of the study closes the dissertation.
CHAPTER I

DANIEL AND FRIENDS IN PRAYER

Dan 2

Identifying the Prayers

The first step to be taken is the identification and formal description of prayers, references to prayers, and allusions to prayer within the chapter. These will be found against the background of the interactions between the divine revelation and intervention and the human response as presented in the narrative. Although the discussion in this chapter concentrates upon the prayers of Daniel and his friends, other references or allusions to prayer will be included because part of the depiction of the characters of Daniel and his friends is found in a comparison with other characters and their relation to prayer and worship.

Interactions between God and Man

Prayer is offered because humans perceive or long for divine activity. The narrative’s explicit references to God indicate the nature of the God who is addressed in prayer.

It is a peculiar feature of the second chapter of Daniel that explicit references to God’s activities are not mentioned directly by the narrator, but contained in the words of the
characters involved in the events, first of all by Daniel (2:20-23, 28, 37, 44-45), second, as a response, by Nebuchadnezzar (2:47).

A dream seriously disturbs the mind of king Nebuchadnezzar (2:1). That this dream actually is a revelation from God, is told only later by Daniel in his explanation to the king (2:28).1 At first Nebuchadnezzar calls upon his wise men (2:2) and demands from them that they tell him the dream and provide an interpretation (2:3-11). The issue of the divine emerges at the close of their three-part dialogue. In their final answer to the king, the sages declare that only the gods would be able to fulfill the royal demands, and it is implied that it will be futile to ask these gods for help (2:11).

When learning from Arioch about the death decree issued by the king (2:13-16), Daniel and his friends on the contrary are able to contact their God, the God of Heaven (vs. 18), for information (2:17-18). In a nightly vision the secret is revealed to Daniel (2:19). Grammatically, this sentence is expressed in passive form (p'îl of נַבִּיר, to reveal). God is not explicitly mentioned. We only deduce from the context that the revelation came from God because Daniel as a result expresses his gratitude to the God of Heaven (2:19b) and directly states it in the prayer (2:23). Daniel then by way of Arioch returns to an audience with the king (2:24-25). As in the dialogue with the wise men, the king leads out in the conversation (2:26), but, contrary to the wise men, Daniel completely takes over (2:27 ff.) with a speech in which he presents some basic principles (2:27-30), recounts the content of the dream (2:31-35), and explains its significance (2:36-45). In the aftermath,

1The meaning of Daniel's expression in 2:30 must be that the "secret" or "mystery" (רָז, 2:18, 26-27, 28, 29, 47) is identical with the dream or its content (cf. Dan 4:6). It was revealed by God to Daniel to be explained to the king because Daniel, and not the astrologers, had been endowed with the gift of interpretation (thus referring back to 1:17), i.e., the ability to provide the נבו, the p'sar, of dreams and visions; cf. Fewell (56).
Nebuchadnezzar recognizes the God of Daniel and his friends as a God who reveals secrets (2:46-47).

In the preceding, all explicit references to the revelation from or intervention by God have been noted. The problem of Nebuchadnezzar and the solution to that problem is described by the presence of three examples of interpersonal communications and the conspicuous absence of one: (1) a dialogue between the king and his wise men, (2) the lack of contact between the wise men and their gods, (3) the prayers to God by Daniel and his friends and God's revelation to Daniel, and (4) the conversation between Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel in which Daniel informs the king on the basis of what he has been shown by God in vision.

Prayers, References to Prayer, and Allusions to Prayer

The following identification of situations of prayer in the chapter is comprehensive because the importance of the communication between God and Daniel and friends is to be understood also in the light of the presence or lack of any prayer relationship between God and other characters.1

1. No prayer is presented to the gods of Nebuchadnezzar by his wise men (2:11).

2. In 2:18 a reference is made to a private prayer by the friends of Daniel (and most likely by Daniel also) who were to ask (from וַיִּהְבָּחֵר, repeated in the prayer in vs. 23) "the God of Heaven" for mercy. The words of this prayer are not recorded. There is no quotation formula stating the fact that the four young men actually did pray. In the narrative the prayer is only implied. First, the divine answer indicates that a prayer has been offered.  

1The significance of prayer in relation to kings and wise men is the object of chapter 1. Therefore, further comments are postponed.
Afterwards, it is confirmed by Daniel's response in the last sentence of the prayer (vs. 23).

The genre of this prayer would be a "prayer for help," the plea indicated by the verb מָלַךְ. This verb is more or less equivalent to the Hebrew בּוּרָה and used in conversations in relation to requests also in Dan 2:13, 16, 49.

3. A prayer of thanksgiving occurs in 2:20-23. This prayer is private, and it is recorded. And, as seen from its introduction, it is evidently directed towards God. The introduction is a quotation formula that contains both a lead-in and a text and clearly delineates the beginning of the prayer: lead-in: "Daniel blessed (from בּוּרָה) the God of Heaven (vs. 19)"; text: "Daniel answered and said (בּוּרָה, vs. 20)."

The demarcation of the end of the prayer is unproblematic. It is indicated by the conjunction that follows, בּוּרָה בּוּרָה, introducing and being the first part of a temporal clause.

The nature of this prayer is implied by the verb בּוּרָה ("to bless"), expressing gratitude and thanksgiving.

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1 This broad term is employed by P. Miller (They Cried, 55).

2 The range of meaning of the word is indicated by the dictionaries as "seek for" or "ask" (Ernestus Vogt S. J., Lexicon Linguae Aramaicae Veteris Testamenti Documentis Antiquis Illustratum [Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1971], 29-30); "enquire (Isa 21:12)" (L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament [KB], 1:141), and "seek" (The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew [DCH], 2:236).

3 Vogt, 29.

4 For the literary significance of this usage within the chapter, see the section on semantic and thematic links between the prayer and its context below, p. 94.

5 The terminology is from Toews (319).

6 The phrase (vss. 5, 7, 8, 10, 15, 27, 47) simply indicates direct speech and could in translation be condensed to the single word "said."

7 See the treatment of the term and the concept in the paragraph on vs. 20 in the section on words and themes of the prayer below, pp. 79-80.
4. In 2:46 king Nebuchadnezzar “falls down and worships” Daniel. The two verbs are יָשַׁב, “fall prostrate” or “pay homage,”1 and יָשַׁב, “fall, bring down.” They are found together also in Dan 3:5, 6, 7, 15 and are likely to be understood as a hendiadys, “falling prostrate.” The king is addressing Daniel, not the God whose might and wisdom he has just witnessed. God remains “your God,” that is, the God of Daniel and his friends. The similarity to prayer of the forms of Nebuchadnezzar’s address contains a literary allusion to the issue of prayer.

Situating the Prayers

In the Structure of the Chapter

Analysis of a structure of a narrative can be made from several perspectives.2 The structure3 presented in table 1 pays particular attention to the interpersonal relationships relevant for the study of prayer. The structure is chiastic. In A (vss. 1-2) the problem is stated, the emotional reaction of the king is mentioned, and he calls upon his wise men. In

1The discussion of the verb יָשַׁב centers around the question whether it indicates a physical posture, so, for instance, Vogts (117), or just “do/pay homage,” so S. Kreuzer (“Zur Bedeutung und Etymologie von hīšāhāwāh/yšhw/,” VT 35 [1985]: 39-60).

2Form-critical criteria are the basis for the structure proposed by Collins in Daniel with an Introduction (46-49), identical to his earlier structure in Daniel (152-153); discourse-analysis forms the background for Toews (49-50 and 124-126); dream-reports for McEntire (33-41) for which reason he treats the narrative up until vs. 31 as the frame for the following. Other scholars have suggested structural outlines for the chapter, first of all Goldingay (Daniel, 41-42), Prinsloo (97-100), Venter (1015-1019), Towner (Daniel, 31), and Doukhan (Le soupir, 60).

3The structure comes close to Prinsloo’s (98-99). Toews also (49-50) understands vss. 13-24 as the peak, preceded by the stage, vs. 1, the pre-peak, vss. 2-12, and followed by the post-peak, vss. 25-48, and the closure, vs. 49.

4Collins (Daniel, 152) separates the first two verses, as do Goldingay (Daniel, 41), Toews (49), Prinsloo (98-99), and Venter (1015).
### TABLE 1
**INTERPERSONAL STRUCTURE OF DANIEL 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Verses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The problem stated: the dream</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the emotional reaction of Nebuchadnezzar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>calling upon the wise men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>King and wise men</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>what is the content</em> of the dream and its interpretation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>King and wise men (continued)</td>
<td>5-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>who</em> is able to <em>reveal</em> the secret?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>closing with the emotions of the king: the death decree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Death decree against the wise men</td>
<td>13-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>postponed by the <em>intervention</em> of Daniel to Arioch and the king</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td><em>Prayer to God:</em> petition</td>
<td>17-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Revelation of the secret</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E'</td>
<td><em>Prayer to God:</em> thanksgiving</td>
<td>20-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D'</td>
<td><em>Intervention</em> by Daniel to Arioch and the king removes the death threat</td>
<td>24-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C'</td>
<td>King and Daniel</td>
<td>26-30</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>God</em> is able to <em>reveal</em> the secret</td>
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<td></td>
<td>closing with the emotions of the king</td>
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<tr>
<td>B'</td>
<td>King and Daniel (continued)</td>
<td>31-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disclosing the <em>content</em> of the dream and its interpretation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A'</td>
<td>Reaction of Nebuchadnezzar to the dream, honoring Daniel and his friends</td>
<td>46-49</td>
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</table>
A’ (vss. 46-49) his reaction to the interpretation is related, and he honors Daniel and his friends. In the king's dialogue with the sages, two central questions are raised. In B (vss. 3-4) Nebuchadnezzar addresses his (un)wise men, and they at first ask for the content of the dream, the “what” (vs. 4). But then the king surprisingly demands that they tell him (vs. 5) not only the interpretation of the dream, but the very dream itself. The issue is not simply an interpretation of a mysterious dream, but a matter of divine revelation (vs. 11), a question about “who” is able to reveal the secret. This part of the dialogue comprises section C (vss. 5-12). Likewise, Daniel in his conversation with the king separates the important question about the ability to reveal (C’, vss. 26-30) from the actual content of the

1Toews (50) sees vs. 49 as the closure. Prinsloo (99) takes vss. 46-47 along with the preceding section—the king and Daniel—and views vss. 48-49 as the result.

2The expression "unwise" is from Prinsloo (99).

3Most scholars regard vs. 12 as the conclusion of the previous dialogue. So Collins (Daniel, 153), Goldingay (Daniel, 41, “a narrative closure”), Toews (49-50), Prinsloo (98-99), and Towner (Daniel, 31). Some end the section with vs. 11: Marti (8-11) and Benzen (25). Others extend it to include vs. 13: Doukhan (Le soupir, 60), Venter (1015), Lebram (Das Buch, 48-49), and Plöger (Das Buch Daniel, 48).

4It is possible with Collins (Daniel, 153) to make the division in the middle of vs. 28, understanding נִקָּחָה, “your dream,” as an introductory formula: “The following is your dream.” But it can also be read as “such was your dream,” referring to the fact that the dream was concerned with the future, as mentioned in the preceding sentence. In the context Daniel is still telling about God as the one who is able to reveal secrets (vss. 29-30), and the actual description of the dream-content begins with vs. 31. Vss. 28 and 29 are often understood to be unnecessarily repetitive. Kratz believes vs. 28 to be secondary (55-57), primarily because of its eschatological phrase, לַחֶדְתָּא טַמְיַא. Montgomery regards the duplication as due to an original gloss (162). Hartmann and Di Lella understand vss. 29-30 as an addition along with vss. 13-23 (140). Note, however, how the speech of Daniel in vss. 27-30 is composed as a well-structured, even chiasm that speaks in favor of its unity:

   A) the secret asked by the king cannot be told by wise men (27),
   B) the secret is revealed by God (28a),
   C) He has informed the king about the future, the end of days (28b),
   D) such was the dream and visions of the king (28c),
   D’) the thoughts of the king on the bed (29a),
   C’) it concerns the future (29b),

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dream and its subsequent interpretation (B', vss. 31-45), reversing the sequence. Sections D and D' both deal with the death decree; in D (vss. 13-16) it is postponed by the intervention of Daniel, in D' (vss. 24-25) it is removed.

In this structure, the importance of the middle section (E-F-E') is further emphasized. It is the only one in which we find a vertical communication, a two-way traffic between heaven and earth. Such dialogue is the frustrated wish of the wise courtiers (vs. 11), and it is later proclaimed to be the basis for the interpretation given by Daniel to the king (vss. 27-30). But it is present only in vss. 17-23. Surrounded on each side by addresses from humans to God, the central statement in the chapter is found in the core of the chiasm in vs. 19: "The secret was revealed to Daniel . . .".

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B') the revealer of secrets (29c) has informed the king about coming events,
A') the secret given to Daniel as a wise man is not due to himself, but given for the sake of the king (30).

In the middle of this chiasm (vs. 28c, D, and vs. 29a, D'), the king and his thoughts in his bed are mentioned, A and A' are linked by references to wise men (וְיָשָׁר, יִשְׁמָר) and wisdom (וְשָׁם חֲכָמִים), B and B' by the "revealer of secrets" (וְשָׁם חֲכָמִים), C and C' by the expression "what is going to happen" (וְהָיָה כֹּלָּה) followed by a form of the root הָעָשָׂה.

1This section could be subdivided into dream-account (vss. 31-36a) and interpretation (vss. 36b-45), the latter adding more details to the initial description of the dream, a pattern followed also in the later visions of the book. This fact is taken by Rowley (263-264) as an argument for the unity of the book. He refers to 7:7, 19, 21 and 4:30. These are examples found within the unit of one single chapter in which the explanation expands the dream/vision. On a larger scale, a similar pattern can be seen in the additions from chapter to chapter of details in the sequential description of the empires.

2Vs. 24 is in general regarded as "a transition verse" (Collins, Daniel, 153). Vss. 24-25 are to be understood as a unit with the movement of Daniel to Arioch and to the king (as vss. 13-16). Fewell (55) notes how Arioch "in the earlier scene informs Daniel of the problem," while Daniel "in the latter scene informs Arioch that he has the solution." Toews (50) takes it as the closure of the preceding section, yet himself treats the conjunction כִּיָּמֶה as a major discourse marker (53).

3"The act of prayer, the answer to prayer, and the presence of the divine helper are the motifs that turn the focus of the story from human wisdom to divine revelation" (Fewell, 53). See also Niditch and Doran (190).
In the Plot of the Narrative

Narrative literature operates on three levels: the events as they transpire, the way they are told, and the effect they have on the reader when told. These three levels will be integrated in the discussion of the plot of chap. 2 in relation to the function of the prayers.

In the preceding section a structure of the narrative has been presented. Doing so, it was viewed from the end. In this section another way of reading will be pursued in which the flow of the events is followed as they are presented in the plot. The tension of the plot is developed from three problems: the content of the dream and its interpretation, the revelation of the secret, and the threat to the lives of the wise men. At first it seems that the content of the dream and its interpretation is the most important question of the narrative. The wise men evidently share this impression. But as their dialogue with the king continues, the reader understands more clearly that another problem lies behind the

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2For this model of three levels of narrative literature, see G. Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).

3"Plot structure simply refers to the pattern of events that take place in the story-world" (Fewell, 19). For a brief description of plot in general, see further Fewell (19-21). Plot refers to the tensions created by the events described, the questions raised, and the solution and answers given in the course of the narrative.

4Vs. 2 tells us that the sages are brought in to "tell (from תָּבָא) the king his dreams." According to Fewell (50), "this seemingly innocent statement appears to be ambiguous. Led by expectation (cf. Gen 41), the reader easily interprets this phrase to mean something like 'in order to help the king understand his dream(s).’ But in reality, the statement is not innocent, nor is it ambiguous. It is quite literal and it functions to foreshadow the coming complication. The telling of the dream itself, and not simply the interpreting of the dream, is a critical part of the king’s agenda." Yet, it should on the other hand be noted that the verb in similar settings also takes the meaning "explain, solve," so Gen 41:24 and Judg 14:12.
disturbance of the emotions of Nebuchadnezzar: the question of the presence of the divine among humans. The ability to reveal the content of a secret dream known only to the king would be the proof of such presence and guarantee the truthfulness of the interpretation. To these two issues, the king himself by his death decree adds another element to the plot.

In the traditional understanding of the genre of this narrative as a court contest between the unwise courtiers of Nebuchadnezzar and the unknown Jewish sage Daniel, the first of these three, the content of the dream, is regarded as the essential issue in the original plot.1 The present story is viewed as an expansion of an earlier version which is supposed to have followed a clear linear development.2

In this "tale of a court contest," the prayer has no obvious function and is therefore most often deleted as a supposed later redactional addition.3 Such reconstructed original structure is understood to remove the tensions embedded in the final edition of the story.4 But it contains internal problems of its own which will be discussed briefly as they are

1It is not the purpose of this study to evaluate the editorial process of the book, and this issue is discussed only because of its close connection with the understanding of the function of the prayers.

2(A) the problem presented (vss. 1-12), (B) the presentation of the hero (vss. 24-28 or 30), (C) the hero gives the solution (vss. 31-45), (D) the hero is honored (vss. 46-49).

3Niditch and Doran, comparing with the types of Finnish folktales, in viewing the diachronical development, reach the following conclusion: "The form of vss. 20-23 which contain elements foreign to type 922, is that of a hymn. This hymn disturbs the folktale form of Dan 2 so that we now have a mixture of genres. It is a later addition to the narrative" (Niditch and Doran, 191). In my opinion this statement seems to confuse form and genre. It also, without necessary justification, imposes a completely foreign literary paradigm upon the biblical text.

4So, for instance, Davies ("Daniel Chapter Two," 393-394), Hartmann and Di Lella (144), Wills (82), and Meadowcroft (162-167).
First, as already observed, according to the dialogue of vss. 3-11, regarded as part of
the supposed original story, the question of revelation is seen as the most important issue. It is therefore natural not only that Daniel in his opening statement to the king (vss. 27-30) refers to the revelation of God, but also that the very event of divine revelation is described (as in vss. 17-23, especially vs. 19). Next, the way wisdom is understood in the narrative points to humility (vss. 27 and 30) as the condition for genuine wisdom. It does not arise from any inborn human capacity. Even in the context of a contest with the sages of Babylon, it would therefore be natural that Daniel as the true wise man of the story is depicted in situations that reveal the very foundation of his wisdom, namely his humble, receiving relationship with God. This is exactly what is achieved by the mentioning of his prayers in vss. 17-23.

Thus, even in the supposed original form of the narrative, the immediate problem of the content of the dream and its interpretation is quickly superseded by the theological question of revelation. The divine-human communication of vss. 17-23 is therefore closely related to the development of the plot. For the plot is less concerned with a court contest between two types of wise men than with a clash of two opposing views of life, two different concepts of God.

1 Contra Meadowcroft (164-165), even without vss. 13-23 the narrative is not “pure court contest.”

2 Note the comment by Niditch and Doran (191): “As Daniel 2 now stands, the role of the hero, the wise man, is almost superseded by a more important protagonist, God.” No writer should be regarded as limited by the generalizations established by our literary paradigms. Within a given framework, or a structural pattern, i.e., a genre, any author whether using oral or written mode of expression will be able to employ a personal
Now, this philosophical issue, the king’s quest for divine revelation, creates a new tension as Nebuchadnezzar issues a decree to kill all the sages. This third element of the plot may be better understood by using the concept of the reader.¹

As in any hero-story, the reader naturally identifies with the heroes, in this case Daniel and his friends as loyal and faithful believers. A dream so important that the feelings of a mighty ruler are upset awakens curiosity for its content. The demand for divine revelation makes the tension religiously significant.² But as the plot develops, the reader is yet reasonably unattached, watching the scene from afar. Because of the natural identification between reader and Daniel/the three friends, however, this situation is dramatically changed with vss. 13-14 when the lives of the heroes are endangered.³

Up until now the reader, like the wise men, may feel the demands of the king unreasonable, but will be distanced from the sages because of their concept of the gods (vs. 11). But at this point in the narrative the reader shares a unique knowledge with the four Hebrews: nobody, except possibly Nebuchadnezzar, knows the content of the dream, but the

creativity to furnish new combinations of forms relevant for the message to be conveyed and consistent with the basic philosophical and religious premises with which the story is told. In Dan 2 these premises penetrate the whole narrative.

¹Regarding the general literary theories on the concept of the reader, see Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), and Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974). The concern of this study is not with the “reader” as a historical reconstruct, but with the “implied reader” who may be found in conjunction with a general literary paradigm by a study of what is implied in the text itself.

²The reader is probably supposed to be able to provide the answer to this question about “who” is able to reveal. On the implied reader in Dan 2, see also Fewell (51-52).

³The issue of the fate of the wise men in general creates little worry. And actually the chapter never again comments upon the fact that their fates were changed and their lives saved because of the revelation by God through Daniel.
reader, Daniel, and his friends are the only characters/persons aware that there is a God in heaven who is able and may be willing to share the mystery sought for. They have got the answer to the question "who?" Other characters, like Nebuchadnezzar, are still to find out. The reader therefore identifies with the four young men in their petition to the God of Heaven in vs. 17. And as the secret is revealed to Daniel, the reader understands and appreciates the spontaneous outburst of thanksgiving. From this very point, however, another tension is growing. The reader does not know the content of the dream, but is aware that Daniel now knows.¹ When will he tell? What will he tell? And what will happen to him, when he does?²

As the narrative subsequently unfolds,³ Daniel discloses the received revelation, both the content of the dream and its significance. Nebuchadnezzar, too, acknowledges that there is a God in Heaven who reveals secrets (vs. 47). And when it comes to the death threat, it disappears. Not only are the lives of the four young men spared, they are even promoted (vss. 48-49). The three issues creating tension in the beginning of the narrative have thus been dealt with, and the plot is solved.

So far the focus has been on the plot in the sequence of events within the narrative. The progression of events has also been reviewed from the aspect of the reader. The third

¹The reader from this point onward identifies more easily with the three friends than with Daniel himself.

²Simply possessing the knowledge does not make Daniel and his friends secure. As Fewell remarks (53): "Some degree of suspension is retained through what we have seen of Nebuchadnezzar's volatile character. The dream, after all, was a troubling dream. The revelation of its meaning has the potential for disaster."

³Venter has in his narrative analysis observed a change in the focalization following the prayer in vss. 20-23 (1016): "This represents a shift from the divine revelation desired, towards the content and meaning of that revelation in terms of the God who gave it."
level of the narrative deals with the way it is told. This aspect adds several significant points to the function of the prayer.

Above, a change has been observed in the role of the reader in sections D and E (vss. 13-18) when the death threat hits Daniel and his friends in vs. 13. The identification between the reader and Daniel/friends reaches a climax in these sections where the reader and the young Hebrews share in knowledge and understanding. This comes to an end when the secret is revealed to Daniel (vs. 19) because he now possesses more knowledge than the reader. He knows the content of the dream. The reader does not. These facts delineate vss. 13-18 (sections D and E) as unique in the relation between reader and Daniel.

The way this part of the narrative is told helps to underline this climax in the process of identification between readers and heroes. In a narrative filled with dialogue, the section (vss. 13-19) is unusual for its lack of direct speech. The effect is an emphasis on speed, illustrated by the fact that Daniel’s entrance to the king is described in shortened form, that Porteous says (41) that "for reasons of literary art, the reader is still kept in the dark"; cf. Goldingay (Daniel, 57).

The only example is Daniel’s address to Arioch in vs. 15. Meadowcroft finds this feature to be decisive when it comes to deciding on the section’s secondary nature. It disturbs “the balance between narrative and dialogue in the structure of the chapter” (164). This argument seems somewhat strange as it supposes that a story predominantly told through dialogues should only contain dialogue. But certainly no narrative in past or present would have to be exclusively either/or.

On the general importance of narrative tempo, see briefly Fewell (29-31).

The reader being supposed to fill in this custom of court etiquette. Later in vs. 25 the mediation by Arioch is mentioned. The difference is perfectly explainable by the function of the character of Arioch as mediator, so Fewell (52-53). A contrast as seen by Hartmann and Di Lella (139), between a story in which Daniel needs time to seek God for the answer (vss. 16-19) and another version in which he is able to tell immediately (vss. 24-28), is of course only present if two separate accounts are presupposed. In the final text such contrast is simply not there. Note also the perceptive comment by E. M. Good, “Apocalyptic as Comedy,” in Tragedy and Comedy in the Bible, ed. J. C. Exum, Semeia 32
the prayer of petition is not worded, not even introduced, and by the concentrated reference
to the revelation by God in vs. 19. It may be further supported by the expression הָרְאָה (vs. 15), by some taken to refer to the harshness of the decree only, but most likely implying the sense of hastiness. That this is indeed the issue is also seen from the result of Daniel’s audience with the king from whom he manages to be given time (פָּנַי).

Closely connected and equally significant is the subsequent reducing of speed. The prayer in vss. 20-23 slows down the tempo. That the author may be deliberately playing on this function seems supported by the further drawing out of the disclosing of the content of the dream and its interpretation.

(Missoula: Scholars Press, 1984): 50-51, who finds that commentators have been unnecessarily bothered by Daniel’s first appointment with Nebuchadnezzar: it is “essential in the impossible task, because it commits Daniel beforehand to solving the riddle.”

1So the Greek translations, Charles (34), Goldingay (Daniel, 31), S. Miller (85), and Jeffery and Kennedy (381).

2So Collins (Daniel, 158), Baldwin (89), Montgomery (156, with detailed argumentation), and also John Calvin (Daniel I: Chapters 1-6, Calvin’s Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 20, trans. T. H. L. Parker [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 63).

3Evidently it is a literary function of any prayer in a narrative context that it delays the action. The longer the prayer, the longer the delay. What is important in our context is that this delay not only is congruent with, but accentuates the plot, its content, and the way the narrative is told.

4So Goldingay (Daniel, 42). This observation is not limited to more recent commentaries with insights from literary studies in general. So also James Barr: “The insertion of the hymn at this point adds to the dramatic tension as we wait to hear the dream” (“Daniel,” Peake’s Commentary on the Bible [New York: Thomas Nelson, 1962], 1:594). Johannes Pedersen spoke (1898) in 1956 about “ascending excitement.” In 1952 Bentzen stated (25) that “the story reaches a climax in suspense in . . . the third scene (vss. 15-23), in the hymn of thanksgiving that is placed there to postpone and heighten the suspense.”

5Cf. Arioch’s futile and unnecessary attempt to play a role (vss. 24-25), and Daniel’s long introduction that delays the actual explanation waited for (vss. 26-30), this “drawing out of the explanation . . . is not necessarily out of place, but functions dramatically.”
Summary

Thus far, the identification and the place of prayer in the narrative of chap. 2 have been discussed. It has been observed that the divine-human communication of vss. 17-23 forms the central part of the structure of the chapter. It has also been found that the prayers and the intervention from God are closely linked to the basic tension of the plot, the question about divine revelation. They are regarded by the narrator as real events and belong to "the story proper." Narrative speed builds up the suspense in the section preceding the prayers; subsequently the slowing down of pace draws it out. The formal analysis has shown the uniqueness of the thanksgiving of Daniel as it is the only stated prayer in the chapter and contains the first direct reference to the activities of God. The intentional change in narrative tempo provides a literary reason for the wording of the thanksgiving, not of the preceding petition. The next step will be to perform an exegesis of Daniel's prayer in order to describe Fewell, 174, n. 42.

1 The question of structure has been approached from the perspective of interpersonal relationships. A perfect coherence between the structure thus established and the very plot of the narrative has been observed, indicating that this structure may have been originally intended.

2 Contra R. A. Anderson (14). If it is possible for interhuman dialogues to form part of a narrative, divine-human communication may do it as well.

3 Regarding the arguments raised against the coherence between vss. 13-23 and the context, I have so far presented a literary argument for the difference in court etiquette for Daniel's two visits to the king. The conceited introduction by Arioch (vs. 25) is obviously ironic in a context where the whole court of Babylon is seen to be completely powerless; cf. Baldwin's remark (91) that "Arioch plays down Daniel's credentials and claims credit for himself." Another issue has not yet been addressed, namely the question why Daniel was not called in along with the sages from the beginning, a question related to the chronological relationship between the education of the four young men in chap. 1 and the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. This issue is treated in the study of the prayer of chap. 2 in the context of chap. 1; see p. 110, n. 2, below.
its theology, to trace the semantic and thematic links between prayer and narrative context, and to compare its depiction of characters with their role in the chapter as a whole.

The Theological Content of the Prayer in Dan 2:20-23

Translation

The primary witnesses to the original Aramaic text of the prayer in Dan 2:20-23 are the Masoretic manuscripts, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Old Greek versions, insofar as the Vorlage "may be reconstructed." It is also possible that the Syriac Peshitta is a translation of a Semitic original, made more or less independently of the Greek versions. Vulgate, too, is

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2 Jeansonne, 14. The Greek versions contain their own built-in problems, such as the scarcity of manuscript evidence for the Old Greek translation, the question of a proto-Theodotion translation, and "the pluriformity of texts from Qumran," Wenthe (19). See further Meadowcroft (29-30), McClay (1-16), and Steussy (25-37). Generally the commentaries have little to say on the manuscripts and the textual problems. Goldingay contains a valuable, but very short evaluation of the manuscripts in Daniel (xxvi-xxvii). The major commentary with regard to textual issues has been Montgomery (24-57). The most recent critical commentary by Collins has now improved this situation by an updated review (Daniel, 2-12).

3 This conclusion is reached by A. G. Kallarakkal who states that "the . . . translation is not at all influenced by the Greek versions" ("The Peshitta Version of Daniel: A Comparison with the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint and Theodotion" [Ph.D. dissertation, Hamburg, 1973], 224). More recently R. A. Taylor reached a similar conclusion about the Vorlage of the Peshitta which is "very close to the consonantal text of MT" (The Peshitta of Daniel. Monographs of the Peshitta Institute Leiden [Leiden/New York/Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1994], 309). This is contrary to M. J. Wyngarden, who found the Syriac version to be "colored by the translation of Theodotion . . . and subsequent to that translation" (The Syriac Version of the Book of Daniel [Leipzig: W. Drugulin, 1923], 39).

translated directly from the Semitic by Jerome who is, however, quite dependent upon his predecessors.¹

The Masoretic text of the present study is that published in Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia (BHS) the basis of which is the ben Asher manuscript B 19A.² Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, the text of Dan 2:20-23 is present in five incomplete lines of fragment 3 of 4QDan³, published by Eugene Ulrich.³

In the translation that follows, textual and grammatical comments are placed in the footnotes.

The text

20 "May the name of God⁴ be blessed from age to age;

¹According to the evaluation by Rast (80), Jerome is also at times careless and very often paraphrasing. A description of Jerome's development in relation to LXX is found in Jay Braverman, Jerome's Commentary on Daniel, CBQMS 7 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1978), 25-34.

²K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, eds., Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983), xi. The text for the Book of Daniel was prepared by Walter Baumgartner.


⁴The hexaplaric 88 and the Syro-Hexapla (Syh), the basis for the Old Greek text, that is, the o'-text of Ziegler, add the adjective μεγαλος, "great," to "God." So does 4QDan⁴ with הגד (Ulrich, 25). Such addition comes easily and could well be inspired by Daniel's remarks in 2:45. Collins includes the adjective in his translation (Daniel, 150).
For wisdom and power are his.

21 For it is He who changes times and seasons, removes kings and installs kings.

He gives wisdom to the wise men, and understanding to those having insight.

22 It is He who reveals what is deep and hidden:

he knows what is in the darkness, for with him the light resides.

1Understanding רד" as introducing a motive clause as in vs. 23. So does Di Lella ("Strophic Structure," 92) and most commentators. The difference between a motive and a causal clause, so van Wyk (186), is here a matter of degree only. Montgomery (160) and the Revised Standard Version (RSV) take it as a relative pronoun, while the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) translates it as a motive clause.

2Arguing from the parallel in vs. 23, Venter (1012) reads "wisdom and power" as a hendiadys, "a fixed pair, . . . the equivalent of knowledge in all of the poem." See the textual remark to vs. 23 below, p. 66, n. 1, and, later, the comments on vs. 20, pp. 81-84.

3"power" or "might," is translated by o'. In the tradition of Theodotion (θ), however, codex Marchalianus (Q) is the only one correctly saying δύναμις, "power." Instead the manuscripts read σοϕεσίς, "intelligence," in a few of them (410 and Lat', Old Latin) with a third element, Greek ἀρχής or Latin "virtus," glossed in "to conform with later θ-text" (Montgomery, 159). Also the Old Latin Weingarten-fragment contains these three elements. For this see E. Ranke, Fragmenta versionis sacrarum scripturarum latina antehieronymianae (Vienna: G. Braumüller, 1868). Ranke provides a copy of the manuscript (48) and places (110) the text of LXX, the Weingarten-fragment, and the translation by Jerome in three parallel columns. The phrase is missing in the beginning of line 2 of 4QDan.

4With van Wyk (186), the waw is understood as explicative, not as a simple conjunction.

5The translation underlines the emphatic pronoun, for, here and in vs. 22a.

6As Hartmann and Di Lella (140) understanding darkness and light as a contrasting pair, underlined in the translation above by the conjunction "for."

7The Greek o' connects darkness and light even further, translating the sentence with "he knows what is in the darkness and in the light," separating "light" from the last two words of the verse. The participle κατά, "residing," according to Charles (38) and Marti (13) passive in form, but not in meaning, is instead understood as a noun, καταλυσις, meaning "solution." Thus o' reads the last sentence as a nominal clause, "with him is solution." The sense of "solve" is a primary meaning of παθεοτείνω, see Dan 5:12 and 16, where the infinitive means "to solve riddles." But the idea of "habitating, residing" is also attested,
23 You, God of my fathers, I praise and honor;
for you have given me wisdom and power.
You have now told me what we have requested of you,
that is, you have told us the king's problem.

Contrary to van Wyk (185), I find no reason for emending to the qere-reading.
Montgomery (161) points to the spelling of the abstract נחנים in Dan 5:11, 14, and the ketib
seems supported also by 4QDan on Dan 2:23.

Contrary to the Jerusalem Bible (JB) that reads "mighty wisdom," taking "power"
and "wisdom" as a hendiadys, as does Venter (1012-1013). Hartmann and Di Lella (140)
and van Wyk (187) argue for keeping the two expressions separated. So also Goldingay
(Daniel, 34) who besides the function in the context points to the chiasm between the two
occurrences in vss. 20 and 23. See later in the section on words and themes.

Though 4QDan is not complete, an interesting variant may be present in strophe 5,
replacing "wisdom and power." After the letters waw, nun, he and yod, "the ink traces
preserved after the yod could well be from res-taw, thus perhaps נתחים ותב" Ulrich (26).
Followed by rc rr (the last taw not being present in the manuscript), the text would then read
"and you have given me the light"; cf. vs. 22.

Once again נתחים, "power, might," is read as "intelligence" or "understanding" in
some of the Greek manuscripts (compare vs. 20). But this time ό with φρονεῖσθαι presents
the variant reading. These variants are inconsistent, and the change must be regarded as a
corruption (Montgomery, 159).

understood explicative, so Di Lella ("Strophic Structure," 92), Hartmann and Di
Lella (135), NIV, and Stanislav Segert (Altarmädische Grammatik [Leipzig: VEB Verlag
Enzyklopädie, 1975], 483). Vulgate and most commentators read it as a causal conjunction,
"for."

is "independently" taking "the suffix for the singular" (Montgomery, 161). To
Meadowcroft (167), this fact indicates textual confusion. But as Venter has pointed out
(1013-1014), the Masoretic text contains a well-ordered interplay in each of the lines of vs.
23 between "you" and "I"/"we," framing the verse.

Problem" is from המלך, "word, saying," "announcement, command" or "case,
matter, issue" (Vogt, 100-101). Some of the Greek manuscripts mistakenly read ῥῆμα,
"vision" for ρήμα, "word, saying," according to Montgomery (161) an "ancient error." The
correct reading is found in Hippolytus and a number of other manuscripts, 538, C, 26, and
230.
Literary Form

The words and phrases of Dan 2:20-23 are cast in a specific literary form. In this section the poetic features of the prayer are investigated. Its form and structure as a prayer are analyzed, and the genre of the text as a psalm is discussed.

Poetical analysis

In general the commentaries have little or nothing to say about the poetic features or structure of the prayer. Schlögl presents a brief analysis of the song and writes out fifteen cola, of which 22a is the center: "He reveals the deep and hidden." Charles, Montgomery, and Marti internally agree that the four strophes (identical with the present division into verses) of the poem are tristich, tetrastich, tristich, and tetrastich, but present no details.

In his analysis Di Lella counts sixteen cola, divided into two stanzas that comprise vss. 20-21 and 22-23 respectively, more or less equal in length. He notices alliterations and minor chiasms among the poetic devices, but pays less attention to meter. van Wyk follows


2 Schlögl, 389-390. He finds the poem to show a four-beat rhythm although in his stress-count he has four beats in only seven of the cola, but three beats in eight of them.

3 Charles, 36, and Montgomery, 157. Marti is not sure whether vs. 23 is to be included (12). They count not four like Schlögl, but three beats in the tristichs.

4 Reaching one additional colon because he divides vs. 21b “removes kings and installs kings” into two (Di Lella, “Strophic Structure," 91).

5 Just stating that “each colon has either three or two accents” (ibid.).
the edition by Baumgartner in BHS closely. Of his nine strophes, the fifth, 22a, is "a single-footed verse of four stresses." It is the center in a chiastic structure with strophes 4 and 6 as its frame. Reading the strophes or lines together in this way in groups of three (lines 1-3, 4-6, and 7-9) may present a nice picture, but it is problematic when looking at the content of the poem. Vs. 20 is obviously to be regarded as a unit, and it is illogical to read the first line of vs. 21 together with it. Vs. 21b likewise naturally belongs to 21a and not to 22a. Each of the two lines of vs. 21 describes in more detail one of the two basic themes of the motive clause of vs. 20: power and wisdom, respectively.

Prinsloo counts fifteen cola that are identical with Schlägl's. He divides them into six lines and two stanzas, A and B, the division being consistent with both form and content of

1Only moving 22b (ז"ס) away from 22a and combining it with 22c (van Wyk, 185).
2Ibid.
3van Wyk is retaining the Masoretic maqgephs except in vs. 23e and reaches the following structure (ibid., 183):

| vs. 20 | line 1: 3 + 3 | line 2: 3 + 2 |
| vs. 21 | line 3: 4 + 4 | line 4: 3 + 3 |
| vs. 22 | line 5: 4 | line 6: 3 + 3 |
| vs. 23 | line 7: 3 + 3 | line 8: 3 + 2 | line 9: 4 + 4 |

4Di Lella has correctly pointed to leh'we in the beginning of vs. 20 and le'hi in its close as forming an inclusio with similar consonants and sounds ("Strophic Structure," 92). Against this, Venter (1011) divides the verse into two strophes, reading the sentence introduced by ר as an independent strophe. He even discusses the possibility that vs. 21 should have been placed between address and motivation in vs. 20 (1013), an idea that runs completely contrary to the basic structure of a prayer of thanksgiving; see further in the section on the "prayer-structure" below, pp. 71-73.

5Also Venter (1011) divides the poem into these two stanzas. He counts 22 stiches, 11 lines and 7 strophes, but does not make it clear how he arrives at 11 lines.
the poem.\textsuperscript{1} The analysis below (table 2) basically follows Prinsloo. There are some
differences between the scholars in counting meters\textsuperscript{2} and dividing the stichs.\textsuperscript{1} The poem
contains several poetic devices.\textsuperscript{4}

These differences with regard to the poetic structure make, however, no large impact
on the theological meaning of the hymn.\textsuperscript{5} A consensus view notes the parallel between the
two motive clauses of vss. 20 and 23, referring to קסנ, wisdom, and כוח, power. Schlögl and van Wyk both point to vs. 22a as the core, but though Di Lella and
Prinsloo disagree on the structure, they also underscore the centrality of this line. Di Lella
makes it the first strophe of his second stanza and Prinsloo sees vs. 22 as a tristich\textsuperscript{6} bound

\textsuperscript{1}Beginning the second stanza with vs. 23, substantiated by both prayer-structure and
genre, see the following. For Di Lella (91), stanza B begins with vs. 22.

\textsuperscript{2}The basic difference between Prinsloo and Schlögl with regard to meter is that
Prinsloo’s counting corresponds to the number of words in each colon, consistent with the
words as the basic units of thought. Schlögl (389) counts accents: he adds one on the
preposition י in vs. 20b, but has none on the initial conjunction י in neither vs. 20c nor 23c.

\textsuperscript{3}In vs. 20a content as well as the Masoretic \textit{zageph parvum} favors reading יבר with
the first colon. So Prinsloo (95), contra van Wyk (183) and Venter (101)—though it could be read as an enjambment. In vs. 23b, Di Lella (“Strophic Structure,” 92) connects אבר with the preceding line. But it is most natural to read it together with the next participle; cf.
the Masoretic \textit{mahpāḵ}.

\textsuperscript{4}Di Lella (“Strophic Structure,” 92) notes, for instance, a nun-alliteration in vs. 21. Also a chiasm is found: the two last cola of vs. 22 form a clear chiasm (ibid., and Prinsloo, 96).

\textsuperscript{5}Venter is an exception. He regards vs. 21 (strophe 3 in his count) with its emphasis
on royal power as somewhat outside the rest of the hymn and possibly an editorial addition (1011, 1013). In line with his treatment of “wisdom and power” in vss. 20 and 23 as a hendiadys he finds that the theme of power and history in vs. 21 is “not repeated or even hinted at in the rest of the poem” (1012).

\textsuperscript{6}Prinsloo, 96, n. 10.
# TABLE 2

**POETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PRAYER**
**IN DANIEL 2:20-23**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>Strophe</th>
<th>Meter</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Verse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>פְּרִינְסְלִיּו/</td>
<td>מְטֹרְאָלָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>מִּצַּלְמָא</td>
<td>נָּלְמָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5/4</td>
<td>יִרְאֵתָלָא</td>
<td>נָּלְמָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>וֹהָיָה</td>
<td>מֶחָנְאָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>מְתַעֲרָה</td>
<td>מְחַקְּכָּנָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>הַּיָּבְסָא לֵאָבִיטֶנִי</td>
<td>מְנַמְּהָא לְדַרְתְּוָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>מְנַמְּהָא לְדַרְתְּוָא</td>
<td>בִּינָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>מַּדִּאָלָא</td>
<td>מְמֻכָּקָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>וּדְוָא</td>
<td>בָּהיָשָרָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>וּדְוָא</td>
<td>בָּהיָשָרָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>לְכֶלֶל אֲבְוָהָר</td>
<td>מְדוֹרָא מַמְשַׁבָּא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>מְדוֹרָא מַמְשַׁבָּא</td>
<td>אֶנָּה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5/4</td>
<td>יִרְאֵתָלָא</td>
<td>וּבוֹרְאָלָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>וּסְנָה</td>
<td>וְדֶהָנְתָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>יִרְאֵתָלָא</td>
<td>מְכָּפָרָא</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
together in an A/B/B₁ pattern in which the first leg forms an introduction to the following two parallel legs. Thus the sentence marks a climax in the description of God, concluding the first stanza.

**Prayer structure**

Because of the nature of prayer, the study of the forms of the prayer also needs to emphasize the aspect of communication (see table 3). The basis for this is not only other psalms, but also biblical prose prayers through which part of a divine-human dialogue is expressed. Elements of communication are many and varied, but some are basic and found more or less in all prayers: address or invocation, petition or thanksgiving, description of/background for the situation, and motivation/reason for petition or thanksgiving.

Combined with the poetic analysis, this structure enhances our understanding of the prayer. The pericope contains several movements. In the first stanza we are informed about the power and wisdom that God *possesses* (vs. 20c). Next we are told how God *gives* his power to kings (vs. 21ab) and his wisdom to wise men (vs. 21cd). As a climax God is described as the one who *reveals* the secrets (vs. 22).

Another movement leads from the general to the specific. The general attributes are described in vss. 21-22 before the poem turns to Daniel's personal situation. The same movement is found in the thanksgiving: implied in the general terms of the opening sentence, a more personal declaration of thanks is expected to come, and we meet it in vs. 23a. Even within the general description of God in vss. 21-22, this movement is seen: from the eternal

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1 See Aejmelaeus (88-91), Greenberg (8-9), and P. Miller (*They Cried*, 337-357).

2 Exemplified by the use of participles in stanza A and the perfect tense in stanza B, noted by Venter (1014).
### TABLE 3

**STRUCTURAL OUTLINE OF THE PRAYER IN DANIEL 2:20-23**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>Strophe</th>
<th>Verse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>address</em> (implying thanksgiving) motivation</td>
<td>May the name of God be blessed from age to age; for wisdom and power are his.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>description</em> (general)</td>
<td>For it is He who changes times and seasons removes kings and installs kings.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He gives wisdom to the wise men, and understanding to those having insight.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>further description</em></td>
<td>It is He who reveals what is deep and hidden; He knows what is in the darkness, for with him the light resides.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>address</em> (thanksgiving) motivation</td>
<td>You, God of my fathers, I praise and honor; for you have given me wisdom and power.</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>specific/personal declaration/motivation</em></td>
<td>You have told me what we have requested of you, that is, you have told us the king's problem.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
truths of God's power over kings as well as wise men in vs. 21 we move closer to the topic of direct revelation in vs. 22, paving the way for the specific reason for thanks in vs. 23: God has revealed the secret to Daniel. He has imparted to him "the wisdom and power" that are God's alone to give (vss. 20c and 23c).

Genre

These observations regarding form and structure have implications for the definition of the genre of the prayer as a psalm. While most scholars agree on the actual content of the prayer, there still remains some confusion as to its classification. This is due to several factors: there is still no exact clarity in the definition of the genres of the psalms of the Old Testament, and in the prayer of Daniel we find a mixture of different forms which, taken individually, traditionally are ascribed to one of these genres only.

Among other basic forms, Gunkel distinguished between the hymn (or psalm of praise) and the individual thanksgiving. Besides the larger types of genres, he identified smaller ones as well. Mowinckel built basically on the foundation laid by Gunkel and maintained the separation between hymn and thanksgiving.

\[1\] Gunkel, *Einleitung.*


\[3\] "... although he pursued more rigorously and extensively ... the relationship between the Psalms and Israel's cult" (Craigie, 46).

\[4\] Mowinckel, *The Psalms.*
Claus Westermann has, however, argued that both of these forms actually should be labeled psalms of praise. Instead Westermann distinguishes between declarative (German: *berichtendes*) and descriptive (German: *beschreibendes*) praise. Like the hymns in the definition by Gunkel, the descriptive psalms of praise tell about the general characteristics of God while the declarative psalms of praise, like the thanksgivings, speak about the specific situation in which God has revealed his character.

But in the prayer of Daniel, this distinction between descriptive and declarative praise is related to form more than to content. According to Westermann, the declarative praise in the "individual psalm of praise" in Dan 2:20-23 is introduced by a descriptive praise. Christopher Mitchell is following Westermann in his distinction between descriptive and declarative psalms and places the prayer of Dan 2 among psalms of praise for a historical act of deliverance. Yet from a formal point of view he classifies it as descriptive and

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1Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, trans. Keith R. Krim and Richard N. Soulen (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981). "As the important events in both groups of psalms is the praise of God, I propose that they are both called "psalms of praise" (25). "The thanksgiving where directed towards God is not encompassed by praise, it is a way of praising" (21).

2Ibid., 61, 76, 87.

3The blessing (cf. Dan 2:20) and the thanksgiving by the use of הָרָקָה (cf. Dan 2:23) developed in Judaism and early Christianity into more rigid forms in the *berakah* and the *hodayot*. James M. Robinson provides a thoroughly argued theory of the development in "Die Hodajot-Formel in Gebet und Hymnus des Frühchristentums," in *Apophoreta: Festschrift für Ernst Haenchen*, Beiheft für Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 30 (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1964), 194-235.

4Ibid., 76.

doxological only.¹ As in many of the psalms of the Old Testament, the various forms are found together in one single psalm. Goldingay points to Ps 113 and 66 as psalms in which a "general statement is closely related to a confession of a particular experience."² These psalms use expressions similar to those found in the prayer of Daniel, such as the blessing and the time element (Dan 2:20).

The significance of this sequence of general description followed by a specific declaration is well expressed by Goldingay:

The characteristic movement of a Psalm would be from testifying to God's specific recent act of grace, via an acknowledgment of his characteristic activity as revealer and lord of history, to worship of him for his personal characteristics, which these activities reflect. The reverse movement here gives prominence to the particular experience of God's power and wisdom that Daniel himself has been given.³

Formally, therefore, the prayer is usually classified as an "individual psalm of thanksgiving"⁴ by scholars who follow the genre distinctions proposed by Gunkel. The blending of "hymn"/"praise" and "thanksgiving" is found with several scholars.⁵ Others maintain, with Westermann, the label "doxology" or "hymn of praise."⁶ In light of the

¹Ibid., 151.
²Goldingay, Daniel, 39.
³Ibid., 56-57.
⁴Towner, "Poetic Passages," 319. Gunkel uses the expression "individual prayer of thanksgiving" (Einleitung, 32). Bentzen (25) and Plöger (Das Buch Daniel, 50) say "prayer of thanksgiving," R. A. Anderson (16) "psalm of thanksgiving," Fewell (54) "song of thanksgiving."
⁵Milne (213) and Hartmann and Di Lella (145) both say "hymn of thanksgiving." "The shading of hymnic language into a psalm of thanksgiving is a well-known phenomenon" (Towner, "Poetic Passages, 320).
observations referred to above, and understanding praise in general to have developed from situations of specific thanksgiving, the poem is here labeled an "individual hymn of thanksgiving."

Important for the purpose of this study is, however, that the scholars' evaluation of the theological meaning of the prayer does not seem to be influenced by the various distinctions made by their classification of its genre.

Form-criticism's traditional search for the Sitz im Leben of the psalms is not of much relevance because the primary setting of the prayer of Daniel, as generally agreed upon, is not liturgic. What is lacking in the prayer of Dan 2 in comparison with at least most collective hymns of praise is the "imperative call for praise." It is not possible from the variety of forms found within this psalm to deduce any other contextual setting than the one we already have within the Book of Daniel.

Words and Themes

In this section, the words and the phrases of the prayer are studied verse by verse against the background of the Old Testament in general and on the basis of the structure and form of the prayer itself. This study will point out the major theological themes of the prayer. It will also establish a firmer basis for the description of Daniel, the pray-er, and of God, the addressee, in their internal relationship as well as in their relation to other characters, to history, and to the world.

1"The psalm is not a liturgical piece" (Goldingay, Daniel, 39). "This is an original composition" (Hartmann and Di Lella, 145). So also Ploger (Das Buch Daniel, 50) and Porteous (31).

2Goldingay, Daniel, 39. For such imperative calls, Pss 95:1; 100:1; 148:1-4; 150:1-5, see Westermann (Praise and Lament, 131-132) and Mitchell (141-146). If present, the prayer would have had a liturgical flavor.
**Vs. 20: Address and motivation**

This verse comprises a unit. It is the first strophe of the first stanza of the poem, containing the address of the prayer and its motivation.

"May the name of God be blessed from age to age." This first sentence of the prayer is the address and consists of three parts, the elements of which are all common in the Old Testament, that is, a mentioning of YHWH by "the name of God," a blessing formula, and a time element. Closest affinity of the expression as a whole is probably to Ps 41:14 (= Ps 106:48),¹ Neh 9:5, and Ps 113:2.

**The name.** The majority of texts in the Old Testament which connect the word for "name" (ךָשֶׁ) with the divine being employ the expression "the name of YHWH" (ךָשֶׁ יְהוָה). Phrases like "the name of YHWH, the God of Israel" (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:17, 20, and 2 Chr 33:18) and "the name of YHWH" + personal suffixes like "my/your/his God" (e.g., Exod 20:7, 1 Kgs 5:17, 19; 2 Kgs 5:11; Isa 60:9) are found several times. The instances where "name" (ךָשֶׁ) and the word "God" (ךָשֶׁלָּ) are combined as a reference to YHWH without the actual use of the name YHWH are, however, very rare. Apart from two Aramaic texts (Dan 2:20, and Ezra 5:1: "the name of Israel's God"), the only clear examples are Ps 44:21 (cf. vs. 9), Ps 69:31, and Ps 145:1.² In later Jewish usage it becomes more common.³

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¹Charles (36) finds the expression to be a direct reproduction in Aramaic of Ps 41:14. There are, however, differences: Ps 41 contains no jussive and does not refer to "the name" of God.

²In Lev 18:21; 19:12; 21:6; Ps 20:6 and Prov 30:9, והיו is present in a parallel section of the verse. In Exod 23:13 the phrase is referring to other gods.

³According to Montgomery (159), to avoid pronouncing the divine name.
The expression "the name of God" may be used in reverence as a substitution for the divine name. Avoiding the use of the name in the prayer of Daniel, in a context where the name would be naturally expected, makes the reader/listener more acutely aware of the meaning and significance of that divine name.

The "name" is a reference to the essential being of a person, not necessarily in an ontological sense, but to the character of a person as manifested in his deeds and acts, therefore at times meaning "fame, reputation." The name of God might point to what "can be known through God's self-revelation," "God in his self-revelation." While the name of men may be blotted out, the name of God is to stay "great for ever." In the context of 2 Sam 7:26, this may happen by praise, in his kingdom, or through the service in his temple. To know a person's name is to have intimate relationship with and possible power over that

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1The genitive construction in "the name of God" consists of A + suffix followed by "ת", and B, literally "His name, that of God" in accordance with the original demonstrative sense of "ת" for which see Hans Bauer and Pontus Leander, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen* (Hildesheim: Georg Olm, 1962), § 109a, 360. By W. Randall Garr the construction is characterized as an "inalienable possession," in this case with a representation (name) of the whole, i.e., God (W. Randall Garr, "On the Alteration between Construct and Di-Phrases in Biblical Aramaic," *JSS* 35 [1990]: 214). Note the difference between the construction "the name of God," referring as a whole to YHWH, and "the name of YHWH" in which the two elements are identical. For an evaluation and criticism of Garr's analysis of the Di-Phrases, see Toews (33-36).

2This holds true for both Pss 44:21 and 69:31, where laments are followed by praise of deliverance from the deepest distress.


4Young, 66.

5Montgomery, 157. Baldwin (90) says that "the name of God is disclosed only by God Himself (cf. Ex 6:3; Judg 13:17, 18) and represents what may be known of Him."
person. By using the phrase, Daniel is indicating that he has been in personal contact with God.¹

The most important Old Testamental text related to the name YHWH² is Exod 3:15 in which God reveals himself to Moses in order to fulfill his promises to the fathers.³ It may be difficult to determine to what degree which shades of meaning associated with the name YHWH actually are present in the short prayer by Daniel.⁴ But the mentioning of the fathers as well as the time phrase is yet another link to Exod 3:15.

Like Dan 2:20, Ps 44:9 contains a time element. The praise of the name of God is expressed by the verb יָדַע, jdh (also present in Dan 2:23). In Ps 69:31 the verb is לְלַעַל, hll. The word used in Dan 2:20 is בָּרָךְ, brk, to "bless."

The blessing. From a formal point of view, the jussive followed by "the name of God" and the pael passive participle is analogous to the Hebrew יְהִי שֶׁנ-יְהוֹה מֶבָּרָךְ,⁵ as found in Job 1:21 and Ps 113:2. In the latter a time phrase is also present. In Neh 9:5 the praise is

¹Baldwin, 90.


⁴On pp. 40-43, Mettinger presents a short analysis of "which theological associations the Name may have evoked in ancient Israel" (14). Fundamental is "an assurance of God's active and aiding presence" (42).

⁵Mitchell, 160.
expressed by an imperative. In meaning, the phrase is identical with other blessing formulas using the participle **bārûk**.¹

"The ‘blessing’ was the most appropriate means of expressing gratitude or respect to a man or to God."² The fact that man could bless God (e.g., Gen 24:27; 1 Sam 25:32.39; 1 Kgs 1:48; Pss 18:47; 28:6; 31:32; 41:14) relates the concept of blessing to intimate personal relationships.³ The language used in blessing God is analogous to the language used in giving thanks to human beings.⁴

Job 1:21, Ps 72:19 (containing a time phrase as well), Ps 113:2, and Ps 145:1 are the only texts in the Old Testament apart from Dan 2:20 in which the "name" of God/YHWH is the object of a blessing. The presence of a time element as well as the theme of kingship links the content of Ps 145:1 closely to the prayer of Daniel.⁵

¹Mitchell (149) categorizes four such types of formulas and provides (185) a table with all the occurrences of **brk** in the Old Testament. Balentine (Prayer, 204) does not include Dan 2:20 among the "narrative occurrences of the **bārûk** sentence."


³Scharbert, "מָרַע brk," 284. Mitchell (26-27) is building upon the basic thesis of Scharbert and is moving further in an attempt to "define the relational connotations of blessing" more fully.

⁴This is one of the basic conclusions in the study by Greenberg. For examples related to "blessing" formulas, see pp. 31-32.

In the prayer by Daniel, the blessing is stated with jussive as a wish.\textsuperscript{1} The gratitude is more than words,\textsuperscript{2} and it is related not only to a personal relationship, but to the wish for a universal praise of God. The theme is enlarged in the following verses, but is present here in the time-phrase: "from age to age."

\textit{The time element.} This expression should not be understood as beyond time or timeless, but as "always, at any time" (cf. 2 Sam 7:26).\textsuperscript{3} God is to be praised by men at all times, during different and changing ages.\textsuperscript{4} The meaning of the phrase is expanded in the following verses.

The subordinate clause introduced by \textit{for wisdom and power are his}—"for wisdom and power are his"\textsuperscript{6}—indicating a strong, causal relationship with the preceding. The causal sense of \textit{for} provides the motivation for the preceding address. It is here translated as an independent motive clause\textsuperscript{5}—"for wisdom and power are his"—indicating a strong, causal relationship with the preceding. The causal sense of \textit{for} provides the motivation for the preceding address. It is here translated as an independent motive clause—"for wisdom and power are his"—indicating a strong, causal relationship with the preceding.

\textsuperscript{1}For the "wish," see Scharbert ("\textit{\textit{b}} \textit{brk}," 286) who without referring to Dan 2:20 provides parallels from interhuman speech, such as Ruth 2:19.

\textsuperscript{2}To bless God is more than to praise (or curse) God; it implies that one must demonstrate reverence and loyalty in deeds as well as words" (Jacob Milgrom, "Encroaching on the Sacred: Purity and Polity in Numbers 1-10," \textit{Int} 51 [1997]: 246-247).

\textsuperscript{3}Goldingay (\textit{Daniel}, 34) states about \textit{cbia}, "eternity, age," that "the word does not suggest a transcendent idea of eternity" and suggests "from age to age" as an alternative translation, a suggestion followed here.


\textsuperscript{5}For \textit{\textit{d}}, \textit{di}, as a subordinating conjunction, see Frank Rosenthal, \textit{A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic}, Porta Linguarum Orientalium (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1983), § 86, 38.

\textsuperscript{6}So tanakh translated by the Jewish Publication Society (JPS) and Hartmann and Di Lella (135); see also the textual notes in the present study. Montgomery (160) and Bauer and Leander (§ 108s, 359) prefer a relative clause. NIV and Goldingay (\textit{Daniel}, 31)
"because") is found also in 2:23 and 47. God is to be praised, because "wisdom and power are his." The sentence describes ownership.

By the word "wisdom" (יִסְדָאָה) we are introduced to one of the most important concepts of the Old Testament. Scholars speak about "wisdom literature" and at times about guilds of wise men teaching at the royal courts of the Middle East. Such literary products or possible social entities should not be confused with the concept itself, permeating all social layers of ancient Israel and to a certain degree present in most parts of the Old Testament. Some of the central elements related to wisdom are parts of the prayer of Daniel.

In the Old Testament, God is generally regarded as the master of wisdom (e.g., Job 12:13; 28:12, 20, 23, 28; 39:17). Ownership comes with creation (e.g., Job 38:37; Ps 104:24; Prov 3:19; 8:22; Jer 10:12=51:15). From the concept of creation springs the preoccupation of wisdom with the order of the world.

In the prayer of Daniel, "wisdom" (יִסְדָאָה) is linked to "power" (גוּבְרָה, gebūrāh).

Gebūrāh is generally used about physical strength (e.g., Job 41:4; Jer 23:10; 51:30; about the powers of youth in Ps 90:10; in parallel with kōh in Ps 66:7; as a description of translate as a simple independent clause, JB as a subordinate clause with the conjunction "since": "since wisdom and powers are his alone," the last word added somewhat at liberty.

According to Mitchell, "The di clause is equivalent to the Hebrew ָֽלָּשֶׁר clauses," 151. Mitchell translates Dan 2:20 as a relative clause (151), but refers (135) to Hebrew equivalents in Gen 24:27 and 48 in which the meaning is causal.

Montgomery notes (159-160) that 1 Cor 1:24 is based on the original Greek of this text.


the sun in Judg 5:31). It refers to the mighty deeds of warriors and kings (e.g., 1 Kgs 15:23; 16:5, 27) and of God (e.g., Pss 20:7; 106:2, 8). Geburah is a royal characteristic. It is the greatness and power of the reign of God. Especially relevant texts are 1 Chr 29:11-12 where David in a prayer of praise is addressing God by use of a bârûk-formula; 2 Chr 20:6 where king Jehoshaphat in the hour of distress is making a petition, comparing the power of God with the kingdoms of men in a prayer also containing the expression "the God of our fathers." Compare Dan 2:23; and Ps 145:4, 10-13 in which YHWH is also blessed (from brk) and praised for his glorious reign/kingdom, המלכות (using among others the words יד וניה, praise and honor, as in Dan 2:23). In his geburah, God's name is expressed in action (e.g., Jer 10:6; 16:21; Ps 54:3).²

God is not governing by simple physical strength. Neither should men. We are to prefer "wisdom" to "strength." Yet in a sense there is power in wisdom (Prov 24:5). Only by it are kings able to govern successfully (Qoh 10:16-17; Prov 8:14-16, beside תבות also using ע建设用地, "counsel, planning," and הבינה, "intelligence, insight"). By it, wise men may save cities in need (Qoh 9:15-16). In several texts, therefore, geburah is linked to words for wisdom: in the description in Isa 11:2 of the sevenfold spirit of Messiah, the ideal king, we find it together with all of the three words of Prov 8 mentioned above;³ in Isa 36:5 (= 2 Kgs 18:20) it forms a pair with ע建设用地, 'זדכ. Particularly relevant is Job 12:13, where "wisdom" and "power" are said to belong to God whom Job earlier has described as "wise and strong"

¹Emphasized also by Mathys (116).

²It is interesting that just as "wisdom" (.AUTH.) in the Old Testament (Prov 8:22ff.) is personalized (not deified), so is geburah in later Judaism; cf. Matt 26:64, see Kosmala (371).

(Job 9:4). The context in chap. 12 speaks about God's power over people and kings as well as of his wisdom in his creative work.¹

Thus, the word pair in the prayer of Daniel is naturally understood as two distinct, yet closely related terms.²

Vs. 21: General description of God

This verse contains strophes 2 and 3, a description of God that elaborates on God's power and God's wisdom and thus provides further motivation for praise.

"For it is He who changes times and seasons."

The presence of the personal pronoun הָיָה, "he," is emphatic. Placed at the beginning of vss. 21 and 22, it binds each of these verses into a unity, linking the participles together.

¹Preben Wemberg-Møller suggests the meaning "wonderful wisdom" of the word pair הָקְמָה and גֶבֶרֶת in a comment on his translation of Plate IV of the Manual of Discipline: "All scholars take גֶבֶרֶת in the meaning 'might'. Note, however, that our phrase is dependent on Job 12:13, where גֶבֶרֶת is used in connection with הָקְמָה, 'sh, and הָקְמָה; cf. Prov 8:14. In these passages גֶבֶרֶת appears to be used in the meaning 'wondrous, mysterious wisdom'" (The Manual of Discipline [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957], 74). As we have noted, however, these passages all speak about the power of God over the kingdoms. So the setting of "power" amidst the sphere of wisdom is caused by the general polemics against a merely human and physical view of power, not by the word גֶבֶרֶת losing its sense of "might." The lesson to be learned in regard to any human use of power is well expressed by Kosmala (372): "Man's strength (his גֶבֶרֶת) lies in quietness, in trusting in God, and not in relying on material possessions (Isa 30:15f.). The fear of God, which involves obedience to his commandments, encompasses a group of spiritual characteristics that show man the right way (Jer 9:22f.). Thus, גֶבֶרֶת has been removed from the physical sphere and has become spiritualized."

²Note also, how the word pair in Job 12:13 is paralleled with the pair in 12:16: הָקְמָה וּ, 'ה and תּוֹדְיָה, "strength," and "success, prudence," thus connecting the sense of גֶבֶרֶת with that of 'ה, "strength." This, too, speaks against Wemberg-Møller's suggestion. For Qumran-examples of גֶבֶרֶת meaning "power," see Maurya P. Horgan, Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books, CBQMS 8 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1979), 102.
The use of participles as predicates in the nominal clauses is durative, but may also be emphatic and, as such, polemic: "He is the one who..." 

There seems to be a scholarly consensus that it is not possible to distinguish in meaning between the two expressions "times and seasons," עֲשֵׂרִים וּשְׁבוֹעָה, when found together.

The wise man in the Old Testament is concerned with the understanding of time, with the proper time for everything (Qoh 3:1-8), including a realization that a time of judgment will come (Qoh 8:5-6, cf. 3:17 and 12:18). The eternal God teaches man wisdom to know the number of his days (Ps 90:1-4, 12, note the presence of gebūrah in vs. 10). This reflection upon time is based on the order of creation. In it we find the link not only to the holy times and feasts (cf. Gen 1:14: "seasons," plural of ימי, mō‘ed), but also to the concept of history, the changing of the ages.

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1See Bauer and Leander (§ 81d, 291) and Segert (Altaramäische Grammatik, 6.6.3.4.2, 381).


3Goldingay (Daniel, 31, 34) attempts to avoid the impression of two distinct meanings by translating "times and eras." Montgomery states (160) that "in combination the words are synonymous." Charles comments (37) that "a definite distinction between these words cannot be established either on the ground of etymology or use."

4Hebrew equivalents of ימי, mō‘ed, מָדוּד, and כְּלֵי, as later in the Targums (Charles, 37).
God is to be praised throughout all ages (vs. 20). He is in charge of the changing times (vs. 21), the meaning of which is further defined by the parallel phrase, "removes kings and installs kings." Such a connection between creation and history is also found in the texts referred to above in which "wisdom" and "power" are combined: Job 12:7-25 and Prov 8:14-17, and also in Ps 145:10-13 where the praise and meditation are based upon God's work of creation, though the words denoting wisdom are not present.

The concept of God's sovereignty in history is of course a general idea in the Old Testament. God is "raising/installing" (cip) kings (e.g., 1 Sam 2:8; 1 Kgs 14:14), not least the kings in the Davidic line (e.g., 2 Sam 3:10; 1 Kgs 9:5; 2 Chr 7:18; Jer 30:9). The verb cip is also used to denote the keeping or confirming of the promises (e.g., 2 Sam 7:25; cf. Deut 9:5; 1 Kgs 2:4; 6:12) or establishing the covenant (e.g., Gen 6:18; 17:7, 19). When the people of God apostatized during the era of the judges, God "gave the people into the hands" of the kings of the enemies (e.g., Judg 2:14; 3:8), but then "raised up" (cip) liberators when the people confessed their sins to him (e.g., Judg 2:16, 18; 3:9, 15).

God "gives wisdom to the wise men, and understanding to those having insight." This third strophe of the poem contains two parallel phrases in which some of the basic words for wisdom beside הָכְתֶּם are used.³

¹No exact verbal parallel is found in the Hebrew part of the Old Testament to the "changing" (ֶלְכוֹת) of times and seasons.

²All examples given are in the hiphil stem corresponding to the hafel of Dan 2:22.

³מ-כ from the root בָּכַי, "discern, understand," and קָרָא from the root וּרְאָה, "know, experience." The roots are "substantially similar in meaning to hkm" (Müller and Krause, 371).
There is in the prayer an emphasis on God as the giver. As the owner of "wisdom" God is able to give it to man. He is imparting the craftsman with "skill" (e.g., Exod 28:3; 31:3, 6). He is sharing his wisdom with outstanding individuals such as Solomon (e.g., 1 Kgs 3:12; 5:9, 10, 26; 2 Chr 1:10), and in general giving understanding to wise men (e.g., Job 35:11; Qoh 2:26). Man becomes wise when taught by wisdom (e.g., Ps 105:22; Prov 8:33; 19:20; 23:19), or by the statutes or commands of the Lord (e.g., Pss 19:8; 119:98). The wise are characterized by willingness to receive instruction (Prov 21:11), fear of God, and lack of pride in their own wisdom (Prov 1:7; Jer 9:22). True wisdom involves an attitude of humility. In order to learn, man must acknowledge what he/she does not know. In order to become acquainted with the divine being, he/she must realize the limitations of humankind.

When God is said to give "wisdom to the wise men, and understanding to those having insight," it underlines the fact that any wisdom that humans may possess is to be regarded as originating from God. Wisdom is not an inherent human quality, but a divine present, and the reception of genuine wisdom presupposes an attitude of humility.

The sentence informs us about the genuine wise men. The Old Testament often presents wisdom in a polemic setting. Only God is truly wise (Isa 31:2); among all the wise men and all the kings of the nations, no one can be compared to God (Jer 10:7). The Assyrian king boasts of his might and wisdom (Isa 10:12-15), but YHWH will make it clear from whom this power and wisdom originates. Polemics with other kinds of wisdom are central to the Book of Job in the discussions between Job and his friends, and to the Book of

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1To this, see also Baldwin (20).

2Note the presence of the themes of both "wisdom" and "power" in this text, in vs. 6 with gebûrāh.
Proverbs in its description of Lady Wisdom (9:1-12) and Dame Folly (9:13-18). Likewise, according to the prayer of Daniel, the only genuine wise men are those receiving their wisdom from God.¹

Vs. 22: Further description of God

This verse is strophe 4 of the hymn and a further development of the description of God, a highlight that concludes the first stanza.

"It is He who reveals what is deep and hidden." This sentence is an introduction to the following two legs in a tristich.

The concept of revelation is here closely linked to the preceding, where God gives "wisdom" and "understanding." Revelation is central to the theology of the Old Testament. God speaks to man. He teaches. He reveals not only a shadowy glimpse of himself, but imparts information and understanding as well.² Compared to the gods of the nations, YHWH is the living God who alone is able to teach and prophecy (e.g., Jer 10:5-10; Isa 46:5-10).

Things "deep and hidden" do not refer to subjects unintelligible to the human mind, but to what could not have been known unless revealed by God; compare Deut 29:28 in

¹God reveals "his wisdom to those who are properly called the wise, because they are dependent for their knowledge on the only true source of wisdom" (Porteous, 42).

²See William Dyrness, Themes in Old Testament Theology (Downer's Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press; Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1979), 25-38. Dyrness characterizes God's self-revelation as "the basis of OT revelation."Calling God "the dynamic, unifying center of the OT," Gerhard Hasel moves on to speak about the revelation of God: "God's existence is not only assumed, but proven in the manifoldness of his self-revelation. The manner of God's selfdisclosure takes the form of the revelation of his nature in actions as they relate to the world and man. The OT speaks of God with regard to his deed and word as they relate to men and nations in creation, nature, and history" (Gerhard F. Hasel, Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate, revised and expanded 4th ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], 169).
which both "reveal" (גלות, nistar, the Hebrew equivalent of the Aramaic 
pael passive participle of Dan 2:22, mesatar) are present.

"Deep" is from the root עמק, found only here in the Aramaic section of the Old 
Testament. Most occurrences in the Hebrew have a literal sense, but two texts demand 
attention.

Isa 29:15 pities those who are going into the deep (using the hifil participle of the verb 
עמק) in order to hide (from עשתו) their plans (from עשתו, 'מעש'). Like in the prayer of Daniel, 
the contrast in the context of Isaiah is set up between genuine and false wisdom (29:13-14). 
In the description of the deeds of "darkness" (29:15, מטרת), Isaiah adds an ethical element 
that is less evident in the words of the prayer of Daniel.

Job 12:22 combines הָלַךְ with עמק, and as discussed earlier, the elements of creation, 
wisdom, and power link this speech of Job closely to the prayer of Daniel in words as well as 
in themes. The connection is further strengthened by the presence of the conflict between 
"light" and "darkness" (Job 12:22-25) as a contrast between intelligence and lack of 
understanding.

God "knows what is in the darkness, for with him light resides." The prayer is 
now not only describing the actions of God, but also the essence of his character. The two 
terms form a contrasting pair, and the two sentences are parallel legs in a tristich beginning 
with vs. 22a. The opposition between light and darkness does not represent a tension in the

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1This link to Job has also been noted by, among others, Mathys (116).

2Ibid., 117.

3So most commentaries, as Goldingay (Daniel, 48), Montgomery (157), Hartman and 
Di Lella (140), and Porteous (42). References are made to texts like Pss 36:10; 104:2; 
139:10; and Isa 10:17.
divine knowledge and power,¹ but is a contrast from the point of human understanding.

What is mystery and darkness to us, is light to God (cf. Ps 139:12).²

Vs. 23: Address and personal thanksgiving

In this second stanza of the poem we move from descriptive to declarative praise, from general to personal thanksgiving. Just as the first stanza, it is introduced by an address with motivation, strophe 5 of the hymn. It is the most direct expression of Daniel's personal relationship with God.

"You, God." As in the preceding verses God is emphasized, here by the preposition b³ with the pronominal suffix as well as by the word order.⁴ The change in address from third to second person is a common phenomenon in the poetry of the Old Testament.⁵


²Note how the Aramaic root for "light" (ר) is also present in the word רְפָא (Dan 5:11, 14), "wisdom, illumination, intelligence," Vogt (110).

³In "Subject and Object in Biblical Aramaic: A Functional Approach Based on Form-Content Analysis," Afroasiatic Linguistics 2 (1975): 1-23, D. R. Cohen has in a brief comparison between form-content analysis and traditional grammar concluded that the prefix למד is associated with only one meaning: of MID importance in precipitating the occurrence.

⁴The sequence OVS are unusual; according to the count by Edward M. Cook only one out of two total occurrences in the Aramaic Daniel, compared with 40 examples in which all three major constituents, subject (S), object (O), and verb (V) are present (Edward M. Cook, "Word Order in the Aramaic of Daniel," Afroasiatic Linguistics 9 [1986]: 114).

⁵Contra Corvin (23) and Meadowcroft (170). Among the many texts taken by Adele Berlin as examples of such "morphologic parallelism" are Ps 104:3 and Cant 1:2 (The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism [Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1985], 40-41). See also Ps 74:12-13, and on a larger scale the two parts of Ps 27: vss. 1-6 and 7-13; other examples include Amos 4:1; Mic 7:19; Cant 4:2 and 6:6, see G. Lloyd

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"God of my fathers" is a favorite expression of Deuteronomy (e.g., 1:8, 11, 21, 35; 4:1; 6:3) and Chronicles (e.g., 1 Chr 5:25; 29:18, 20; 2 Chr 7:22; 13:18; 20:6). In Genesis and in Exodus the singular form is common (e.g., Gen 26:24; 28:13; 31:5, 29; 32:9; 43:23; Exod 15:2; 18:4). The expression often carries the connotation of the faithful God who will keep his promises (e.g., Gen 46:1, 3; Josh 18:3, and not least in Exod 3:6, 13, 15-16). By using the expression, this sentence of the prayer thus creates an association similar to the one stemming from the mention of the "name of God" in vs. 20.

The parallel between the addresses of the two stanzas is significant. They are followed by an almost identical motivation: in vs. 20 the general statement, "for wisdom and power are his," in vs. 23 the personal exclamation, "You have given me wisdom and power." The invocation of stanza A contains three elements: the object (the name of God), the blessing, and the time element. The address of stanza B consists of only two of these elements: the object (God of my fathers) and the thanksgiving (I praise and honor). "The name of God" equals the "God of my fathers," and the blessing equals the thanksgiving. The time element of the first stanza is lacking in the second. In vs. 20 the address expresses the wish for the praise of God at any time, always. In contrast, the specific and personal thanksgiving in vs. 23 by omitting the phrase places an emphasis on the present "now" experienced by Daniel.

The verbs in "I praise and honor" (דָּבֵד and שֵׁם) are common words for gratitude. The range of meaning of דָּבֵד is wide, spanning from "give thanks" to "confess (sins)."\footnote{Carr, The Song of Solomon, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984), 72. With special reference to the expression here in Daniel, see W. Sibley Towner, "'Blessed Be YHWH' and 'Blessed Art Thou, YHWH:' The Modulation of a Biblical Formula," CBQ 30 (1968): 368-399.}

\footnote{Günther Bornkamm has shown how these two senses can be naturally understood as stemming from the common background of God's powerful intervention as savior or judge. In the confession God's intervention is confirmed and proclaimed to the glory of God.}
While the first יְ at the verse as in vs. 20 is understood as causal and translated with a motive clause: "for you have given me wisdom and power," the second יְ is taken as explicative in the sense "that is."

Daniel shares in the divine "wisdom and power." These two concepts permeate the whole prayer. The power given to Daniel may refer to the power that is linked to wisdom (cf. Isa 11:2) and springs from humble recognition and knowledge of YHWH (cf. Jer 9:22-23). It may also be understood as the strength and courage to proclaim the God-given revelation (cf. Mic 3:8, also using gebûrâh), or as the power that Daniel is possessing because he has received the unique ability to interpret the deep and hidden secret so much searched for, that is, the power of the word to be proclaimed. But it may also indicate that because of his wisdom Daniel is regarded as worthy of receiving the power that is to be bestowed only upon royalty.

"You have now told me what we have requested of you, that is, you have told us the king's problem." This last and sixth strophe of the prayer relates it specifically to its narrative setting within the Book of Daniel. The use of personal pronouns and suffixes makes the three friends part of the action and partners of prayer and revelation. The causative hafel-conjugation of the verb הָדַּע ("to make known") is used first for Daniel ("me"), next for all ("us"). Daniel is thus understood as the representative for all of them.

Summary

The prayer of Dan 2:20-23 has been studied against the background of the language, poetry, and prayers of the Old Testament. From both a thematic, a poetical, and a literary

point of view, the prayer can be understood as a coherent unity. It employs a variety of
well-known expressions and forms\(^1\) without being dependent upon any one of these.\(^2\) Rather,
the prayer as an original prayer\(^3\) in a unique way combines the forms of descriptive and
declarative praise as well as important theological themes. I have labeled the prayer an
individual hymn of thanksgiving.

Basic theological concepts of the prayer are divine wisdom and the universal kingship
of God in history. In connection with these themes, the way human beings partake in these
divine characteristics is an important issue. This happens only when God gives: He reveals
His wisdom and He delegates His power. Wise men get wisdom partly because of their
humble acknowledgment of its divine origin, kings are raised and removed as times and
seasons pass. Specific revelation is emphasized in the climax of the poem. In praying,
Daniel experiences the personal presence of God, and by propositional revelation he receives
wisdom and power from God.

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\(^1\)This conclusion is completely contrary to the view presented by Gerhard von Rad
who claims that along with the other poetic pieces (referring to 3:33; 4:31-34; and 6:27-28)
in the first part of Daniel it is "remarkably different from the earlier ones (psalms) which, as
we all know, had as their chief subject Jahwe's wonderful works in creation and in the
saving history. Here, the speaker's religious horizon has almost no connection with the
actual events of history" (Old Testament Theology, vol. 2, trans. D. M. G. Stalker [New

\(^2\)R. A. Anderson states (xiv), regarding the prayer in general, that it "exhibits clear
dependence on a number of texts in the Writings." Such indication of literary dependency
on other texts is, however, not obvious. Sharing the same language, one becomes
dependent on identical words to express identical ideas.

\(^3\)Thus this investigation supports the view of the majority of scholars that, although
"not without biblical parallels," the prayer "appears as an original composition" (Lacocque,
The Book of Daniel, 43). So also Collins (Daniel, 160). Form-historical, it has no "close
parallels" (Mathys, 117). See further the discussion in the section "Daniel's Prayer in 2:20-
23" in the introduction of this study, pp. 25-30.
The prayer has already been placed in the structure and related to the plot of the narrative. The purpose of this section is to investigate the stated prayer in its context on the basis of its content as described in the preceding section.

Semantic and Thematic Links

Several of the words found in both praise and narrative are common expressions that simply belong to the general vocabulary of the language and say little about the specific relationship between prayer and context. This is true for אֱלֹהִים ("God," in prayer: vss. 20a and 23a; in narrative: vs. 11 etc.) and for בֵּי ("king," in prayer: vss. 21b and 23e; in narrative context: vss. 2 etc.), words that hardly could have been replaced by synonyms and are found in all sections of the chapter. It may also be true for מִלְחָמַת ("matter," in prayer: vs. 23e; in context: vss. 5, 8, 9, 10 (x2), 11, 15, and 17) though there may be a play on this word.\(^1\) linking the prayer to the preceding sections of the narrative.\(^2\) Two words related to interpersonal relations, "to bless" (בָּרָךְ) and "to ask for" (בָּשָׁם), may fall into the same category. Yet בָּשָׁם closely links the prayer to its introduction as the verb is found only in the prayer in vs. 20a and in the context in vs. 19. And בָּשָׁם of the prayer (vs. 23d) may deliberately be reflected in its use in the speedy movements of vss. 13-18 (found in vss. 13, 16, and 18)\(^3\) and in the final closure in vs. 49.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Like the Hebrew בָּשָׁם, the word has a broad shape of meaning, see Vogt (100-101).

\(^2\) Watts, 146.

\(^3\) As stated by Goldingay (Daniel, 44), the word "relates the executioners' inquiry after Daniel, Daniel's inquiry of the king, then Daniel and the friends' inquiry of God."

\(^4\) Watts, 146.
One group of terms is related to the concept of wisdom. The word itself (in the prayer in vs. 21c) shows up in vs. 30. The label “wise men” (בְּנֵי הָשָׁם, in the prayer in vs. 21c) is found scattered throughout most sections of the narrative (vss. 12, 13, 14, 18, 24, 27, 48). The fact that the royal advisors are not called “wise men” in the introduction of the chapter (vss. 1-2) or throughout their dialogue with the king (vss. 3-11) may be seen as an indication of their lack of genuine wisdom.

In addition, words formed from the root ידִיעָה (to know) play an important role. In the prayer we meet the noun ידִיעָה (intelligence, knowledge) in vs. 21b. Forms of the verb are present in vss. 21b and 22b (p'al participle) and 23de (hafel). The latter conjugation is used for many of its occurrences in the narrative (with the sense “make known,” vss. 5, 9, 15, 25, 26, 28, 30, and 45), but also p'al is employed (participle in vs. 8, finite verbs in vss. 9 and 30, cf. the qal infinitive of the Hebrew in vs. 3). These words must be seen as a close link between the prayer and the narrative at large.

According to the prayer, divine wisdom is given to man by revelation (vss. 22a, 23bc). The theme of revelation appears already in vs. 11. The specific verb for reveal, יחִבּ, is found in vss. 19, 28, 29, 30, and 47 (x2).

Other major concepts of the prayer are time and history. In vs. 21a God is described as changing (from יַֽעַסֵּק) “times” (from עֶקֶד) and “seasons” (from יָֽסַֽבּ), paralleled with the

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1Ibid.

2The listing of the many varieties of sages may contain some irony, as suggested by Peter W. Coxon, “The 'List' Genre and Narrative Style in the Court Tales of Daniel,” *JSOT* 35 (1986): 95-121.


4See also Watts, 146.
installing and removing of kings of the following colon. Both words both play a significant role in the dialogue between the king and his sages. Nebuchadnezzar accuses his wise men of an attempt to gain a respite (ḇeṣer, vs. 8) until the times (ḇemarot, vs. 9) are changed (from hadan), directly reflected in the words of the prayer. We find הנ in 2:16, where Daniel is asking (from הבם) the king to give him time.

Two other expressions related to time deserve mentioning. In their address to the king in vs. 4 the sages employ the word יפָ ("time, eternity") in their formal greeting, "may the king live forever!" The word is used in the prayer to describe the God who alone lives forever (vs. 20b). In his direct speech to the king in vs. 27, Daniel, in contrast to other court officials, does not make use of this formula. The temporary character of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar is a basic feature of Daniel's interpretation of the dream, comparing it with the kingdom of God that is going to remain forever (vs. 44, בָּלֹ). Another link may be seen in the opening of the prayer, לָטַה ("may . . . be/let . . . be", vs. 20a), implying in the prayer

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1 This connection has been noted by Watts who speaks about "an ironic echo to Nebuchadnezzar's description of the Babylonian sages' attempts to buy . . . time . . . " (147).

2 There may also be a deliberate play on the word "agree" (סֶר) in vs. 9, so Watts (146) and Goldingay (Daniel, 44). The ketib-reading prefers a hafel, but it is most likely to be understood as reflexive in the hitpael or hitpaal conjugation. The actual spelling without the dalet, however, serves to maintain a closer association with the homonym word for "time."

3 The present context gives it (the formulaic greeting) an unexpected twist" (Lacocque, The Book of Daniel, 38).

4 Ibid.

5 This lack of court etiquette on behalf of Daniel should not be regarded merely as an accident. The phenomenon is repeated in later audiences with pagan kings; see 3:16 (cf. 3:8); 4:16; and 5:17 (cf. 5:10). Only in his dialogue with king Darius in 6:21-22, does Daniel employ the phrase. But in this narrative Darius has just shown himself to be quite different from the kings thus far described and has explicitly expressed the eternity of God by calling him "the living God" (vs. 21).
a wish for the future and eternal praise of God. Indicating the future and final installment of the kingdom of God, the word is used in Daniel’s speech to the king in vs. 28 and 29 (x2) and again in his interpretation of the significance of the dream in vs. 45.

These phrases related to time weave prayer and narrative into a close unit. The important and related themes of power and kingship\(^1\) add to this unity. According to the prayer, God raises up (אני) kings (vs. 21b).\(^2\) The expression is mirrored in vs. 44 (x2) where it is said that God will establish (אני) a kingdom for eternity (אכל). The prayer twice emphasizes that all power belongs to God (vss. 20c and 23c), and that God shares it with human beings. King Nebuchadnezzar makes several attempts at giving and being in power (in vss. 5-6 he promises gifts and even life and death, in vs. 16 he gives time, and in vs. 48 he gives gifts to Daniel). But as underlined in the interpretation of the dream (vss. 36-38), Nebuchadnezzar has no power by himself. The focus is first on the process of giving: God has given (vss. 37 and 38, Público, like in the prayer in vss. 21c and 23c). Next it centers on power: God has given humans and animals into his hand (רי, “hand or power,” vs. 38, signifying human power; compare the use in vss. 34 and 45 of the divine intervention, “not by hand/רי”). Other words for power are added in vs. 37: דרג (“dominion, majesty”), חז (“strength”), and חז (“strength”).\(^3\)

A difference may be detected between the description of human history in prayer and narrative. The interpretation of the dream contains a linear structured history and may suggest a somewhat deterministic historical development that is made a little more relative by

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\(^1\)See, for instance, Mathys (114) and Watts (147).

\(^2\)Watts, 147.

\(^3\)Cf. 1 Chr 29:1ff.; see also Mathys (115).
the statements of the prayer according to which we only see kings come and go. As the emphasis in the prayer is on God’s delegation of his power and wisdom in history, rather than on the flow of historical events, we should not understand the discrepancy as a contrast or conflict. The two descriptions rather complement each other, the prayer concerned with the principles guiding the kingdoms, the dream interpretation looking for the final overthrow of all human powers.

Moving on from this observation of a slight thematic difference between prayer and context, we turn to the unique vocabulary contained in the prayer. Most conspicuous is the word for power, *geburah*, נבוזה (vss. 20c and 23c). Its thematic link to the narrative context is evident. The reason for its restriction to the prayer may be the fact noted in the comments above that נבוזה is often linked in particular to the divine majesty, to the power of God’s reign. Used exclusively in Daniel’s prayer about God and not in the narrative about the kings, it underscores the reign of God.

Other phrases limited to the prayer are expressions of the personal relationship between Daniel and his God, such as *the name of God* (vs. 20a) and *God of my fathers* (vs. 23a). Like the words for praise in vs. 23b (עֵדָה and וֹדְדוּ), they belong to the prayer because of its subject matter. The fact that they are not present in the narrative says little about the literary relationship between prayer and context.

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1So Mathys (114).

2The following chapters of the book add significant points to the idea of history of the Book of Daniel, especially when it comes to the reasons for the rise and fall of kingdoms.

3In a brief evaluation of the vocabulary in the disputed section of vss. 13-23, Meadowcroft concludes (163) that it “fails to yield a consistent pattern in favor of” a distinction between this section and the chapter at large, a distinction he for other reasons supports. He does not address the question of the unique vocabulary of the prayer.
Besides the above, the additions from the prayer to the vocabulary stock of the chapter primarily stem from the theme of wisdom. "Insight," ידיעת, is not found elsewhere in this chapter, but note the Hebrew expression in 1:4, characterizing the young men, "לוֹדֶד (פָּנֶה) in the prayer in 2:21d), "having insight of knowledge/being insightful." Found only in the prayer are the two phrases "deep and hidden" and the contrasting pair of "darkness" and "light" (vs. 22b and c). "Deep and hidden" is in the prayer the object of "reveal" (הָנָל, vs. 22a), having replaced the mystery, אֲנִי, of the narrative at large (vss. 19, 28, 29, 30, 47 [x2]) as the object of this verb. All of these expressions sound natural in the mouth of a believing Jew in Daniel’s situation. Rather than creating a tension between the prayer and the narrative at large, these expressions move the reader beyond the immediate context of the chapter and in a natural way connect the issues with broader Old Testament themes.¹

Having dealt with the unique features of the prayer, it should be noted that the only major theme of the narrative left somewhat untouched in the short prayer of thanksgiving in 2:20-23 is the final establishment of the kingdom of God at the end of days (vss. 44-45). Yet in hindsight this theme may be seen as hinted at in the address to God as the one to be praised forever (vs. 20a). Moreover, in the context of the narrative flow it is understandable why the reader is not yet informed explicitly about a topic that constitutes the very essence of the interpretation of the dream content, an interpretation that for the purpose of suspense is postponed until the very end of the narrative.

From these observations of the semantic and thematic links between the prayer and its narrative context, it can be concluded that the chapter in this regard appears as a coherent

¹As noticed by Mathys (116-117).
unity. Similarities between phrases of prayer and narrative are scattered throughout all the sections of the story, and differences are naturally explained by the very nature of the prayer.

The Depiction of the Characters

Many persons appear in relation to the prayer. Some are mentioned only in the words of the hymn, such as kings, wise men, and Daniel's companions. The most important are the two involved in the process of communication, the pray-er and the addressee, Daniel and God. In this section, the function of the characters referred to in the prayer will be compared with their function in the narrative at large. Subsequently, the investigation focuses on the depiction of the characters of Daniel, who prays, and God, to whom the prayer is directed.

Characters in the prayer

In the prayer, kings are mentioned in general in vs. 21a and b, Nebuchadnezzar in specific in vs. 23e. The philosophical statement of the changing eras of human dominion is in line with the interpretation of the dream in vss. 36-38 and with the acknowledgment of Nebuchadnezzar himself in vs. 47. The prayer refers to wise men in vs. 21c and d, speaking about the way genuine wisdom is imparted. As is evident from the narrative, the Babylonian sages of Nebuchadnezzar's court have not received it (vss. 3-11), but their lives are saved by the intervention of Daniel (vs. 24).

Although not mentioned by name, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are implied by the plurals of vs. 23d and e. Many scholars regard their presence in the prayer as a major
problem because they play no role in the narrative. Some scholars find that the three friends are edited into the narrative partly to prepare the way for their appearance in chap. 3.

As concluded in the comments on its words and its themes, Daniel in the prayer is seen as the representative of a larger group. The role the three young men play in the narrative fits the reference in the prayer perfectly. They are not major players of the drama. They are Daniel’s backing group, his companions or friends (vss. 17-18). As recently pointed out by Daniel Smith-Christopher, prayers of appeal in exilic and post-exilic literature regularly follow a pattern of (1) clarification of the threat, (2) gathering of the community to appeal to God, and (3) songs of praise. The presence of a similar pattern employed here in chap. 2 sustains the above remarks on the relation between Daniel and his friends. The three friends of Daniel constitute the believing community that he is “mustering” for spiritual “warfare.” For that reason, the plural “we” of Daniel in vs. 36 needs not to be understood as enigmatic. Daniel is speaking on behalf of the praying community he represents. Nebuchadnezzar also

1So Hartmann and Di Lella (139).

2So Davies (Daniel, 43).

3Actually, the term Daniel’s “friends” (from וַיִּשְׁלַח), universally used of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, is found only here.


5Ibid., 52. Maier calls the friends Daniel’s “prayer-fellowship” (108).

6After a lengthy discussion of various suggestions as to the reason for the plural in vss. 36 and 47 if not referring to the three friends, Meadowcroft remains uncertain on its significance (165-167).

7In a larger context, this community may consist not just of the three friends, not even only of the Jewish people, but of the faithful and praying reader as well; cf. the comments below in the section on the plot of the narrative regarding the identification between the
recognizes the God of Daniel as the God of the captives from Judah when addressing Daniel with the plural “your God” in vs. 47. This secondary, yet related, narrative role of the friends finds its final expression in the closure as they on Daniel’s request are promoted in the administration of Babylon (vs. 49). It seems natural that the three young men in this setting are mentioned by their Babylonian names while, in the context of their prayer-relationship with God in vs. 17, they are referred to by their Hebrew ones.

The role played in the narrative by kings and wise men as well as by the friends of Daniel is thus fully consistent with the reference to them in the prayer.

Daniel, the pray-er

Daniel is by his prayer depicted in his relationship to other human beings as well as to God. He is the representative of his friends, the praying community. In comparison with the sages of the court, he is the genuine wise man. He is also by his initiative and prayer saving the lives of both friends and foes/the ungodly colleagues. As a messenger from or a spokesman for God, he has been given the power to proclaim even unpopular truth to the king. Receiving this power, he also represents true royalty and thereby the kingdom of God.

A comparison between the king and Daniel brings forth the important difference between the two major human participants in a narrative in which divine revelation and divine-human communication is at the core.

1. When Nebuchadnezzar is in trouble,\(^1\) he addresses the gods indirectly, through his wise men. When Daniel is in trouble, he calls upon God directly.

\(^1\)In the investigation of kings and wise men in prayer in chapter 2, more details will be added to this comparison, drawing out the implications for the depiction of the character of king Nebuchadnezzar.
2. The secret is revealed by God to Daniel. But it is revealed to Nebuchadnezzar through Daniel.

3. God answers when asked to by Daniel and his friends. When Nebuchadnezzar requires an answer, his gods are silent.

4. When Daniel has received the revelation, he praises God in thanksgiving. When Nebuchadnezzar has been informed, he worships Daniel. His praise of God in vs. 47 is public, but indirect.¹

Daniel communicates with God in person. Nebuchadnezzar does not. Daniel is primarily characterized by his relationship to God. In the prayer as well as in the narrative, his humility is emphasized (vss. 21cd and 30).² His trust in God³ is expressed not so much in turning to God in deep peril as in taking time to give thanks before knowing the final outcome of events.⁴

In his prayer life, Daniel is shown to be willing to take the initiative (vss. 17-18). The wisdom he has received according to the prayer (vs. 23c) is well exemplified by the very fact that he is praying, but also expressed in his prudent ways in the court (vss. 14-15 and 24-30). He has been endowed with a divine gift to interpret dreams, but it becomes active only

¹The importance of a comparison between these two situations is seen also by the fact that the prayer in vss. 20-23 and Nebuchadnezzar’s reaction in vss. 47b are the only poetic portions of the narrative.

²See the comments by Mathys (114).

³See Watts (146).

⁴"It is suggestive that Daniel invites his readers into praise of God’s might and wisdom before he actually relates the dream and its significance to them" (John E. Goldingay, “The Stories in Daniel: A Narrative Politics,” JSOT 37 [1987]: 111).
through prayer. Prayer is also the channel of his power. Because of prayer he is imparted with the divine information that equips him with power before the king.

*God, the addressee*

Whenever a prayer is offered, we must ask for the character of the God who is addressed. How does the pray-er understand God? And how does the narrator depict his character?

In Dan 2, the character and activities of God are first of all revealed through the words of the speakers. The basic statements about God are found in Daniel’s thanksgiving. Some of the essential themes related to the nature of God, such as his possession and delegation of power and wisdom, have already been thoroughly discussed.

The prayer is introduced in vs. 19 first by a passive reference¹ to God’s revelation, next by the expression “Daniel blessed the *God of Heaven.*” The exact same phrase is used in the previous vs. 18 and recurs in vss. 37 and 44, and a similar phrase (“God in Heaven”) is found in vs. 28, all spoken by Daniel.² In vs. 45 he adds to the description of God by the adjective “great” (גָּדוֹל). In vs. 47 Nebuchadnezzar reacts to the interpretation by calling God “the God of gods” and “the Lord of kings,” the last phrase reflecting the address by Daniel to the king in vs. 36, speaking about how the God of Heaven has given Nebuchadnezzar, the king of kings, his power. The human king of many kingdoms acknowledges that the God of Heaven is the Lord of them all.

¹The passive is often employed in the Book of Daniel for divine providence or intervention; cf. 7:4, 5, 6 and 9:1.

²The title “is found in Gen 24:3,7 but is characteristic for the post-exilic period, occurring frequently in Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah” (Collins, *Daniel*, 159); cf. e.g., 2 Chr 36:23; Ezra 1:2; 6:9, 10; Neh 1:4, 5.
This title both associates and separates the God to whom Daniel directs his praise from the gods of the astral-religion of Babylon. \(^1\) God is above them all and in charge. At the same time the very fact that Daniel and his company find it natural to turn to the God of Heaven with their petition shows that they do not accept the course of events as already settled. Contrary to any deterministic view, history may to some degree be affected by prayer. Complemented by the subsequent interpretation of the dream and its scheme of world history, the narrative lets us understand that although the final outcome is settled by God's overall structure and plan, the fate of the individual is not. It may be changed by God's intervention.

As captives from Judah, the four young men represent a people and a God who seem to have lost in the battle with the gods of Babylon. In the power struggle, their God has suffered an apparent defeat. He is absent. But through their prayers, Daniel and his friends experience His presence in the midst of absence. As there is no better way to emphasize and express the presence of God than by praise, the words of the prayer of thanksgiving, and not the words of the initial prayer of petition, are recorded. \(^2\)

The three major characteristics of God in the prayer and in the chapter are therefore wisdom, power, and God's presence as He intervenes and brings revelation. This becomes even more evident when we look at the characterization of God in the context of the events described in Dan 1.

\(^1\)Compare the remark by the sages, foretellers, and conjurers in vs. 11; noted by, for instance, Montgomery (157-158).

\(^2\)The feature of narrative tempo has in the review of the plot above, pp. 60-61, provided a literary reason for the fact that words of the thanksgiving and not of the petition is recorded. To that reason can now be added this more theological one: in petition the distance to God is felt, in thanksgiving His presence is experienced.
Against the Background of Dan 1

No prayer can be identified in Dan 1. Yet the divine activities described are important for the understanding of the character of the God to whose revelation and intervention human beings later in the book respond by prayer. In the following, these activities will be reviewed and the connections to chap. 2 noted.

The chapter contains only three explicit statements about God. A common link between them is the verb “to give” (יָדַע). In 1:2 the Lord “gives” the king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, in 1:9 he “gives” Daniel favor with the chief official, and in 1:17 he “gives” the four young Judeans wisdom and insight.

Another common feature for these statements is found on the literary level: they all provide information from the narrator to the readers. The narrator explains the divine

1The narrative in chap. 2, and the divine-human dialogue it contains in the revelation and in the prayers, has many links to the subsequent chapters in the book. For such links, for instance, to chap. 3, see the discussion below in the notes on pp. 116-117. In the flow of events, however, as the communication between heaven and earth develops within the book, it is necessary to view chap. 2 in the context of the preceding chapter. In discussing the relationship between these chapters, this study is limited to the world of the Book of Daniel. The concern is not, for instance, problems pertinent to the historical events referred to in the book, such as the fact and date of the siege of Jerusalem.

2The chapter is most often seen as an introductory chapter, so Collins (Daniel, 129), S. R. Driver (The Book of Daniel, 5th ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922], 1), Heaton (17, 114), Porteous (24), Hartman and Di Lella (131). Fewell comments (34): “Daniel 1 is both a story and an exposition to a larger story, that found in the narrative corpus of Daniel 1-6 or, if one thinks in broader terms, the entire Book of Daniel.”

3Milne chooses (206-207) for her specific purpose to read chaps. 1 and 2 together, yet maintains that each chapter is a narrative unit. She criticizes form-critical studies in general for not always treating the story of chap. 1 as an independent unit and including it in the court stories of the book.

4This has been noted by Fewell (42).
leading of the events. In marked contrast to chap. 2, the characters involved do not mention it and may not necessarily discern it.

The first statement in 1:2 deals with the idea of history on a collective level. To kings such as Nebuchadnezzar, God imparts power. The explanatory expression "gave into the hands of" is directly reflected in Daniel's description of king Nebuchadnezzar in his interpretation of the dream in 2:37-38: "O king, the God of Heaven has given you kingship, power, strength, and honor. . . . In your hand he has given the people . . . ." As in the prayer in 2:20 and 23, the Aramaic verb for "to give" (נָאָם) is here (twice) replacing יָדָא. In relation to Israel, this phrase presupposes the common Old Testament concept of the covenant and the view that the people of God were delivered to the enemies because of sin. Yet Nebuchadnezzar is unaware of the origin of his power. From a human point of view he is in charge. The Jews and their God are defeated. The intention of the king is now to educate the best of the Jewish youth, the future of the people, according to Babylonian standards.

1"Hand", יָד, is a common metaphor for power, or strength, see texts like Gen 49:24, Judg 3:10, Jer 20:4, and also J. Bergman, W. von Soden, and P. R. Ackroyd, "יָד", TDOT (1986), 5:418-424.

2 So S. Miller (58), R. A. Anderson (1-2), and Sinclair B. Ferguson, Daniel, The Communicator's Bible (Waco: Word Books Publisher, 1988), 31-32. Goldingay (Daniel, 21) rejects the thought because the sins are not explicitly mentioned, and because Daniel and his friends were regarded as "good people." He overlooks the point that the devastation of Judah and the exile of the people would include the innocent suffering of some, and exactly that problem might be one of the essential issues in the Book of Daniel; cf. the discussion on theodicy by Towner ("Poetic Passages," 324-325). According to Fewell (36), "the narrator implies that the people have done something to cause the anger of their god . . . As a common motif in Israelite literature, . . . God's anger against the people is usually caused by their religious or political apostasy. Consequently, the filling of this gap (the lack of explicit mention of the sin) . . . relies upon the reader's familiarity with the larger context."

3 By Fewell (35) labeled a "dramatic irony."

4 This attempt at indoctrination is exemplified by the renaming of the four young men according to the names of Babylonian gods.
Yet the reader knows from the explanation in 1:2 that the power of Nebuchadnezzar is but
given him by God. In the prayer, we are in 2:20-21 further told how God removes and
installs (from יָּנוֹס) kings.¹

The second statement about God (1:9) is concerned with interhuman relationships on
an individual level. As readers we may not know how, and the chief official may not have
known at all, but behind the goodwill Daniel receives from him was the hand of God. The
official has placed (כָּלָה, 1:7) new names on the young men, but Daniel has set (כֶּלֶה, 1:8, note
the wordplay) his heart not to become "babylonized" and takes the initiative. Therefore God
gives (רֵחַב) him favor (רֵחַב) and sympathy (רֵחַב), the last term echoed in 2:18 as the three
friends are requested to ask God for mercy (רֵחַב). To the young Jews, living in a land of a
foreign god (cf. the mentioning of the vessels in 1:2), God is present.

The third statement in 1:17 describes God's intervention on an individual level and is
related to the primary goal of the educational process, the gift of wisdom. While the
outcome of his education of the four Jews may have seemed satisfactory to Nebuchadnezzar.
the way the narrative is told reveals that the Babylonian attempt to dominate does not

¹Is it just a coincidence that the name of the Judaic king delivered by God into the
power of Nebuchadnezzar is Jehoiakim, meaning "YHWH raises up," from the verb שָׁם? Nebuchadnezzar only tears down or removes what God has formerly "raised up" because of
the power entrusted him by God, a power that may be removed from him again at any time
at the will of God.

²Goldingay (Daniel, 5) notes that "כָּלָה could have been used again, but instead the
language follows 1 Kgs 8:50 and Ps 106:46." I find that it is evident that כָּלָה is employed
deliberately and agree that covenantal language is used, just as in 1:2 where the sins of the
people—mentioned directly in similar language in, for instance, Ps 106 (vss. 34-39) and
1 Kgs 8:50—are presupposed.
succeed. Through two tests within specific limits of time, Daniel and his friends manage to stay loyal to God and still be victorious. Already here, Daniel and his friends are wise men, as they are in the subsequent narrative in chap. 2; they are recognized as such on a human level by the Babylonian court. But the story points to God as the true source of their wisdom.

Thus the narrative of the first chapter of Daniel in its explicit statements about God very precisely characterizes him as the one who gives power to kings and wisdom to wise men. He is also shown as a God who is able to intervene and help the loyal and faithful on an individual level in a time of collective disaster. This depiction of God forms the background for the human response in prayer in the following chapters of the book. In specific, it establishes a clear link to chap. 2 in which we have found the delegation of power, the giving of wisdom, and the divine presence in the midst of the praying community in distress to be the three dominating motifs.

1Note the similarity between the test in ten days regarding unclean food and the longer test of education in the three-year span, both employing the term מְשַׁמֵּשׁ, at the end of the days (1:15 and 18).

2Goldingay (Daniel, 5) argues convincingly for the meaning of מְשַׁמֵּשׁ in both 1:2 and 1:5 as "some of," indicating that passing the examination under the auspices of the king (1:19) meant that Daniel and his friends, but not all of the other students, entered the service at the king’s court.

3The description in 1:4 adds the expression מְשַׁמֵּשׁ, maskilim, proficient, insightful, to words for wisdom whose Aramaic equivalents are part of the prayer in 2:20-23, such as בְּנוֹת בַּע, מִנָּר וְמָרוּ, and מָשֵׁה.

4Daniel also received his particular gift of interpreting visions and dreams from God. The hifil-form should with Old Greek and Vulgate be read as causative, "he (God) gave Daniel insight in all kinds of visions and dreams." Though the hifil of the verb could be static, the causative meaning is present in Daniel when used with finite verbs in 8:16 and 11:33, and not least in view of the context in chap. 1 it should be preserved in the translation of 1:17, in spite of all modern translations. Hartman and Di Lella (128) read it in this way when translating “was endowed with.” This understanding is also implied by the commentary by Doukhan (Le soupir, 29-30).
Chap. 1 also sets the stage for chap. 2 by its presentation of the characters. The king is given power (1:2), Daniel and friends are educated, receiving their divine gifts of wisdom (1:17) and introduced at the court. The roles they play are all consistent with their function in the narrative in chap. 2.

1From the point of the history of the redaction of the book, the three friends are viewed by Klaus Koch as secondary in the chapter (Daniel, Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament 22 [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986], 19). Against this, Collins (Daniel, 130) understands the whole of chap. 1 as written by the editor. The three friends therefore originally belong in this story, but are secondary in chap. 2. I question, however, whether Collins's statement regarding "some ambivalence about the status of the three companions in relation to Daniel" really fits the final canonical text of Daniel. On the contrary, it seems that the secondary role played by the three friends in relation to Daniel is the same throughout, both in chap. 2 where all four appear, and in the narrative section as a whole where Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are in focus as a group in chap. 3, but nowhere else. And the fact that Daniel alone receives the specific gift of interpreting dreams and visions (1:17) perfectly well counts for his unique role in explaining the mysteries contained in the symbolic dreams and visions to follow.

The two chapters are by most critical commentators regarded as being in tension because of the apparent discrepancies between their chronological statements. The second year of Nebuchadnezzar (2:1) does not seem to leave room for the three-year training of Daniel and friends (1:5.18). The close thematic and even semantic links between the two chapters observed above speak against the thought expressed by Smith-Christopher (49) that the stories "were never originally intended to be told in a single setting." As Daniel and friends immediately after his interpretation of the royal dream are promoted to high positions, the narratives cannot be reconciled by letting Daniel and friends at this time still just be students, as suggested by Fewell (49, 52); in that case, no time would be left for the examinations described in 1:19. Among critical scholars, Driver (17) is distinguished by giving genuine attention to the original historical background for the statements. He therefore explains the seeming contradiction by reference to the accession-year reckoning used in Babylon and Judah. He is followed by most conservative scholars, so Young (55-56), Gerhard F. Hasel ("The Book of Daniel: Evidences Relating to Persons and Chronology," AUSS 19 [1981]: 47-49), Archer (41-42), Maier (92-93), and S. Miller (76-77). This reading understands with Goldingay (Daniel, 6) and Lacocque (The Book of Daniel, 40), but contra Fewell (43) and Collins (Daniel, 145 and 155), not only 1:21, but also 1:20 as part of the frame for the entire narrative section of the book. This fact is indicated by the preceding sentence in the end of vs. 19 in which the four Jews following their test enter the service of the court. Contra Collins (Daniel, 155), I find nothing in the text of 2:25 that indicates that Daniel was previously completely unknown to the king and that the examination at the end of his schooling could not have taken place already. The last issue to be touched upon in this context is the question why Daniel and his friends did not attend the first meeting with the king in 2:1-12, see Collins (Daniel, 158). Close reading
Conclusion: The Function of Prayer

Themes and Characters

In situating the prayers by Daniel and his friends, their central role in the literary structure and in the narrative plot of the chapter was noticed. After the study of the content of the stated prayer of Daniel in 2:20-23 in light of the chapter as a whole, it is now possible to conclude that it is not only "an original composition," but from a thematic and theological point of view it is "entirely to the point of the story."1 This holds true, not only in its literary setting within chap. 2 about the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, but also in relation to the preceding narrative of chap. 1 in which the four young men are introduced at the king's court. The two chapters are dominated by three major theological themes: wisdom, power, and divine presence. The content of Daniel's praise deepens our understanding of God's wisdom and power. The very fact that Daniel's thanksgiving and not his preceding petition is recorded, helps to accentuate God's presence. Thematically, the content of the prayer can therefore be viewed as a concise summary of the message of the chapter. Likewise, its depiction of the characters is in perfect agreement with their role in the narrative, both in regard to the characters referred to in the prayer and in regard to those taking part in the divine-human communication.

reveals, however, that the text never states that all wise men of Babylon were summoned to the king. Whether Daniel, at this stage of his service, had not yet reached a sufficient rank may be the historical explanation, but it is just speculation. The reason is not given in the text. Nothing is stated except the fact that as a result of the dialogue between the king and some (but not all) of his magicians, sorcerers, etc., Nebuchadnezzar ordered all wise men (now using the term הָלֹאֵל which included Daniel and his friends) to be killed. But any unsurmountable obstacle against the coherence of the two chapters is not found.

1Montgomery, 157.
The Prayer Event

The significance of prayer reaches beyond its role in the structure and the plot, its thematic relationship to the narrative, and its depiction of the characters. Prayer is not just a theme, but always part of an interpersonal relationship, a divine-human dialogue, and the event of prayer brings a message simply by taking place.

To explore the significance of prayer in the chapter, the prayers of the chapter from the very outset of this study have been placed in the context of the divine activities referred to. Two private prayers by Daniel and his friends have been identified. Both are reactions to divine activities. The first (vs. 18) is set in motion by a divinely given dream to Nebuchadnezzar. It is an unrecorded plea for mercy in a life or death situation. The fact that God gave Daniel the answer through a "vision of the night" implies that at least part of the night was spent in fervent prayer. Ordinarily, prayers were offered at certain times every day, but in times of existential need, the ritual habits of prayer were overruled and the night spent in seeking God (e.g., 1 Sam 15:11-16; 2 Sam 12:16; 2 Chr 7:12; Neh 1:6; Ps 88:1). The petition calls forth yet another divine revelation. In contrast to Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel has a personal relationship with God. He knows how to pray, and when Daniel and his prayer community beg God for mercy, God answers.

The second prayer (vss. 20-23) is the grateful response to God's revelation of the secret. His pre-deliverance psalm is not without parallels in the OT. In Isa 38:9-20, the narrator presents king Hezekiah's prayer of thanksgiving before the actual healing is

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1The exact Hebrew equivalent of the Aramaic expression "visions of the night" (מְכַלַּלִּים יָלֶלִים) is found only in Job 4:13; 20:8; 35:10; and Isa 29:7. But in these texts the emphasis is on the transience of the nightly visions. In Daniel they are real and should rather be compared with the common situations in OT in which God speaks during the night in dreams or visions (e.g., Gen 28:11-12; 40:5; 41:11; 46:2; Num 22:20; 2 Sam 7:4; 1 Kgs 3:5; Mic 3:6; Zech 1:8).
reported, though the hymn is said to be produced after the event (vs. 9). In Jonah 2:2-9 the
prophet expresses his gratitude before his deliverance from the great fish, but the
characterization of Jonah is not simply laudatory.1 In the Book of Daniel the situation is
different. It is not just a matter of letting the reader hear the praise before the actual
revelation, or heighten the tension by drawing out the pace. In the course of events, Daniel
takes time to address God in thanksgiving though he could have hurried to the king to save
his life and the lives of his friends. His choice helps to underline the nature of prayer as part
of genuine communication with God. From a human point of view, Daniel’s thanksgiving
may be inconvenient, but in a personal relationship with God, expression of gratitude takes
precedence over utilitarianism.2

The movement between the two prayers is the typical Old Testamental movement from
weeping to laughter, from sorrow to joy, from tribulation to deliverance (Ps 42:4, 9: Isa
30:18-20, 29), from crying in the night to rejoicing in the morning (Ps 30:6). Psalms and
prayers move between plea or petition and praise or thanksgiving, but the final direction is
praise.3

1See the discussion in Balentine (Prayer, 74-76).

2"The test of our spirituality does not lie only in the fervency of our prayers in times
of crisis, but in the wholeheartedness of our worship when God acts in grace" (Ferguson,
Daniel, 58).

3"The continuum of prayer between supplication and praise is not just a kind of
pendulum swing that means the praying Israelite always moved back and forth between
petition and praise or that these were in a sense simply the two components of prayer.
Rather one always was moving toward praise. . . . Praise and thanks are in a sense the final
word, the direction one is headed in the relationship with God" (Patrick D. Miller,
39 [1985]: 7).

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Daniel’s recorded response in thanksgiving summarizes the content of the narrative. But the very presence of the prayers also complements and adds to it. Because the divine-human dialogue is reported, we know that prayer may affect the events, and that the fate of the individual is not predetermined. Because of its very nature, prayer helps to balance the fixed scheme of the world empires in the course of human history as revealed by the divinely given dream. Without the presence of the prayers, the reader would still know that God is in charge of human powers now and in the future (cf. vss. 37-38, 40), and the reader would also acknowledge, as does Nebuchadnezzar (vs. 47), that the God of Heaven is the God of wisdom and able to reveal secrets to His representatives. But nothing would be known about how divine wisdom and power are actually received. Wisdom and prophetic revelation are given to Daniel as a wise man only because he in humble prayer acknowledges his absolute need for divine guidance. He receives his power to interpret and proclaim only because he by praying accepts that man is not in control, and that all power belongs to God.

The prayers are therefore significant for a full understanding of the narrative. Removing the divine-human dialogue from the chapter would drastically cripple an essential part of its message.

**Summary**

The function of the prayers by Daniel and his friends in the chapter is manifold. In the narrow context of the narrative, the prayers first of all have literary functions: they are part of a divine-human communication placed in the structural center of the chapter; the poetic

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1 As a court story with elements of wisdom and the presence of a mysterious dream and its interpretation, comparison with the stories about Joseph in Egypt (Gen 40-41) is natural. For some of the basic similarities, see Collins *Daniel*, 39). The major difference of Dan 2 is the presence of prayer, related, as we have seen, directly to the essential theme of revelation and to the content of the plot of the narrative.
form of the thanksgiving places the prayer in the foreground;¹ and the recording of the prayer heightens the tension and delays the pace. Second, the prayers have several theological functions: the recorded prayer of Daniel in vss. 20-23 contains the basic theological statement of the chapter regarding the wisdom and power of God; by their effect on events, the prayers modify the otherwise deterministic outlook of the apocalyptic prophecy; and they highlight the divine presence simply by being there. Third, the prayers are a means to the depiction of the characters of the narrative: they express verbally what we otherwise only infer about God from His actions; they accentuate the significance of the praying community of Daniel; and they underline the humility of Daniel in contrast to the sages of Babylon and his personal relationship with God in contrast to king Nebuchadnezzar.

But the prayers also have a broader function in the light of Old Testament theology. They firmly place the whole narrative of Dan 2 and its theology in a wider context by employing liturgical terms and theological concepts that are central to the Old Testament at large. They also serve to build the bridge between prophecy and wisdom: as part of a divine-human dialogue, prayer is both a prerequisite for receiving genuine wisdom and the means to obtain prophetic revelation.

¹Prinsloo (101) emphasizes the element of foregrounding for the poetic passages.
Interactions between God and Man

In contrast to chap. 2, the events in chap. 3 are set in motion not by divine intervention, but by proud human endeavor. References to prayer and worship in this narrative must be understood against this background. The focus is on the activity of king Nebuchadnezzar who defies God by building a statue completely made of gold (vs. 1), raising it (vs. 1), and ordering officials from the province of Babylon to come for its dedication (vs. 2). They all worship except, as we later are informed, three young Jews.

As in Dan 2, divine activities are not expressed by the narrator, but only in the words of the characters of the narrative. And as in the story about Nebuchadnezzar's dream, some

1Vss. 31-33 in the Hebrew Bible are not read along with this chapter, but are included in chap. 4.

2The footnotes on this and the subsequent page will refer to some of the connections between chaps. 2 and 3.

3Although the chapter divisions of the book in general are clearly marked by, for instance, chronological indicators, we should not fail to note the obvious literary connections between successive chapters. The beginning part of the narrative in chap. 3 is linked to the close of the preceding. The statue, of which not only the head but all is of gold, may be seen as Nebuchadnezzar's rebellion against the divinely revealed truth in chap. 2 regarding the fragile and temporary character of his kingdom. The word for statue is the same (הָרָז, 3:1, cf. 2:31), and the gold (כָּחֵמ) points back to the head of the image in 2:38.

4The verb (in the hafel conjugation) is used as much as 9 times in the chapter to accentuate the enterprise of the king (vss. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 12, 14, 15, 18). This should be compared with its use in the preceding chapters, not least 2:21, 44, 45; see Doukhan (Le soupir, 61). In chap. 2, God's activities were emphasized. In chap. 3, Nebuchadnezzar responds in opposition to God.

5The use of this verb in 2:47 forms yet another literary link to chap. 2, as does the presence of the officials from "the province of Babylon" (cf. 2:49).
time elapses before the issue of God and gods is mentioned directly. Following the public worship, some Chaldeans address the king, accusing Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego of not obeying the royal command (vss. 8-12). In their complaint they introduce the religious element and link the act of worshiping the statue directly to serving (προσφυγία) the god(s) of Nebuchadnezzar (vss. 12 and 14). This connection is repeated by the three young men in vs. 18 and made even stronger in the final public decree by the king (vs. 28).  

Driven by fury, Nebuchadnezzar summons Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (vs. 13). In dialogue with the king, they refuse to worship the idol, and the issue of divine power and intervention thus moves into the forefront (vss. 13-18). The subsequent salvation of the young men (vss. 23/24-27) from the punishment of the king (vss. 19-22/23) is therefore understood as an act of God. That their deliverance is a divine event is told in the words of Nebuchadnezzar who exclaims that he beholds a divine being, a fourth person, in the fiery oven (vs. 25). Later he closes the narrative by a royal decree, acknowledging their salvation as a divine intervention and protecting them from further religious harassment (vss. 28-29). In the final closure, the king promotes Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego further.  

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1 Among the many groups of sages in chap. 2, the Chaldeans are the spokesmen (vs. 4).

2 The ketib of vs. 12 reads plural.

3 The statue should not be seen as a representation of Nebuchadnezzar himself, but rather as a divine representation of his kingdom, most likely the god Marduk; see Lacocque (The Book of Daniel, 58-59).  

4 With NIV this is the natural way to understand נַעֲשָׂה in vs. 30, not necessarily in conflict with 2:49, so also Collins (Daniel, 178, 191-192) and Montgomery (216).
Prayers, References to Prayer, and Allusions to Prayer

1. A reference to prayer is present in the worshiping or praying to the idol of the golden statue (vs. 7). The two verbs ('ש and מָשַל) are found together also in Dan 2:46; 3:5, 6, 15 and are likely to be understood as a hendiadys, "falling prostrate." The worshipers are officials from the province of Babylon, representing all "people, nations, and languages" (vs. 7). The worship is public in nature.

2. The absence of prayer/worship by the three Jews alludes to the issue of prayer (vss. 12, 14-15, 18).

3. The royal decree in vss. 28-29 in which Nebuchadnezzar expresses gratitude (blesses, from בָּרָך̇ as in 2:20) towards God resembles prayer. This decree is the king's reaction to the divine event he has just witnessed. It is a public acknowledgment. However, the words are not directed to God, but to "all people, nations, and tongues" of his kingdom. The similarity with prayer contains an allusion to the issue of prayer.

Situating the Prayers

In the Structure of the Chapter

Based on the personal interactions as described in the preceding paragraph it is possible to find a chiastic structure in chap. 3 (see table 4).

1See the identification of prayers, references to prayers, and allusions to prayers in relation to chap. 2 at p. 49 above.

2See the treatment of the term and the concept in the paragraph on vs. 20 in the section on words and themes of the prayer in Dan 2:20-23, pp. 79-81.

3The role of the king in relation to prayer is discussed further in chapter 2.

4Doukhan, too, finds a chiastic structure in the narrative (Le soupir, 80). It also reaches its center with the section that begins with vs. 13, though Doukhan stretches it to vs.
TABLE 4
INTERPERSONAL STRUCTURE
OF DANIEL 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Verses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Introduction: &lt;br&gt;Nebuchadnezzar builds a statue &lt;br&gt;and summons the officials of the province of Babylon</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar to &quot;people, nations, and languages&quot; threat of fire worship of idol</td>
<td>3-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Chaldeans address the king regarding young men they ought to be thrown into the oven</td>
<td>8-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar challenges the young men introduced by the wrath (רעה) of the king</td>
<td>13-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The young men’s answer</td>
<td>16-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D'</td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar punishes the young men introduced by the wrath (רעה) of the king</td>
<td>19-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C'</td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar addresses his advisors regarding the young men they are saved from the oven</td>
<td>24-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B'</td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar in a decree to &quot;people, nations, and tongues&quot; salvation of the young men from fire no worship of idol</td>
<td>28-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A'</td>
<td>Result: Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego are promoted as officials in the province of Babylon</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27. Collins’s seven-point structure is not presented as chiastic (Daniel, 179), neither is his earlier, more detailed, yet slightly different structure (Daniel with an Introduction, 53-55). Toews reads 3:1 as the stage, 3:2-12 as pre-peak episodes, 3:13-22 as the peak, and 3:23-30 as the post-peak (51-52).
The introduction and the result (vss. 1-2, A, and vs. 30, A') are linked together by the presence of officials from "the province of Babylon" to whom the three Jews are regarded. In B and B' the king orders or decrees to "people, nations, and tongues." In the chapter, this phrase, אָדָם אַנְוָה לִשְׁפָּךְ, is found only in these two sections: in B in plural, vss. 4 and 7, in B' in singular, vs. 29. C and C' contain the reverse movement, from court officials (the Chaldeans) to king in vs. 8, and from king to court officials (the advisors) in vs. 24. The subject matter is related: in C the Chaldeans claim that the young men should be thrown into the fiery furnace, in C' they come out. In C the tension is created; by the mighty deliverance in C' it is relieved. Sections D (vss. 13-15) and D' (vss. 19-23) contain the actions of Nebuchadnezzar towards the three friends: in D he challenges by words, in D' he follows up with an action of punishment. In the center of the narrative, E, we find the response by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to the king.

The episode of worship/prayer to the statue, the idol, is found in section B, and the royal decree expressing thanksgiving and referring to the issue of worship is present in B'. The friends of Daniel are not praying, but as we will discover next, it is this very absence that creates the tension in the plot of the narrative.

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1Most scholars take 1-7 as one large unit.

2Vs. 13 of section D is a transition verse, the wrath recurring in vs. 19 (D'), the ordering of bringing the four Jews reflected in the call to come out in vs. 26, section C'. The verse could be counted with the preceding section of C.

3Toews (51-52) reads the sentence of vs. 23 with the following section. But the temporal adverb יַהֲקִם, "then," points as a discourse marker to a new beginning in vs. 24; see Toews himself (42-43).
In the Plot of the Narrative

Up until the accusation by the Chaldeans the story runs smoothly, and only against the background of chap. 2, does the completely golden statue hint of the power struggle to come. As soon as the three Jews are introduced into the narrative, the tension rises. What will happen to them when summoned to the king? In the address by Nebuchadnezzar to the young men, this first question regarding their eventual fate is, however, quickly superseded by another and more philosophical issue: Which God can save from the power of the king (vs. 15)? Thus the tension of the plot centers around two related problems: Will the young men be saved? and is the power of God greater than the power of Nebuchadnezzar? As the narrative develops, the latter will be proved by the former.

The tension is succinctly stated by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in their answer to the king in vss. 16-18, which we have found to be the structural climax of the narrative. For the study of the function of prayer this answer is essential because it presents their motivation and attitude towards worship.

The introductory word in vs. 17 is not to be understood as an exclamatory particle, but as a conditional conjunction "if." Goldingay connects the conjunction with the existence of God, translating "if our God . . . exists." The question is then raised only "for

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1The lists of officials and musical instruments may also play on the irony of Nebuchadnezzar trying to show off his power; cf. Coxon ("The 'List' Genre," 95-121). Fewell (83) rightly makes an important point out of the king's attempt "to be in control over life and death" and still "in godlike fashion" to decide the destinies of his subjects.

2A similar movement is detected in the narrative of Dan 2, a movement from a historical, factual question towards a more religious one.

3Vogt, 51-52. So also Goldingay (Daniel, 66), Collins (Daniel, 177), and Montgomery (206), according to whom it was a stumbling block to the ancient translations that could not accept the seeming questioning of God's ability to save.
the sake of the argument. The purpose of such a statement is not obvious, and the verb רוחא is most likely inseparable from the participle to follow, וזום, 'who is able.' For that reason several scholars translate "if our God . . . is able to save, He will save us . . ." Though grammatically possible, such triumphal understanding that God, if He is only able, will always deliver, in my view runs contrary to the thought expressed by the second "if not" of the statement (vs. 18). In stead, this study follows the thorough investigation by J. W. Wesselius who connects the first sentence of the answer (from vs. 16) to the following conditional clause, translating "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter, if (ןֶ֫ד) . . . " The point is not that the young men themselves question the ability of

1Goldingay, Daniel, 64, 71.

2Denoting presence, "there is" or "exists," or used as copula (Vogt, 6-7).


4Thereby excluding the translation, "if our God . . . exists, he is able . . ."

5So, for instance, Collins (Daniel, 187-188), Towner (Daniel, 52-53), Lacocque (The Book of Daniel, 63), and Fewell (75).

6Peter W. Coxon finds it unlikely that the question here is the ability of God ("Daniel 3:17: A Linguistic and Theological Problem," VT 26 [1976]: 400-409). Contra Fewell (75) and Collins (Daniel, 187). In a later study Coxon suggests that the first part of the answer by the three friends is to be understood legally: "we simply accept the sentence" (Peter W. Coxon, "Nebuchadnezzar's Hermeneutical Dilemma," JSOT 66 [1995]: 93).

7J. W. Wesselius, "Language and Style in Biblical Aramaic: Observations on the Unity of Daniel II-VI," VT 38 (1988): 206-207. In this article Wesselius provides examples of an emphatic use of some less-common grammatical features in the book of Daniel. In relation to this particular text he shows how the answer by the three young men syntactically echoes the challenge by the king in vss. 14-15, thus together forming an "echo dialogue" (204-208). This echo has also been noted by Doukhan (Le soupir, 71).

their God, but that no answer to the king's challenge is necessary if God is actually able to save.¹ God himself will in that case have provided the answer.² In translation, the sentence cluster continues as follows, "we have no need to answer you in this matter, if the God whom we serve (מֶלֶךְ) is able to save us. And from the fiery furnace and from your hand, O king, he will save."³ After this response to the king, the friends express their unconditional willingness to obey, "but if not,⁴ let it be known to you, O king, that we will not serve your god and that we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up."⁵ With their statement, the three Hebrews are not questioning God's ability, but asserting His freedom.

¹Bevan (82) suggests another solution in translation, "If our God . . . be able to deliver us, He will deliver us from the furnace," implying that if God is able to deliver at all, he can deliver from the king. He has been followed by Hartman and Di Lella (155).

²Corresponding to the observation already made that this chapter focuses on God's revelation or activities in a dramatic event, not in words, dreams, or visions.

³Here quite literally following the Aramaic word order. It may sound somewhat clumsy in English, but points out that the two occurrences (in the infinitive and the finite form) of the verb בָּרָם, "deliver/save," both close their respective sentences, perhaps also indicated by the atnach under the infinitive.

⁴Contra Collins (Daniel, 177), there is no necessary reason to link this "if not" to the participle יָפֶה, meaning "if he is not able." The immediately preceding verb, בָּרָם, "to deliver," is much closer, and it is the finite verb in an independent clause. So, contrary to the view of Collins (Daniel, 188), there are definitely good "grammatical reasons" to connect "if not" with this verb, meaning "if he does not save."

⁵Calling into question that the "if not" is to be connected with the nearest verb meaning "if he does not save," as argued above, Collins (Daniel, 188) goes on to state that "the element of uncertainty adds a touch of realism to the story. Any Jew of the post-exilic period must have known that God, for whatever reason, does not always deliver the faithful. The youths' fidelity does not depend on the certainty of deliverance." But this conclusion is actually contrary to Collins's own choice of translation. The meaning that "if God is able, he will deliver" takes the deliverance to be a foregone conclusion. For it is fair to say that any Jew of the period also would claim to believe in the almighty power of God. The uncertainty present in the answer by the young men is definitely best expressed by the idea that God, "for whatever reason," might choose not to deliver, even though He is able.
The remaining part of the story relieves the tensions created. The young men are delivered because God intervenes and proves able to save from the power of the king. In the end, the king himself acknowledges this fact by his public decree.¹

Conclusion: The Function of Prayer

Themes and Characters

In this chapter the friends of Daniel are related to prayer by an act of defiance. They refuse to worship an idol. They do not pray. As a non-existent prayer, an investigation of its content is evidently not possible. But the theological reasons for their refusal are clearly expressed by the three young men in their response in vss. 16-18 to the king's repeated order to worship.

Viewed from a literary aspect, the tension of the plot reaches its climax exactly with this statement, placed in the center of the chapter's structural chiasm. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego are willing to risk their lives by obeying God whether He proves His might by saving them or not.² Power has no bearing on their decision. But it is this attitude that calls forth the divine intervention. God intervenes to show His sovereignty, exactly because the young men refuse to pray to or worship any other god and choose to remain loyal independently of His intervention.

This attitude serves to depict the characters of the young men against the background of the basic theological features of the narrative: power and presence. Shadrach, Meshach,

¹It is obvious that the narrative is even more concerned with the character of the king than with the character of the three Jews, as observed by Fewell (79-81). We will return to this issue in the chapter devoted to the kings in prayer, chapter 2.

²“No threat and no conceivable outcome can deter these witnesses from their commitment to the highest and best that they know” (James Wharton, “Daniel 3:16-18,” Int 39 [1985]: 174-175).
and Abed-Nego are contrasted with the king. Compared with obedience, power is insignificant to them, and as a consequence they experience the divine presence amidst the flaming fire (vs. 25). In this event, the narrative contains an ironic contrast between God and the pagan god of Nebuchadnezzar, which does not act, but only enters the scene because it is made by the king.

**The Prayer Event**

In the process of divine-human dialogue, the events of chap. 3, as those in chap. 2, are partly triggered by the absence of prayer. This calls for another comparison between the two chapters. In chap. 2, the sages of Babylon did not pray to their gods because they were not believed to be present; in chap. 3, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refuse to worship and accept the presence of the gods of Babylon, forced upon them only by the human endeavor of the king. Through the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in chap. 2, God had intervened by giving a revelation; in the story about the three young men in the fiery furnace, God's intervention happens in the end as a response to the loyalty of the Jews who cannot be forced to pray to an idol.

Several situations in the Old Testament may be comparable, but still the experience of Shadrach, Meschach, and Abed-Nego is unique. A contest between God and the pagan gods is also part of the drama at Mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18), but the issue there is not human worship, but divine answer and intervention. In the Book of Esther, the Jews in exile are also threatened by jealous enemies, but the question is about national and religious identity, not about individual loyalty and unconditional obedience. Joseph faces such a situation of

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1For semantic and literary links between chaps. 2 and 3, see the discussion and the notes in the section above on the "interactions between God and man," pp 116-117.
personal choice in Potiphar's house (Gen 39), but his dilemma is of an ethical nature, and prayer is never an issue. In the plain of Dura, the young Jews' individual existence is at stake, and their choice stands between obedience and death or pagan worship and life. Their dilemma capsulates the ultimate consequences of a sincere commitment to monotheism.

The situation faced by the three young men is public and obligatory. It places prayer and worship in the theological context of freedom. The issue in question is not the communal nature of prayer, but the compulsory worship of an idol. As part of a personal relationship with God, no prayer is genuine if it is enforced. True prayer presupposes freedom and choice. The attitude manifested by Daniel's friends further illustrates this personal aspect of their relationship with God. Their "if not" indicates that it is not to be compared with a business relationship, demanding a quid pro quo. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego humbly respect the freedom of God to act according to His choice.

Summary

The paradox of the narrative in Dan 3 is that prayer functions by its absence. From a literary perspective, the lack of prayer to an idol creates the tension of the plot. In the depiction of characters, it describes the attitude of the faithful Jews. Their act of defiance and their stated motivation contributes to our theological understanding of prayer in the Old Testament in its contrast to pagan worship: God never enforces prayer, and prayer to God can never be a command, but must, in order to remain genuine, respect His freedom.

1Note the similarity between the three friends, who refuse to pray to an idol whatever the consequences, and Daniel who in 2:20-23 thanks God before his fate is certain. Both Daniel and his friends experience God's presence in situations of His apparent absence.
Dan 6

Identifying the Prayers

Interactions between God and Man

As in the story about the three friends of Daniel in the fiery furnace, the divine intervention in the narrative about Daniel in the lions' den is set in motion by selfish human activities and the uncompromising attitude of a loyal believer, resulting in a clash between the earthly empire and God's kingdom. But in the end, the human sovereign himself, king Darius, testifies along with Daniel that it is God who delivers Daniel. This divine act has been longed for by the king (vss. 17 and 21), experienced and witnessed by Daniel himself (vs. 23), confirmed by Darius (vs. 24), and is finally acknowledged and confessed by the king (vss. 27-28).

References and allusions to prayers abound in this narrative, but they all center around the relationship between God and Daniel. This fact will be deduced in the following, first from the way God is mentioned, next from the personal interactions in the flow of the events.

The narrative contains twelve explicit references to God or gods. Their most remarkable feature is their emphasis on God as the "God of Daniel." Two of them mention gods in general (vss. 8 and 13). Eight texts speak about the "God of Daniel": thrice God is called so by the narrator (vss. 11, 12, 24); the satraps say "his God" in vs. 6, the king "your God" in vss. 17 and 21 and "Daniel's God" in vs. 27, and Daniel himself "my God" in vs. 23. The last two of the twelve references to God are both found in close conjunction and parallel with the phrase "the God of Daniel/your God," namely in vss. 21 and 27 in which king Darius entitles God as the "living God." His words to Daniel in vs. 21 reverse the
description of their relationship by calling Daniel "the servant of the living God." God is Daniel's God because Daniel belongs to God.

As the chapter opens, some issues within the administration of the kingdom are mentioned and the main characters introduced (vss. 2-3). Because of Daniel's remarkable service, the king intends to raise him even further (vs. 4), thus giving incentive to jealousy among his rivals (vs. 5). From this moment the phrase "ministers and satraps" does not include Daniel, but only his enemies who, after futile attempts to detect errors in his administrative service, turn their attention to his religion, to the "law (םָר) of his God" (vs. 6).

Still full of initiative, they address the king with a petition (vss. 7-9). They suggest a legal injunction testing the subordinates' loyalty towards the king by, for a short period of time, forbidding them to pray (בָּעַשׁ, vs. 8) to anyone but the king, whether god or man. According to Median and Persian law (רָע), the decree would be unchangeable.

Though informed of the injunction, Daniel continues his routine of thrice daily turning on his knees towards Jerusalem in prayer (vs. 11). He is caught in his act of petitioning and supplicating by the ministers and satraps (vs. 12) who gather before the king with the news (vs. 13). Their dialogue repeats the substance of the decree and includes a direct statement concerning Daniel's habit of prayer (vs. 14).

The king becomes aware that he has been tricked, but has to give in and send Daniel into the lions' den (vss. 15-18). He does so with a wish expressed to Daniel (vs. 17) for the

1Employing the הָפֵל conjugation of one of the keywords in the narrative part of Daniel, כָּפֵל; cf., for instance, 6:2, 9, 16, the prayer in Dan 2:21, and 3:1. Of the four usages in the narrative in chap. 6, the first two relate to the installing of high officials: the king appoints satraps (vs. 2), and he intends to raise Daniel (vs. 4). The next two occurrences denote the enactment of the royal decree (vss. 9 and 16) by which the enemies of Daniel succeed in countering the original intentions of the king.
intervention of God, referring to Daniel’s continuous relationship with God. After a night spent fasting (vs. 19), the king returns and once again addresses Daniel as the loyal servant unceasingly worshiping God (vss. 20-22). Finding Daniel saved (vss. 23-24), the king lets the enemies experience what they had suggested for Daniel (vs. 25) and publishes a decree of praise for the God of Daniel (vss. 26-28). The closure of the chapter relates the subsequent success of Daniel during the new kingdom (vs. 29).

Prayers, References to Prayer, and Allusions to Prayers

The prayers of the chapter can be identified against the background of these interactions between God and man. No other chapter in the book of Daniel contains so many references and allusions to prayer:

1. The royal decree forbids anyone to make a petition or pray (רעה) to any god or man except to the king (vs. 8, repeated in vs. 13).

2. The ministers and satraps are addressing the king with a petition in vs. 9, the form being a literary allusion to the issue of prayer.

3. The relationship in prayer between Daniel and his God is described in vs. 11. Three times a day Daniel was privately kneeling (נָבָה), speaking to or entreating (נֶלְעָל)  

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1 Cf. the use of this word in Dan 2:18 and 23. See further the comments in the paragraph “Prayers, References to Prayers, and Allusions to Prayer” in the section on Dan 2 above, p. 50.

2 Collins (Daniel with an Introduction, 72) has noted the form of petition, including “a salutation, a statement of what is desired, and a request for an edict.”

3 With many manuscripts pointing קד not as a pronoun, but as a verb, so also Goldingay (Daniel, 121), and Collins (Daniel, 256).

4 From נַבָה, in biblical Aramaic found only here and in Ezra 6:10; in later Aramaic at times used in the sense “intercede, pray for” (Vogt, 143). If that connotation is present
God, and confessing or praising (הודות)\(^1\) Him. The direction towards Jerusalem may indicate several basic element of his prayers: the wish for a restoration of the city and a return of the exiles and a cultic orientation (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:35, 38, 44, 48, and Pss 3:5 5:8; 26:8).\(^2\) Kneeling before God is the natural position for prayer (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:54; Ezra 9:5; Ps 95:6), indicating submission to a higher being (e.g., Gen 41:43; Isa 45:23) and willing obedience (1 Kgs 19:18). Praying three times a day presumably meant morning, noon, and evening.\(^3\) The psalmist (Ps 55:18) does so “because of the urgency of his personal need.”\(^4\) For Daniel, it has become a habit. His personal need is not the issue, while the present situation of his people may be.

\(^1\)From מודה as in the prayer in 2:23. See further the comment on this verse in the paragraph on the words and themes of the prayer in Dan 2:20-23 above, p. 91.

\(^2\)This aspect of the prayers of Daniel is further commented upon in the assessment of the combined function of the prayers within the book: the direction towards Jerusalem is part of a spatial movement “In the Progression of the Book,” and it also functions as part of the depiction of “Daniel the Pray-er” (see the discussion under these headings in chapter 3). At this point I preliminarily mention some of the similarities between Daniel’s praying in 6:11-12 and the long prayer in chap. 9. The two events both take place in the first year of king Darius (6:1 and 9:1), and besides Dan 1 (vs. 1) and 5 (the vessels in vs. 2 referring back to 1:1), these are the only chapters in the book mentioning the city of Jerusalem by name (6:11 and 9:2, 7, 12, 16, 25).

\(^3\)Winfried Vogel is probably correct when he sees in the expression a “reference to the sanctuary service” (“Cultic Motifs and Themes in Daniel,” JATS 7 [1996]: 26), though no equivalent of the three times of prayer is found in OT in relation to the cult as such. The link to chap. 9 and the reference in this chapter to the daily sacrifice as the time for Daniel’s prayer (9:21) favors the understanding of Charles (157), that Daniel prayed at the time of the two daily sacrifices plus once more, maybe at sunset, or even later. Keil and Delitzsch (213) suggest the times as at the third, the sixth, and the ninth hour of the day. Lacocque (The Book of Daniel, 114, n. 14) observes that “at Qumran we find a ternary prayer punctuating the day.”

\(^4\)Goldingay, Daniel, 131.
4. A specific private prayer of Daniel is found in vs. 12 in which he petitions (from הָבָה, cf. vs. 8) and supplicates (hitpaal from בַּדָּל, imploring for mercy).¹ The prayer is unstated as the words are not recorded.

5. A petition² is directed from the king to Daniel in vs. 17, the form itself being a literary allusion to prayer.

6. Twice the king makes reference to the daily relationship of Daniel to God (vss. 17 and 21): "your God whom you continually serve (יִדְנָה)." In the book of Daniel, this verb is linked to worship, see 3:12, 14, 17, 18, 28 (paralleled in chap. 3 with רָאָה) and 7:14, 27.

7. The fasting and abstinence of the king (vs. 19) may imply prayer (cf. 9:3 and 10:3, 12).

8. A royal decree in vss. 27-28 consists of three elements: a greeting/address, an injunction, and a doxology, "a descriptive hymn of praise"³ that provides the motivation for the injunction. It is not directed towards God, but towards the "peoples, nations, and languages" of Darius's kingdom (from השָׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ as in 3:4, 7, 29, 31 and 7:14).

A study of their function in the narrative will clarify whether the king's petition in vs. 17 and his decree in vss. 27-28 are to be understood as just allusions to prayer or as references to the fact that Darius is praying.⁴

¹Vogt, 66.
²By Collins (Daniel with an Introduction, 72) formally defined as a prayer of petition.
³Ibid.
⁴For this question, see further chapter 2, pp. 281-283, the section entitled "Themes and Characters."
Situating the Prayers

In the Structure of the Chapter

The structure presented by most commentators is in reality often an outline based on the dramatic development of the plot. For that reason, several issues related to the plot of the narrative are integrated in the present discussion of the place of the references and allusions to prayer in the structure of this chapter.¹

The following linear outline proposed by Collins is with minor variations used by several scholars:² introduction (vss. 2-4), conspiracy (vss. 5-10), condemnation (vss. 11-19),³ deliverance (vss. 20-25), proclamation (vss. 26-28), and conclusion (vs. 29).

In contrast to these, two other linear outlines treat the section containing the prayer of Daniel as a more independent unit. J. A. Boogaart compares the narrative of the chapter with dramatic literature and understands vss. 2-10 as the exposition, vss. 11-14 in which Daniel is found in prayer as the challenge, vss. 15-19 as the rising action, vss. 20-23 as the climax, and vss. 24-29 as the denouement.⁴ Smith-Christopher accentuates the prayer section even further, seeing vss. 11-12 as Daniel’s civil disobedience, vss. 13-16 as the

¹Several scholars list the verses of this chapter according to some English translations, not the Aramaic text, counting, for instance, vs. 2 of the manuscript as vs. 1. In the comments below I have adjusted these references to follow the Aramaic text.

²Collins, Daniel with an Introduction, 70-71. So also Hartmann and Di Lella (197-201), Maier (236-258), S. Miller (177-190), and Montgomery (268-279). Toews (53-54) includes vs. 1 in this chapter and regards it as the stage. He unites vss. 2-10 as pre-peak, has vss. 11-18 as the peak, vss. 19-25 as the post-peak, and vss. 26-29 as the closure.

³More recently Collins ends this section with vs. 18 (Daniel, 262).

fruition, and vss. 17-19 as the punishment, in the preceding and subsequent sections
delineating the chapter in a traditional manner.¹

A few scholars have proposed a chiastic structure for the chapter. One way or the
other, they all include the deliverance of Daniel from the lions as part of the climax.²

Most of these suggestions are distinguished by not treating the prayer section as an
independent unit.³ Accordingly, the praying of Daniel appears to have little structural
significance. Partly to rectify this situation, Prinsloo presents yet another structure.⁴ Vs. 1
forms the introduction and vss. 2-3 the king’s administrative arrangements. The large
middle section of the chapter (vss. 4-18) in which the tension reaches its height is seen as
chiastic, its center being Daniel caught in prayer (vss. 11-12).⁵ In the subsequent sections,

¹Smith-Christopher, 91-94.

²Doukhan makes 11 verses, vss. 15-25, the large center in a brief chiastic structure
(Le soupir, 140). Towner’s center is found in vss. 19-23 (Daniel, 79). Goldingay (Daniel,
124) places vss. 17-19 as D (“Darius hopes for deliverance”) and vss. 20-24 as D’ (“Daniel
witnesses deliverance”) in the center of an even chiasm. Especially Towner includes more
details, but in these the weakness becomes evident. Why is, for instance, the first part of
vs. 25 treated as a complete and very short independent unit in which “the king orders,”
while vss. 17-18 in which he also orders are grouped with the preceding into a very long
section of vss. 11-18 containing a large number of different scenes?

³Prinsloo (105) rightly criticizes both Towner and Goldingay on this point. For
Towner the prayer is part of the section called “Devout Daniel is arrested and sentenced to
death” (vss. 11-18) (Daniel, 79). Goldingay (Daniel, 124) places the reference to Daniel’s
habitual praying with the preceding section under the heading “Darius signs an injunction,
but Daniel takes his stand,” while the scene in which Daniel is caught in prayer is grouped
with the subsequent dialogue between conspirators and king (vss. 12-16) as “Daniel’s
colleagues plan his death.”

⁴Prinsloo, 103-105.

⁵Surrounded by court scenes with the rivals and the king (vss. 7-10 and 13-15).
Farther away in this chiasm Prinsloo places vss. 4-6, Daniel and his rivals, opposite vss. 16-
18, Daniel thrown into the lions’ den (ibid., 105). The connection between these two
sections is more difficult to discern.
God shows that "only He can save" (vss. 19-25) and Darius confesses to this fact (vss. 26-28), thus making "the poetic passage" serve "as climax to the narrative."¹

The difference between these proposals illustrates two important points. First, it exemplifies the observation made by Boogaart that descriptions of structure all are made from a specific perspective and therefore will vary.² Second, it accentuates the fact that viewed from the perspective of interpersonal relationships, the narrative in chap. 6 is more complex than the earlier stories of the book. This becomes evident when we compare Darius in the lions’ den with the narrative in chap. 3 about his friends in the fiery furnace.³

The three friends of chap. 3 correspond to Daniel in chap. 6, Nebuchadnezzar to king Darius, and the Chaldeans to the ministers and the satraps. But in contrast to chap. 3, the king in chap. 6 is no antagonist to Daniel or God.⁴ The plot in chap. 3 is related directly to

¹Ibid., 106.
²Boogaart, 106.
³There are several good reasons to compare these two chapters. We find, for instance, that in both narratives a death decree is issued in relation to prayer: in chap. 3 the friends are sentenced to death because they refuse to pray, in chap. 6 Daniel is thrown to the lions because he does. It is in these two chapters of the book that the Jews are called the servants of God (3:26, 28 and 6:21). And both chapters end with a royal decree that to some degree honors God. In 3:28 God is named as "the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego," in 6:27 he is called the "God of Daniel." Besides noting further semantic links "between the two tales," Lacocque has connected the chapters also in their structural outline (The Book of Daniel, 107). They share an introduction (3:1-7 and 6:2-9), a first part (3:8-23 and 6:10-19), a second part (3:24-27 and 6:20-25), and a conclusion (3:28-30 and 6:26-29). This outline is general and may fit many narratives. Doukhan (Le soupir, 80, 140) has, however, provided a more specific chiastic outline for the two chapters, supporting the general conception of their parallel nature. In the broader structure of the book, this parallel has been observed, among others, by A. Lenglet ("La structure littéraire de Daniel 2-7," Bib 53 [1972]: 169-190). For a discussion of its theological significance in relation to the role of the prayers in the structure of the book, see chapter 3, pp. 295-302, the section "In the Structure of the Book."

⁴As chapter 2 presents the characterization of the kings in further detail, at this stage the observations are limited to making the necessary point.
the power exerted by Nebuchadnezzar in defiance of God. It is fueled by the Chaldeans.

The struggle between king and God in chap. 3 is thus fairly simple. In chap. 6, however, Darius is not in line with his officials and not in deliberate opposition to God. The line between God and His antagonists is more clearly drawn in chap. 3 than chap. 6.

In accordance with these reflections, we will also in regard to this chapter structure the narrative from the specific perspective of the interactions between the characters (see table 5), well aware of the fact that this is only one of several possible perspectives, and that elements of the narrative are woven together in many ways as the events progress.

The beginning and the end of the frame are linked by wording as well as by content. The kingdom (מְלָכָה, vss. 1, 2, 4 and 27) is referred to in its entirety (מֵלֶאךְ מֶלְאַכֶּנָּא in vss. 2, 4 and מְלָכָה מֶלֶאךְ מֶלְאַכֶּנָּא in vs. 27); in the beginning Darius is administering the whole kingdom, in the end he is addressing all people inhabiting it. There is also a correlation between the sovereignty of Darius as expressed in his management of the empire (vss. 1-4) and the sovereignty of God as acknowledged later (vss. 26-29). Finally, the eminence of Daniel’s work is related in both.

1The difference between king Darius in chap. 6 and king Nebuchadnezzar in chap. 3 may be illustrated by the parallel structure of these narratives, provided by Doukhan (Le soupir, 80, 140). In his structure of chap. 6, Doukhan divides his middle section (“The Test of the Lions,” vss. 14-24) into the following subsections: the dialogue between king and Daniel, Daniel in the den, the second dialogue between king and Daniel, and Daniel saved from the lions. But he does not specify the king’s attempt to save Daniel (vs. 15) or his fasting (vs. 19). While the truth of the parallel relationship between the chapters is well-established, these differences are precisely the features that show the dissimilarity between the kings of the two narratives.

2Most scholars count without further commentary vs. 1 with the preceding chapter. Here I follow Toews (53) and Prinsloo (103-104).

3As it has been noted by Boogaart (111). For the theological significance, see the conclusion below, pp. 142-143, and the discussion of the content of the decree by Darius in chapter 2, pp. 276-282.
TABLE 5
INTERPERSONAL STRUCTURE OF DANIEL 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-4</th>
<th>Frame: Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>King Darius and his kingdom: the king sovereign success of Daniel</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>Conspirators take initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>A seek a way to frame Daniel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10</td>
<td>B make the king sign the decree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>C Daniel is praying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>B' find Daniel guilty in relation to human law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>A' enforce the execution of Daniel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II</th>
<th>King takes initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>D seeks a way to save Daniel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>E enforces the decree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>F the king is fasting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>E' finds Daniel innocent in the eyes of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>D' executes the conspirators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26-29 Frame: Results
King Darius to his kingdom: God sovereign success of Daniel
The main body of the narrative (vss. 15-25) is divided into two sections. The events initiated by the conspirators are all found in section I. In section II the king makes an attempt to control the actions. Syntactically, the introduction to each of the individual scenes (A, B, C, etc.) is distinguished by the fact that these persons (the conspirators in vss. 5, 7, 12, and 16; the king in vss. 15, 17, 19, 20, and 25; Daniel in vs. 11) appear as subjects in the very beginning of the scenes.

The initiatives by the enemies of Daniel in section I are illustrated by the verbs and are linked chiastically together. Scene A forms an introduction stating their intent: they seek\(^1\) (vs. 5) to find a cause against Daniel. The subsequent three scenes are scenes of action linked by a common verb. In B\(^2\) they hurry in a throng (בָּשַׄב) to the king (vs. 7) and make him sign a decree; in B' they hurry (בָּשַׄב) to find Daniel in prayer (vs. 12) and continue to the king with an accusation against Daniel for breaking the decree; in A' they hurry (בָּשַׄב) back to the king (vs. 16) a third and final time to prevent him from taking over and to force him to bring about the execution of Daniel. These four initiatives center around a contrasting action\(^4\) by Daniel in vs. 11, namely his daily routine of praying.

\(^1\)A participle from בָּשַׄב ("seek, ask, pray"); note the play on the various meanings of this word, used also in the injunction, vss. 8 and 13, and of the act of prayer by Daniel in vs. 12.

\(^2\)B and B' are linked together in several ways. Only here do we find the signing (the verb בָּשַׄב, "write, sign, ratify," twice in B in vss. 9 and 10 and twice in B' in vss. 13 and 14) of the injunction mentioned. The period of the 30 days and the actual punishment of being thrown into the lions (the phrase is בַּשָּׁב אַלּוֹת אֶרֶם אֲדֹנָי, "he shall be cast into the lions' den," vss. 8 and 13) are also present only here.

\(^3\)Or "move in excitement" (Vogt, 155). In Biblical Aramaic, the verb is present only in this chapter, vss. 7, 12, and 16. The meaning of the verb has been somewhat debated; cf. the discussion by Collins (Daniel, 265-266) and Goldingay (Daniel, 121).

\(^4\)"There is a sharp contrast between Daniel's calm faithfulness and the frantic rushing about of his rivals" (Prinsloo, 105-106).
In section II the king returns from the frame of events in his attempt to assume the upper hand. The five scenes are, like section I, structured as a chiasm. Scene D is an introduction stating his intent: he hears (יָדַע) about Daniel and decides (ותיָדַע, בָּלָוי, his heart; cf. Dan 1:8) to save him. The subsequent scenes with the actions of the king are linked by a common verb, דָּבָר, “to order.” In E (vss. 17-18) he, though reluctantly, orders (ָדָבָר) the enforcement of the decree by punishing Daniel, in E' he orders (דָּבָר) Daniel brought up from the den. In D' (vs. 25) he finally orders the execution of the conspirators.

Thus D deals with the attempt at salvation of Daniel, D' with the condemnation of his enemies. E and E' describe the punishment and the deliverance of Daniel, respectively. In the center of this section we find the king abstinent and fasting (F, vss. 19). The scene is surrounded by movements from the den to the palace and back again. In vs. 19a the king returns (גָּו, “go”) to his palace; in vs. 20a he raises up and goes (חָא) to find Daniel delivered and innocent. Containing no action, this center forms a contrast to the other parts of the section. At the same time, it illustrates the very important point that the king's activity in general is futile. He has been trapped. He is not in charge. He is powerless. There is nothing he really can do except doing nothing, which is exactly how he spends the night (vs. 19). And in the final end he escapes his unhappy dilemma only because of God's miraculous intervention.

While each of these two middle sections of the chapter are structured as chiasms, they also parallel each other in a way that underscores the contrasting attitudes of conspirators and king. The conspirators try to frame Daniel (A), the king to save him (D).1 In B and E

1It is a common trait for A and D that they, from a scenic, or dramatic, point of view, are eventless. Nothing happens. They express the intentions of the conspirators and the king, respectively.
the king first signs the injunction, next he enforces it. The praying of Daniel three times a day (C) corresponds to the fasting of the king during the whole night (F). In B’ Daniel is found (רֹאשׁ) guilty according to the laws of the Medes and the Persians, in E’ he is found (רֹאשׁ) innocent by God.2 In A’ the conspirators press the king to execute Daniel, in D’ the king reverses the fate of the participants of the drama and executes Daniel’s adversaries.

This structure not only includes, but even emphasizes, the praying and the fasting, two elements most often overlooked or neglected.3 In the paragraph to follow, their significance in the plot is investigated.

**In the Plot of the Narrative**

Since much has already been indicated about the plot of the narrative, the treatment in this section is brief. From the outset the story is told as a story about the government of a new kingdom. To improve its management, the king makes some administrative

1 This verb is a keyword in the narrative. It is used four times in vss. 5-6 where Daniel’s adversaries in vain “seek (רָצָא) to find” a pretext for an accusation against him. In vs. 7 they hurry (שָׁבַע) to the king. In vs. 12 (the introduction to B’) they once again “hurry” and find (רָאשׁ) Daniel praying (literally “seeking, asking,” from אָשֹׁא). This illustrates how the narrative links the elements together in the course of events.

2 The two sections also share the elements of dialogue. In B’ the satraps find Daniel in prayer and next address the king with a question to which he answers. In E’ the king finds Daniel, asks him a question and receives an answer. These are the only two dialogues in the chapter.

3 The uncertainty of the function of the fasting of the king may be illustrated by its place in the various outlines. Originally Collins placed it as part of the conclusion (vss. 17-19) of the report of condemnation (vss. 11-19) and labeled it “distress of king” (Daniel with an Introduction, 70-71). More recently he reads it together with the “deliverance” section (vss. 19-25) (Daniel, 262). Smith-Christopher, who is to be commended for understanding the prayer of Daniel as an independent unit, reads the king’s fast together with the previous vss. 17 and 18 in a section called “punishment” while his commentary rather links the verse with the subsequent deliverance of Daniel (Smith-Christopher, 92-93). The significance of this element will be enlarged in chapter 2 on the kings and gentiles in prayer.
adjustments in order to be personally less bothered. But because of the jealousy of the ministers and satraps and the scheme they invent, the issue becomes religious. The unchangeable law of the Medes and the Persians conflicts with the law of the God of Daniel. Thus two empires clash. As Daniel takes his stand for the kingdom of God, the tension reaches its first peak with the scene in vs. 12 where he is caught in the act of praying, following the law of the kingdom of his God, but breaking the injunction just ratified by the king.

On a historical level the tension of the plot concerns the fate of Daniel. What will happen to him now? As the character of Darius emerges as a real part of the action, and the dilemma in which he is caught moves into focus, the question about the king's eventual fate and attitude is also raised. On a religious level, the tension is created by the clash of the empires and the conflict between their constitutions. It is specifically related to the issue of

1The meaning of the last phrase of vs. 3, using the verb הָזֵר, is that the king "should not be troubled," not "should not suffer loss" (Goldingay, Daniel, 119-121). See also H. L. Ginsberg, "Lexicographical Notes," Hebräische Wortforschung: Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von Walter Baumgartner, Vetus Testamentum Supplements 16 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 81. Ginsberg explains the sense also of Esth 7:4 and refers to Ezra 4:13, 15, 22 and the related Akkadian nazaqu. This would indicate a reform by the king in order to make administration more effective, stated positively, by delegating responsibility, stated in a more negative way, by allowing others to take over. As we have seen, the latter is exactly what happens in the narrative. For that reason also, this translation is to be recommended.

2The chapter contains a play on the word for law, יָד, dat, used about Daniel's religion in vs. 6, "the law of his God," and about the unchangeable law of the Medes and the Persians in vss. 9, 13, 16.

3This battle is the main issue of the perceptive study by Boogaart, significantly entitled "A Tale of Two Empires."

4Thus from this perspective confirming the analysis by Toews (53-54), regarding vss. 11-18 as the peak.

5For a description of the character of Darius, see further chapter 2.
prayer and worship. Daniel’s unceasing worship and service to God (vss. 11, 17, 21) stand in opposition to the unchangeable law of the human kingdom.

The answer to the questions raised regarding the fate of Daniel is revealed in scenes reflecting a process of judgment. Punished by the law of the human kingdom, Daniel is nonetheless found innocent by a divine court (vs. 23). His salvation from the lions is God’s public verdict of Daniel’s lack of guilt. By this deliverance the basic tension of the plot is relieved. The question regarding Daniel is answered. The religious issue is also addressed. The kingdom of God is the eternal kingdom. Its basic law cannot be dissolved. The human kingdom is but temporary. Its unchangeable law may be canceled.

The third question of the plot focused on king Darius. For the development of the events, his reaction is important. Only because he is able to testify to the miraculous intervention by God (vs. 24), the injunction can be reversed, the enemies or conspirators

1 Note the passive form of the sentence that speaks about Daniel’s lack of guilt, “because before Him innocence was found with regard to me.” The verb “was found” from שמע reflects the use in vs. 12 and also plays on its 5 occurrences in vss. 5-6.

2 From this perspective it is therefore fully consistent to refer to this section of the narrative as its climax; cf. Doukhan (Le soupir, 140) and Boogaart (110).

3 To the repeated adjectival phrase about the law, יד לא תنهار, “which shall not pass away” (vss. 9 and 13), the conspirators in vs. 9 add יד לא תחלש, “which is not to be changed” (see also vs. 17). The chapter plays on the verb ליו, to change, in vs. 18 speaking about how the opening to the den was sealed so that the situation of Daniel could not change. Note also its occurrence in 2:9, 21 and in 3:28 (the three friends “transgressing” the royal command), and the presence of the verb “pass away,” שימ, in the prayer in Dan 2:21 along with לה.
justly put to death (vs. 25).¹ and the sovereignty and eternal character of the kingdom of
God acknowledged as is done by the royal decree (vss. 26-28).²

Conclusion: The Function of Prayer

Themes and Characters

From a literary point of view, the habitual praying by Daniel is the core of the
narrative. It forms the contrasting structural center amidst the frantic activities by his
enemies. The tension of the plot is created when the conspirators catch Daniel while he is
continuing his custom of praying towards Jerusalem.

Prayer therefore highlights the essential theological issues of the chapter. As in the
story about the three friends in the fiery furnace, presence and power are the decisive
themes. Daniel, who habitually communicates with God through prayer, experiences the
divine presence in a time of crisis. His enemies do not. Daniel’s prayers bring about a
demonstration of the power and sovereignty of God.

These themes are set in the broader context of a clash between two empires, a conflict
between human and divine sovereignty. Each kingdom has its law (חתי, vss. 6, 9, 13). In
praying, Daniel obeys the law of God’s kingdom; in delivering Daniel, God proves His laws
to be eternal and the “unchangeable” laws of the human empire to be but temporary.

¹Boogaart (109) has noted that the ordeal in the lions’ den according to the injunction
was “a test of the sovereignty of the man or god before whom one humbled oneself. If
another king, appointed and defended by his nation’s god or another national god, were
truly superior to Darius, his devotee would emerge unscathed.” When Daniel is saved, his
accusers, “according to the logic of the ordeal, . . . must now submit to the same test” (110).

²From this perspective Prinsloo’s view (106), that the final decree forms the climax,
holds true. Only in this decree the philosophy of the chapter is explicitly spelled out; cf. the
similar significance of the prayer of Daniel in 2:20-23 in its context, and of the answer
given by the three young men in 3:16-18.
The time sequence of the narrative implies an eschatological perspective, "the setting of the Persian dominion," "the night of trial" (vs. 19) and "the rising of God's dominion." As the narrative closes and the eternal kingdom of the living God is praised, the reader in consequence must raise a question from an apocalyptic perspective: if Daniel's prayers prove thus effective in his trial of the night, will not also his constant petitions with his face turned towards Jerusalem then be heard? Will the kingdom of God not be established?

The relationship between Daniel and his God is the axis around which the events of the narrative turn. Even without the words, Daniel's regular and daily worship of God helps to reveal the nature of God. He is always there, as realized by king Darius when he describes God by the adjective "living" (vss. 21, 27, but not in vs. 17, indicating a development in the thoughts of Darius). God is the master of life and death, the sovereign of both heaven and earth (vs. 28). The close relationship between God and Daniel is illustrated by the chapter's explicit references to God, accentuating the fact that He is the

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1So Boogaart (111). He concludes from his analysis that "first, we see . . . that 'vision' is not the only genre used to render the apocalyptic world view in the Old Testament. Daniel 6 is clearly an apocalyptic story. Second, we see that there is a thematic relationship between this story and the apocalyptic visions in the second half of the book of Daniel. While some scholars have questioned whether the stories in the first half of the book belong together with the visions in the second half, the apocalyptic orientation of Daniel 6 provides new evidence for the unity of the book" (112).

2Leading up to the following chapters in the book; cf. the comments by Boogaart (111-112). Towner (Daniel, 85) also reflects on the significance of the "canonical juxtaposition to the eschatological hope of Daniel 7-12" of this and the previous narratives as "an anticipation of the experience of the faithful in the face of ultimate testing." The present investigation of chap. 6 suggests that this element is inherent to the narrative.

3The habitual worship by Daniel, turned towards Jerusalem in prayer, connects him both with his people and with the continuous service of the temple in Jerusalem.

4From that perspective, the common association with resurrection in the history of the interpretation of the story is not without merit, so Ferguson (140-141). See also Towner (Daniel, 84-85).
"God of Daniel." More than anything, the prayers therefore help to depict the pray-er, the character of Daniel.

His prayers are personal and private, not public. While in chap. 2 we saw him praying in a specific crisis, this narrative reveals that his continuous life with God is the basis for his abilities and loyalty, not only towards God, but also towards man and society (vss. 5b, 23b, and 29). His faithfulness and unselfishness in prayer lead to constant devotion in his service.

The Prayer Event

From the perspective of divine-human communication, the prayer creates a tension and calls forth the divine answer: God's deliverance. But in the narrative, the very event of Daniel's constant prayers also becomes a message from God regarding His unchangeable law and His eternal kingdom. Daniel's commitment to prayer communicates to king Darius the personal nature of the God whose servant Daniel is (vs. 21).

The prayer situation in this chapter is, contrary to the public worship in chap. 3, of a private nature. The dilemma facing Daniel emphasizes an individual side of Old Testamental monotheism: not only being part of the people, standing as a group before God, but having a personal relationship with Him; not only serving under public scrutiny, but praying and worshiping in quietude and solitude. In contrast to chap. 3, the question is not about refusing to worship an idol, but of continuously serving God.1

The attitude of Daniel is loyalty and unselfishness. He is not only praying when in specific trouble, as in chap. 2, but has offered his prayers daily. Turned towards Jerusalem

1"It is not, as with his three companions in chap. 3, a question of a positive sin which he will not commit, but of a positive duty, which he will not omit" (Driver, 71).
he has been praying for his people, exemplifying how genuine prayer always look at the need of the believing community at large. And though Daniel as a "man of prayer" is sincere in his service towards the earthly kingdoms, when in conflict, his loyalty towards the kingdom of God surpasses all other commitments. As in chaps. 2 and 3, the prayers are offered to God independently of the final outcome. No external circumstances are able to deter Daniel from making his petitions or giving his thanks. The individual and communal value of the prayer life with God is of such a character that he would never sever this personal relationship.

God responds to Daniel’s praying by intervention and deliverance. In the narrative, the connection between heaven and earth is not only found on a vertical, but also on a chronological level. As a person of prayer, Daniel is part of the future kingdom of God. Praying in the direction of Jerusalem implies absence and longing: he is not there. The narrative context provides a chronological, eschatological framework: he is not there yet. The prayer of Daniel is a "cry for the kingdom" of God.¹

Summary

Besides activating the plot of the narrative and depicting God as the “God of Daniel” and Daniel as “God’s servant,” the prayer life of Daniel has several theological functions. In the narrative it exemplifies the unbreakable character of the "law (πντ) of God" and both constitutes and conveys the basic message from God to Darius. Moreover, it contributes to

¹"Every truly Christian prayer of petition is, implicitly at least, a request that the Kingdom may come" (Gabriel Daly, Asking the Father [Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1982], 80). See also Stanley J. Grenz, Prayer: The Cry for the Kingdom (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988), 17-18.
our understanding of the role of prayer in the Old Testament by pointing out that the “man of prayer” already now belongs to the kingdom of God to come.

Dan 9

Identifying and Situating the Prayers

Interactions Between God and Man

The events in chap. 9 are set in motion because Daniel studies scriptural prophecies. It is explicitly stated that they are given by God: they comprise “the word of YHWH” (דָּבָר יְהוָה) to the prophet Jeremiah (vs. 2). As a result, Daniel seeks God by fasting and prayer (vs. 3). His prayer covers most of the chapter (vss. 4-19). When closing, the angel Gabriel appears with a “word” (vs. 23, דָּבָר), “provoked by the action of the prayer.”1 We infer that his answer (vss. 24-27) comes from God, though its source is not directly mentioned.2 The sequence is thus: a previous divine activity preserved in the prophetic writings, a reaction in prayer by Daniel, and finally, an answer by God through an angelic mediator.

Prayers, References to Prayer, and Allusions to Prayer

The chapter contains only one prayer, a private prayer by Daniel in vss. 4b-19. The prayer is delineated at its beginning by a lead-in and a text (vs. 4a): lead-in: “and I prayed (הָפַל from בָּבָז) to YHWH my God”; text: “and I confessed (הָפַל from רָאשִׁי) and said.”

1Rast, 133.

2Ibid. We do so for several reasons, among them the addressee of the prayer (God); our former acquaintance with Gabriel (8:16); and the appellative later given to Daniel as the “highly beloved” (טַעַר, 9:23), the plural passive participle by Goldingay (Daniel, 228) labeled “an intensive plural.” The passive typically expresses the divine intervention or emotion.

3Cf. the use of the same verb in Dan 2:23.
The demarcation of the end of the prayer is likewise clear. It is followed in vs. 20 by a subordinate clause introduced by waw plus the temporal conjunction רָעַם: "And while I was still speaking, praying and confessing . . . ", the last two verbs repeated from the introduction to the prayer, רָאָס and רָאָשׁ, also here in the hitpael. These terms show up in hitpael as a word pair in connection with prayers of repentance in Neh 1:6; 9:2, and Ezra 10:1.

In the description of the circumstances surrounding the prayer, several expressions are employed that help to define it more precisely. In vs. 3 Daniel "sets his face"3 to seek God in prayer and supplication, through fasting, sack, and ashes. The gestures surrounding his prayer were fitting for penance and confession of sin (cf. Esth 4:1-4; Jonah 3:6; Ezra 9:3-4; and Neh 9:1). The expression "to seek in prayer and supplication" is unique in the Old Testament, with the verb רָאָשׁ ("seek") taking the prayer as its direct object. The meaning is hardly limited to "pray earnestly,4 but rather to inquire or to make prayers of

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1For the term רָאָשׁ, "praise, confess, give thanks"; see KB (2:389), and the comments on the words and themes of the prayer in Dan 2:20-23 above, p. 91.

2G. Mayer concludes after an evaluation of the usage of רָאָשׁ that "the passages listed use the hithpael of רָאָשׁ as a technical term for the recitation of a particular kind of prayer, namely, a prayer of repentance or a lament including a confession of sin," in "rrv ydh," TDOT (1986), 5:443. See also J. F. A. Sawyer, "Types of Prayer in the Old Testament: Some Semantic Observations on Hitpallel, Hithannen, Etc.," Semitics 7 (1980): 131-134.

3Setting the face towards God reflects the idea of praying in the direction of the temple in Jerusalem, cf. 6:11; see also Rast (100).

4Cf. Zeph 2:3, in which YHWH, רָאָשׁ, righteousness, and רָאָס, humility are the objects.

5Porteous, 136.
inquiry, as the verb traditionally was linked to the oracle (cf. 2 Sam 21:2 and Hos 5:15; note also Dan 8:15).

The two words for prayer in vs. 3 denote first prayer in general, תְּפִלָּה, tepillāh;\(^1\) next more specific supplication, תֶּחְנָה, tekhnāh.\(^3\) They both appear in vs. 17 in the prayer in exactly the same sense,\(^4\) again in vs. 21, תֶּחְנָה in both vss. 18 and 23. In vs. 20 another term for prayer from the root פָּנַי, tānā, tehinānāh,\(^5\) is used.

While fasting (vs. 3) by its very nature takes place over a certain period of time, the reference to the evening sacrifice in vs. 21 relates the prayer to a specific time and adds to the depiction of Daniel as a man of regular and loyal habits of worship.\(^6\)

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\(^1\)See Montgomery (360) and Hartmann and Di Lella (241). The literal meaning "seeking prayer" may closely mirror the setting of the oracle, as "seeking prayer" would indicate a strong longing for communication. The synonym תְּפִלָּה is used about seeking an oracle in a similar situation in 2 Chr 20:3ff. (Rast, 101).

\(^2\)The term most often understood as simply denoting prayer, examples are Pss 17:1; 42:9; 65:2; 86:1; 90:1; 102:1; Isa 1:15; and Hab 3:1. K. Heinen refers also to Dan 9 when he concludes that the term can designate a genre as a terminus technicus for the prayer of lament and petition (K. Heinen, "Das Nomen třilla als Gattungsbezeichnung," BZ 17 [1973]: 103-15).

\(^3\)כָּרֶב comes from the root כָּרֶב, "grace, mercy, favor," and is always used as an abstract plural, "cries for favor" or "supplications"; see D. N. Freedman, J. R. Lundblom and H.-J. Fabry, "כָּרֶב הָנָן," TDOT (1986), 5:26. It forms yet another link to Daniel's praying in chap. 6; cf. the use of the hitpēel of the verb כָּרֶב in 6:12.

\(^4\)Goldingay (Daniel, 227) distinguishes in meaning between the two in the context of vs. 4, the first term a general one for prayer, "the second specifies the kind of prayer." Hartman and Di Lella (241) call the expression a hendiadys for "supplicating prayer." The two terms stand parallel in Ps 143:1.

\(^5\)Found in parallel with תְּפִלָּה in Solomon's prayer in, for instance, 1 Kgs 8:28, 38, 49. It can mean "favor" or "mercy" or, like here, "cry for favor," "supplication" (Freedman, Lundbom and Fabry, 25).

\(^6\)Lacocque ("The Liturgical Prayer," 142) takes the view that the prayer actually was composed in Jerusalem, but explains how Daniel in the story could be perceived as present in Babylon, "Daniel turns himself towards Jerusalem, at the time of the evening sacrifice,
In the Structure of the Chapter

The outline of chap. 9 is fairly simple compared with the narratives of the first section of the book. We can with Collins divide it into three parts:\(^1\) (1) *introduction* to the chapter (vss. 1-2), (2) *prayer* (vss. 3-19) with an introduction in vss. 3-4a and the words recorded in vss. 4b-19, and (3) and *revelation* (vss. 20-27), including an epiphany (vss. 20-23) and an angelic discourse (vss. 24-27). A discussion of the theological relationship between these parts is only possible on the basis of an investigation of the actual content of the prayer to which we will now turn.

The Theological Content of the Prayer in Dan 9:4b-19

Translation

The remarks in the parallel introduction to the prayer in Dan 2 regarding the basic manuscripts hold true for the prayer in chap. 9 as well.\(^2\) The Dead Sea Scrolls add nothing significant to the text of this prayer.\(^3\) In our translation of the prayer below, textual and grammatical notes are not intended to be comprehensive, but accompany the translation to the degree they are deemed relevant for the theological content of the prayer, or necessary to clarify the meaning in relation to the Masoretic text.

and, liturgically, i.e., effectively, he is in the Temple and offers 'minhāh'.”

\(^1\) Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction*, 89-90.

\(^2\) Besides Rast (82-86), the most important comments on textual issues for the chapter are generally found in Collins (*Daniel*, 344-345), Goldingay (*Daniel*, 226-228), and Montgomery (368-370).

\(^3\) According to Ulrich (25), 4QDan⁶ contains five tiny fragments of the prayer in Dan 9, but only with one word each. The Old Latin Weingarten-fragment contains only 2:18-33, 9:25-27, and 10:1-11.
"O please, my Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant and maintains his unfailing love towards all who love him and keep his commands.

We have sinned, we have committed iniquity, we have acted wickedly, and we have rebelled. We have turned away from your commands and your just decisions.

and we have not listened to your servants the prophets who in your name spoke to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

You have all the right, O Lord, and today only open shame falls upon us—the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem—all Israel, near and far away, in every country to which you have thrust them because of the treachery with which they betrayed you.

O YHWH, to us is only open shame, to our kings, princes and fathers who sinned against you.

But mercy and forgiveness is up to you, O Lord our God.

In the appellative, the Old Greek, o', adds a third element, ὁ ἰσχυρός ("the mighty"); cf. a similar enlargement in Dan 2:20. The element is found placed in identical wording in the three-part address in Neh 9:32 ("the mighty" from the Hebrew אֱלֹהֵינוֹ הַיָּחֵי), and it could very well be taken from there.

Hornig (Dissertation, 81, and also in her notes, 25), follows Montgomery (364 and 369) in reading the tetragrammaton here and in the other instances where the manuscript says ὅδε for the Lord. There is no textual reason to do so.

"Today" (הַיּוֹם) is also found in Ezra 9:7 and in several verses in Jeremiah (44:6, 22, 23) and denotes the present moment, this day (Goldingay, Daniel, 227).

Codex B of θ reads an additional line in the beginning of the verse, "in You, Lord, is our δικαίωμα," thus introducing "the idea of imputed righteousness" (Rast, 82).

In o' the plural forms are translated into the singular δικαίωμα and εὐλογία, a normal pattern in LXX. The plural could be due to the idea of many manifestations or acts of God's mercy or of His forgiveness (Goldingay, Daniel, 227).
Because we rebelled against him,

and did not obey YHWH our God so that we walked in accordance with his instructions which he set before us by his servants the prophets,

and all Israel broke your law and turned away without obeying you, the sworn curse written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, has been poured down upon us.

Because we sinned against him,

he established his words which he had spoken against us and our judges, by bringing upon us such a great calamity that nothing has ever happened like what happened to Jerusalem;

just as it is written in the law of Moses, this calamity came upon us.

Abstract nouns are frequently expressed by a plural; see Waltke and O'Connor ($§$ 7.4.4, 120-121).

1 Here and in vs. 11 the conjunction יִשָּׁנָה is read as causal and as an introduction to the following sentence structure. I agree with Goldingay ($Daniel$, 225, 227) that a concessive clause ("even/though," NIV) introduced by יִשָּׁנָה is unlikely in the context. As a causal clause, it could belong to the preceding (JB, JPS), but also to the following; see, for instance, Gen 3:14, 17; 29:33; and Deut 7:8. For יִשָּׁנָה introducing causal clauses; see Waltke and O’Connor ($§$ 38.4, 640-641).

2 Literally "listened to the voice of," an idiom for obeying one’s command, common not least in Deuteronomy (for instance 28:1 and 15) and Jeremiah (3:13 et al.); see further Rast (115-116). Cf. also Gen 4:23.

3 The prefix lamed + the infinitive introduce the result.

4 The Greek versions, Vulgate, and the Peshitta all read "the law" in singular, while the plural of the Masoretic text says "instructions" in the more original sense of הָנַחַת. The Old Greek also adds the name of Moses, reading "the law which he set before Moses and us," probably inspired by its occurrence in vs. 11.

5 The curse and the oath are here understood as a hendiadys, so Hartman and Di Lella (242), "the sworn curse" (cf. Neh 10:30 and Num 5:21, "the oath of the curse").

6 o’ reads διαθήκη, covenant, of Moses instead of נָשָׁה, in the law of Moses.
We did not sweeten the face of YHWH our God by repenting our wickedness and by
gaining insight from your truth.\(^1\)

14 and YHWH has watched for the right moment to bring the calamity upon us; for
YHWH our God is righteous in all his actions, and\(^2\) we did not obey him.

15 But now, O Lord our God, who with a mighty hand brought your people out of the
land of Egypt, and made for yourself a reputation that you still have today, we have
sinned and acted wickedly.

16 O Lord, in accordance with all your acts of salvation, please let your anger and wrath
turn back from your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain; for because of our sins and
the iniquities of our ancestors, Jerusalem and your people have become objects of
scorn among all our neighbors.

17 And now, listen, our God, to your servant's prayer of supplications.\(^3\) Let your face
shine upon your destroyed sanctuary\(^4\)—for the sake of my Lord.\(^5\)

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\(^1\) ο’ reads δικαιοσύνη, righteousness, for ἡσύ, truth.

\(^2\) Or “but,” reading the waw as adversative, so Rast (77).

\(^3\) Literally, “to your servant’s prayer and to his supplications.” The Masoretic text
reads “his supplications” in the third person. LXX keeps the second person throughout the
verse. As noted in the comment on Dan 2:23 above, pp. 90-91, the shift between second
and third person in the address to God is a common phenomenon in the OT, in this prayer
in Dan 9 also seen in vss. 10-11.

\(^4\) LXX says “your holy mountain” (as in vss. 16 and 20) for מִקְדֶשׁ, “your sanctuary.”

\(^5\) Both ο’ and θ seem to struggle with the abrupt expression לְזָעַר, אֲלֵיה יִרְצֶנּ, “for the sake of
my Lord,” the Old Greek saying “for the sake of your servants,” θ "for your sake, Lord.”
Vulgate omits "Lord," and the Syriac reads “for the sake of your name.” The short
Masoretic wording could be retained (Rast, 85). In the direct and intensive personal
address, the prayer may hurry directly to the phrase “my Lord,” omitting the pre-
understood "you."
18 Incline, my God, your ear and hear, open your eyes and take notice of our complete
desolation\(^1\) and of the city that is attached to your name. Not based on our own
righteous deeds\(^2\) do we entreat you with our supplications,\(^3\) but relying on your great
mercy alone.

19 My Lord, listen! My Lord, pardon! My Lord, hear and act!\(^4\) Make no delay!—for
your own sake, my God; for your name is attached to your city and to your people.\(^5\)

Literary Form

Most scholars agree\(^6\) that a simple analysis of the prayer divides it into two parts: the
confession in vss. 4b-14 and the petition (or supplication) in vss. 15-19.\(^7\) While I

\(^1\)Here the plural form מִפְּלָג describes the completeness of the destruction.

\(^2\)The plural indicating "acts of salvation/righteousness."

\(^3\)Literally "causing our petitions/supplications to fall before you." In the OT the phrase is found, besides Dan 9:18 and 20 (with different, yet related nouns), only in the
book of Jeremiah (36:7; 37:20; 38:26; 42:2, 9); see Rast (127).

\(^4\)θ reverses the order of the three imperative petitions in the beginning of the verse
into the following sequence: act, pardon, listen, while only "listen, Lord" is present in
LXX.

\(^5\)Proper names such as Zion and Israel are by o' added to "your city" and "your
people."

\(^6\)Bayer was unique in his treatment of the structure of the prayer (13-21). He divided
the prayer into 14 strophes, the first and last standing alone, the remaining 12 being paired.
He found its overall structure to be chiastic. He did not use the formal elements related to
communication, and he employed a long-since outdated classical metric system. For these
reasons he has had no followers in spite of many valuable observations regarding the
prayer.

\(^7\)So, for instance, Gilbert (299, 301), Montgomery (363, 366), Rast (105), and Heaton
(205-207). Vs. 4b can with Goldingay (Daniel, 235) be separated as an "ascription of
praise," by Collins (Daniel, 347) called the invocation.
acknowledge the basic truth of this partition, I want to describe the structure in more detail with specific reference to the aspects of the prayer as part of a dialogue.

Prayer structure

Greenberg has shown a social analogy between the confessions within interhuman speech (e.g., 1 Sam 26:21; 2 Kgs 18:14; 2 Sam 24:10; and Judg 10:10-15) and within the divine-human dialogue in the prose prayers of the Old Testament.1 The prayer by Daniel is structured around the basic elements for these spheres of communication: confession of sin, acknowledgment, motivation, and petition. I present a structure of the prayer (see table 6)2 and discuss the individual elements in more detail in order to deduce the implications of the structure.

The invocation: Vs. 4b. It contains the first direct address to God. The initial petitionary מָלַךְ of vs. 4b is an expression of intense entreaty.3 The address is followed by a description of the God invoked as the God of the covenant. This description can be labeled "an ascription of praise."4

1See especially Greenberg (24-30), but also P. Miller (They Cried, 337-357).

2In this, I am particularly indebted to Hornig (Dissertation, 81-83).

3See DCH (1:333), s.v. מָלַךְ. It carries with it the connotation of intense address, besides this text used in the context of forgiveness in interhuman dialogue in Gen 50:17 (x2), and in divine-human relationship in Exod 32:21 and Neh 1:5, 11. Other scriptural occurrences are found, for instance, in Ps 118:25 (x2) in a cultic shout for salvation and deliverance, and in the prayer of king Hezekiah for his life (2 Kgs 20:3).

4P. Miller, They Cried, 256.
## TABLE 6

**STRUCTURAL OUTLINE OF THE PRAYER IN DANIEL 9:4B-19**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of Prayer</th>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Invocation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>address</td>
<td>4b</td>
<td>O please, my Lord,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>description</td>
<td>4c</td>
<td>the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant and maintains his unfailing love towards all who love him and obey his commands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. Confession</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confession of sin (general)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>We have sinned, we have committed iniquity, we have acted wickedly, and we have rebelled. We have turned away from your commands and your just decisions, and we have not listened to your servants the prophets who in your name spoke to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(more specific)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III. Acknowledgments</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. acknowledgment (present state)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>You have all the right, O Lord, and today only open shame falls upon us—the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem—all Israel, near and far away, in every country to which you have thrust them because of the treachery with which they have betrayed you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>address</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>O YHWH,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acknowledgment (continued)</td>
<td>9a</td>
<td>to us is only open shame, to our kings, princes, and fathers who sinned against you. But mercy and forgiveness is up to you, O Lord our God.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 6—Continued.

| 2. acknowledgment (past history) | 9b-13 | Because we rebelled against you, and did not obey YHWH our God so that we walked in accordance with his instructions which he set before us by his servants the prophets, and all Israel broke your law and turned away without obeying you, the sworn curse written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, has been poured down upon us. Because we sinned against him, he established his words which he had spoken against us and our judges, by bringing upon us such a great calamity that nothing has ever happened like what happened to Jerusalem; just as it is written in the law of Moses, this calamity came upon us. |

| 3. acknowledgment (summary) | 13b-14 | We did not sweeten the face of YHWH our God by repenting our wickedness and by gaining insight from your truth, and YHWH has watched for the right moment to bring the calamity upon us; for YHWH our God is righteous in all his actions, and we did not obey him. |

IV. Supplications

| 1. transition | 15a | But now, |
| address | 15b | O Lord our God, |
| description | 15c | who with a mighty hand brought your people out of the land of Egypt, and made for yourself a reputation that you still have today, |
| confession | 15d | we have sinned and acted wickedly. |
| address | 16a | O Lord, |
| motivation | 16b | in accordance with all your acts of salvation, |
| petition | 16c | please let your anger and wrath turn back from your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain; |
| acknowledgment | 16d | for because of our sins and the iniquities of our ancestors, Jerusalem and your people have become objects of scorn among all our neighbors. |
| 2. transition | 17a | And now,       |
|              | 17b | listen, our God, |
|              |     | to your servant's prayer and |
|              |     | supplications.   |
|              |     | Let your face shine over your destroyed sanctuary |
| motivation   | 17c | for the sake of my Lord. |
| petition +   | 18a | Incline, my God, your ear, and hear, |
| address      |     | open your eyes and take notice of |
| (for attention)|    | our complete desolation and of the city that is attached to |
| (for favor)  |     | your name.       |
| motivation   | 18b | Not based on our own righteous deeds do we entreat you |
|              |     | with our supplications, but relying on your great mercy |
|              |     | alone.           |
| address +    | 19a | My Lord,       |
| petition     |     | listen!         |
| (for attention)|    | My Lord,       |
|              | 19b | pardon!        |
| address +    | 19c | My Lord,       |
| petition     |     | hear and act!  |
| (for favor)  | 19d |                |
| address +    | 19e | Make no delay!—|
| petition     |     |                |
| (for attention) | 19f | for your own sake, my God; for your name is attached to |
| (time-related/ |     | your city and to your people." |
| specific)    |     |                |
The confession: Vs. 5-6. A basic confession of the sin of the people relates them to the law and to the prophets.\(^1\) Five verbs coordinated by waw tell what the people did (vs. 5),\(^2\) one verb introduces (vs. 6) what they did not do: listen to God’s messengers. The confession moves from a general to a more specific description of the breach of the covenant.\(^3\)

The first acknowledgment: Vs. 7-9a. Three major acknowledgments serve as a motivation for God to listen favorably to the petition of the prayer. The element of self-denunciation is an important part of this motivation.

The first acknowledgment is forensic in nature.\(^4\) It is formed as a closely knit syntactical chiasm\(^5\) (see table 7) describing the present state of the covenant relationship.

---

\(^1\)So far all scholars agree on the divisions. Balentine (Prayer, 105) notes the importance of contrast between God and the people, between ָдонיא/YHWH and "we." He understands the remainder of the prayer as structured around repetitions of this basic contrast.

\(^2\)The four verbs in perfect tense are not to be read as consecutive, but coordinate. They are followed by רותס, to turn away, "for variety's sake" an infinitive absolute (Hartman and Di Lella, 242).

\(^3\)The elaboration is "a repetition of the basic confession in other terms. . . . Such repetition gives emphasis to the contrition and penitence inherent in the basic confession" (P. Miller, They Cried, 252).

\(^4\)Illustrated by the הבקה of God; cf., for instance, with Pharaoh’s admittance of his guilt and of Yahweh’s righteousness in Exod 9:27.

\(^5\)For other examples of syntactical chiasms, see Berlin (53-63).
between God and His people.\textsuperscript{1} It continues the thought from the general confession in vs. 5 by underscoring that their sins were directed against God: they “betrayed you” (vs. 7), and we “sinned against you” (vs. 8). In this way it accentuates the personal relationship broken by sin.\textsuperscript{2}

\textit{The second acknowledgment: Vs. 9b-13a.}\textsuperscript{3} While the first acknowledgment is concerned with the present state, the second strengthens the motivation by presenting the historical background for the situation.\textsuperscript{4} A review of cause and effect in the history of Israel

\textsuperscript{1}Brempong Owusu-Antwi notes the chiastic sequence in these verses: the Lord, to us, YHWH, we, and the Lord in \textit{The Chronology of Daniel 9:24-27}, Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series 2 (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society, 1995), 82. He views it as part of a larger chiasm, comprising vss. 5-11a. In this, he divides vss. 5 and 6 and links them with vss. 11a and 10, respectively, a feature which I find less convincing.

\textsuperscript{2}Also Doukhan (\textit{Le soupir}, 197) sees a chiasm on the level of persons in these verses, you, we, all Israel, we, you, centering around “all Israel.” This chiasm does not take the invocation to YHWH in vs. 8a into consideration. In the syntactical analysis presented in table 7, “all Israel” and the “we” belong to the same entity, supported by the possessive \textit{lamed} governing both. Later, in vs. 11, “all Israel” appears again as an expression for “us.” Doukhan’s smaller chiasm of vss. 7-9 is placed as the center in a larger chiasm, covering the entire prayer (196, 221). This broad chiasm is, however, not as the one in vss. 7-9 made from the perspective of persons.

\textsuperscript{3}In \textit{Daniel with an Introduction} (89-90) and more recently, but less detailed, in \textit{Daniel} (347), Collins follows Gilbert (299-301) in a different division of the section from vss. 5-14. He calls vss. 5-11a \textit{confession of sin}: (1) direct confession (vss. 5-6), (2) confession combined with acknowledgment of divine judgment (vss. 7-8), (3) confessions in terms of breach of covenant (vss. 9-11a).

\textsuperscript{4}The syntactical chiasm of vss. 7-9a is a major argument for linking the subordinate clause introduced by the conjunction \textit{אַל} in vs. 9b with the subsequent sentence structure. This is done by W. H. Joubert, “Power and Responsibility in the Book of Daniel” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1980), 162-163, and Goldingay (\textit{Daniel}, 227). This is also the consequences of the suggested chiasms by Doukhan (\textit{Le soupir}, 197) and Owusu-Antwi (82), as they both end it with you/the Lord. This leaves no room for the sentence introduced by “because we rebelled” which would then seem an odd appendix to the preceding sentence structure.
TABLE 7
SYNTACTICAL STRUCTURE
OF DANIEL 9:7-9A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Syntactical Feature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>7a</td>
<td><em>Possessive lamed</em> relating to God with a noun reflecting basic characteristics of God: “righteousness”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>7b</td>
<td><em>Possessive lamed</em> relating to Israel with a nominal phrase describing Israel: “open shame”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7c</td>
<td>followed by <em>appellatives</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7d</td>
<td>closed by a <em>relative clause</em> with a verb for sin + pronominal suffix in 2nd person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>8a</td>
<td><em>Address to YHWH</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B'</td>
<td>8b</td>
<td><em>Possessive lamed</em> relating to Israel with a nominal phrase describing Israel: “open shame”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8c</td>
<td>followed by <em>appellatives</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8d</td>
<td>closed by a <em>relative clause</em> with a verb for sin + pronominal suffix in 2nd person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A'</td>
<td>9a</td>
<td><em>Possessive lamed</em> relating to God with nouns reflecting basic characteristics of God: “mercy and forgiveness.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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retells how the sins of the people led to the just intervention by God. Syntactically, this acknowledgment is formed by two sentence constructions introduced by the conjunction ב.

These two sentence structures of vss. 9b-11b and 11c-13a constitute a parallel (see table 8).

1. Both are introduced by causal clauses with ב, stating that the people "rebelled/sinned" against Him. In the first construction, the effect is expressed in vs. 11b with a sentence introduced by the waw-imperfect verb, דברו, "the sworn curse has been poured down." In the second the result immediately follows the cause with the waw-imperfect verb בחר, "he established."

Wambaq (469) has suggested this understanding of ב in vs. 11, but not in vs. 9. He does so partly on the basis of the shift in addressing God from 2nd person in vs. 11 to 3rd person in vs. 12. Mathys (22) rightly rejects this argument: in his view the content of vs. 11 is not directed towards God; cf. the discussion on the phenomenon of changes in person in the comments to Dan 2:23, pp. 90-91. He does not, however, discuss the syntactical features presented above.

Note the development: in vs. 5, "we sinned," in vss. 7-9a, we "sinned against you," and here in vss. 9b-13a, we "sinned against Him."

Collins (Daniel with an Introduction, 89-90) understands this sentence in vs. 11 as beginning a new section from 11b-14, labeled description of divine judgment: (1) affirmation of curses (vss. 11b-13), and (2) affirmation of justice (vs. 14). Archer shares the division (109-110). So does Owusu-Antwi (82-83), calling vss. 4b-11a confession of sin and vss. 11b-14 effects of sin. The basic argument of Collins (Daniel, 347, and Daniel with an Introduction, 89) is that the verb in vs. 11b, דברו, is passive, from דבר ("gush forth, be poured out"). The waw-imperfect form of the verb is, however, in qal, and strictly speaking, not passive though we often prefer to translate it into our languages as such. We naturally infer that when the "water gushed forth" upon the people, it did not do so by itself, but because of the intervention by God. This is then directly stated in vs. 12. But there is no reason to draw the conclusion that these two sentences therefore belong together. It would be just as natural to understand the "passive/medial" sense as belonging to the first sentence structure and the active verb in the parallel construction to amplify the reference to God's actions. In the two parallel ב-structures we thus move from an implicit to an explicit mentioning of God.
2. The first construction tells in vss. 10-11 how the people have acted, the second reveals in vss. 12-13 how God has interfered. Thus the first sentence structure elaborates on the cause, the sin of Israel, while the subsequent parallel adds elements regarding the result, the punishment by God.

3. The final clauses mention the curse/the calamity by a reference to the "law of Moses." The two constructions thus enlarge the content of the preceding chiasm of vss. 7-9a, showing on the one hand that the "open shame" of the people is well deserved, and on the other hand that God's punishment is just and righteous.

---

**TABLE 8**

**STRUCTURE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT IN DANIEL 9:9B-13A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verses 9b-11b</th>
<th>Verses 11c-13a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>cause</strong></td>
<td><strong>cause</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ְ-clause</td>
<td>ְ-clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;because we rebelled&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;because we sinned&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ elaboration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>effect</strong></td>
<td><strong>effect</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waw-imperfect</td>
<td>waw-imperfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;the sworn curse has been poured down&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;he established his words&quot; + elaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>reference</strong></td>
<td><strong>reference</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what is written (קדש)</td>
<td>what is written (קדש)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;in the law of Moses&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;in the law of Moses&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The third acknowledgment: Vss. 13b-14. A summary statement concludes and deepens the theological content of the preceding historical review: the people not only rebelled, but they also rejected God's offer of mercy by not repenting, and in due time God therefore let the righteous judgment fall upon them.

The supplications: Vss. 15-19. The mode is changed to that of supplication1 as God is being reminded of His former salvific acts for His people. We turn to the present situation with the expression "but now," הוהי, an expression of transition2 found in vss. 15 and 17, dividing this section of supplications into two parts, 15-16 and 17-19.

The supplications combine the various formal features into a theological summary, reaching its peak in the petitions. The first part in vss. 15-16 opens with a transition (vs. 15a) and concludes with an acknowledgment (vs. 16d) that helps to build up the motivation. In between, the formal elements make up a close parallel (see table 9): address, description, and confession (vs. 15b-d) followed by address, motivation, and petition (vs. 16a-c). The description and the motivation correspond: the description tells about God's former mighty acts at the time of the exodus, the motivation repeats the content by referring to "all your acts of righteousness." Likewise, the confession and the petition are linked together: "we have sinned" prepares the way for the petition to "let your anger and wrath turn back from your city Jerusalem." In the acknowledgment in vs. 16d, the confession and the petition are

1This is illustrated in vs. 16 by the enclitic נ: following the verb בָּשַׁב, "turn back," reflecting the initial address in vs. 4 in which the interjection נ and נ: are combined into נ:ה, translated "O please."

2It often denotes this kind of transition from "confession of sin to appeal for mercy" (Collins, Daniel, 350); e.g., Isa 64:7; Exod 32:31-32; Neh 9:32. As in 1 Sam 12:10; 15:24-25 and 2 Sam 24:10, the expression signifies the beginning of a new section; see further Gilbert (297-298) and A. Laurentin, "וּמַעַת-הַקְּנָה נְעָל: Formule caractéristique des textes juridiques et liturgiques," Biblica 45 (1964): 168-197.
combined: the confession relates the cause ("because of our sins"), the petition reveals the consequences ("Jerusalem and your people have become objects of scorn").

**TABLE 9**

**PARALLEL STRUCTURE OF SUPPLICATIONS IN DANIEL 9:15-16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of Prayer</th>
<th>Verse 15</th>
<th>Verse 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>transition</td>
<td>&quot;But now&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>address</td>
<td>&quot;O Lord our God&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;O Lord&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>description/motivation</td>
<td>the exodus</td>
<td>&quot;your acts of salvation&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confession/petition</td>
<td>&quot;we have sinned&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;let your anger turn back&quot; from Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acknowledgment</td>
<td>combining cause from</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>confession: &quot;our sins,&quot;</td>
<td>with result from petition: fate of Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second part of the supplications (vss. 17-19) changes the negative petition of vs. 16 into a positive one:¹ "let your anger turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy

¹Gilbert (302) comments on the change in the mood of the imperatives from a negative in vs. 16 to a more positive in vss. 17-19.
mountain” is replaced by “let your face shine over your destroyed sanctuary” (vs. 17). Like
the previous one, this section is tightly constructed and progresses towards a climax. After
the introductory transition (“and now,” vs. 17a), vss. 17-18 constitute a closely knit parallel.
Each parallel consists of petitions and a motivation. The petitions are first for attention.
next for favor. The motivations follow.

The initial petitions for favor each contain an address. These addresses in vss. 17-18
shift from plural to singular, from “our God” to “my God.” This leads to the petitions of vs.
19 in which the first three are petitions for attention connected to addresses to God with the
first person possessive suffix “my Lord.” They prepare the way for the specific and
climactic petition of the prayer. This is a wish for action without delay (אֶרֶנֶּפֶנַּבְּלָא), in
contrast to the three preceding imperative petitions expressed in jussive. The final
motivation in vs. 19 combines the expressions “for your sake” from vs. 17, adding the
address in the first person from vs. 18: “my God,” with the phrase “your name is attached to
your holy city” from vs. 18, adding “for your people.” The specific petition in vs. 19 of
making no delay is thereby followed by a precise resumé of the motivations from the prayer
as a whole.

1 Note the parallel as well as the development between the two petitions of vss. 16 and
17. Both are concerned with the temple in Jerusalem. The first asks God to remove His
anger, the second to intervene, reflecting the Aronitic blessing in Num 6:25.

2 Note how the word order of the petitions for attention stress this parallel: in both
petitions (vss. 17b and 18a), the direct address (“our God” and “my God”) is placed after,
not before, the initial imperative of the idiomatic expressions (“Listen . . . to your servant’s
prayer” and “Incline . . . your ear”).

3 The petition in vs. 16 that introduces the section is likewise in jussive.
The formal analysis of the prayer presented above reveals a precisely and well-structured prayer in which the motivation is developed progressively throughout towards its climax in the final petitions.¹

**Genre**

The essence of the prayer is often understood as penitence,² an element that we have seen indicated by the phrases describing and the gestures surrounding the prayer.³ But it is probably correct to include penitential prayers as a subgenre in the broader genre of lament.⁴ The communal aspect permeates the prayer,⁵ but the personal addresses in, for instance, vss. 4b and 17 strongly reflect the pray-er's individual relationship with God. It therefore contains a strong element of intercession.⁶

¹Rather than seeing a chiastic structure of the prayer. For a such, see Doukhan (Le soupir, 196).

²As noted by Towner (Daniel, 130), Carl Roy Anderson (109), Hornig (Dissertation 57, 81). It is also the very thesis of de Quervain, indicated by the title Buße: Eine Auslegung von Daniel 9,4-19. Balentine (Prayer, 103) writes that “within the prose-prayers of the Hebrew Bible, Ezra 9:6-15, Neh 1:5-11, 9:6-37, and Dan 9:4-19 constitute a distinct genre of ‘prayers of penitence’.”

³See the paragraph identifying the “prayers, the references to prayer, and the allusions to prayer” above, pp. 146-148.

⁴The genre of lament originates from specific petitions and encompasses all situations in which the pray-er stands in need of help, whether the reason is traced to internal sin or to external factors, such as sickness, war, etc. P. Miller (They Cried, 256) writes about these long prose prayers that they “as a whole bear some resemblance to the community prayers for help or laments in that they are communal prayers rising out of distress and often calling God to remember the covenant promises.”

⁵Justifying the label “a communal confession” used by Collins (Daniel with an Introduction, 92) and Goldingay (Daniel, 233).

⁶Lacocque (“The Liturgical Prayer,” 124) notes that the hitpael of תִּפְאָרָה is used only once in the Pentateuch in the sense of intercession, namely about the high priest on Yom Kippur in Lev 16:21. I concur with Lacocque that this lends significant support to the
Thematic and verbal parallels to the great prayer of Solomon in 1 Kgs 8:14-61 are found repeatedly, but there is no doubt that when looking on form as well as vocabulary, the post-exilic prayers in Ezra 9:6-15 and Neh 1:5-11 and 9:36-37 are the closest parallels,¹ and they will be compared briefly with Dan 9:4b-19 in regard to their formal elements.²

Compared with Dan 9, the prayer by Ezra is unique, because it does not, such as, for instance, Dan 9:15-19, contain any supplications in either imperative or jussive.³ After a brief address (Ezra 9:6a), it also includes a confession of sin in a specific historical situation with a historical review in which the background for the present problem is presented (vss. 6-12). We find a motivation (vss. 13-14) and an acknowledgment (vs. 15), but the prayer is abrupt, and the specific petitions are lacking.

Neh 1:5-11 is a personal prayer by Nehemiah in which he addresses God with a description of the covenant elements (vss. 4-5; cf. Dan 9:4). He appeals for attention (vs. 6a), confesses the sins of his people (vss. 6b-7), motivates God by reminding Him of His covenant promises (vss. 8-10), and finally makes his specific petition of obtaining favor with the concept of intercession in Dan 9, even without accepting his theory of an original setting in the liturgical context of Yom Kippur (141).

¹So Towner ("Retributional Theology," 210), Carl Roy Anderson (109), and Goldingay (Daniel, 233). Among other prayers Goldingay also refers to Baruch 1:15-2:19, the object of a comparison with Dan 9 by Wambacq. Among the conclusions reached by Wambacq (475), is the priority of the prayer of Dan 9.

²Towner has in "Retributional Theology" (210-211) summarized features that link these prayers: (1) of all prose prayers in OT they alone are identified with the hitpael form of הָרָדֵד, (2) they are longer, eclectic in language, combining the various elements into a larger structure, (3) and each prayer is penitential and reflects the temple prayer by Solomon in 1 Kgs 8:23-53. See also the discussion in Balentine (Prayer, 103-104).

the king (vs. 11). These elements of confession, motivation, and petition for attention have also been discerned in Dan 9, but the specific petition is different because of the particular historical situation.

Many of these features are repeated in the much longer public prayer in Neh 9:5b-37. The acknowledgment is enlarged by a very comprehensive historical review (vss. 7-31). The mood of petition is introduced by נַע in vs. 32 (cf. Dan 9:15, 17 and Ezra 9:10), and the specific problem is retold in the final vss. 36-37 that function as further motivation. As in Ezra 9, the prayer in Neh 10 is followed by a public promise to be faithful from now on.

The prayer in Daniel is private like the short prayer by Nehemiah in 1:5-11. Yet, because of Daniel's intercession for and identification with the people, it shares the communal aspects with the public prayer in Neh 9:5b-37. Daniel's prayer exceeds this long prayer by Nehemiah in its intensity. The sin of the people is explained in a much deeper sense (cf. Dan 9:13). The motivation is far more elaborate and personal. The destruction and desolation of the sanctuary are a major specific historical problem in Daniel (9:16, 17, 19), not in Nehemiah. The specific petition in Neh 9:32, 36-37 is related to the oppression by the foreign rulers. In Dan 9:19 it deals with time.

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1Ibid., 167.

2See Carl Roy Anderson for a more detailed structural outline of the prayer of Nehemiah (94-97).
Based upon these considerations regarding the genre of Dan 9:4b-19, I will label the prayer an individual,\(^1\) intercessory\(^2\) lament.\(^3\)

**Words and Themes**

In this section the theological content of the prayer is pursued by an investigation of its words and themes. This is done with specific emphasis on the way in which they characterize persons and their internal relationships. The comments are organized in accordance with the structure of the prayer. In this, the *invocation* is primarily concerned with God, the *confession* of sin with the people, the *acknowledgments* with the relationship between God and people, and the final *supplications* with the relationship between God, the people, and Daniel.

**Vs. 4b: The God invoked**

God is described by two adjectives as “the great (בר כלב) and the awesome (תועדו).” These are common characteristics of God, found together also in Joel 2:31 and Mal 3:23 (describing the day of the Lord), and in Deut 10:17, Neh 1:5 and 9:32. The *nifal* participle

\(^1\)Like Neh 1:5-11, but in contrast to Ezra 9:6-15 and Neh 9:5-37, the prayer of Dan 9 is a private prayer. This is implied not only by the context within the book in which the prayer is set, but also by the emphasis of the prayer on the personal relationship between Daniel and his God (especially vss. 17-19); cf. a similar emphasis on the individual prayer in Neh 1:11 in which Nehemiah twice calls himself *your* (singular) servant.

\(^2\)An individual lament can be oriented towards the personal situation of a person praying, but also as here towards the collective community, the people. Reventlow (283) uses the word “Volksklagelied” which could mean both lament “for” or “of” the people. In case of orientation towards the people in need, an individual lament as here assumes the character of intercession. In the setting of Dan 9, however, this is not a prophetic or royal intercession made in a public, possibly cultic situation, and it therefore remains individual.

\(^3\)Agreeing with Rast (94) that the elements of the lament are present in the prayer. In my view, the genre of the lament encompasses the confession which describes a specific type of background for the petition of the lament.
awesome or "terrible") from אֶלֶף ("to fear") is often used of God's presence in a holy place (Gen 28:17), as in His sanctuary (e.g., Pss 47:3; 68:36). It is associated with His acts of salvation in history (e.g., Exod 15:11; Deut 10:21) as well as in the temple (e.g., Pss 34:10; 66:3, 5). The context in Neh 1:5 presents the closest parallel to the phrase, as also other key expressions are employed—such as נְשָׁם "to keep the covenant") and נְחָד "steadfast or unfailing love") about God; and נְשָׁם ("to love") and נְשָׁם ("to keep the commandments") about the people.

The relationship between נְשָׁם ("covenant") and נְשָׁם ("love") has been much debated.2 This study builds on the conclusions reached by H.-J. Zobel and R. Laird Harris that even in the late period3 is primary and therefore to be understood not only as loyalty within


3Harris, 306-307. Zobel (64) writes that "we can observe that postexilic theology rigorously assigned the concept of hesed to the category of the berit idea. The kindness of Yahweh became the content of his covenant with Israel. But even in this late stage of development our concept did not become a legal term. In it we hear overtones of promise and grace, mercy and unexpected kindness, not law and obligation." A more restricted view of the meaning of the term is found in the monograph by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, The Meaning of Hesed in the Hebrew Bible, Harvard Semitic Monograph Series 17 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978). But her work has more recently been superseded by Gordon R. Clark, The Word Hesed in the Hebrew Bible, JSOT Supplement 157 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), who is employing insights from modern linguistic science in his
the norms of a covenant or an agreement, but as mercy, lovingkindness (KJV), steadfast love (RSV), or unfailing love (NIV).

The phrase of God's keeping of towards those who love him and obey his commandments is traditional language and very closely reflects Deut 7:9. The human reaction to the divine kindness is also part of the more elaborate description in Deut 10:12-13 in the context of which the presentation of God as great, mighty, and terrible (awesome) is also found (vs. 17, cf. vs. 21). In both Deut 7 (see esp. vss. 7-9) and 10 (see vss. 15 and 19), the emphasis is on the undeserved and surprising love of God who takes the initiative and establishes the covenant on the basis of a personal relationship so far unknown to man.

The reversed parallel structure (ABB'A') of this sentence in the prayer of Daniel resembles these concepts from Deuteronomy. It is verbally identical with Deut 7:9:

| A | בֵּית הָעָם | who keeps the covenant |
| B | הָעָם | and the unfailing love |
| B' | לֶאֶבֶן | towards those who love him |
| A' | וֶאָבֶן | and keep his commandments |


1 Contra Goldingay, "covenantal commitment" (Daniel, 225, 227), Rast (75), Hartman and Di Lella (239), and Collins (Daniel, 344, 350).

2 So LXX and Vulgate.

3 These sentences belong to what could be called the theological constants of the Old Testament, present at any chronological point in the history of Israel and found in all major parts of the Old Testament in spite of the variation in genre and theological outlook; see Terence E. Fretheim, The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective, Overtures to Biblical Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 25. Fretheim refers to such texts as Deut 7:6-11 and Neh 9:6-31 as typical, and to Dan 9:4 in a footnote. He regards Exod 34:6-7 as probably the "earliest and fullest articulation" of such recitals telling what kind of God it is who has engaged Himself on Israel's behalf.
The two occurrences of the verb to keep, "ןָּשָׁה, is a verbal link between A and A' containing elements also related by content. The personal love for God, expressed in B' by the verb וַאֲהֵבָה ("to love"), responds to God's unfailing kindness, וָדַע, in B.¹

Vss. 5-6: The people confessing

Vs. 5 is introduced by several verbs for sin, וֹאֵם ("incur guilt, miss, fail to attain"),² וֹאֲשָׁה ("do wrong"),³ וֹאָשָׁה (hifil, "make oneself guilty"),⁴ and יִשְׁעָר ("to rise in revolt, rebel").⁵ NIV connects the first two verbs with the preceding verse. But except for יִשְׁעָר, the four perfect-tense verbs are all found in a similar list in Ps 106:6 and in the prayer by Solomon in 1 Kgs 8:47,⁶ and they belong naturally together in this context. What could be regarded as the theologically most basic word for sin, וֹאֵם,⁷ the breach of the fundamental relationship with God,⁸ is absent from these lists for human inadequacy and immorality.

¹It would therefore be natural to read the last of the lamed prefixes as indicating a result. See Waltke and O'Connor (§ 36.2.3d, 606-608) on lamed introducing subordinate clauses. Just as in Deut 10:12-13, we may add the notion of result by reading "all who love him and therefore obey his commandments." In Deut 11:1 the sentence is not constructed with the prefix lamed, but also there the "keeping of the commandments" is most likely to be understood as a result of "loving" God, from וַאֲהֵב.

²DCH, 3:194.

³KB, 2:796.

⁴So explained as internally transitive in the hifil conjugation by KB (3:1295), the sense in consequence "to act wickedly."

⁵KB, 2:632.

⁶The prayer in 1 Kgs 8:23-53 is of importance for the setting in Dan 9 as one of the relatively few very long prose prayers of the Old Testament.

⁷According to the evaluation by, for instance, Martens (47-50).

⁸For which reason it is central in the ritual of the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:16), so Jacob Milgrom (Leviticus 1-16, AB, vol. 3 [New York: Doubleday, 1991], 1034).
though found in the prayer by Solomon within the narrow context (1 Kgs 8:49). Its absence here in Daniel may indicate a wish on behalf of the pray-er that the covenant promises of restoration in case of sincere confession and conversion1 would still have validity, in spite of the heavy sin.

The final sentence of the verse, “we have turned away from your commands and your just decisions,” is a further explanation of the sins of Israel. To turn away, Ḥĕrĕ, is especially used by prophets like Jeremiah (e.g., 5:23 and 6:28) for Israel’s apostasy.2 But also in Deuteronomy it plays an important role in the charge to the people (e.g., 5:23; 11:16, 23; 17:11) and to the king (17:20).3 God’s just decisions (from הָסֶדֶר) are often combined with statutes (וּסְדֵי) as an expression for all the laws revealed by God to Israel,4 but the combination in this verse with מִסְכָּנָה has a strong forensic connotation,5 and the combination of the two words refers both to the original revelation of statutes and laws and to the decisions of judgment by which God has further established the meaning and content of these laws.6

[Cf. 1 Kgs 8:4-51 and 5 Mos 30:1-7.]

[Rast, 111.]

[In 17:20 it is as here connected with הָסֶדֶר, the commands, or the tradition.]


[In Deut 33:10 we find מִסְכָּנָה connected with הָסֶדֶר.]

[See, for instance, Exod 23:6. Exod 28:15 and 30 mention the breastplate of the High Priest. See also Lev 24:22; Deut 10:18; 16:18; 32:4; 1 Kgs 3:11, 28. Note the use in 1 Kgs 8:49, 59 in the prayer of Solomon. 1 Kgs 10:9; 2 Chr 9:8; and Job 40:8 all combine it with some derivation of הָסֶדֶר, righteousness.

[Goldingay (Daniel, 227) prefers the translation "your decisions." Zeph 3:8 and 15 are probably closest in meaning. Collins (Daniel, 344) says "your judgments."
It seems natural to understand the first sentence in vs. 6, "and we have not listened to your servants the prophets," as a continuation of the preceding. The rebellion of the people is thereby exemplified first in their turning aside from the law and next in their rejection of the prophets whom God sent to bring them back. The phrase is common usage with Jeremiah (e.g., 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4-5). To speak in the name of God is to act as His representative.  

Also the list of people of different classes is typical for Jeremiah (e.g., 1:18 and 44:21). Similar lists are also found in Neh 9:32 and 34. In Daniel, the order is of "descending dignity." "Fathers" should not here be understood as ancestors (JB and NRSV) or forefathers (the Revised English Bible [REB]), but rather as leaders invested with power and authority as heads of families.  

The point of these lists is completeness. The intention is not to make a dichotomy between the various leaders and the people in general, but rather to emphasize the common responsibility. In Jer 1:18 the list is explicative of the immediately preceding phrase, "the whole land/nation" (כָל הָאָדָם). In Jer 44:20-23 the prophet addresses the "whole people" (vs. 20, כָּל הָעָם) as guilty. And in Neh 9:32 the list is concluded by a reference to "all your people" (כָּל הַעֲלָה). The same completeness or universalism is expressed in Daniel's prayer by the final expression in vs. 6, כָּל הַקֶּבֶר הָאָדָם, "all the people of the land."

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1Goldingay, Daniel, 225.

2Hartman and Di Lella, 242.

3This point is made by several commentators, Collins (Daniel, 350), Goldingay (Daniel, 245-246), Hartman and Di Lella (242). John T. Willis argues with reference among other texts to Isa 22:20-25 that the "father" at times was used for "the second in command" (John T. Willis, "בָּא as an Official Term," SJOT 10 [1996]: 135).
Vss. 7-14: God's righteousness acknowledged in His relationship to the people

The collective or universal reference to the people in the confession is continued and expanded in the acknowledgments. The first two of the three acknowledgments contain the expression "all Israel" (vss. 7 and 11, קָדוֹן אֲנָחָי). ¹

The first acknowledgment in vss. 7-9a is, as we have seen, structured as a chiasm that introduces a total contrast between the righteousness, כְּדָם, of God, and the shame of Israel. The meaning of God’s righteousness is in this context primarily forensic, but its associations are broad. As the celebration of God’s כְּדָם compared with the people’s lack of it (Deut 9:4-5) was an important aspect of the worship of Israel (Pss 89:16; 103:17), God’s כְּדָם was understood as more than just a legal term. It was His saving acts on behalf of His people. In using the term, Daniel acknowledges God’s complete right in His punishment of the people, yet indicates hope because of His knowledge of God’s willingness and power to save. This understanding is supported by the second part of the chiasm in which God’s righteousness is matched by His “mercy,” חָסְדָּה, and His “forgiveness,” כְּדָם (vs. 9). ³

¹Also Doukhan (Le soupir, 196-197) underlines the aspect of universalism in relation to the people.

²The continuous presence of God’s mercies in the midst of the sins of the people may indicate an extension of the כְּדָם which in vs. 4 is directed towards those who love and obey YHWH, but here reaches even the rebellious. So Clark (147), although he cautiously adds that the relationship between the two terms "is far too complex to be reduced to a simple and uniform pattern. All that can be asserted is that the regions of the semantic field covered by כְּדָם and כְּדָם overlap considerably, but do not coincide."

³The difference being between the indicative and the potentialis, so Mathys (23): "You are right, you have the possibility to forgive."
The people are first of all characterized by the expression "open shame," literally "shame of faces," in vs. 7 in the sentence "today only open shame falls upon us." In addition to this prayer, it is found in only four other Old Testament texts: 2 Chr 32:21; Ps 44:16; Jer 7:19; and Ezra 9:7.1 Ezra and, once again, Jeremiah provide the closest parallel, as both examples in their context also speak about the sins of the people as the cause of their open shame and the reason for the divine wrath.

The contemporary condition of the land and of the temple makes the shame evident. In the first part of the chiasm the people are labeled as "the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem—all Israel, near and far away, in every country to which you have thrust2 them" (vs. 7). The phrase "men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem" is an idiomatic expression reflecting Jeremiah.3 Condensed into "all Israel," the people are presently scattered among the countries: the shame is open.4 The second part of the chiasm in vs. 8 repeats the reference of vs. 6 to the leaders of the people.

In the historical review of the second acknowledgment in vss. 9b-13a, no conflict is seen between the law with its instructions on the one hand and the prophets on the other. The prophets are servants of the Lord. So was Moses (הנהב in vs. 11), the first in a long

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1The text in Ezra is missed by Rast (113). Of these occurrences, only the two in Daniel include the article before "faces."

2Scattered, dispersed, or more literally, thrust, is from the verb מָהַה, a favorite of Jeremiah, using it repeatedly in syntactical patterns identical to the one in this verse of Daniel, Jer 8:3; 16:15; 23:2, 3, 8; 24:9; 27:10, 15; 29:14, 18; 32:37; 46:28; 50:17; see Rast (114-115) for more details.

3Or even dependent upon (Plöger, Das Buch Daniel, 133). See Jer 4:4; 17:25; 32:32; and 35:13.

4These expressions do therefore not necessarily indicate anything about the locus for the writing. Even in exile, the people might refer to themselves as "men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem."

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chain of spokesmen for God. In his lawbook, the covenant stipulations with their blessings and curses are found (see especially Lev 26:27-45; Deut 28:15-68 and 29:20). These are the words that God "established" (vs. 12) by pouring out (vs. 11) the curse, or "bringing upon us such great calamity."3 Also in the reference to the people, no dichotomy is present: "all Israel broke" the law (vs. 11).

The third and last acknowledgment of vss. 13b-14 introduces a new aspect of the description of Israel's past. Vss. 5-6 provide us with general statements of Israel's sins and historical examples of her disobedience to the law and her rejection of the messages given by the prophets. The chiasm in vss. 7-9a contains a forensic declaration of the present situation. The " constructions of vss. 9c-13 then combine this legal evaluation with the historical events: because of the sins in their history, God has all the right to bring them into exile.

But even though the people had sinned, they had not needed to face the calamity. Because God is merciful and forgiving, they would have had another possibility for rescue.4 The lines from the middle of vs. 13 and until the beginning of the petition in vs. 15 deal with this opportunity.

1From הָעָד (cf. Dan 2:21), here used as a confirmation of the divine word (cf. Jer 44:29, and also Num 23:19; Deut 9:5; Jer 29:10; and Neh 9:8). God made His threats come true.

2From יִשָּׁר, often employed to denote the wrath of God against Jerusalem (Jer 7:20; 42:18; 44:6; 2 Chr 12:7; 34:25).

3The word for calamity (נֵרָה, vss. 12, 13 and 14) has a prominent place in the book of Jeremiah, denoting the evil which was to come upon Jerusalem and Judah because of their sin (e.g., Jer 11:12; 14:17; 15:11; 26:13; 44:11, 27). So Rast (119). Collins (Daniel, 350) adds references to Jer 35:17; 36:31.

4So, for instance, Otzen (84).
The verb in the sentence “we did not sweeten the face of YHWH” is piel from הָדַע, often derived from the meaning “to be sick, weak.”1 But probably it is rather from a homonym with the sense of “be sweet, pleasant.”2 The idiom “sweeten the face,” מִשְׁחָטְתָה, signifies the seeking of favor and personal presence3 (e.g., Ps 45:13; Prov 19:6; Mal 1:9; 1 Sam 13:12) and is often, as here, set in the introductory position (e.g., Exod 32:11, 14 and Jer 26:19—in both instances God regrets and does not send the calamity, חֲרֵשׁי— and Zech 7:2). The association with the open shame of Israel (vss. 7-8)—literally “the shame of faces”—should not be overlooked. God is seen and His face may be shamed in the actions of the people who bear His name.

Even when the people had sinned, they could have received the favor of God “by repenting”4 their wickedness and “by gaining insight,” הָפֵיל infinitive of לַשׁוֹן, from God’s truth, נַעַם. As a means of obtaining favor, sense of the last expression is not just “giving heed to your faithfulness,”5 or even “recognizing his resoluteness” in carrying out the judgment,6 taking רְאֵם in the normal sense of fidelity. In the context, it seems more likely to understand רְאֵם as related to “true religion.” By repenting and becoming wise in God’s

1So KB (1:316-317), DCH (3:229), and Rast (120).
3“The expression designates a gesture of respect, of worship, and of submission, performed with the purpose of seeking favor” (ibid., 409).
4Both infinitives in this construction are introduced by lamed and understood as gerunds.
5Goldingay, Daniel, 225.
6Hartman and Di Lella, 239, 242.
revealed truth, the relationship with God could have been truly restored and the calamity avoided.

Instead YHWH “watched for the right moment to bring the calamity” (vs. 14).

The final sentence of the verse concludes this section of the prayer by once again underscoring that God has been righteous/right in all His dealings with Israel, and that we, the people, have been disobedient/wrong.

**Vss. 15-19: Daniel the intercessor and the God of his people**

In vss. 15-16 Daniel prepares the way for the appeal by a motivation that refers to God’s historical acts of deliverance from the slavery in Egypt, and to the honor God won Himself by these deeds, a reputation He maintains today. This fame is compared with the disgrace of mocking that surrounds God’s people at the present time where they are "objects of scorn." The contrast is set up between "ours" and "us" on the one hand and

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1 JPS says, "become wise through your truth." Cf. Collins (*Daniel*, 344), "become adept in your truth."


3 From יִסָּכֵר. It mirrors Jer 44:27 (the word plays a special role in Jeremiah; see also 1:12; 5:6; and 31:28) and may indicate a time limit. NIV translates, "the Lord did not hesitate;" JB says "has watched for the right moment," followed here.

4 The plural form in vs. 16 of תָּכָר ("righteousness") here probably refers to God’s salvific acts, so Montgomery (367), De Vries (168); cf. Judg 5:11; 2 Sam 12:7; Mic 6:5; and Ps 103:6.

5 This is here the significance of the name, אֵל, of God. For a discussion of the "name," see the comments on Dan 2:20 above, pp. 77-79.

6 The same expression as in vs. 7, בַּכְשָׂה יְהוָה, "today."
"you" and "yours" on the other. The sins are "ours" and "our" ancestors, but the "acts of salvation" or "righteousness," the city Jerusalem, and the people are all "yours." They belong to God. For that reason the first petition is an appeal to turn back "your anger and your wrath" from "your city."

In vs. 17 Daniel takes the role of the prophetic intercessor as he calls himself the servant, of God, just like Moses (vs. 11) and the prophets (vss. 6, 10). His appeal for attention, "listen to your servant's prayer . . ." echoes vs. 6 in which the people did not listen (from ynti) to God's servants. He thereby puts his trust in God by the implication that God is not and does not want to be like His unfaithful people has been. "Let your face shine" is an appeal for a divine blessing (e.g., Num 6:25; Pss 4:7; 31:17, etc.). When the face of YHWH shines, the downtrodden will be saved (as the refrain of Ps 80:4, 8, 20

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1The word "fathers" has another sense here than in vss. 6 and 8.

2Anger and wrath, and their synonym, are common words for God's judgment on Israel for its sins, especially for His punishment of Jerusalem. As a pair, Jeremiah seems very fond of them, e.g., 7:20; 21:5; 32:31, 37; 33:5; 36:7; 42:18; 44:6. See also Ps 6:2 and Isa 63:3. It is possible with Goldingay to understand the two as a hendiadys, "your burning fury" (Daniel, 225).

sounds).¹ The unique feature of this sentence is that not men, but the sanctuary itself, מִקְדֶשׁ אֲדֹנָי, is to be the object of the blessing² because of its present desolation or destruction.³

In vs. 18 several appeals for attention emphasize the need for close communication and build up the tension before the final plea. They are followed by an appeal to turn the attention to the desolations with regard to the city. This time the motivation for divine intervention is not expressed by "for your sake," but by referring to the fact that the city "is attached to" God's name.⁴ At this central point of the prayer, a more detailed motivation for God's interaction is added. YHWH is not to act because of any human merit and righteousness.⁵ Daniel directs his intense supplications relying on God's great mercy alone.⁶

In vs. 19 repeated appeals for attention pave the way for the final, specific and climactic petition, מִקְדֶשׁ אֲדֹנָי, "make no delay!"⁷ The motif of delay is important in the Old Testament.² In all other instances where the expression is found, the face of God shines upon persons: Num 6:25; Pss 67:1; Pss 80:3, 7, 19; Pss 119:135.

²The desolation expressed by the adjective בַּעֲדֵיהֶם. Words from this root are used to describe the desolations foretold of the land in the covenant threats of Lev 26 (vss. 31, 32, 33, etc.).

⁴Literally "over which your name is called." Several ideas are included in the phrase. God's name and honor are linked to the status of Jerusalem, and in this city God's name is called upon by believers (Deut 12:1ff.; 2 Sam 12:28; Ps 74:7; 1 Kgs 8:29; Jer 7:10-11). It thus denotes ownership (Lacocque, "The Liturgical Prayer," 140).

⁵Mathys has shown how the prayer, in a unique and theologically profound way, employs the whole spectrum of the meanings of the word פָּרָשָׁה, 23-25: the justice of God (vss. 7, 14), the deeds (of man, vs. 18), and the grace or mercy of God (vs. 16).

⁶Note the use of "mercy," פָּרָשָׁה, also in Dan 1:9 and 2:18 (the Aramaic פָּרָשָׁה).

⁷"Perhaps the strongest assertion in this final petition is the cry 'do not delay!'" (Rast, 128). So also Mathys (25-26). Gilbert (302), speaking about the petitions in vss. 17-19, says that "the tone is now more positive; it culminates in 'act! do not tarry!'" In a more...
Testament, permeating not least the psalms of lament by the question "how long?/until when?" God has appointed His times. Yet we like the prophet Habakkuk now and then feel that God's intervention tarries (Hab 1:2, נא appellate). In 2:2-3 Habakkuk employs the termsجل and the verb "to delay," from רס as in the prayer in Dan 9:19. Occurrences of this verb are limited, and only a few of them are related to any action by God. Of these, Pss 40:18 and 70:6 are imperatives with negations and identical in form to the occurrence in our prayer. Most significant is perhaps the use in Deut 7:10. In the context of the covenant, it is promised that God will not delay His intervention towards those who hate him. Looking at the desolations of Jerusalem and of the temple, it was natural for Daniel to pray for divine action now, without delay.

1Goldingay writes about the petition in Dan 9:19: "Such an appeal to God not to delay acting closes off the pleas in Pss 40:18; 70:6. It recalls the 'how long...?' that features in the lament itself (Pss 6:4; 13:2-3; 74:10; 79:5; 80:4; 89:46; 90:13) and the positive plea not to delay, 'hurry' to help us (e.g., 22:20; 38:23, 40:14; 70:2, 6; 71:12)" (Goldingay, Daniel, 254-255).

2The two synonymous expressions for "how long/until when?" (לֵךְ אָבֶד עֵת וְלֵךְ עֵת) used in connection with the divine intervention longed for, are often linked to the theme of judgment, vindication, and deliverance (e.g., Num 14:27; Pss 82:2; 94:3).

3Especially in the cultic settings; cf. נֵסֵעְתָם (Lev 23:2, 4, etc.), the appointed times for the festivals.

4It is found 17 times in OT, 1 in qal, 1 in hitpael, and 1 in hifil (2 Sam 20:5 containing also the word מָעַר); the rest are all in piel.

5These are: Deut 7:10; Isa 46:13; Hab 2:3; Pss 40:18 and 70:6.
Reaching the end, Daniel maintains the theocentric tone that has marked the prayer from its beginning: "For your own sake, my God," for to you belong the city and the people.

Summary

The prayer of Dan 9:4b-19 has been studied against the background of the prayers and the language of the Old Testament and has come to be understood as an individual, intercessory lament, heavily influenced by the language of the prophet Jeremiah.¹

The basic theological concept of the prayer is the covenant that expresses the relationship between God and His people. Within the framework of the covenant, the prayer describes cause and effect in the past history of Israel. Because of their sin and their refusal to seek God's mercy, the people have been scattered into exile, and the temple and Jerusalem have been desolated.

Acknowledging that God has been completely just in His dealings with the people, Daniel maintains that the character of God and the nature of His covenant still give hope of favor for the penitent, and with growing intensity he pours out his supplications for his people. His final and specific petition reflects the typical "how long?" of the Old Testament laments and thus deals with the element of time, "make no delay."

The Prayer of Dan 9:4b-19 in Its Literary Context

The narrow setting within chap. 9 differs from the context in which we have found the prayers of the book thus far discussed. In chaps. 2, 3, and 6, Daniel and his friends are

¹The valuable list of comparable Old Testament expressions related to the prayer provided by Gilbert (295-296) far exceeds the parallels presented by Werline (90-103).
engaged in prayer in narratives that contain elaborate descriptions of the characters involved.\textsuperscript{1} The genre of chap. 9 is, however, not a narrative, and for that reason the organization of this section differs slightly from the treatment of the previous chapters. First, the links between the prayer and the chapter are established in three related areas: verbal, thematic, and with regard to the depiction of the characters. Next, the prayer is studied in its somewhat broader context within the visionary part of the book.

**In the Context of Chap. 9**

*Semantic links*

In many ways the language of the prayer is quite different from its context.\textsuperscript{2} Yet it is in the nature of any prayer that it may employ linguistic expressions of its own.\textsuperscript{3} The prayer in Dan 9 stands in the tradition of such exilic and post-exilic prose prayers as Neh 9:5b-37 and is heavily influenced by Deuteronomistic language. By genre and subject matter it distinguishes itself from the subsequent oracle and from the vision-reports of the second part of Daniel, yet it would seem a natural prayer for Daniel or any Jew to offer in this setting, and we should be cautious not to draw any conclusion with regard to its eventual secondary inclusion.

\textsuperscript{1}The very length of the prayer compared with the surrounding material is often part of the reason given for the secondary inclusion of the prayer, so Hartman and Di Lella (245). Goldingay (*Daniel*, 237) finds this argument unconvincing: "while the chapter would be short without it, it would not be a torso."

\textsuperscript{2}Hartmann and Di Lella (246) reject the prayer as authentic, partly because of its good Hebrew without any Aramaisms. But Heaton argues that "when a passage, as in the present case, is so clearly taken over from a common tradition, it is difficult to judge . . . who placed it in position" (Heaton, 203). I will further add that the style chosen in writing is influenced by the genre or subject. This naturally makes the language of prayer different from the language of vision-reports.

\textsuperscript{3}The prayer differs in style from the remainder of the Hebrew part of the book for which reason several scholars regard it as a later addition. This is unnecessary as it is possible to assume a festive, archaic style in prayer" (Lebram, *Das Buch*, 104).
nature on the basis of its linguistic features. Furthermore, as observed throughout the investigation of its words and themes, the prayer shares many grammatical and lexical peculiarities with the prophet Jeremiah, some even exclusively. Vss. 1-2 present Daniel as passionately engaged in a study of the writings of this prophet, and it would therefore be fair to say that the language of the prayer in this regard is coherent with the historical context that the literary setting implies. The fasting in vs. 2 and the evening sacrifice (רבי; cf. vs. 27) in vs. 21 are both liturgical features with which the dominant liturgical flavor of the wording of the prayer is also completely consistent.

The way the prayer is "seamed" into its context has been heavily debated. The transition between the prayer and the oracle is found in vss. 20-21. While Daniel is still in prayer, Gabriel comes to him. The repetition of the phrase "while I was yet speaking" (vss. 20 and 21, רעי) is by some scholars viewed as clumsy or unnecessary. It is linked

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1 Though finding a different author of the prayer than of any other chapter in the Book of Daniel, except maybe for 6:2-29, Barton (75), in arguing against von Gall, stated that it is unnecessary to regard the prayer as a later insertion on the basis of its language: "It is enough to suppose that such prayers as those of Nehemiah were the natural model for an author so steeped in the Scriptures as this one."

2 Like the phrase "causing our petitions/supplications to fall before you" in vs. 18 and 20 and in Jeremiah in 36:7; 37:20; 38:26; 42:2, 9. Other examples include רוח "to turn" (vs. 5): Jer 5:23; 6:28; the expression "men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem" (vs. 7): Jer 4:4; 17:25; 32:32; 35:13; and הנע, "calamity" (vss. 12, 13, 14): Jer 11:12; 14:17; 15:11; 26:13; 44:11, 27. For more examples, see the comments in the section on words and themes of the prayer above, and also Rast (94-128).

3 The liturgical wording of the prayer is agreed upon by almost all scholars, for instance, Gerstenberger (282), Lacocque (The Book of Daniel, 182), and Montgomery to whom it is "a liturgical gem in form and expression," which in literary character "excels the more verbose types found in Ezra and Nehemiah" (Montgomery, 361).

4 So Hartmann and Di Lella (246), who in particular refer to the articles by Jones ("The Prayer") and Gilbert. Both these scholars, however, regard the prayer as authentic, yet The Anchor Bible never engages in any debate on this point or makes any attempt to discuss the arguments raised by Jones (489).
to what has been called an "interruption motif" (cf. Dan 4:28 and Isa 65:24) and combines expressions from the introduction in 1-4b with the prayer itself. In vs. 20 it is followed by forms of הָנָּדָע and דָּהֲנֵי, the words used for prayer in the introduction in vs. 4a. In vs. 21, however, the word that follows is הָנָּדָע, used in vs. 3 as well as in the prayer (vs. 17). The two verbs for praying in vs. 4a, the hitpael-forms of דָּהֲנֵי and הָנָּדָע, take in vs. 20 the sin of Daniel and his people as their object. This sin is the very content of the prayer (vs. 5), and the two words thereby link the "seams" to the prayer. Furthermore, the verb to fall (הָזָרְפַּל of הָזָרְפַּל) before God in prayer is repeated in vs. 20 from vs. 18, and the words for prayer (הָנָּדָע, vss. 3, 17, 21, and תָּכָלֶנ, vss. 3, 17, 18, 23) are present in both introduction, prayer, and angelic epiphany.

The concern of the present work is not the historical development or prehistory of the text, but its function within the final product. Original or not, the prayer in any case would have to be placed in its context by some kind of transition. The important conclusion of the observations above is that the way the prayer is "seamed" into the context accentuates the unity between the three parts of the chapter.

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1See Rast (130-31). The expression is from Marvin H. Pope (Job, AB, vol. 15 [Garden City: Doubleday, 1965], 14). Jones ("The Prayer," 489-490) points out that Dan 9:1-2 contains the same kind of repetition with the phrase, "in the first year of Dareios," in both vss. 1 and 2. This could imply a deliberate style of the author.

2Bentzen (75) labels vss. 4a and 20 "editorial parentheses," agreeing with Marti (64) and followed by Hartmann and Di Lella (246). Other scholars see no need to argue that the redactional seams here indicate a later interpolation of the prayer. Ploeger calls it a "normal transition verse" (Ploeger, Das Buch Daniel, 139). Collins (Daniel, 348) says that it "may be due to the author's somewhat awkward style."

3And even if the 'seaming' is regarded as clumsy, "why should the clumsiness not be attributed to the author of the chapter in incorporating the prayer into his composition?" (Davies, Daniel, 61).
The prayer is united with its context by several other expressions. We find the exclamatory particle הָשַׁמְנוּ in vs. 22 (cf. vss. 15 and 17), and it may be seen as a reference to the petitions of the prayer—now comes the answer. The important word for gaining wisdom is also used by Gabriel as he tells Daniel that he has come to give him insight (*hifil* infinitive from הֶשָּׁב ל, to "obtain wisdom," as in vs. 13). In the first line of vs. 25, the same word is employed in the oracle in a manner that closely reflects the prayer. We find here an appeal to "know" (from יָדַע) and "understand" (from עָכַב). These two verbs are almost identical in meaning, but they seem not accidentally repeated. The prophecy contains another word pair in vs. 25, formed by the infinitives of to "restore" (עָקַב) and to "build" (בָּנָה). In vs. 13 yet another pair is formed by the expression "by repenting our wickedness and by gaining insight from your truth." The two verbs employed are עָכַב ("to understand") and עָקַב ("to restore"). Thus, the word pair in the prayer (vs. 13) is a contraction of the two word pairs in the oracle (vs. 25) in what seems a deliberate literary ploy.1

A few more linguistic features deserve mentioning before we turn our attention to the references to persons and places. In the expression "70 weeks are cut off" (vs. 24), we observe two word plays that link the oracle to the prayer and point to the chapter as a "carefully constructed unit."2 One plays on the words for "week" in vs. 24, שָׁנָה, and for "oath" in vs. 11, שְׁנַת, the other on the words for "cut off" in vs. 24, מָכַס, and "be poured over" in vs. 11 (and 27), מַכְּס.

The reference to the person of God by the tetragrammaton יְהֹוָה is often taken to indicate the secondary nature of the prayer, present only in this chapter in the book. Yet it

1See Jones ("The Prayer," 491). Note also the presence of לָשָׁנָה in vs. 16 in the prayer.

2Ibid., 491-492.
is found in all three parts of chap. 9, in the introduction (vss. 2 and 4),¹ in the prayer (vss. 8, 10, 13, 14), and in the angelic appearance (vs. 20).² The word for prophet, נבון (vss. 2, 6, 10, 24),³ in the Book of Daniel is also unique for chap. 9. To the people, וב (vss. 6, 15, 16, 19, 26), the various sections of the chapter attach personal suffixes in what would seem to be a deliberate manner. During his supplications (vss. 15-19), Daniel at first speaks about “your”/God’s people in reference to God’s act of deliverance from Egypt. In the final plea “your”/God’s people (vs. 19) is to be identified with the present Jewish community on whose behalf Daniel is praying. But when Daniel immediately following the prayer refers to the people in the context of the confession of sin, he speaks about “my” people. This use of the pronoun “my” is exceptional⁴ because it usually would refer to Yahweh when speaking about Israel. In the prelude of the oracle in vs. 24, Gabriel answers Daniel by a reference to “your”/Daniel’s people.

¹Bentzen (75) is imprecise when stating that the tetragrammaton only is found in the prayer in vss. “4b-19.” Charles (225) even takes the liberty of changing YHWH in vs. 2 into Elohim without textual foundation, simply because he takes his thesis for granted. Goettsberger (69) claims that the presence in vs. 2 is due to a quotation from Jeremiah; he is followed, among others, by Stahl (179). But as shown by Jones (“The Prayer,” 489), it is not a quotation, but rather due to the fact that the verse simply “is using a common idiom in which the tetragrammaton is acceptable.” Furthermore, Jones shows how the Book of Daniel in general employs terms for God fitting to the context, such as specific expressions when addressing the gentile rulers. As another example, the term שדנay is used in 1:2 though nowhere else in the book besides chap. 9. Collins (Daniel, 348-349) and Bayer (49) argue in a similar manner.

²By Montgomery taken as an indication of the unity of the chapter (360).

³Present nowhere else in the Book of Daniel (Bayer, 53). Goldingay (Daniel, 236) rightly states that “the prayer’s concern with prophecy has a different focus” from the context. This issue will be taken into consideration in the conclusion of this chapter.

⁴Goldingay, 247, supported by Collins (Daniel, 351).
In vss. 19 and 24, the city, ירושלים (the word also present in vs. 26), and the people are combined with the prefix עלי. The references to the name Israel (vss. 7, 11, 20) are unique for this chapter of the book, the name Jerusalem (found in all three parts of the chapter, in vss. 2, 7, 16, 25) present elsewhere only in 1:2; 5:2; and 6:11. The destruction or devastation of Jerusalem mentioned in the introduction (vs. 2, from the plural חרב) is a conceptual equivalent of the desolation (from חרב) mentioned in both the prayer (vss. 17-18) and in the oracle (once in vs. 26 and twice in vs. 27). The holy mountain (implying the temple), נַחַל, is mentioned in both prayer and context (vss. 16 and 20).

**Thematic links**

This leads us to important themes common to both prayer and context. Basic for the prayer is the concept of the covenant (הָעַבוּד, mentioned directly in vs. 5). The word itself recurs in the oracle in vs. 27 as the covenant is confirmed for the "many" (כֹּל), and related terms and ideas permeate both prayer and oracle.

The prayer contains a covenantal view of history in which the sequence of the sin of the people and the destruction of the city is seen as cause and effect. The two elements "people" and "city" have been shown by Doukhan to form the basis of the literary structure

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1 Bayer (53) notes the presence of the expression "city and people" combined with the preposition בְּעָלֶה both in prayer (vs.19) and oracle (vs. 24), but in Daniel found only in this chapter.

2 It denotes total ruin, the result of the fulfillment of the divine threats inherent in the covenant (e.g., Lev 26:31, 33), see Rast (97-99), Otto Kaiser ("עַבְדוּד hārab I," *TDOT* [1986], 5:150-154), and *DCH* (3:306).

3 The plural חָרְבֵי is, besides Daniel, found only six times in the OT (Isa 49:8; 61:4 [twice]; Jer 51:26, 62; Ezek 35:9). It is present twice in Daniel, both in chap. 9, one in the prayer (vs. 18), and one in the oracle (vs. 26), see also Bayer (53).
of the oracle. In the prelude of vs. 24, Gabriel mentions the two elements in the reverse sequence of the climactic motivation in vs. 19ff.: "70 weeks are separated concerning your people and concerning your holy city." This introduction to the oracle is followed first by three expressions dealing with the sins of the people, next by three expressions dealing with the city. In the main body of the prophecy, "the same twofold picture is present." The first part of each of the three verses (25-27) is concerned with the sins of the people and for that reason contains the references to the sacrificial system. The second part of each of the vss. 25-27 describes the fate of Jerusalem in the course of and as caused by the events during the seventy weeks.

Two of the terms for sin employed in the prayer are repeated in the oracle, one group from the root Nun (vss. 5, 16, 20, 24, elsewhere in Daniel only in 4:24), another group with verb and noun in vss. 5 and 24, respectively. In the list of the three nouns for sin in vs. 24, אכזב is found, noted by its absence in the prayer.

Another remarkable literary feature is suggestive of the theological relationship between the prayer and the oracle. Compared with the preceding part of the chapter, the

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2Vs. 24 speaks about the general content of the prophecy, while vss. 25-27 deal with the events within a more specific chronological framework.

3Containing two and three words, respectively, corresponding to (two words) "concerning your people" and to (three words) "concerning your holy city" (Doukhan. "The Seventy Weeks," 10).

4Ibid., 12.

5Especially in vs. 27, but according to Doukhan also by the mentioning of the Messiah par excellence in vss. 25 and 26 (ibid., 13, 21).

6Steck ("Weltgeschehen," 71-72) finds a Deuteronomic view with the sins of the people as the cause of its affliction expressed in Dan 9:24-27.
oracle makes an exceptional use of the words for sin, for righteousness (אַעֲנֶה in vss. 7, 14, 16, 19 of the prayer, אַעֲנֶה in vs. 24), and for prophet (אֲבִי, vss. 2, 6). This is precisely stated by Doukhan:

All those words which are used in the prayer in a definite sense expressing a particularist view ("our," "my," "of the people," "of God," etc.) are suddenly, as soon as they appear in the context of the 70 weeks, used in an indefinite sense expressing a universalistic point of view.¹

Besides the above mentioned words, this phenomenon holds true also for words not present in the prayer, such as the anointed one, the מָשָׁא, in vss. 25 and 26, and vision, וַיַּעַשׁ, הָזָון, in vss. 21² and 24.

The issue of time plays an all-important part in both introduction and oracle. The occasion for the prayer is given as Daniel’s study of the prophecy of the seventy years mentioned by Jer 25:11, 12; 29:10. The answer by Gabriel introduces a period of seventy weeks in vs. 24, divided into minor periods in vss. 25-27. The relationship between the two periods of seventy is closely tied to cultic time,³ consistent with the prayer’s preoccupation with the issue of the sanctuary. The desolations wrought upon Jerusalem and Judah are recompensation for the lost sabbatical years (cf. the use of הַשָּׁעַר in 2 Chr 36:20-22, Lev 26:34, 43 and the prayer in Dan 9:17, 18), and the restoration promised in the oracle points to the year of Jubilee.⁴

¹Doukhan ("The Seventy Weeks," 21), with detailed argumentation on p. 20.
²In this verse pointing to a "particular and definite vision" (ibid., 20).
³Based on 2 Chr 36:20-22 and Lev 26:34,43, Pierre Grelot understands the numbers as referring to the sabbatical year (7 x 10) and to the Jubilee (7 x 7 x 10), "Soixante-dix semaines d’années," Bib 50 (1969): 169. Bevan (146) especially points to the seven times mentioned for the punishment of the sins of Israel in Lev 26:28, so also Goldingay (Daniel, 232). See further the discussion in Collins (Daniel, 352-353).
⁴So also Doukhan ("The Seventy Weeks," 6-8).
In its climax in vs. 19, the specific petition of the prayer focuses on the issue of time and thereby closely links the prayer both with the setting implied by its literary context and with the divine answer given by Gabriel.

**The depiction of the characters**

By his biblically inspired praying, Daniel is presented as a man of Scripture (cf. vs. 2), seeking wisdom by God's truth (vs. 13), but primarily he is the individual "I" who represents the collective "we."¹ In the prayer, Daniel repeatedly refers to the people and their various subgroups (vss. 6-8, 12, 15-16, 19), emphasizing the aspect of solidarity between the groups. Together they constitute "all Israel" (vss. 7, 11). In the angelic epiphany and oracle, the people likewise play an important part (vss. 20, 24). None of the subgroups from the prayer are mentioned. But it is significant that the people are referred to in the oracle by the term "the many" (םְרָבָּיָנָה, vs. 27), a term with the connotations of the people of God in its entirety.² A major role is also given to an individual, the "anointed one," the "prince" (vs. 25), who is to be cut off or executed³ without any help (vs. 26).⁴

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¹ Among the commentators, I have found the reflections by Ronald S. Wallace in *The Message of Daniel: The Lord Is King,* The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester/Downer's Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), 153-154, to be the most profound on this issue.

² Doukhan ("The Seventy Weeks," 13) speaks about the universal dimension of the term מִרְבָּיָן and refers to texts like Isa 53:12 and Dan 12:2, see also Dan 12:10.

³ The nifal of בָּשָׂם are several times used in this sense, so Doukhan ("The Seventy Weeks," 22); see texts like Lev 20:17; Num 15:31.

⁴ For this meaning of יְהוָה (ibid., 18-19), cf. Dan 11:45.
Thus, both oracle and prayer focus on an individual and on the people as a collective group.¹

In the prayer, Daniel, the pray-er, identifies with his people, using the plural pronoun "we" (vss. 5-6, 18). Individually he is innocent, yet in this way he partakes in the suffering of his people.² It is remarkable that he in his address to God as "my God" in vs. 19 continues by calling the people "your (God’s) people" and immediately following speaks about "my" people (vs. 20). A similar mutual relationship occurs in chap. 6, God being "Daniel’s God" (6:27) and Daniel being "God’s servant" (üşḇ, vs. 21). In chap. 9, the emphasis of the prayer on "all Israel" makes the element of solidarity even stronger. In identifying with the people in the confession of sin, Daniel assumes the role of the prophetic intercessor in the line of Moses and the prophets (the servants, from א-י, in vss. 6, 11),³ fitting, incidentally, with the contextual reference to the prophet Jeremiah (vs. 2).⁴ While

¹In the oracle, a future enemy, the destroyer (vs. 27b), plays an important role. In the prayer, the historical enemies are implied by the reference to the calamity in vs. 12.

²In the context, this would provide a thematic link to the oracle, if following the messianic interpretation. Daniel is, in his intercessory prayer, an individual representing "all Israel," and the "anointed one" in the oracle may be an individual who identifies with the "many."

³Wallace, 153. R. le Déaut attempts to trace the historical development from the earlier prophets until the raise of Judaism, "Aspects de l’intercession dans le Judaïsme ancien," JSJ 1 (1970): 35-50. He mentions (35) the possibility that Dan 9 can be "considered a repetition of Exod 32" and Daniel reflect the sacerdotal role of the successive presentations of the character of Moses.

⁴The prophets, for whom the intercession for the people had been one of the primary functions, in solidarity more and more, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, shared the responsibilities and the fate of those they represented" (le Déaut, 35-36). The connection between Daniel and the prophet Jeremiah may be illuminated by the wide-spread notion that Jeremiah is the Old Testament "man of prayer" par excellence; see, for instance, Walter Brueggemann, "The Book of Jeremiah: Portrait of a Prophet," Int 37 (1983): 130-145, and S. H. Blank, "The Prophet as Paradigm," in Essays in Old Testament Ethics, ed. J. Crenshaw and J. T. Willis (New York: KTAV, 1974), 111-130. This view of Jeremiah is often linked to his so-
Daniel as an intercessor also reflects the "Lord's servant" in Isaiah, there is nothing to indicate that his intercession in any way claims value because of his personal merits.²

As a result of Daniel's prayer, he is approached by a heavenly character, Gabriel, who claims to have been sent as soon as Daniel began praying. It is a misunderstanding of the phrase "in the moment you began your supplications" (vs. 23) to deduce that the answer to be given by the angel will have no relation to the content of Daniel's prayer.³ Rather, the called confessions for which see A. R. Diamond, *The Confessions of Jeremiah in Context: Scenes of Prophetic Drama*, JSOTSup 45 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987).


²So also Goldingay (Daniel, 247). Le Déaut observes this phenomenon of attaching merits to the mediator himself in the later stage of the development of the intercession in ancient Judaism (49-50).

³Understood in this way by Jones ("The Prayer," 492-493) and Collins (Daniel, 352). Lacocque rejects this view as inexact: "'the beginning of your supplications' . . . is not meant to indicate that the rest went unheard, but is rather a manner of emphasizing the promptness of the divine response to the supplications of the 'favoured man' (cf. Isa 65:24)" (Lacocque, The Book of Daniel, 181). He is followed by Smith-Christopher (127): "But surely this comment that Gabriel was sent after Daniel began praying is an emphasis on God's quick response, and not a comment on the irrelevance of the rest of the prayer (see Isa 65:24; cf. Matt 6:8)."
expression underlines Daniel's close ties with the heavenly world. Gabriel belongs to his supporting group, to his heavenly prayer fellowship.¹

Daniel speaks to God as the addressee. Sanctuary and history are the two important themes relating to God in the chapter. The role of God as the object for worship is essential to prayer as well as oracle, because it is the very concern of the temple service. In vs. 17, for instance, Daniel motivates God to act by a reference to the temple where God formerly had been worshiped. The fate of the temple and its sacrifices is the pivotal issue in the revelation given by Gabriel. Likewise, God is depicted as the Lord of history in both prayer and oracle. God has been in charge of the history of His people, confirming His words of warnings by letting the promised calamity hit them (vss. 11-14). He will also be in charge of the future history (vss. 24-27). The angelic oracle accentuates the divine decisions in the events to come.² The tension between what seems to indicate a deterministic view of history in the oracle and the prayer's emphasis on personal and collective responsibility in history is the major theological problem of the chapter and is discussed below.³

¹Smith-Christopher, 126. In chap. 2 this prayer community is an earthly backing-group, namely Daniel's three friends. For the concept, see also the discussion of the characters in the prayer of Dan 2:20-23 above, p. 101.

²Note, for instance, the passive participle in vs. 26, "decreed (נתרץ from נזר; cf. the presence of this root also in vss. 25 and 27) desolations."

Summary

This section has traced some of the similarities between words, themes and characters that unite the prayer with its narrow context within the chapter. In spite of the difference in style between the prayer and the report of the angelic epiphany and oracle, several terms and linguistic features help to establish the interrelationship. They should not make us overlook the obvious differences. Some of them have already been touched upon. Among them are the unique use in the oracle of the basic word for sin (יָפָק, vs. 24), absent in the prayer; the oracle’s universal reference to a number of themes that, in the introduction, the prayer and the epiphany are described in a particular way; and the apocalyptic language of the oracle compared with the Deuteronomistic nature of the prayer. Another is the mentioning of the enemy power in the oracle in vss. 26-27. Though the prayer’s references to the history of Israel presuppose the fact of enemies of the people, these are not explicitly mentioned.

These elements all point beyond the prayer as the sole context of the angelic revelation. This observation is supported by the presence of several other expressions in the epiphany. In vs. 21 Daniel introduces Gabriel as someone he has previously seen in the

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1From the perspective of this study it is of less importance whether the prayer is original, edited by the major editor of the book, or placed there at a yet later time as a secondary addition. As noted by Davies, we would still have to raise the question why the prayer is there, and what purpose it does serve (Davies, Daniel, 61).

2Ziony Zevit attempts in “The Exegetical Implications of Dan 8:1; 9:21,” VT 28 (1978): 489, to identify Gabriel with “the son of man” in 7:13 on the basis of the expression in 9:21, נֵחָלֹת, which he understands as always having the sense “in the beginning,” referring to “a first or initial time.” Collins (Daniel, 310) rejects the identification between Gabriel and Michael, yet accepts that 9:21 must refer back to the vision in chap. 7 because the vision in 8 is explicitly mentioned as a second one and therefore cannot be the intended reference of נֵחָלֹת; so also William H. Shea, “The Relationship Between the Prophecies of Daniel 8 and Daniel 9,” in The Sanctuary and the Atonement, ed. Arnold V. Wallenkampf (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1980), 230-231. I do not find this understanding to
vision. The chapter itself thus broadens the literary context of the prayer to include the preceding visionary part of the book. For that reason the prayer will next be viewed in the light of this context.

Against the Background of Dan 8

Interactions between God and man

No prayer can be detected in chap. 8. Yet, the process of divine-human communication is central to the understanding of the flow of events. In this part of the book, Daniel, no gentile king, is the recipient of visions containing divine revelation. The role of explaining the significance of the visionary symbols, which in chaps. 1-6 was filled by Daniel, is now taken over by heavenly beings.1

be convincing. In texts like Gen 41:21; 43:18, 20, the usage of the phrase is obviously "previously, formerly." As pointed out by Goldingay (Daniel, 196; see further his discussion at 256-257), בָּשָׁם הָהָיָה in Gen 13:3-4 stands parallel to בַּשָּׁם. He specifically argues for the sense "previously" in 8:1 by stating that "it would be odd to refer to the immediately preceding chapter as 'at the beginning.' So also Hartman and Di Leila (223).

1As generally recognized, this reference presupposes Dan 8:15-16; see Lacocque (The Book of Daniel, 190). Even if 8:16 and 9:23 came from the same hand and only were later added to 8:15, so Hartman and Di Lella (243), the link would remain. We should also note that "the vision" in vs. 21, מָצָא, contrary to Zevit (489), points back to the only vision of Daniel that is specifically labeled מָצָא, the vision of chap. 8 (see vs. 1-2).

2The relevance of the heavenly beings for the prayers is exemplified by the prayer in 9 where we have met Gabriel as part of Daniel’s heavenly prayer fellowship. In Daniel’s first vision in chap. 7, the angelus interpres is referred to as "one of those standing" (vs. 16), the participle from עָצַב most likely pointing back to the throne scene of vs. 10, describing the myriads of people who stood (impf. of עָצַב) before the Ancient of Days. In chap. 8:15-16, the heavenly messenger is described as a being with the appearance of a man and accordingly named Gabriel, "the man of God."
In chap. 8, Daniel’s ecstatic experience, like in chap. 7, covers almost the whole chapter with vss. 1-2a as an introduction and vs. 27 as a “concluding statement of the visionary’s reaction.” This main body of the chapter basically can be divided into two parts: the report of the vision or revelation (vss. 2b-14) and the interpretation (vss. 15-26). The resumption in vs. 15 of the phrase נבנ as an introduction and vs. 27 as a “concluding statement of the visionary’s reaction.” This main body of the chapter basically can be divided into two parts: the report of the vision or revelation (vss. 2b-14) and the interpretation (vss. 15-26). The resumption in vs. 15 of the phrase נבנ as an introduction and vs. 27 as a “concluding statement of the visionary’s reaction.”

1In chap. 7, it is introduced by vs. 1 and rounded off with vs. 28.

2Hartman and Di Lella (230) interpret vs. 15 as indicating that Daniel’s dream was over and the following vs. 16 therefore an intrusion. But in 7:15 a similar transition occurs between the visionary scenes presented and the explanation to come. Nothing would demand that Daniel could not in his ecstatic mood meditate upon the meaning of what he saw. Actually he has been doing that already during the previous scenes of the vision in chap. 8 (cf. the expression “while I pondered,” איה נבנ, vs. 5).

3So Goldingay (Daniel, 196, 203), Pöger (Das Buch Daniel, 120) in his translation, yet not in his commentary (123-124), and Koch (“Visionsbericht,” 416-417). This division and this understanding of the much discussed repeated phrase of the verse, נבנ, “while I was seeing, I,” would indicate that Daniel was present in Susa only in vision.

Collins (Daniel, 327-329) understands the expression as a dittography and chooses to divide with the beginning of vs. 3. The same division is found with Doukhan (Le soupir, 191), Stephen Breck Reid (Enoch and Daniel: A Form Critical and Sociological Study of Historical Apocalypses, Bibal Monograph Series 2 [Berkeley, CA: Bibal Press, 1989], 93), and with Montgomery (325) though he recognizes “that Daniel was in Elam only in uisione.”

4Collins, Daniel with an Introduction, 85.

5So Collins, Daniel (328), Reid (92), using the expressions “Account of Revelation” and “Interpretation of Revelation, and Porter (7-8) saying “symbolic vision” and “interpretation.”

6So Koch (“Visionsbericht,” 419).
The main elements of the revelation are four: the ram (vss. 3-4), the goat (vss. 5-8), the little horn (vss. 9-12), and a conversation between two heavenly beings regarding time (vss. 13-14), often called the audition.1

After an introduction in which the seer meets the interpreter and is presented with the basic purpose and scope of the vision (vss. 15-19), Daniel is given an interpretation that closely follows the outline of the revelation and its four main elements. The ram is further commented on in vs. 20, the goat in vss. 21-22, the little horn in vss. 23-25, and the audition in vs. 26.

While this elaboration given by Gabriel obviously is intended to clarify the identity and the activities of the three historical powers in question, the meaning of the heavenly conversation is not disclosed in vs. 26,2 but deliberately and explicitly kept away from Daniel.

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1 Martin Noth saw this audition as a later addition because of its lack of visionary elements ("Zur Komposition des Buches Daniel," TSK 99 [1926]: 160). He has been followed by Ginsberg (Studies, 32) and Hartman and Di Lella (230). Collins rejects their arguments (Daniel, 328), stating that "apocalyptic writers do not necessarily have the same concern for formal purity as do some form-critics." And Freer points out (35-36) that "if Noth’s distinction were sustainable as a phenomenological division, much of Dan 9 and 10:1-12:4 would have to be regarded as something other than a vision-report. . . . [such elements] cannot be used as a tool to study redactional history." I will further add that the audition of Dan 8:13-14 is not completely void of visual elements. If so, Daniel probably would not have been able to identify the speakers; compare with the situation in vs. 16 where he just hears the sound of a voice over the canal.

2 The expressions in vs. 26 clearly refer back to vss. 13-14, so Lacocque (The Book of Daniel, 172), who in the closing verses finds a decisive link to chap. 9. The evening and morning (תַּעַרְבּוּ) is repeated, now with the article as a reference to the evenings and mornings already mentioned. The relative sentence “about which there was spoken” (הִיאָה אֵלֶּה הָאָמַרְתָּ) directly points to the conversation. Most likely the word for vision (נֶפֶשׁ) in this case is used to indicate the part of the larger vision of the whole chapter (יִתְנָה) in which personal beings appear, in accordance with the basic sense of נֶפֶשׁ as “appearance”; cf. vs. 15; see also KB (2:630).
From the perspective of the divine-human communication, therefore, Daniel has been given a divine revelation containing four main points. He has received a more detailed explanation of three of the main elements of the vision, but no further information regarding the fourth basic element, the conversation about time. It is therefore significant that the closure of the chapter highlights his lack of understanding of the audition\(^1\) by the phrase "I did not understand" (vs. 27, from אֲנָן נִבְרָא).\(^2\)

**Semantic and thematic links**

The differences between chap. 8 and chap. 9 are obvious. In chap. 8 the future is the subject matter, and it is presented in visionary symbols. In chap. 9 the prayer reviews the past history of Israel through the concept of the covenant and in Deuteronomic language. In the vision in chap. 8, pagan powers are central elements. In the prayer of chap. 9, the past enemies of Israel are only implied by the mentioning of the calamity (9:13-14). Nevertheless, it is possible to discern some similarities in words, in themes, and in the pattern of events described in the two chapters.\(^3\) These are the major concerns of this section.

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\(^1\)As in the immediately preceding vs. 26, the word for "vision" in vs. 27 is נִבְרָא, pointing to the audition of vss. 13-14. "The reference in vs. 27 by נִבְרָא to the audition . . . shakes the seer because it also after the interpretation remains imperfectly understood by him" (Plöger, *Das Buch Daniel*, 129).

\(^2\)Also the vision in chap. 7 ends on a note of awe. Yet the element of lack of understanding is not emphasized. In contrast to Gabriel's explanation in the vision of chap. 8, the elements of chap. 7 have all been dealt with by the *angelus interpres*.

\(^3\)William H. Shea compares Dan 8 and Dan 9 in "The Relationship Between the Prophecies." He does so in regard to the larger setting of Daniel's visions and the details of terminology, common phraseology in the introductions, and themes and historical applications of the prophecies. His article contains no references to the content of the prayer in Dan 9:4b-19.
The pattern of events. First of all, the sanctuary (קדש, 8:11 and 9:17) and the “holy” (קדש, 8:13; cf. קדשׁ in 9:16) are in the focus of the events in both chapters.¹ Their fate is in jeopardy because of the destructions. The chapters share common terminology in regard to these desolations (from כותב, 8:13 and 9:17, 18). They are closely connected with the tribulation of the people (עם, “people” is present in both vision, 8:24, and prayer, 9:6, 19).

Next, the future divine intervention, so desperately looked for, deals in both chapters directly with the sanctuary. In chap. 9 this will take place when God “lets his face shine upon” it (vs. 17),² in chap. 8 when the sanctuary is restored, cleansed, or vindicated (vs. 14, יזק).³ The root of this verb, יזק, has been seen to be essential also in chap. 9. In the supplications of the prayer, it characterizes God (vs. 16, יזק), referring to the merciful

¹The book contains scattered references to the theme of the sanctuary throughout; cf. Dan 1:2; 5:2; 6:11 et al., not less important in the context of prayer and worship. Yet it is not until chap. 8 that the temple-motif becomes dominant, seen among other features by the symbolic use of sacrificial animals in the historical presentation of the chapter, Doukhan (Le soupir, 179-180), contra Collins (Daniel with an Introduction, 93), who claims Dan 9 to be “the only passage in the book where the cultic motifs are prominent.” For some reflections on cultic terms in Dan 8, see Gerhard F. Hasel, “The ‘Little Horn,’ the Saints, and the Sanctuary,” in The Sanctuary and the Atonement, ed. Arnold V. Wallenkampf (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1980), 177-220.

²The unique feature of this expression is that it takes the sanctuary as its object; see the section on words and themes of the prayer above, p. 181.

acts of God in turning His wrath away from the city and the temple. In the oracle (vs. 24, "תָּמִית"), it points in a more universal manner to His everlasting righteousness. In the parallel between the *description* in vs. 15 and the *motivation* in vs. 16,1 God's "destroyed sanctuary" (vs. 16b) is compared with the original deliverance from Egypt (vs. 15c) like a new exodus. In the subsequent petition in vs. 17b, this future event is described as God's blessing over His "destroyed sanctuary."

Furthermore, the situation preceding this divine intervention is in both chapters explained by the concept of "wrath." In chap. 8 the terms נאום (vs. 6, the fury of the goat) and מִשְׁחָת (vs. 19, "at the end of the wrath"/"when the wrath is over") are used, in chap. 9 the words נאום and נאום, referring explicitly to God's wrath (vs. 16). The two terms נאום and נאום are often used as synonyms (e.g., Isa 10:5; 30:27; Nah 1:6).2 The anger of God towards His people is often experienced as the wrath or fury of the enemy used to chastise Israel ("rod of anger," Isa 10:5; "instruments of anger," Isa 13:5). To discern the relationship between God's responsibility and the responsibility of the enemy unwittingly employed by God to bring tribulations to the people belongs to the major theological challenges of the Old Testament.3 It is a common pattern that the wrath, after having been executed by a pagan people, turns on the enemy itself when the divine purpose is fulfilled (e.g., like Jer 25:8-14, 15; 51:7; Isa 10:20-26; 51:21-23). The various references in chaps. 8 and 9 to the

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1See the section on the prayer structure above, p. 163, and the table on p. 164.


3This tension occasionally clearly creates difficulties. Isa 10:24f. is very cautious about ascribing to God responsibility for oppression at the hands of Assyria. In Daniel, where נאום is used absolutely as a term for the period of persecution (8:19; 11:6), the end of this period is determined in advance by Yahweh, but the verb itself does not have a divine subject in 11:30. Here we might find one of the assumptions leading to dualism, but never totally eliminating wrath from the nature of God" (Wiklander, 111).
wrath are consistent with this Old Testament usage. The wrath hits the people through the agency of foreign powers (8:6, cf. 11:30), but it is in the final end governed by divine providence (8:19; 9:16). Accordingly, Gabriel in his description of the activities of the little horn points out that the strength of the horn does not come by its inherent might (אלא", "not by its own power," 8:24).

A definite pattern of events has been discovered in which the desolation of the sanctuary, the wrath and the tribulation, is followed by divine intervention, a pattern that usually is related to the covenant, the central theme of the prayer in chap. 9. The pattern is also reflected in another expression in chap. 8. The enemy of the little horn is in 8:23 characterized by the Hebrew phrase יִשְׁמָד ו", "stern-faced." This expression is unique in the OT for this verse and Deut 28:50 where it characterizes the pagan enemy who because of

1Zimmerli (586) suggests that the "self-understanding of the prayer (in Daniel 9) according to which the people of God were under the punishing wrath of God possibly points further on to 8:19 and 11:36 . . . . The cry for an end to the time of wrath is thereby at the same time a cry for the return of the divine grace."

2Collins (Daniel, 338) objects to this understanding of the concept of the wrath in Daniel because he finds only the transgression of the little horn to be mentioned in the chapter. In doing so, he makes an attempt to view also the wrath in Dan 8:19 and 11:36 as the wrath of Antiochus IV, not of God (386): "The alternative interpretation, that the wrath is the Lord's anger against Israel, is not impossible, but goes against the tendency of Daniel to place the blame for the turmoil on the king." See also Collins (Daniel with an Introduction, 95). In my view, Collins is missing that the wrath as a concept in any case expresses the divine providence, whether by allowing the enemy power to reign for a definite time period, or by direct divine punitive action.

3No enemy power is directly mentioned in the prayer that restricts itself to the relationship between God and the people, so that the blame falls upon the people without any distraction or dispute. Yet the mentioning of the calamity in 9:11-14 presupposes the existence of the historical enemies used by God to chastise the people.

4Reid notes (98) this connection and suggests that "Daniel draws upon Deuteronomistic tradition in his stylized description of Antiochus IV." So also Steck ("Weltgeschehen," 67).

5Further described as a deceptive "wise man," possessing understanding (חכם, cf. 8:27) of riddles (8:23), and "insight" (8:25), from the root חָסֵל. Lacocque notes that in
the people's breach of the covenant\(^1\) will be used by God to bring about the curses foretold in Deuteronomy.

*The cause of events.* When it comes to the question of cause and effect, the prayer in 9:4b-19 is very clear. The reason for the desolations of the sanctuary is to be found in the sins of the people. This is stated in vs. 16: "for *because of* (using the preposition \(b\), *beth*) our sins (from נאשון) and *because of* the iniquities (from יוש) of our ancestors, Jerusalem and your people have become objects of scorn among all our neighbors." The word for sin in chap. 8 is יִשְׁפָּא (vss. 12, 13, 23), and in light of the similarities so far detected between chaps. 8 and 9, it is natural to investigate whether some kind of covenantal pattern of cause and effect is implied also in chap. 8 by the use of this term for sin.

In its first occurrence in the chapter in vs. 12a, the word יִשְׁפָּא is connected with *beth*, the preposition employed with the words for "sin" in 9:16. Traditionally the sentence as contrast to the book at large (1:4, 17, 20; 11:33, 35; 12:3, 10), the use of this root in Dan 8 (vs. 25) and 9 (in the prayer in vs. 13, in the angelic epiphany and oracle in vss. 22 and 25) is non-technical. The usages in chap. 9 "should be seen as the divine response to the *צֶּכֶל* (skills) of Antiochus IV in Daniel 8:25" (*Daniel in His Time*, 10).

\(^1\)Collins recognizes this origin of the expression (*The Book of Daniel*, 339), but goes on to claim that it "cannot, however, be taken to imply that the rise of Antiochus is viewed as a covenantal curse." He finds the context of the somewhat similar expression used for the harlot in Prov 7:13 to provide just as obvious a parallel to the setting in Daniel. In Prov 7:13 the text says התנה גּוֹזֵע, in agreement with the feminine subject. But Dan 8:23's רו נְסִי is the direct equivalent of Deut 28:50, and the situation foreshadowed in Deuteronomy is precisely the one presupposed in Daniel. Elements of wisdom are present also in Dan 8, yet I find that the features relating to the covenant, as presented in this section, are even more explicit, and Deuteronomy is far more natural for a comparison than Proverbs.

\(^2\)In the prayer, this preposition is the only one used in connection with a word for sin and each time indicating the cause, the third and final example found in vs. 7: "*because of* their treachery."
well as the whole verse is regarded as extremely difficult. The Masoretic text of vs. 12a says רָּעָ֯א תִּנְתָּה ה 'ָ֯כְתַּמִי בַּ֔'סָּה. To determine whether the “sin” in this verse denotes the cause, the grammatical elements of this sentence have to be investigated.

The first word of the sentence is the word for “host.” The sense of the noun סַעַ֑דָא, סַעַדָא, is in my view the same as in the immediate context. It refers to the saints in vss. 11 and 13 and is explained as the people in Gabriel’s further comment in vs. 24. So also here.

1 Martin Pröbstle provides a good update on the various scholarly suggestions and grammatical possibilities in “A Linguistic Analysis of Daniel 8:11-12,” *JTS* 7 (1996): 86-93.

2 Where possible a solution that avoids any emendations is preferred. The grammatical problems encountered in the Masoretic text are by no means greater than the problems created by the many emendations that have been proposed, often primarily made on the basis of theological evaluations and attempts at historical applications.

3 The problems scholars have been facing in regard to its meaning are complex, and arguments are related to grammar and syntax, historical application, views on the redactional development of the chapter, and views on the overall theology of the Book of Daniel. The most important of these arguments will be referred to in the notes below during the investigation of the elements of the sentence.


5 The primary grammatical objection to this view points to the gender incongruence between the masculine in vs. 11 and the feminine in vs. 12 which could indicate that the "army" or "host" should be understood differently in vs. 12a. A similar gender shift is applied to the little horn (*fem* in most of vss. 9-10, yet changing to *masc.* in vs. 11). Many attempts have been made to solve this apparent problem, some involving extreme emendations of the consonantal text. The most simple solution may be found in the phenomenon of syntactical gender shift in accordance with the masculine gender as indicating strength, the feminine gender expressing weakness, as suggested to me in class by Johann Erbes; see also the grammar by Nyberg (§ 79e, 231). It fits perfectly with the context in Dan 8:9-12 and explains the gender shifts of these verses. When growing great (or acting greatly, understanding the *hīfīl* adverbially), the horn becomes masculine; when the host of God is given over, the feminine gender is used.
The preposition ב (beth)\(^1\) before "sin" would in this context either be sociative (or circumstantial, describing the circumstances accompanying the activities of the logical subject) or causal (denoting the cause or background for the actions), the prepositional phrase בֵּיתָנֶה ‘having the meaning “because of sin.”\(^2\)

A syntactically parallel example to the use of the passive verbal construction is provided by Ezra 9:7.\(^3\) In this prayer of Ezra, a nifal form of the verb זר is also employed in conjunction with a prepositional phrase with ב (beth) followed by a term for “sin”:

"Because of (ב, beth) our sins (from וּב) we . . . have been given (nifal of וּב) into the hand of other countries’ kings."\(^4\) Read in the context of the chapter’s description of the tribulations, Dan 8:12a expresses a meaning similar to this parallel from Ezra 9.

In the subsequent sentences of the verse, the verbs are also in feminine (from וּב, throw, and תֶּשׁ, to do, achieve),\(^5\) and the little horn is perceived as the subject. But the

\(^1\)The locative/spatial or temporal sense is unnatural in this context. The causal is at times labeled as circumstantial too. For the use of the preposition beth in general, see Waltke and O'Connor (§ 11.2.5, 196-199) and DCH (2:82-86).

\(^2\)This sense is preferred by such scholars as S. Miller (227), Lacocque (The Book of Daniel, 163), C. H. H. Wright (Studies in Daniel’s Prophecy [Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1983], 180-181), Seebass (808), Steck ("Weltgeschehen," 65-66), Davidson (tentatively, 116), and in translations like NRSV, NIV, JPS, and the New King James (NKJ).

\(^3\)This is the only parallel example in OT of a nifal form זר followed by beth plus a word for sin. The text is missed by Pröbstle (92), who claims that abstract nouns (like terms for “sin”) are never used in a causal, but “only in a modal sense is following beth.” But in Ezra 9:7 the phrase is not modal: it does not refer back to the passive verb, meaning “in a sinful manner."

\(^4\)It is important to keep in mind the relevance of Ezra 9 for the context of Daniel, not only because of its proximity in time, but also because of the close relationship between the prayer in Ezra 9 and the prayer of Dan 9.

\(^5\)Bernhard Hasselberger argues in Hoffnung in der Bedrängnis: Eine formkritische Untersuchung zu Dan 8 und 10-12, Münchener Universitätsschriften (St. Ottilien: Eos Verlag, 1977), 102, that the subject of the verb תינאָט must be the little horn because this
logical subject of the passive construction in vs. 12a is not the little horn, but God. The sentence points beyond the immediate historical events to an idea of history in which the providence of God prevails.1

From a grammatical point of view, the translation of the sentence in Dan 8:12a therefore naturally reads as follows: "The host was given over, along with2 the continual sacrificial service (hattāmīḏ),3 because of sin," in the context understood as the transgression of the people.

verb, like the three remaining verbs of the verse, is feminine. That the horn is the subject of "ban, nnra, and nmbsn is evident from the explanation by Gabriel in vss. 24-25. But the nifal form of the first verb clearly distinguishes it from the subsequent verbs.

1The passive verb indicates the providence of God; the active verbs following it accentuate that the actual historical tribulations and desolations were effected by the little horn.

2For this understanding of the preposition ʿal, see Lacocque (The Book of Daniel, 163), Keil and Delitzsch (300), and Leopold (348). It presupposes that the two concepts are closely related, which is substantiated by the question in vs. 13. A textual example of the use of the preposition in this way is Exod 35:22: "and the men came along with the women" or "both the men and the women came." Pröbstle (91) finds that such understanding "does not take into account the usage of ʿal in NTN-sentences." But the preposition ʿal has no specific relationship with the verb of the sentence, as does ʿal, beth. The prepositional phrase with ʿal serves the purpose of linking the nominal expression hattāmīḏ with the host, the grammatical subject. The usage of ʿal in NTN-sentences is therefore of minor significance in this context.

3The exact meaning of hattāmīḏ is less important for our purpose. Critical scholarship most often assumes that the word for sacrifice is implied, and that the phrase therefore signifies the daily morning and evening sacrifices. In OT, the phrase never has this meaning without the word for sacrifice added, like in Exod 29:42; hattāmīḏ is used in conjunction with several features of the sacrificial service, such as the breads of the Presence (Exod 25:30), the lamp (Exod 27:20), Urim and Tummim (Exod 28:29-30), the incense (Lev 24:8), and the divine presence over the tabernacle (Num 9:16). See also Angel M. Rodriguez, "Significance of the Cultic Language in Daniel 8:9-14," in Symposium on Daniel, Daniel & Revelation Series 2, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1986), 532-533.
This understanding of the sentence can be supported by three observations regarding the usage of the verb. First, the passive form as such is repeatedly used in the Book of Daniel to express divine action or providence (e.g., 2:18; 7:6; 9:1, 12b, 25b). Second, we note that already earlier in the book the verb “to give” is employed in a significant way when delegation of power in history is the issue (1:2; 2:21, 37, 38; 7:6, 12b). The expression of 8:12a thus implies that God gave the people into the hands/power of the little horn. And finally, also in vs. 13 the central terms "sin" and "host" are linked to the verb "to give", maintaining the same sense as in vs. 12: "until when is . . . the sin, causing desolation and the giving over (from נתח, the infinitive used nominally) of both sanctuary and host (הידוח) to be trampled down?"

1Collins (Daniel, 335) also understands the verb in this sense, translating "was given over to it," presumably to the little horn. But he translates ב'פא'א as "in the course of transgression," understood as "the offense of the little horn."

2Besides the fact already mentioned—that the vision in chap. 8 replaces the beasts of prey from chap. 7 with sacrificial animals—other literary features help to underline that in this chapter the people once again are in focus: the change from 3rd to 1st person (completed in 7:28 and maintained from chap. 8 and onwards) points to the people represented by Daniel; the theme of the sanctuary (8:11) comes to the forefront; and the language returns with chap. 8 to Hebrew, the general language of the Scriptures.

3Goldingay (Daniel, 195) translates the phrase in the following manner, "the surrendering of both sacred place and host to be trampled down?"

4The plural הפשעים in vs. 23 may be vocalized as "the sinners" (the Masoretes) or as "the sins" (LXX). The latter is followed by Collins (Daniel, 327, 339), who takes the phrase as referring to the kings supplanted by Antiochus IV: their sins "must run its course." For Plöger it points most likely to the apostacy of "the Hellenistic party within the Jewish theocracy" (Plöger, Das Buch Daniel, 129), so also Seebass (808). Attempts at historical application are beyond the scope of the present work, but these understandings of the phrase as such are consistent with the meaning suggested above.
Conclusions. The vision of chap. 8 and the prayer in 9 share a similar pattern of events related to the people of God. The cause of their tribulations is described as sin or transgression. The results are explained by the concept of the wrath, experienced by the people.

The basic objection raised by Collins (Daniel, 335) against this understanding of chap. 8 is that "Daniel never views the persecution as punishment for the sins of the Jewish people." This view can be maintained only if the prayer in chap. 9 is regarded as secondary, but is not consistent with a supposed original prayer. In the present context of the canonical work, the themes of chap. 8 must be understood in the light of the prayer in chap. 9. But we should also realize that the sin of the people obviously goes unmentioned in chapters where the people are not an issue. The sin is, however, presupposed in Dan 1:2, and it is not illogical that it recurs in chap. 8, where the people once again enter the main focus. When the issue is resumed in 11:30, the text speaks about those who abandon the covenant, about apostasy within (11:32) and purification (11:35; 12:10) of the people, concepts closely related to the covenant pattern described above. On the latter texts, Goldingay comments, "Daniel subsequently makes it clear that a distinction between faithfulness to the covenant and wickedness ran within Israel itself... Dan 9 might presuppose this distinction; the innocent identify with the wicked, and God responds to their prayer" (Goldingay, Daniel, 259).

The second major objection made by Collins is based upon his identification of the host or stars in 8:10-12 with heavenly beings. The discussion is complex and linked in the broader context also to the understanding of the identity of the "saints" or "holy ones" in chap. 7. The excursus in Collins (Daniel, 313-317) provides a thorough introduction to this issue. Since Martin Noth in "The Holy Ones of the Most High," in The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Essays (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1966; reprint, London: SCM, 1984), 215-218, a growing number of scholars have identified this group in Dan 7 with heavenly beings. For the view that they represent earthly characters, major representatives are C. H. W. Brekelmans, "The Saints of the Most High and Their Kingdom," OTS 14 (1965): 305-329, and Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Identity of ‘the Saints of the Most High’ in Daniel 7," Bib 56 (1975): 173-192. Collins follows the view presented by Noth. It is in this context and for that reason he declares that "transgression cannot be attributed to the heavenly host" (Daniel, 335). Lacocque, who shares Collins’s view of the host, finds no problem on this point (The Book of Daniel, 163-164). The transgression is supposedly the sin of the people on earth. It should, however, be questioned that the identification of the stars with the heavenly beings is evident. Stars are a common metaphor for the earthly people of God (e.g., Gen 15:5; Deut 28:62 in the context of the covenant curses; Dan 12:3). That the Book of Daniel presents heaven and earth as a parallel, in which heavenly beings fight as counterparts to the earthly powers, is not in question. But in my view the most consistent way to view this struggle is not to see an earthly power like the little horn battling heavenly angels, but to understand the heavenly representatives of both the little horn and the people of God as fighting behind the scenes. This is exemplified in Dan 10:13 where heavenly princes, representatives of the terrestrial kingdoms, struggle with each other.
people as they are given over to hostile powers, and seen in the desolation of the sanctuary
and the casting down of true religion ("truth," יתנש, 8:11, is used also in the prayer in 9:13).¹
It should, therefore, come as no surprise that both vision and prayer in their conclusion
express the hope for divine intervention in the mood of lament: in the audition in 8:13-14 a
heavenly being raises the question "how long?/until when" (יָדוּ, 8:13-14);² in the final and specific
petition of his prayer, Daniel, the human intercessor, expresses his concern for divine
intervention in time by the words "act!" and "make no delay!" (9:19).³ The verb for "act,"
עשה, is an essential verb in the vision of chap. 8 where it denotes the activities of the gentile
powers and the little horn in particular (vss. 4, 12, 24). Its use in 9:19 reflects Daniel’s
wish that God, after this long period of pagan domination, will finally intervene and take
over.⁴ In chap. 8 the period of tribulation is the time of the wrath, and the vision points to

¹Gerhard F. Hasel describes the sense of יתנש in 8:11 as "the divine truth of revelation
that the little horn will throw down to earth" ("The ‘Little Horn,’ the Saints, and the
Sanctuary," 189).

²According to Lacocque (The Book of Daniel, 164) “this is the question par excellence
of the apocalypse, the reason the Author wrote chap. 8.” Towner (Daniel, 128) though
finding the “connection of chap. 9 to chap. 8” “more apparent than real,” yet acknowledges
that the entire chap. 9 “is related to chap. 8 as if it were an answer to the question, How
long, o Lord, will the oppression of the saints endure?”

³This link between the “how long?” of 8:19 and chap. 9 is noted by Fewell (158, 192).

⁴It may be that another contrast between the divine intervention hoped for and the
tribulation experienced through the enemy agents is reflected in the use of the adjective גָּדִיל,
“great,” about God in 9:4b. The הִפִּיל form of the verb is typical for chap. 8’s description of
the activities of the world powers, not least of the little horn (vss. 4b, 8, 9, 10, 11). These
powers have acted in a proud or great manner, but God alone is great, and the pray-er’s
desire is that he finally will intervene to overcome them.
the end of this wrath by the expression $\text{מִנּוֹנָם}$ in vs. 19. The verb for “delay” in 9:19 (as $\text{אֲחַרְיָן}$, $\text{יָרָאת}$, in 8:19 from the root ראת) echoes this expression.¹

Therefore, in spite of the obvious differences between the vision of chap. 8 and the prayer in chap. 9, a certain pattern of events is similar to both. In comparison with the prayer, the combined presence² of these elements of a covenantal pattern in chap. 8 substantiates that there is a thematic link between the chapters.³ The differences may point to nuances or even contrasts in the understanding between the two chapters, yet the similarities are sufficient to establish their interrelationship. As we continue, we will further pursue this connection by discussing the role of the prayer in the plot contained in chaps. 8 and 9.

In the plot

Most scholars regard Daniel’s major problem in chap. 9 to be his lack of understanding of the prophecies contained in the writings of Jeremiah.⁴ His search for the


²In order to reject this theory, it is necessary for Collins (*Daniel*, 335, 339, 387) for each occurrence of a covenantal element to repeat that there are no other arguments to support it. Yet, the need for such repetitions should make us aware of the combined effect of the presence of these elements.

³For clarification, this thematic relationship does not imply that the two chapters are to be seen as parallels. The different settings of the chapters speak against such parallelism. The outline of the empires in the vision in chap. 8 is rather a parallel to the oral prophecy in chap. 11. The prayer in chap. 9 takes place in a completely different chronological context, it lacks the sequence of the kingdoms, and though thematically related, the angelic oracle in 9:24-27 is not added to the vision in chap. 8 as a chronological climax.

⁴“The central purpose of the chapter is the reinterpretation of Jeremiah’s prediction” (R. A. Anderson, 110), so also Raymond Hammer, *The Book of Daniel*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 95, Montgomery (359-
true meaning of the time prophecy about the seventy years is seen as the decisive question of
the plot.¹ In line with this thinking, the angelic oracle in vss. 24-27 is viewed as a pesher-
like reinterpretation of Jer 25:8-14 and 29:10-14.² To many scholars, therefore, the prayer
is out of context because its theological content seems unrelated to this plot.³

In the final canonical shape of the text, this interpretation faces several difficulties,
even apart from the presence of the prayer. Nothing in the introduction, prayer, or angelic
epiphany and oracle suggests that Daniel does not understand Jeremiah or that he seeks
further illumination regarding his prophecy.⁴ Read in light of the present literary setting,
there is no reason why a sixth-century Daniel⁵ should perceive this straight-forward

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¹According to Collins (Daniel, 349, 359), Dan 9 “pointedly rejected” the plain
historical interpretation of the seventy years in Jeremiah by the Chronicler and Zechariah.
“The author offers a novel interpretation of Jeremiah’s prophecy on the length of
Jerusalem’s affliction” (Hartman and Di Lella, 245, 247).

²So R. A. Anderson (106), Porteous (134), and Hartman and Di Lella (245). For the
genre of the pesher, see A. Finkel (“The Pesher of Dreams and Scriptures,” RevQ 4 [1963]:
357-370) and G. J. Brooke (“Qumran Pesher,” RevQ 10 [1981]: 483-503). Lacocque (“The
Liturgical Prayer,” 120) states that “Daniel 9 inaugurates a literary genre which became very
popular in Judaism: the pesher, i.e., the midrashic actualization of prophetic writings.” The
historical impact and this use of Dan 9 for scriptural interpretations are not to be denied.

³Hartman and Di Lella, 245.

⁴Porteous (136) comments on the seeming irrelevance of the prayer as a means to
provide this information: “The author is not so inept that he could not have composed a
prayer for illumination if he had felt that one was needed at this point.”

⁵The issue here is not the actual historical dating of the chapter. Even if accepting the
predominant position of the Maccabean date, the “fiction” of the book places Daniel in sixth-
century Babylon. The text must be read first in the historical setting implied by this literary
context.
prophecy as anything else than what it was: a historical time prophecy framed in the context of the covenant-promises and threats to Israel.

Why then does Daniel pray as he does, when "he has already 'perceived' the duration of the period of the desolations of Jerusalem?" This question, so central to the plot, must be answered in light of the preceding chapter. Daniel pours forth his prayer because of the tension between the time element in the audition in 8:13-14 which he did not understand and his immediate understanding of the prophetic period contained in the writings of Jeremiah.

This view is substantiated by the verbal links between the introduction of chap. 9 (vss. 1-4a) and the explanation of the vision in the preceding chapter. The two verbs that designate the activity of Daniel in the opening verses are רָאָה (vs. 2, "to notice, understand") and עָפָר בָּך (vs. 3, "to seek"). These two verbs are both essential in the vision report of chap. 8, עָפָר בָּך introducing the whole explanatory section (8:15-26), closing the

1 "It is not the case that vss. 1-3 make one expect a prayer for illumination rather than a prayer of confession; Daniel in the sixth century B.C. had no reason to be puzzled by the prophecy" (Goldingay, Daniel, 237). Bentzen (73) turns things upside down by arguing for a late dating of the text, because "for a Daniel living around 540 B.C. the number (of the seventy years) would present no problem," thus taking the Jeremiah thesis for granted, in spite of both text and supposed literary setting.

2 Towner, Daniel, 128.

3 Hartman and Di Lella consider the presence of the verb הָבָת בָּך in 9:2 as a bad translation from an Aramaic original. They do so in order to avoid the meaning: "I understood": "However, such meaning here is contrary to the whole tenor of the chapter; Daniel needed a revelation precisely because he did not understand the sense of Jeremiah's prophecy. Violence is done to the meaning of the verb by translating it as "I tried to understand" (Hartman and Di Lella, 241). With the preposition בֵּית, however, the verb may simply mean "notice, become aware of" as in Ez 8:15; Neh 13:7, making the argumentation by Hartman and Di Lella less relevant.

4 In 8:15, this verb describes Daniel's initial search to understand the vision, "and I sought (בָּך בָּך in the root בָּך)." The infinitive of בָּך, to seek, is found in 9:3: "I set my face... to seek in prayer..." Daniel now continues his inquiry by turning to God in prayer.
In chap. 9 Daniel seeks God because the unexplained time period of the previous vision makes him uncertain in light of the clear prophecy by Jeremiah.

When it comes to the prayer in 9:4b-19, this tension between the period of the vision in chap. 8, pointing to a time beyond both the Medo-Persian and the Greek empires (8:20-21), and the period of the seventy years in Jeremiah, scheduled to end with the replacement of the Babylonian rule (Jer 25:12; 29:10-14), provides the rationale for both form and content. The communal aspect of the prayer and its penitential nature is fitting for a prayer that during the predicted tribulation cries out to God. The covenant stipulations of Deut 30:1-4 (cf. 1 Kgs 8:46-53) demand conversion and obedience as prerequisites for the divine turning of the fate of the exiled people. In his letter to the exiles, the prophet Jeremiah further emphasizes the need to seek the Lord in prayer at the close of the seventy years as a condition for a return to the land of Israel (note the presence of the verb trope in Jer 29:13, and of the expression trope in vs. 11; cf. Dan 8:19; 9:19). In confessing his sins and the sins of the people, Daniel is simply performing the acts pertinent to the covenant between the people and God. Daniel is obviously aware of the importance

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1 The verb trope, bin, is used (as a participle with a negation, trope, “and there was no understanding”) to close chap. 8, referring to the unexplained audition about time (the trope, vs. 27). It is significant that it is employed again to open chap. 9 when Daniel “understood” (vs. 2, trope, the finite verbal form). This link between the two chapters has been explored by Doukhan (“The Seventy Weeks,” 5) and briefly noted also by Goldingay (Daniel, 238).

2 This has been argued convincingly by Fishbane (487-489). So also Lacocque (“The Liturgical Prayer,” 122-124), contra Towner (“Retributional Theology,” 203-214).

3 Contra Ferguson who finds the prophecy by Jeremiah to be unconditional (187).

4 His prayer in no way indicates that God has left the people alone, or that the covenant no longer functions just because it has been broken by the people. The exile was foreseen in the covenant stipulations; cf. Deut 28:63-68.
215 of confession for the turning of the fate of the people. But as we have seen, the prayer also reflects the wording and some of the themes contained in chap. 8. He has, as recorded in chap. 8, seen a vision in which the basic restoration of the temple seems to be pushed into the far future. The element of time was left unexplained. When in his study of the prophet Jeremiah he comes to realize that the time is up, he hurries to seek the Lord in prayer on behalf of his people in order that the period of wrath may cease, and that the promised return may not be delayed as he would easily come to believe from the preceding vision because of the similarity with the covenant in the pattern of events.

The angelic epiphany and oracle therefore naturally address the issue of the explanation of the time period hitherto unexplained. The link to chap. 8 is indicated in several ways. It is significant that the angelus interpres is named Gabriel only in these two chapters (8:16 and 9:21), and that Gabriel in the epiphany in 9:21 explicitly is referred to as the one whom Daniel had seen previously in the vision (יְהוָה, the definite vision of chap. 8, see vss. 1-2). Gabriel’s introduction to the oracle contains several more elements that link his explanation to the preceding vision. The noun הנ第三人, "insight," sought by Daniel in 8:15 in his initial attempt to grasp the vision, is repeated in 9:22 when Gabriel informs Daniel

1The conditional aspect of the covenant promises may have been further accentuated by Jer 18:1-12.

2"So he implored the Lord God . . . to ensure the reestablishment of the Commonwealth of Israel" (Archer, 107).

3Goldingay (Daniel, 228, 225) has suggested yet another link between the angelic epiphanies in chaps. 8 and 9 by letting the phrase אחפשי יבש, "wearied with weariness" (9:21), refer to the exhaustion of Daniel in 8:17-18, translating the whole sentence: "when Gabriel, the being I had seen in the vision I had previously, when I was tired and weary, approached me . . ." The much debated traditional explanation (so Vulgate) understands the verb אחפשי, "be wearied," as having a homonym meaning "to fly" KB (2:421).
that he has come to instruct him in "insight." The command to Gabriel across Ulay in 8:16 sounds: "explain (הָעַבְרָה, הָעַבְרָה, הִפִּיל) imperative) this man the vision (יִתְנָאֵשׁ)." It is significant that the same imperative form of the verb is employed in 9:23 in the very introduction to the oracle, once again with יִתְנָאֵשׁ as its object.

That the actual explanation given in 9:24-27 centers around time is therefore the logical consequence in light of the tension experienced by Daniel between the long time period of the vision and the limited historical time prophecy by Jeremiah. The period of seventy weeks is the literary link within chap. 9 to the seventy years studied by Daniel, its cutting off the link to the vision (יִתְנָאֵשׁ) of the evenings and mornings in chap. 8. In the context, however, Daniel is not told that the prophecy of Jeremiah would not be fulfilled in time. Rather, the explanation points to the previous vision as dealing with a period of a

1These links connected by the various words from the root יִתְנָאֵשׁ are treated by Doukhan ("The Seventy Weeks," 4-6).

2It is not the purpose of this paper to engage in any discussion of the historical applications of the time elements. For a recent update on the different positions, see Owusu-Antwi (27-58), who himself favors the Messianic interpretation, but presents the chronological outlines of the various schools of interpretation.

3To this meaning of the initial verb in 9:24, יִתְנָאֵשׁ, see Doukhan ("The Seventy Weeks," 6) and Collins (Daniel, 353). The sense "determined" is often suggested, so Collins (Daniel, 345) and Goldingay (Daniel, 229). In 9:24, the period is explicitly mentioned as determined with regard to Daniel's people and Daniel's holy city, suggesting a limitation in comparison with a more universal outlook in the previous chapter.

4Thomas E. McComiskey "understands the passage to answer Daniel's fervent prayer by assuring him that Jeremiah's prediction of the consumation of the exile would come true. But the end was not yet. The city would endure desolations throughout a period of time much longer than spanned the exile" ("'The Seventy 'Weeks' of Daniel against the Background of Ancient Near Eastern Literature," WTJ 47 [1985]: 44). Contra Smith-Christoffer (121), who speaks about a "liberation exegesis of Jeremiah" in the context of a prolonged exodus, and Collins who claims that "the treatment of Jeremiah's prophecy in chap. 9 denies that the sixth century restoration brought an end to the desolations of Jerusalem" in marked contrast to such theocratic compositions as Zechariah and Chronicles (see Zech 1:12; 2 Chr 36:20-21) (John J. Collins, "Daniel and His Social World," Int 39
much longer duration because it was leading to the final eschatological end-time. The conjunction of the terms for sin in Dan 9:24 helps to underscore this relationship between prayer and vision. Besides סנה, the wordsاز and ינ are used. They are both found in the prayer (vss. 5, 13) in which סנה is absent. But, as noted above, this is an important term in chap. 8 as the explanation of the cause of events (vss. 12, 23). The three phrases in vs. 24 therefore connect the vision of chap. 8 with the prayer in chap. 9. But they do so in a universalistic manner that points to the limitation of the Deuteronomistic outlook of Daniel in the prayer compared with the apocalyptic vision of the previous chapter. It is confirmed that Jeremiah’s prophecy will come true, the people return, and the city rebuilt. But destructions and desolations will not come to an end. They will recur during a longer period of time and reach their final end with the divine intervention at the end of days.

By this explanation, the tension created by the plot between the two different time periods is relieved. Daniel has received insight in the previously unexplained audition about time as well as confirmation that his prayer of confession and mercy has been heard.

Conclusion: The Function of Prayer

Dan 9 is dominated by a long recorded prayer. According to this investigation, it is an individual intercessory lament with confession of sin, penetrated by the covenant theme and culminating in a specific petition for divine intervention without delay.

[1985]: 136).

1 I agree with Goldingay (Daniel, 231) that the revelation of the oracle is “not in the pesher form” and is rather to be likened to a midrash that in “the context of other passages of scripture” offers illumination of a given topic.

2 Cf. the comments above, pp. 191-192, on the non-particular usages of the central concepts in this section of Dan 9.
In its literary setting, this prayer by Daniel in both form and content fits naturally into its broader context. The structure of the chapter reflects the sequence of a lament followed by an oracle. The plot is related to the revelation given in chap. 8. Studying the prophecies of Jeremiah, Daniel understands that the time is approaching for the promised restoration of Jerusalem. Having previously received a vision in which the element of time was left unexplained, and where various elements could remind him of the covenant pattern, he offers a confession on behalf of his people in accordance with the penitence required in the covenant stipulations. The words and themes of his prayer repeat central issues of the vision, culminating in the desperate cry to God not to delay his action, mirroring the "how long" so typical of the lament and present in the heavenly conversation in 8:13-14. The appearance of Gabriel strengthens the link to the preceding vision. The answer given by the angel in response to Daniel's prayer centers on the issue of time and combines elements from prayer and vision-report to offer a solution to the question of the plot: the prophecy of Jeremiah is related to the local and limited setting of the sixth century that is implied by the literary context of the Book of Daniel, while the preceding vision points to the universal end time.

Themes and Characters

This leads us to the question of the theological relationship between the prayer and its context. The often perceived conflict between the Deuteronomistic view of history in the prayer with its emphasis on human responsibility and the deterministic outlook of the
apocalyptic visions should not be seen as a logical contrast. In the apocalyptic vision of chap. 8 and in the oracle of 9:24-27, a certain pattern of events and the final outcome are predestined, but "the apocalyptic determinism concerns only the external course of events. The fate of individuals is not predetermined."

The origin of the expressions that at first strengthen the impression of determinism may help us to understand how it is qualified. The deterministic description of the historical events in the oracle of chap. 9:26-27 verbally reflects Isa 10:20-25 very closely. But in this passage from Isaiah we find elements of the pattern that have been discerned in both vision-report in chap. 8 and prayer in chap. 9: wrath and tribulation, the survival of a remnant, and the turning of the wrath against the enemy. In 8:19 determinism comes to the fore with

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1For references, see also the section on the prayers of the Book of Daniel in the Introduction, pp. 33-35.

2I am indebted to the perceptive treatment of the topic of "Dualism and Determinism" by Lacocque (Daniel in His Time, 95-102).

3The climax is "something which God in his wisdom had resolved to bring about and which in consequence is inevitable. This, however, was a religious certainty and not the result of a philosophical theory" (Porteous, 143-144).


6This element is not explicitly to be noted in chaps. 8-9, but the concept is likely present in the vision in 10-12 by the maskilim (or wise men) in 11:32-33 and 12:3, 4, 10.

7Wildberger discusses how apocalyptic and prophetic thoughts are combined in the passage (436-438). Also Jones ("Ideas of History," 268) discusses the significance of Daniel's borrowing from Isaiah and concludes that "if we want to speak about 'determinism' in Daniel, we must use the same word to describe Isaiah... In Daniel 9, in Isaiah,
the expression יבשוע, "appointed (time/place/people)." This term has both eschatological and cultic connotations, and as pointed out by Lacocque, the rigidity of the liturgical times is not at odds with individual responsibility and free will. The cultic context of both vision, prayer, and angelic oracle thus provides a well-known Old Testament framework in which determined times and a definite pattern of events go hand in hand with personal responsibility and individual choice. In the apocalyptic visions of Daniel, the cultic language that so often is used in the OT in a covenant setting to illustrate local historical events is brought in to provide an explanation for historical events taking place on a universal and eschatological scale.

The themes of sanctuary and history have been seen as pivotal in the prayer’s depiction of God’s character. The God whose name is called upon and worshiped in the sanctuary in Jerusalem (9:18-19) is also the sovereign Lord of history. The apocalyptic

and in the rest of the Bible there is a balance between man’s freedom of choice and God’s freedom of choice.\(^1\)

\(^1\)The link between Dan 8:19 and Hab 2:3 should be noted. They share as the only texts in OT the key terms רוחב, "vision," וק, "end." Also, they are both set in the context of the question "how long? (Dan 8:13, וק יד, Hab 1:2, וק יד). It is important to observe that this question expresses the human impression that the divine intervention is postponed. For that reason, the answer to the prophet Habakkuk explicitly states that it will not be delayed (2:3, using the verb יניע, just as in the climactic petition by Daniel in 9:19).

\(^2\)See the treatment by Klaus Koch ("תבש '☞ " in TDOT [1997], 8:167-173).

\(^3\)The "schematization of history is no odder and no more foreign in the apocalypse than it is in the cult" (Lacocque, Daniel in His Time, 100).

\(^4\)The element of cultic times is present in chap. 9 in the concept of sabbatical years (the 70 years of Jeremiah) and years of the Jubilee in the angelic oracle (the 70 weeks of years); see Doukhan ("The Seventy Weeks," 6-8).

\(^5\)Balentine (Prayer, 104) writes in relation to the prayer in Dan 9:4b-19, "The theme of penitence attains clarity by being contrasted to a governing emphasis on God’s sovereignty, mercy, and justice." So, the penitent attitude expressed in confession, with its
visions emphasize that God has determined the course and the outcome of events, that He is in full control, that His kingdom will be established and His people receive their reward. They accentuate the divine leading of universal history. Combined with the prayer's Deuteronomistic perspective of human inadequacy in the presence of God, the reader becomes aware of the more personal aspect of the sanctuary rituals: the human sinfulness and need for humble penitence. In this way, the prayer serves as a "profound corrective" to the self-righteousness that might otherwise easily arise from the awareness of belonging to a people predestined by God for glory.¹

The Prayer Event

As part of the divine-human dialogue within the Book of Daniel, the prayer is significant for the progression of the events within the book. Because of his prayer, Daniel on the one hand receives a confirmation of the promise so essential to his exilic community, on the other hand is provided with an explanation concerning the future course of history and its culmination in the final divine eschatological intervention.² But by his prayer he is not only led to an understanding of the future restoration of God's kingdom, he is also brought into close community with the present heavenly army of God, represented by the emphasis on responsibility, is to be understood against the background of God's sovereignty in dealing with history. This attitude is close to the apocalyptic emphasis on the certainty of the divinely ordained events.

¹Gammie ("Spatial and Ethical Dualism," 378).

²While therefore agreeing with De Vries (168) that Dan 9 modifies the Deuteronomistic view in the sense that it is incorporated into a more universalistic philosophy of history, the present study does not support the notion that the apocalyptic thoughts in the Book of Daniel is a "radical denial of Heilsgeschichte" or directly replaces "prophetism" (342-343).
messenger Gabriel. Because of his intercession for the people, he experiences the fellowship with heavenly beings. The events later in Dan 10 expand on this theme.

The prayer of Daniel does not take place in a vacuum. His situation is closely linked to the study of Holy Scriptures, and both the content and the situation help to unite the various theological aspects of the Old Testament as well as different social subgroups within the people. The prayer itself presents no dichotomy between the law and the prophets (vss. 5-6, 10), and in the character of Daniel, the prophet and the wise man are united: he learns about God's truth (cf. vs. 13) by pondering upon the divine revelation (cf. Ps 1:2). He is not a self-contained charismatic figure basing his understanding of God just upon his own visionary experience; he is the humble student of prophetic writing.

His intercession for the people exhibits an attitude of humility and unselfishness already seen in chap. 6. Though his personal relationship with God is described as unique, with the emphasis in the petitions on "my God," he still confesses "we have sinned." This intercession underlines the aspect of communal unity in the prayer, expressed by the term "all the people/all Israel" (vss. 7, 8, 11). So does the element of penitence that in exilic and post-exilic times was common in both priestly (Neh 9) and apocalyptic (Dan 9) circles.

1This spatial dualism is neither cosmological or ontological; see Gammie ("Spatial and Ethical Dualism," 366-367).

2Features that link the prayer in chap. 9 with Daniel's situation in chap. 6 are manifold: Daniel is praying toward and for Jerusalem (6:11; 9:16); the mentioning of Jerusalem (besides these two chapters found in the Book of Daniel only in 1:1 and 5:2 which refer to 1:1); the events are taking place in the same year (Darius's first year); the terms for praying in 6:12 (from pr) and supplications in 9:3, 18, 23 (tah‘nūn) and 9:20 (tehinnāh) are linguistically connected; the fasting of king Darius (6:19) is mirrored in the fasting of Daniel (9:3); and as discerned in the analysis of chap. 6, the prayers of Daniel in both chapters are set in an apocalyptic context. To these similarities it is now possible to add yet another significant link: the unique feature of the reference to God in chap. 6 was its emphasis on God as "Daniel's God." This feature is repeated in chap. 9 in both prayer (vss. 18-19) and context (vs. 20).
The basic genre of the prayer leads to another important issue. In the lament, the absence of God is felt.\textsuperscript{1} The more intense the longing for the kingdom is, the less bright will the present state be felt. Yet, Daniel receives a divine response and experiences God's presence. That the answer from God may be unexpected does not mean that the content of the prayer is ignored by God.\textsuperscript{2} As in his address to Job, God at times answers in surprising ways.\textsuperscript{3} But contrary to Job who is never told about the heavenly court conflict that frames the events on earth, Daniel is invited to take a look behind the scenes and learn what is happening in the heavenly world to bring about the final judgment and the kingdom of God. So, the prayer is not without effect.\textsuperscript{4} The heavenly response does provide Daniel with an answer to his locally oriented concern, but it reaches far beyond the fate of Israel at the end of the exile in Babylon. And as Daniel is praying as the representative for the people, as the exemplary man of prayer, his confession and humility in prayer point to the way the obstacle for the advent of the kingdom may be overcome at the end of days.

\textsuperscript{1}As exemplified by questions like "why are you so far from saving me?" (Ps 22:2, פָּדוּ; cf. vss. 12, 20), "where is God?" (Pss 42:4, 11; 79:10; 115:2), and "how long will you hide your face from me?" (Ps 13:2). For this motif, see Samuel E. Balentine, \textit{The Hidden God: The Hiding of God's Face in the Old Testament} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

\textsuperscript{2}Contra Towner ("Retributional Theology," 213) and Jones ("The Prayer," 492).

\textsuperscript{3}Balentine (\textit{Prayer}) is discussing the surprising or even unsatisfactory answers by God to laments in general on pp. 155-156 and 292, studying Job in particular in relation to prayer on pp. 168-182.

\textsuperscript{4}Primarily arguing against Towner ("Retributional Theology"), Lacocque reflects on the question of the effect of the prayer: "the petitioning apocalyptician had no intention whatsoever to 'change the purpose of God,' for that purpose is nothing but the vindication of Israel" (Lacocque, "The Liturgical Prayer," 123). Lacocque draws attention to the fact that the decisive obstacle to be removed for the advent of the eschaton was confession of sin, indicated in chap. 9 by the \textit{hitpael} conjugation of רַאֲשִׁי in vss. 4 and 20.
Summary

Like the recorded prayer in Dan 2, the prose prayer in Dan 9 functions both in regard to its limited narrative setting and in light of the Old Testament at large. In its literary context, the prayer serves to link the local historical situation implied by the context of the book with the eschatological future. It modifies the deterministic outlook of the apocalyptic prophecy. It presents a theological statement of human inadequacy and divine sovereignty in past history that supports the veracity of the prophecies about his dominancy of events to come. In its depiction of the characters, the prayer by accentuating God's faithfulness and mercy strengthens the hope of deliverance in situations where God's absence is experienced. It pictures Daniel as the representative of his people and connects it through him with the heavenly world.

Like the prayer in Daniel 2, this prayer helps to position the apocalyptic visions in the broader context of Old Testament. The presence of the prayer in Dan 9 functions to combine apocalyptic and Deuteronomic views of history and to create a synthesis of important elements from the Old Testament, such as wisdom and prophecy, priest and apocalypticist, and cult and history.

Dan 10-12

Identifying and Situating the Prayers

Interactions between God and Man

The divine activities in chaps. 10-12\(^1\) are first of all the epiphany of the heavenly being to Daniel described in vss. 4-6; next, the arrival in vss. 10-14 of the messenger who

\(^1\)These chapters are naturally read together, constituting a "long concluding section" of the book (Collins, Daniel, 371). "It is generally agreed that these chapters belong together as a single whole" (Porteous, 149).
explicitly states that he now has been sent (vs. 11, the *pu’al* of נשל, the passive implying the divine origin), and that he has come because Daniel’s words to God in prayer “have been heard” (vs. 12). The angel’s subsequent long oral elaboration of the future course of history (11:2-12:4) and the final conversations between Daniel and an angel and between the heavenly beings (12:5-13) are therefore to be understood as revelations from God too.

**Prayers, References to Prayer, and Allusions to Prayer**

These chapters contain only one reference to prayer, that is, to the private prayer (or several prayers) offered by Daniel during his time of sorrow and fasting (vss. 2-3). The reference is made later in the narrative by the heavenly messenger (vs. 12). The words are not recorded, and no introductory formula is present.

**In the Structure of the Chapters**

The oral or dynastic prophecy (see the structure in table 10) often assumes the major role in the scholarly discussions because of the attempt at historical applications. But the two sections that frame the prophecy and contain the communication with supernatural beings provide the theological explanations of the events. Daniel is allowed a look behind

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1 The “now” (now) in 10:11, cf. 9:15, 17, 22, has “the resonance of ‘finally’” (Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel*, 208). Its presence earlier in Gabriel’s epiphany in chap. 9 indicates that the angel already here in vs. 12 is the interpreting angel and not identical to the being who has just shown himself to Daniel (vss. 5-6).


3 This may be indicated already in the introduction in vs. 1. The sense of the word revealed to him (דבע) is “event” or “history.” For this meaning of דבע, see *DCH* (2:400) and J. Bergman, H. Lutzmann, and W. H. Schmidt, "דבע," *TDOT* (1978), 3:105-106. The deeper meaning of the great battle (מה נזון) in the history of mankind is explained to Daniel by help of a “vision,” דבע. This word for vision refers to the appearance of heavenly beings, in this context explicitly to the epiphany of vs. 4-6; note its
the scenes. The apocalyptic vision helps him to view the historical developments on earth in light of a heavenly struggle.

TABLE 10
STRUCTURE OF DANIEL 10-12

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The reference to his prayer is found in chap. 10, and a more detailed structure of Daniel's meeting with the heavenly world in chap. 10 is presented in table 11.

At times it may be less clear how many heavenly beings Daniel is confronted with in these chapters besides the person dressed in linen in vss. 5-6.¹ At least two more are mentioned in 12:5-6. The structure of chap. 10, however, makes a clear distinction² presence in vss. 7-8 as a name for this epiphany.

¹Goldingay, Daniel, 291.

²Collins (Daniel, 371) puts vs. 9 with the preceding section. So also Goldingay (Daniel, 286). But Marti (75), Montgomery (410), Delcor (208), Hartman and Di Lella
between the person whom Daniel beholds in the epiphany and the angel who later explains the meaning and content of the future events to him.1 His effect on Daniel is far more (280), and Doukhan (Le soupir, 233) all include it with the subsequent verses. Doukhan (Le soupir, 229) has shown a clear and significant parallel between the two encounters of vss. 9-14 and 15-21 that supports seeing vs. 9 as introducing section III.

1The remark in 11:2a—"and now I will tell you the truth"—may be seen as a parallel to 10:14 where the angel states that he is going to explain to Daniel what will happen at the end of the days. Each of these two parallels thus concludes the respective encounters with a heavenly being, the second and last in 11:2a introducing the following section, the long oral prophecy.
dramatic, and though not named, it is likely that he is Michael. The *angelus interpres* in the subsequent encounters would then be Gabriel, which would correspond to his role in chaps. 8 and 9. If the man in the linen dress is Michael, it becomes more evident why it would be easier for Daniel to understand the final outcome of events. In a vision (המכרה, vs. 1, cf. vss. 7-8) Daniel had experienced his power. This person will certainly be able to overcome the enemies and save his people in the day when he “will arise” (12:1).

Conclusion: The Function of Prayer

**Themes and Characters**

As the words of the prayers offered by Daniel during his period of fasting are not recorded, it is not possible to review their theological content. The long period (three weeks) of fasting and praying helps to stress the patience and endurance of Daniel. The duration also points to the element of waiting and the theme of the delay of the appointed

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1So Charles (258) and Doukhan (*Le soupir, 226*), who compares with the divine epiphany in Ezek 1; see the discussion in Goldingay (*Daniel, 291*), who states that this does not “indicate that the person is God.”

2So Doukhan (*Le soupir, 233*). That the name is not mentioned may be due to several reasons. From a historical aspect Daniel would actually not yet know. From a literary perspective the vague references create curiosity. That the mentioning of the name of Gabriel is limited to chaps. 8 and 9 also helps to strengthen the unique connection between these two chapters.

3So Goldingay (*Daniel, 291*). In chap. 12, the distinction between the man in the linen dress who is part of the conversation about time (vss. 5-7) and the accompanying and explaining angel (vss. 8-13) is clear.

4Lacocque (*The Book of Daniel, 206*) rejects the common theory that the man in linen is Gabriel. Instead he understands him as the “Son of Man” from 7:13. Gabriel first appears in vs. 16. I agree with Lacocque in the rejection of the identification with Gabriel, but find that the explaining angel is present already from vs. 10. See later in the section of the prayer event on the parallel between 10:10-14 and 8:15-19 for further support for this thought.
time. These features are important to the vision and prophecy in chaps. 10-12;\(^1\) compare the waiting in 12:12 (ותב), the question "how long?" (12:6), the motif of delay in 11:35, and the very length of the oral explanation. But they have also been found essential in the preceding visions; compare the motif of the delay of the appointed time (נהוג, 8:19; the petition in 9:19) and the question "how long?" in 8:13.

The Prayer Event

Reviewing the situation from the aspect of divine-human communication, a first glance may give the impression that the activities in these chapters take place simply as a divine response to Daniel's fasting and praying. In the narrative part of the book, prayers have mainly been offered by human beings as a reaction to perceived divine actions. In chap. 9, the relationship between heaven and earth was reciprocal: Daniel related to specific divine revelations by praying and in consequence received heavenly information. In chap. 10, the starting point of events is the initiative of Daniel. Yet a closer look at the similarities with the preceding chapters shows that Daniel is concerned with a deeper understanding of the previous messages, and that his religious initiative is based on former divine activities.

First of all the events that lead to the revelation to Daniel in chap. 10 are described\(^2\) in a way similar to chap. 9:\(^3\)

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\(^2\) In chap. 9 the description follows the chronological sequence of events; in chap. 10 the introduction in vs. 1 gives a resumé of what is described later.

\(^3\) See David (187-193) and Doukhan (Daniel: The Vision, 5). So also Lacocque (The Book of Daniel, 204).
1. The message is understood (9:1-2 and 10:1).

2. Daniel is fasting and praying (9:3-4 and 10:2-3).

3. Daniel’s words were heard from the beginning of his praying (9:23 and 10:12).

4. A heavenly messenger arrives to give Daniel further understanding (9:21-22 and 10:11-12).

5. Daniel is named the “highly beloved” (מָשְׂכָל, 9:23 and 10:11, 19). In this parallel pattern, the epiphany of the figure dressed in linen stands out as a unique feature in chap. 10, not present in chap. 9.

Next, the explanation by the angel and the conversation between the heavenly beings in chaps. 10-12 are linked to the preceding vision in Dan 8 by a close parallel:

1. Daniel’s reaction is described in identical ways in 8:15-19 and in the double encounter in 10:9-11:2a.

2. The angel expresses the scope of the events in similar terms: “end of wrath/end of days” (8:19 and 10:14).

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1The thoughts are similar though the expressions are not identical: in 9:23 “in the beginning of your supplications,” in 10:12: “from the first day you decided to understand and humble yourself for your God, your words have been heard.”

2David makes no distinction between the person seen in the epiphany in vss. 4-5 and the angelus interpres of vss. 10 and onward (191-192).

3Note, however, also the difference: in chap. 9, the angel arrives while Daniel is still praying. In the situation in chap. 10, Daniel is in a company by the river (cf. the vision in 8 where he is located at the canal).

4See Paul Birch (Daniels Bog: Et Studiehæfte [Odense: Dansk Bogforlag, 1992], 73, 76).

5In the oral prophecy, several of the terms from 8:19 are reused, especially in 11:35-36, such as מִזְדוֹד, מַעֲרִיר and מַעֲרֵי. This is no coincidence and indicates that concepts like the wrath should be understood in a similar sense.
3. The oral angelic discourses commenting on the course of history are similar (8:20-26 and 11:2b-12:3).¹

4. In both explanations, the angel closes by asking Daniel to hide the vision/the words: in 8:27 the verb used is כָּרָתַה ("hide"), so also in 12:4 (and 12:9), where the verb מָרָת ("to seal") is added to combine the vision in chap. 8 with Gabriel’s oracle in chap. 9 where the sealing of the vision is mentioned in vs. 24.

5. The conversation between the man dressed in linen and another heavenly being in 12:5-7 reflects the audition of 8:13-14: (a) both are introduced by the question “how long?” (וַחֲשֵׁם), and (b) in both cases the answer posits a definite time period.²

These patterns emphasize that Daniel is being given further revelation regarding the content of the former visions,³ and that his prayers and fasting, though undertaken at his personal initiative, still are inspired by divine activities.

Turning to the prayer event, the praying of Daniel once again puts him in contact with the heavenly community. This time he is not only given further explanation by an

¹Collins (Daniel with an Introduction, 21) labels also 8:20-26 as a “dynastic prophecy,” 86, with a reference to A. Grayson, Babylonian Historical Literary Texts (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975).

²The unusual usage of מָרָת for “time” in 12:7 may be seen as a literary connection to 8:19, but also as an association to the cult.

³It may be worth noting that the heavenly conversation about time in 8:13-14 is the last visionary presentation given to Daniel with regard to future history. Since then all revelation is oral. The symbols intended for his eyes cease; from this moment he meets with and listens to the words of the heavenly beings. This phenomenon may indicate that the “vision” (יָד) referred to in 10:14 is not to be understood as another and new vision—which he actually does not receive—but as a reference to the vision (יָד) of chap. 8, so Shea (“The Relationship Between the Prophecies,” 226). The revelations in 9 and 11 are intended to deepen the understanding of the elements already shown.
angelus interpres, he also beholds the heavenly Prince of his people\(^1\) and is impressed with His power.

But his prayers not only call forth a divine response to Daniel personally, they also actually influence the course of events. The angel tells Daniel (10:13) that he has fought the prince of Persia, the “patron angel of Persia,”\(^2\) for twenty-one days. This period is identical in length with the time of Daniel’s fasting and praying. The connection between the two may be understood as explaining the delay in answering: Gabriel has been willing to visit Daniel, but has been occupied in the battle with the Prince of Persia.\(^3\) But it may also mean that Michael, the heavenly Prince who represents the people of Daniel, enters the struggle against the Prince of Persia on Gabriel’s and God’s side as a result of Daniel’s prayers. As the link between the people on earth and the heavenly world, prayer may be of cosmic consequences. The Prince of the people commits himself to the battle on their behalf when they pray like Daniel.

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\(^1\)The “Prince” (\(\pi\)) of Daniel’s people (10:21) is most likely to be identified with the “prince (\(\pi\)) of the army” in 8:11.

\(^2\)So Collins (Daniel, 374). In this context the princes are to be understood as the heavenly representatives of the earthly powers, not as earthly figures, contra William H. Shea in “Wrestling with the Prince of Persia,” AUSS 21 (1983): 235, who identifies this prince with Kambyses. The kingdoms each have only one heavenly representative, or prince, as indicated by 10:20-21. In my view, this is one of the basic objections to the identification of the army of 8:11-12 with heavenly beings because it would imply that the little horn is involved in an actual battle against heavenly beings. Historically, the attack of the little horn is directed towards earthly entities. But from Daniel’s view behind the scenes, it should be realized that the background is a struggle between heavenly powers that represent the powers on earth.

\(^3\)So Lacocque (The Book of Daniel, 209), “the message has taken twenty-one days to get to him” because of the opposition from the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia.
Summary

The prayers by Daniel, referred to by the angel, function in chaps. 10-12 as the believer’s line of communication to the heavenly community, as the human entry into the battle behind the scenes. They also depict the patience of Daniel and link his endurance with the eschatological waiting for the end. Finally, they help to release the heavenly powers in favor of the people and secure deliverance and ultimate victory.
CHAPTER II

KINGS AND GENTILES IN PRAYER

In the preceding chapter, prayer has been studied in relation to Daniel and his friends. In order to do so, prayers, references to prayer, and allusions to prayer have been identified and situated in the relevant chapters of the book. This identification has been comprehensive because the function of the prayers of Daniel and friends in the individual chapters partly depends on their relationship to other prayers and allusions to prayers.

Turning now to kings and gentiles in prayer, the work of identification already done will not be repeated. Where prayers, references to prayer, or allusions to prayer have been identified and situated in the plot of the narrative, the focus will be directly on the depiction of these characters by their relation to prayer, on the themes pertinent to this relationship, and on the significance of the event of prayer per se.

Dan 2

The Function of Prayer

Neither king Nebuchadnezzar nor his wise men offers any prayer to God in chap. 2.¹ For that reason their theological content cannot be dissected and the significance of any

¹For the identification of prayers, references to prayer, and allusions to prayer in this chapter, see chapter 1 above in the section dealing with Dan 2, pp. 49-51.
prayer event cannot be deducted, and we will move directly to the way the characters are depicted in the narrative because of their relationship to prayer.

**The Depiction of the Characters**

*The wise men*

Confronted by king Nebuchadnezzar, the sages of Babylon acknowledge that they share no real communication with the gods whose “dwellings are not among humans” (2:11). After their dialogue with the king, they disappear from the story. The function of their lack of prayer is threefold. First, it contrasts the gods of Babylon with the God of Daniel. Second, in comparison with Daniel’s humble prayer, it unveils their lack of genuine wisdom (vs. 21), illustrated ironically in the long list of the various wise men (vs. 2).1 Third, it accentuates the dilemma of the king and his reign: his gods are not present, and his sages, representing his educational system (cf. chap. 1) and his whole government, are incapable of reaching them.2

*King Nebuchadnezzar*

The dilemma facing Nebuchadnezzar is exemplified by the three main issues creating the tension of the narrative plot, namely the death decree, the content and the interpretation of the dream, and the issue of divine presence among humans.

1Coxon, “The List Genre,” 95-121.

2Jack N. Lawson argues in “‘The God Who Reveals Secrets’: The Mesopotamian Background to Daniel 2:47,” *JSOT* 74 (1997): 61, from Mesopotamian sources that Daniel in this chapter “presents us with a fusion of Hebrew and Mesopotamian cultures: the God of Israel provides a service to the king of Babylon, but in a way that was well within the parameters of Nebuchadnezzar’s experience,” pointing to the fact that the concept of divine revelation was well-known by the wise men of Babylon.
First, by threatening the lives of all his sages and thereby making an attempt to be in charge of life and death (vs. 5), Nebuchadnezzar is also in a sense about to put an end to his own kingdom by removing its religious foundation. Second, in spite of the king being the golden head of the statue (vs. 38), the content of the dream, as interpreted by Daniel, discloses his limitations: his power is delegated to him by the God of Heaven (vss. 37-38), and it is only temporary (vss. 39, 44-45). Third, the fact that he so desperately seeks the divine presence only further highlights his lack of communication with God. A comparison between Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar has revealed how Daniel is speaking directly to God and receiving an answer, whereas the king only obtains contact through a mediator, Daniel.

This fact is illustrated by Nebuchadnezzar’s reaction to Daniel’s interpretation as described in vss. 46-49, a reaction that also serves to illuminate the nature of the king’s response to the divine revelation. The sequence of events parallels the divine-human communication between God and Daniel in vss. 19-23:

1. The secret has been revealed to Nebuchadnezzar by Daniel (vss. 31-45), just as the secret had been disclosed to Daniel (vs. 19).

2. The king falls down and honors (וֹתֵן, נָצַע, וֹתְנָנָה, vs. 46) and speaks to Daniel, just as Daniel honored God by blessing Him (בָּרָא, וֹתְנָנָה, 19) and addressing Him (בָּרָא, נְאָצָה, וֹתְנָנָה, vs. 20) in prayer.

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1 See pp. 102-103.

2 In the reverence Nebuchadnezzar shows towards Daniel, by falling prostrate before him and ordering sacrificial gifts and incense to be carried forward (vs. 46), the king treats him as a direct representative of the divine.
3. His words to Daniel are in poetry as was Daniel’s prayer to God in vss. 20-23, the two passages being the only poetical sections in the chapter.¹

4. The themes and phrases of the king reflect the wording of the prayer.² The emphasis is on revelation (יִדְרַע, cf. vs. 22a) and on God’s kingship: God is "God of Gods and Lord of Kings," compare vs. 21.

By his public recognition of Daniel and his God, Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges not only "that God reveals secrets." He also realizes the sovereignty of God.³ This is evident from the phrase in his statement in vs. 47: "God of Gods and Lord of Kings." The unique element in this expression is the word "lord" (נְאִים). In his interpretation of the dream, Daniel has in vs. 37 called king Nebuchadnezzar for "the King (מֶלֶך) of Kings," reflecting "the God of Gods": what God is in heaven, Nebuchadnezzar is on earth. God is now recognized by the king as the "Lord of Kings" because He is the one who removes and installs them (cf. 2:21).

Yet, in characterizing the king we are left with some ambiguities. He acknowledges God, but addresses only His representative,⁴ not referring to God as the God of Heaven, but as the God of Daniel. He gives God public honor, but subordinates Him to Daniel.⁵ He calls God "the God of Gods," but he does not praise Him in prayer. He realizes that God

¹Noted by Venter (1014).


³Contra Venter who states that "only Daniel and his readers get to know that God also reigns over kings and kingdoms" (1017).

⁴Good finds that "Nebuchadnezzar’s idolatrous reaction (vs. 46) responds to the flattery of his identification with the Age of Gold" (51).

⁵See further Fewell for this ambiguity (62).
has the power, yet shows his own by elevating Daniel and his friends. He knows that God is the great giver, yet loads Daniel with gifts (נָשָׂא) as promised in his initial dialogue with the sages (vs. 6). While the narrative's closing at first seems to answer all the questions, in the end we are still left with some uncertainty regarding the attitude of the king.

Summary

Central theological issues of the narrative are wisdom, power, and presence. God imparts wisdom, delegates power, and reveals His presence. Prayer functions as a vehicle for receiving these divine gifts. Neither the wise men of Babylon nor their king are praying. This fact highlights the sages' lack of wisdom and the powerlessness of the king.

Dan 3

The Function of Prayer

The Depiction of the Characters

The officials of Babylon

As is the case with the sages of chap. 2, the officials in chap. 3, representing all people, quickly disappear from the narrative never to return. In comparison, they are even less a part of events. They never speak, they just bow to the image. The function of this worship is, therefore, not so much to characterize the officials. Instead, it serves to contrast the decision by the three friends of Daniel not to worship the statue. Moreover, it helps accentuate the conscious defiance of king Nebuchadnezzar who, objecting to the message revealed to him in the previous chapter, orders prayers and public worship under the threat of death.

For the identification of prayers, references to prayer, and allusions to prayer in this chapter, see chapter 1 in the section dealing with Dan 3, p. 118.
King Nebuchadnezzar

In the end, however, events force the king to publicize another message. In the internal literary structure of the narrative, Nebuchadnezzar's decree to the "people, nations, and tongues" in vss. 28-29 parallels his initial address to the officials gathered from the province of Babel (vss. 3-7). In the meantime, the situation has been reversed. The three young men have "transgressed" the king's command. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego have been saved from the fire because they were not willing to worship or pray to the idol of the king. Conversely, they now are allowed to worship their own God. Anyone who, like the Chaldeans (vs. 8), speaks against this is threatened with death.

Besides containing such internal links, the narrative of the chapter has been shown to be closely connected with the preceding. This lends further significance to the initial sentence of the royal decree in vs. 28. It is the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew bārūk-sentence, introduced by the passive participle of ב, followed by "an ascription identifying God as the subject" and a causal clause, giving the reason for thanksgiving. While the gratitude of Nebuchadnezzar is grounded on the fact that God has sent His angel and saved

1The meaning of the verb יזו in vs. 28 has the primary sense "changed."

2Goldingay (Daniel, 69) adapts a reverse structure from Joubert as follows: (a) the king commands all to bow to the statue, (b) Jews are sentenced, (b') the Jews are saved, (a') the king commands all to bow to the God Most High. But the final decree by the king actually never commands anyone to do so.

3See the paragraph on the "Interactions between God and Man" in the section "Identifying the Prayers" of Dan 3 in chapter 1 above, pp. 116-117.

4See Balentine (Prayer, 203-205).

5Ibid., 204.

6With כ replacing the Hebrew ק.  

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his servants, the wording also mirrors the prayer by Daniel in chap. 2:20-23 in which Daniel "blessed" (vs. 19) God, employing in the prayer a תָּנָא formula of identical meaning (vs. 20). Just as in Dan 2:46-47, Nebuchadnezzar is a contrasting reflection of Daniel. Though he publicly acknowledges God as the God of the Jews, he does not address Him directly in praise or prayer.2

This characterization of Nebuchadnezzar is even more emphasized by the two major theological themes of the chapter, presence and power. Nebuchadnezzar's initial order to gather the officials of "the province of Babylon" provides yet another connection to the story about his dream in chap. 2. In the final conclusion of this narrative, there is still some confusion in regard to the true response from Nebuchadnezzar. He has exercised his power by elevating the three friends of Daniel to high positions in "the province of Babylon" (Dan 2:49). The narrative in chap. 3 reveals how the king subsequently makes a defiant, but futile, attempt to show his authority over these servants of God. Ironically, by his attempt to force the presence of the divine by power, he exposes his own powerlessness: the young men he condemns to death experiences the divine presence before his eyes. Though persuaded to admit God's power to deliver, the king himself has no personal relationship with God.

In the end, the reader is thus still left with some ambiguity regarding the attitude of king Nebuchadnezzar. His acknowledgment of God is forced by circumstances. His expression of gratitude towards God concerns the specific event and is part of a public

1Using the paet perfect.

2Contra Kratz (91), I concur with Daud Soeliso who excludes 3:28-29 as poetry, partly "because the benediction is a very common element in narrative texts" ("Translating the Poetic Sections of Daniel 1-6," Bible Translator 41[1990]: 432.)
decree, not a personal prayer. Though reflecting the prayer by Daniel in 2:20-23, the king limits his concession of God's power to the area covered by the worship of the Jews. He never confesses that his royal power as such only was given by God. On the contrary, in his final injunction he once again (cf. 2:5) presents himself as the master of life and death by threatening the religious adversaries of the Jews with execution (vs. 29).

Summary

The description of Nebuchadnezzar’s attitude towards prayer in this chapter is a continuation of the preceding one. The difference is evident: in chap. 2 the king was unaware of the power and wisdom of the God of Heaven. From the beginning of the narrative in chap. 3 he knows. For that reason his reaction is rebellious and provocative, and when, in spite of this attitude, he experiences supernatural, divine intervention, the event is terrifying, and the king responds in terror (vs. 24) and acknowledges God out of fear.

Dan 4

Identifying the Prayers

Interactions between God and Man

The narrative is formed as a public royal decree in which Nebuchadnezzar from the outset directly refers to the divine activities he has experienced, the signs and wonders the

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1 The address in 3:31 to "peoples, nations, and languages" (plural from לציון לארמ) reflects the decree that is closing the preceding narrative (vs. 29) and has been the cause of the confusion of the chapter divisions. But though the narrative of chap. 4 obviously takes its beginning with this verse, this link to the previous decree is not without significance. The reader will understand the depiction of Nebuchadnezzar in this narrative as a continuation and a further development of what has occurred earlier in the book.
Most High God has performed (vs. 32). This initial statement is followed by a poetical testimony to the greatness of God and His kingdom (vs. 33).\(^1\)

Compared with the preceding narratives, God's activities are thus more explicitly mentioned from the beginning of the story. God is giving a dream, revealing its interpretation through Daniel, and directly intervening in the personal life of Nebuchadnezzar.

From the similar event in chap. 2, it can be inferred that the dream of Nebuchadnezzar (vss. 1-2) comes from God.\(^2\) It is also deduced from this earlier experience that the interpretation by Daniel has a divine origin, though not so mentioned by Daniel, whose entrance and performance before the king are less marked by humility than in chap. 2 (vss. 5 and 16, cf. 2:28-30). In the dream-report itself (vss. 7-14), the divine intervention in the personal life of Nebuchadnezzar is anticipated by a reference to the Most High God and the decision by the heavenly watchers (vs. 14). In his interpretation (vss. 16-24), Daniel certifies this understanding (vss. 21-22). In the subsequent events, the narrator describes the realization of this prophecy about divine intervention (vss. 28-30): God speaks to the king in the sound of a heavenly voice, and Nebuchadnezzar is struck with madness. Finally, the fact of divine intervention is confirmed by the king himself as he, returning to his senses, tells how he was praising God (vs. 31). The closure reveals that he is doing so habitually.

\(^1\)Vss. 31-33 of chap. 3 naturally belong to this chapter. I will consistently follow the versification of BHS, though generally labeling this narrative as the narrative of chap. 4. In referring to scholars who for some reason prefer another versification, I will adjust accordingly.

\(^2\)So also Fewell (95).
Prayers, References to Prayer, and Allusions to Prayer

The chapter contains the following references or allusions to prayer:

1. A poetical praise of God's signs and wonders and an acknowledgment of his eternal kingdom is found in 3:33. The speaker is king Nebuchadnezzar, and the poem follows the introduction to a public decree directed towards "all people, nations, and languages." The expression "it pleases me to disclose" (vs. 32, סדרת קראים לארץ רחמים) could be understood as an introduction formula.

2. A reference in 4:31 to a prayer by Nebuchadnezzar is present at the close of his period of madness. The fact of the prayer is introduced by verbs in the perfect tense indicating the specific situation. These verbs are בָּרָם ("bless, give thanks"), נְדָב ("praise"), and הָדַּד ("glorify"). The words are, however, not recorded. Vs. 31b gives the reasons for praise, directed towards the recipients of the royal decree. It is introduced by the conjunction "וְ." While this at times may indicate direct speech (Dan 6:6, 14), it here has a parallel in the prayer in Dan 2:23 in which the conjunction introduces a subordinate causal clause immediately after a sentence with the verb נְדָב, and it is naturally understood as introducing a causal clause here too. Vs. 32 is a poetical continuation. The sequence

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1 For a discussion of the limitation of the poetical section, see the paragraph on the literary form of the doxology below, pp. 252-253.

2 See the treatment of the term and the concept in the paragraph on vs. 20 in the section of words and themes of the prayer in Dan 2:20-23 above, pp. 79-81.

3 Found in biblical Aramaic only in Dan 2:23; 4:31, 34; 5:4, 23 (Vogt, 163).

4 In biblical Aramaic only in Dan 4:31, 34; 5:23.

5 Rosenthal, § 86, 38.

6 Implied by Collins (Daniel, 212), but contra Fewell (89 and 180).
parallels the epistolary prescript in which a short poem is placed after a testimony to God’s wonders.

3. A reference to prayer by Nebuchadnezzar closes the narrative in 4:34. In contrast to vs. 31, the verbs used to indicate prayer are here all participles, a general present implying continuous or habitual praying. Of the three verbs, the two are from the same roots as in vs. 31, תָּרָה and הָרָה, with the addition of וַיָּרֶא ("to elevate"). Exactly as in vs. 31, the words of the prayers of the king are not recorded. Instead, the verbs indicating prayer are followed by a causal clause introduced by the conjunction וְ in which the reasons for praise are stated.

These references to prayer and praise in the narrative may contain some ambiguity. They contain neither a formal address to God nor petition or thanksgiving. They are often collectively labeled doxologies or confessions. Formally, the doxology in 3:33 is a testimony directed towards all the inhabitants of the kingdom rather than a prayer directed towards God, yet as a spontaneous outburst of praise, it resembles prayer. When it comes to the statements at the close of the decree in 4:31-32 and 4:34, their similarity is a decisive argument in favor of the view that both are to be understood as causal clauses and not as direct speech. Yet, the reasons given for praise, as well as the poetical addition in vs. 32, would be a natural part of the prayers that Nebuchadnezzar is said to be offering to God.

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1BL, § 81d, 291.

2In the polel conjugation, besides this text used only in 5:23.

3Or "hymns of praise" (Collins, Daniel with an Introduction, 63).

4Goldingay, Daniel, 85.

5The syntactical and verbal parallels make it inconsistent to regard vss. 31b-32, but not vs. 34, as direct speech. Contra Fewell (180).
These ambiguities are clarified by the study of two areas: first, the function of the
doxologies in their narrative context, second, the depiction of the character of
Nebuchadnezzar against the background of the narratives of chaps. 2-4.

Situating the Prayers

In the Structure of the Chapter

The outlines presented by various scholars with regard to this narrative do not differ
significantly. The chapter may be seen as a chiasm (see table 12).¹

In the introduction Nebuchadnezzar addresses all people.² In sections B and C the
king is the narrator of the events. The aspect of narration changes to third person in vs. 16,
covering the interpretation in C’ and the fulfillment of the dream in B’. During this
fulfillment, the proud exclamation spoken by Nebuchadnezzar in vs. 27 receives a divine
response from heaven in vss. 28-29. As the narration in section A’ returns to first person,
Nebuchadnezzar tells how he now addresses God in praise and prayer.

¹William H. Shea also argues for a chiastic structure, “Further Literary Structures in
Daniel 2-7: An Analysis of Daniel 4,” AUSS 23 (1985): 193-202, a structure supported by
Fewell (102-103). For the differences, see the comments in the notes on the pages below.
Doukhan (Le soupir, 103) presents a brief chiasm that is somewhat different from Shea’s.

²Toews separates vs. 31a, the formulaic introduction to the proclamation, from the
subsequent proclamation by Nebuchadnezzar (180-181).
TABLE 12
INTERPERSONAL STRUCTURE OF DANIEL 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Verses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Introduction: postfulfillment proclamation</td>
<td>3:31-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>introductory praise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar's reception of the dream:</td>
<td>4:1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in the palace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a divine revelation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the king exercises his power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar's report of the dream</td>
<td>4:6-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar</td>
<td>4:16ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C'</td>
<td>Daniel's interpretation of the dream</td>
<td>4:16c-24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sections A and A’ frame the narrative about the dream, its interpretation, and its fulfillment: the confessions are the common elements. The opening of the narrative in B (vss. 1-5) contains the following sequence of events: Nebuchadnezzar is thriving in his palace; he receives a dream (from God); and he exercises his royal power by commanding his wise men to approach him with an interpretation. The events in section B’ (vss. 25-30) are parallel to B: in his palace the king expresses his pride for his achievements; he receives a divine command, the verdict of judgment; and, in direct contrast to B, his royal accreditations are removed from him. In C (vss. 6-15) Nebuchadnezzar speaks to Daniel, in C’ (vss. 16c-24) Daniel addresses the king. Their speeches are structured in a similar way: (1) a courteous introduction (vss. 6 and 16c), (2) the main body (vss. 7-14 and 17-23), (3) and a closing appeal (vss. 15 and 24). The center in vs. 16 is unique in several ways:

1In his short outline, Doukhan (Le soupir, 103) reads B and C together, but follows basically the same division.

2The parallel between these sections is expressed somewhat differently by Shea ("Further Literary Structures: An Analysis of Daniel 4," 197).

3Shea further separates vss. 5-6 and vs. 24 as independent units ("Further Literary Structures: An Analysis of Daniel 4," 198-199). He views these units as unfulfilled dialogues: in vss. 5-6 the king first addresses Daniel without getting a response, in vs. 24 Daniel addresses the king without receiving an answer. The “genuine piece of dialogue” Shea finds in the center, in vss. 15-16. The fact that the speeches in C and C’ respectively follow an identical outline, see below, makes it, in my judgment, unnecessary to evaluate the remarks in vss. 6 and 24 as part of unfulfilled dialogues.

4In my view, this understanding is to be preferred to the suggestion by Shea ("Further Literary Structures: An Analysis of Daniel 4," 198), one reason being that there is no reason to expect an answer from Daniel to the king’s introductory remark in vs. 6.

ways: it contains the change in narration from first to third person, it marks the time in the flow of events where Nebuchadnezzar no longer is in charge, and it is the chronological turning point after which the solution is beginning to be unveiled.

In this structure, the confessions, or the references to prayer, are found in the framing sections A and A'. The significance of this placement is pursued in the reflections of the plot of the narrative.

In the Plot of the Narrative

The suspense of the narrative in chap. 4 hinges on the prologue. The epistolary form of the proclamation makes it possible to begin the discourse from the end. Curiosity compels the reader to raise some intriguing questions: What are the signs and wonders God has performed for Nebuchadnezzar? What has happened to turn this gentile king into a

1Except for the emphasis on vs. 16 in the above structure, this division of the major sections is found also with Collins (Daniel, 216) and Goldingay (Daniel, 85).

2Note how the terror that seizes Daniel when he realizes the meaning of the dream (vs. 16, from הָזָה, twice) resembles the emotions of the king as he at the beginning of the narrative receives his dream (cf. הָזָה in vs. 2).


4This feature is a major difference between the Masoretic text and the Greek versions, underlining its literary significance in the Masoretic text.

5For this aspect, see Fewell (91-92).
spokesman for God? Against the background of the earlier events in the Book of Daniel, the questions become more profound: How can it be that this ruler, so obsessed with the everlasting nature of his kingdom (chap. 3), now confesses that only God's kingdom is eternal? What are the events that have persuaded the proud king to humble himself and praise God? And does he really mean it, or is it once again a compulsory public acknowledgment (cf. chap. 3) rather than a personal prayer from his heart?

From that perspective, the dissolving of the tension is fairly simple. As the narrative takes us back to the chronological beginning, it starts unravelling the answer by pointing out the divine activities that have changed the mind of the king. The dream and the disturbance of the emotions of the king (vss. 1-3) resemble chap. 2, but the subsequent summoning of the sages bears only slight traces of a contest, though Daniel enters as the "chief of the dream-interpreters (vs. 6)," the final and most important wise man. The content of the dream as retold by the king may by its symbolism provide some hints as to what will happen, but does not help the reader to see why this would bring Nebuchadnezzar to praise

1Fewell (91) has noted the link to the previous part of the book in the use of the verb יפנ, "disclose" in 3:32. In the narrative of chap. 2, this verb repeatedly is employed to denote the disclosing of the secret dream of the king.

2"The basic form (of a contest) is overshadowed by the emphasis on the sovereignty of the God of Daniel" (Humphreys, "A Life-Style," 220).

3Fewell (93-96) discusses the possibility of "safely guessing" "that the great tree, like the head of gold, is none other than Nebuchadnezzar?" and continues with reflections about the metaphor of the tree in OT. J. J. Slotki (Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah [London: Soncino, 1951], 30) notes the link between the metaphor in vs. 17 and the phrase in vs. 1: "I, Nebuchadnezzar, . . . was flourishing in my palace," so also Vogt (158). In OT this word (שניד, "flourishing, luxuriant") is always used in connection with trees or plants (as in Deut 12:2; Ps 37:35; and Jer 3:6, 13); the only exception may be Ps 92:11, yet it is here an adjective to the olive oil.
God.¹ For this reason, the gentler ending of the dream-interpretation given by Daniel in vs. 23 is significant. Even after an eventual destruction, the remaining stub suggests that there is hope.² But the king is not responding to Daniel’s final appeal in vs. 24 to stop his iniquities and show mercy to the helpless,³ and the events continue towards their fulfillment.

The next divine act takes place as the voice from heaven “falls upon” the king as a verdict of judgment, and for a period of time he is changed into an animal. But it is the last divine intervention of the narrative, the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar, that finally relieves the suspense and gives the answers to the questions raised by the confession in the prologue.

The description of the restoration is often understood as unnecessarily redundant and due to redactional seams.⁴ Yet, a closer look at the phraseology and not least at the tense of the verbs employed reveals a logical development.⁵

The perfect tense of the verbs in vs. 31 points to two events taking place at specific points in time: first, Nebuchadnezzar lifted up (from הובא) his eyes, next, he praised (three verbs from ובא, בשמה, and היה). In between, the imperfect tense of the verb תָּאִום (“return”) in the expression “my sanity was returned to me” (מדברים של יובע) indicates the beginning of an ongoing process. The phrase “lift up one’s eyes towards heaven” implies a change of

¹A destruction as implied in the dream-report in vss. 7-14 would hardly supply either reason or opportunity for praise.

²The metaphor is of course well-known in OT from Isa 11:1-3, 10.

³Only from general knowledge of history and against the background of the previous part of the book are the sins of Nebuchadnezzar known to the reader, illustrating that this narrative is to be understood in the literary context of the Book of Daniel.

⁴So Collins (Daniel, 231).

⁵Kratz detects traces of reworking, but finds that “the text nevertheless both grammatical and in regard to content, in itself as well as in the context of the collection, makes good sense” (91).
attitude where Nebuchadnezzar is seeking the assistance of God (cf. Pss 25:15; 121:1-2; 123:1; 141:8). From this moment, his healing began. He thanked and praised God, acknowledging His superiority. In doing so, he at that moment completely regained his sanity (vs. 33 repeats the phrase with slightly changed word order: וַיֵּשֶׁב נַבְעַחַד נָצָאר). The imperfect tense of the verbs in vs. 33 reveals the process of the restoration. The participles of the praise in vs. 34 (from מָלַל, שֶׁבָּעַת, וָדַע) show his present and continuous habit of praying.

This description at the end of the narrative relieves the tension of the plot. Now the reader knows some of the answers. The signs and wonders performed by God are not, as in the earlier stories, only related to what Nebuchadnezzar witnesses in regard to Daniel and his friends. He is able to share a personal testimony. He has through his own experience realized the fragility of human kingdoms and the perpetuity of God’s. His praise is habitual and genuine. The doxology of the prologue, therefore, though addressed to “all peoples, nations, and languages” as part of a public proclamation, reflects his private prayers.

The divine signs and wonders performed in the personal life of king Nebuchadnezzar are not simply to be identified with the dream, its interpretation, and its subsequent fulfillment in the judgment of the king. They are first of all manifested in the divine mercy towards an enemy, in returning the sanity and the power to Nebuchadnezzar in spite of his former pride. The mercy (from פָּרַע, vs. 24) which Nebuchadnezzar had not been willing to show as king of his earthly domain is a characteristic of the “King of Heaven.”

1 So Goldingay (Daniel, 90) and Young (113).

2 Cf. the use of the verb to describe Daniel’s prayer in 6:12.
The Theological Content of the Confessions in Dan 3:33; 4:31b-32; and 4:34

The doxologies of 4:31b-32 and 4:34 have not been identified as recorded prayers. They provide the motivation for prayer, but are not the prayers themselves. And the initial praise of the encyclical in 3:33 is, strictly speaking, directed towards “all peoples, nations, and languages.” Yet, from the investigation of the plot of the narrative it has become clear that this doxology may resemble the habitual prayers that the king is now offering. For that reason, these confessions are analyzed in more detail. This paragraph will provide a translation and a literary analysis, compare their words and themes with their narrative context, and on the basis of this comparison evaluate the way the characters of the narrative are depicted.

Dan 3:33

Translation

How great are his signs and how mighty his wonders.

His kingdom is eternal, his rule lasts through all generations.¹

Literary form

One of the central questions is whether vss. 31-32 should be included in the poetical section.² Though these verses may be written out in poetic lines, I find it most natural to

¹“Through all generations” is the sense of the idiomatic expression מַה-יָּאָדֶּד (Vogt. 45). So also Goldingay (Daniel, 77).


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regard them as an "epistolary prescript."\(^1\) As an introduction, they form a parallel to Dan 6:26-27 and contain identical elements, though in different order. In 3:31-32 the sequence is: sender, greeting, addressee, and type of decree (intention: "I want to tell about the signs and wonders . . .").\(^2\) This parallel helps to precisely delineate the doxology. It follows immediately after the infinitive of מְנַה ("to tell, disclose"), the verb that in the conclusion of vs. 32 indicates the intention behind the decree.

The poetical form of this doxology in vs. 33 is simple. The short poem consists of only one stanza, divided into two bicola of 2x3 words (vs. 33ab and 33cd). Each couplet of the cola contains an identical parallelism.

From the aspect of communication, the whole stanza is to be labeled description. In a prayer, such description would normally follow the initial invocation (cf. Dan 9:4b) and be placed before other possible elements, leading up to thanksgiving or petition. Such prayer-elements are lacking from this poem, addressed as it is to the people within the reign of the king.

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\(^1\)The expression is from Collins (Daniel, 216), who likewise understands vs. 33 as the doxology. For an example of vss. 31-32 written out as poetry, see Di Lella, "Strophic Structure," 93-94.

\(^2\)In 6:26-27 we find greeting, sender, type of decree (intention: a command), addressee ("in all the kingdom . . ."). See also Prinsloo (101-102) and the discussion of Dan 6:26-28 below.
Words and themes

The dominant theme of the poem is the sovereignty of God’s heavenly kingdom, contained in the second bicolon. The words for kingdom and rule (or power) are כְּלָלָה and שָׁלֹם. Eternity is expressed by עֵד (cf. 2:20) and the parallel phrase רָאָה רָדָה.

"Signs" and "wonders" (from צְבִית and יָדָה) constitute a common word pair in the OT (the Hebrew נִיסָי is used in place of the Aramaic ניס). It commonly designates God’s acts during the Exodus (Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 26:8; 29:3; 34:11; Neh 9:10) and may here suggest that the experience Nebuchadnezzar "is about to relate" is "equal in importance to Israel’s exodus from Egypt," at least at a personal level. The use of the word pair in conjunction with prophetic messages (Deut 13:2; Isa 8:18; 20:3) may indicate that the king has been exposed to prophetic signs.

Dan 4:31b-32

Translation

31b I gave thanks to the Most High

and praised and honored the One who lives forever;

for his rule is eternal, his kingdom lasts through all generations.

32 All who dwell on earth are counted as nothing.

He does as he pleases with the heavenly host

(and those who dwell on earth).

1Fewell, 91.

2"As persons of no account" (Charles, 100).

3BHS suggests that the phrase זְרָאָה אִדְרַע is to be omitted. It is most likely a dittography from the previous colon and is not included in the present poetical analysis. So also Collins (Daniel, 212).
No one is able to restrain his hand
or say to him: "what have you done?"

**Literary form**

Vs. 31b constitutes a unit. To let the causal clause with the conjunction כ be the first part of a poem would be awkward as it is closely connected with the preceding address: “I thanked and praised and honored the One who lives forever.” Yet the poetical nature of the sentence introduced by כ, “his rule is eternal, his kingdom lasts through all generations,” is evident from the fact that it deliberately copies the second bicolon (2x3) of the poem in 3:33, switching the words for rule, שלם, and kingdom, but otherwise identical. It functions as an introduction to the subsequent praise. The unit of the short poem is therefore to be limited to vs. 32 whose poetical form is easily discernable as evidenced in table 13.

The poem consists of only one stanza with two strophes (or lines). The strophic pattern is that of the bicolon (2x4). The parallel cola of the first couplet is chiastic in nature with the *merismus,*1 “the inhabitants of the earth” and “the host of heaven,” forming an inclusio. The strophes are linked by the verb ת公益性 (“do, perform,” participle in vs. 32b, perfect tense in 32d), referring to the sovereign activities of God. As was the case with the doxology in 3:33, the short poem contains no address and no petition or thanksgiving or similar formal communicative elements from prayers. It is solely a *description* of God.

**Words and themes**

Also in this poem the dominant theme is the sovereignty of God. The first couplet

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1This *merismus* including heaven and earth is common throughout OT, so Gen 1:1 and Isa 1:2; cf. Luke 2:14.
contrasts God with all creatures in heaven and earth. The inhabitants of the earth are regarded or counted as nothing, אכלת המזבח. This negative evaluation is associated with the forensic sense of accounting,² in this situation not to be understood as an indication that God's work in the creation of man is without value. Such evaluation could imply a contest in a legal setting,³ but the primary contrast here is related to time. This is evident from the context. According to vs. 31, God is addressed as the "One who lives forever (רֹא הַלַּל)," and the reason for praise is the eternal nature of His kingdom. It is in comparison with God as the everlasting God that man is nothing, exactly because he is only creation.

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¹The passive participle indicates that God is the logical subject of אכלת.


³The thought in Isa 40:17 is similar, though not verbatim. The context in Isaiah speaks about God as the eternal creator in the literary setting of the ṛib, the defense speech of the court.

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TABLE 13

POETICAL ANALYSIS
OF DANIEL 4:32

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strophe</th>
<th>Meter</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Verse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>כְּלַלָּאָו אֲרֵעַ֛ו בְּלַלָּאָו תְּשׁוֹבֵּט</td>
<td>32a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>הָמְשַׂכְּכָּו עֵבֶרּ בְּיִלּוּ֑ שְׁמַיהֲוָא</td>
<td>32b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>לַלָּא אֶוְּאֲו רָוֶרָוּ֝מָא בְּדוּרָה</td>
<td>32c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>רָאָמִיּוּ לָהַּוָא נַבָּדָה</td>
<td>32d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The same is true for the heavenly army (יוֹלֵדוֹת הַשֵּׁמֶשׁ), yet the predicate of this second colon of the strophe ("he does as he pleases, החכם הוא שבעה, עבדו) implies service, not contrast. The army of heaven is the instrument employed by God to carry out His wishes. The preposition בֵּית, ב, may in that case be instrumental rather than indicating the object of עֶבֶד. The point is not simply that God is doing to the heavenly host as He pleases, but rather that He is the sovereign commander making the army perform His biddings.

The imperfect of the verb נָשַׁה in the second strophe has the sense "strike, hit." As a counteraction the meaning here would be "stop, restrain." No one is able to hinder God in fulfilling His purposes.

The last sentence of the poem emphasizes that God is in control. The meaning of the phrase "who can say to him: 'what have you done?'" is that God is the one giving the orders. Human beings are counted (cf. יָדֵי in vs. 32a) and made accountable. As the eternal creator, God is accountable to no one.

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1Vogt, 99. Later, in targums and Talmud, the phrase רְכַּזָּה בֵּית becomes a technical expression for "reprove, oppose oneself to" (Lacocque, The Book of Daniel, 88).

2In the context of the Book of Daniel, the expression is an echo of the only other occurrences of the verb in biblical Aramaic, namely in Dan 2:34-35, where it denotes how God strikes the statue representing the human kingdoms. Note how Daniel in both his description and his explanation of this event indicates that it is the work of the hand (ד) of God, "not by (human) hands (רָיוֹן)" (2:34, 45).

3Job 9:12 provides a parallel in thought. The setting is the scene of the court. Even more so is the text in Isa 45:9 where the prophet is challenging the creation who dares to accuse the creator. See also Doukhan (Le soupir, 100-101).
Dan 4:34

Translation

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and honor the King of Heaven;
for all his deeds are right and all his ways are just.
He is able to humble the one who walks in pride.

Literary form

There is no reason to treat this last sentence as a poem. Proverbial in nature, such a phrase could well be employed as part of a piece of poetry, but this is not the case here. The preceding causal clause with ה STATES the reason for the habitual praise offered by Nebuchadnezzar.

Words and themes

Also this third and last confession emphasizes the sovereignty of God. Without any reference to his own position, the earthly regent addresses the "King of Heaven," a unique expression in the OT. It is the equivalent of the "God of Heaven" in 2:18, the word "king" replacing God, fitting for the context.

The confession reflects the wisdom literature in its general description of God’s deeds. Compared with the preceding doxologies of the chapter, the human kingdoms play a lesser role, and the individual’s humble standing before God is accentuated. Nebuchadnezzar is not primarily the world ruler acknowledging God’s reign, but a human being whose life is in the hands of his creator.
Summary

Of the three doxologies in the narrative in Dan 4, each of the first two contains a smaller poem (3:33 and 4:32, respectively). These poems are introduced by a statement of Nebuchadnezzar’s intention to either proclaim God’s wonders or give Him thanks. Along with the last doxology (4:34), which basically consists of a statement of praise, a reason for praise, and a proverb indicating the attitude of Nebuchadnezzar in his relationship to God, these passages function as confessions and summarize basic theological thoughts. The major theme is the sovereignty of God as heavenly king and creator of all.

The Confessions of Dan 3:33; 4:31b-32; and 4:34 in Their Literary Context

Semantic and Thematic Links

The confessions’ dominant theme has been shown to be the divine sovereignty in both history and creation. Several verbal links between the doxologies and their narrative context substantiate this observation.

The words used by Nebuchadnezzar for God’s kingship and dominion in history in the doxologies are שָׁלֹם and מַלָאך in both 3:33 and 4:31. The adjective שָׁלֹם is used about God in the narrative in vss. 14, 22, 29, מַלָאך is employed concerning Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom both before (vss. 15, 26) and after (vs. 33) his illness. The adjective “eternal” is a prerogative for God’s kingdom (3:33; 4:31), but brings out the contrasting fate of the human kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. Words from the root צָר, “great,” are common throughout the narrative, initially denoting God’s greatness in the

1Indicating that “the antithesis between divine and human kingship is not to be sharply drawn, nor does the humbling of human kingship necessarily mean dethronement rather than chastisement” (Goldingay, Daniel, 85).
doxology in 3:33, but subsequently in a comparison used about the tree (vss. 8, 15) and the kingdom it symbolizes (vss. 17, 19, 27), with a hint of irony about the length of Nebuchadnezzar's hair during his madness (vs. 30), and finally, about the restored human kingdom in vs. 33.

Other terms play on the relationship between God's power and glory and the achievements of the king. With the view from the top of his palace, Nebuchadnezzar boasts (vs. 27) among other things of his "might" (יָנוֹד) and "honor" (יָניָד). This is contrasted with the mighty (the adjective יָנוֹד) wonders of God (3:33) and Nebuchadnezzar's honoring of God (vss. 31, 34 using the verbal form of the root יָניָד). After the restoration, "honor" is given back to the king (vs. 33).

Finally, some of the verbs describing the actions or attitude of God or Nebuchadnezzar are found in both the confessions and in the narrative at large. The verb יָשֵׁב ("wish, desire, please") is part of the repeated key phrase that "the Most High is sovereign over human dominion and gives it to whomever he pleases" (vss. 14, 22, 29). In the confession in 4:32, the infinitive of the verb is used nominally, in translation: "he does as he pleases." The finite verb in this expression is יָשֵׁב ("to do"), used also in the initial greeting in 3:32 about the signs and wonders performed by God. The final verb of the narrative in the concluding proverb is the infinitive of יָשֵׁב ("to be humble, low" in הָפֶל). God humbles the proud. The adjective of this root is employed in vs. 14 to express how God is able to install\(^1\) even the most humble or low over the human dominion, an anticipation of the yet future restoration of Nebuchadnezzar after his humiliating madness. This connection between the final doxologies and the repeated phrases of vss. 14, 22, 29 is

\(^1\)From the verb יָשֵׁב; cf. its use about installing kings in Daniel's prayer in 2:21.
strengthened by the usage of the verb ידוע ("to know,"
נתבדר), "that the living may understand." The mental restoration of Nebuchadnezzar takes place as his "sanity" returns (vss. 31, 33). The term for sanity is נ 있게,1 from the same root. As Nebuchadnezzar lifts his eyes to heaven in recognition of God's sovereignty, he "understands," his sanity begins to return, and the process of his restoration is on its way.

God's reign in history is linked to His sovereignty as creator.2 In the confessions, this theme is especially evident in 4:32 which speaks about God as the eternal One compared with whom created beings are all counted as nothing, refers to him as the sovereign commander of the heavenly army, and closes by the rhetorical question "What have you done?" As seen above, this question resembles such texts as Isa 45:9 and Job 9:12, both set in the context of the theme of creation.3 In the narrative, this theme comes to the fore in the very symbol of the dream, the tree. The flourishing of the tree of Nebuchadnezzar in the house of his kingdom (vss. 1, 17-19, 27) represents a kingdom which is not sustained by God (cf. Ps 92:11-14 and the messianic tree in Ezek 17:22-24).4 Like the tower of Babel, the tree reaches towards heaven (vss. 8, 19). In the symbolism, heaven stands for God (see vs. 23), and the tree represents, as the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Eden story, "a human being wanting to be like a god."5

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1Note the use of these words related to wisdom also in the prayer in Dan 2:21-22.
2For the theme in this context, see Doukhan ("Allusions").
3So Doukhan (Le soupir, 100-101).
4See further Fewell (93-95).
5Ibid., 96.
The Depiction of the Characters

In the doxologies, the heavenly army is referred to in 4:32 as the instrument of God in fulfilling His purposes. This is consistent with the narrative’s reference to the heavenly watchers’ active participation in the decision to cut down the tree (vss. 10, 14), a verdict that brings about the judgment of Nebuchadnezzar for his pride and arrogance. In the Book of Daniel, the role of heavenly beings in the history of mankind is mentioned for the first time in this narrative.

Besides these beings, the confessions refer to no other specific characters, and the section dealing with the depiction of the characters will focus directly on the addressee and the pray-er, God and Nebuchadnezzar. The discussion of the themes of the doxologies and the narrative has already brought out some important traits. Essential to a proper understanding of the characters is the relationship between the two as implied by the references to Nebuchadnezzar’s prayers.

God, the addressee

The name given to God in this chapter is “the Most High” (n'b'j). Introduced in the book in the royal decree in 3:26, Nebuchadnezzar refers to God in this way in his confessions in 3:31 and 4:31. In the narrative as such, it is employed in vss. 14, 21, 22, 29. It reflects the emphasis in the chapter on the distinction as well as the close relationship between heaven and earth.¹ In the final confession, the title for God is “the King of

¹Goldingay describes the key pair yntzi and its significance for the narrative (Daniel, 85).
Heaven," fitting in the context of the human king’s acknowledgment of the rule of the heavenly One (vs. 34).¹

The reflections so far have shown the sovereignty of God as the ruler of history and creation to be the dominant theme of both confessions and narrative. But the restoration of king Nebuchadnezzar and his subsequent gratitude (Daniel 4:31) point to another aspect of the character of God. By warning Nebuchadnezzar about the possible outcome, by appealing to him through Daniel, and by bringing him back to his senses and his throne, God is both patient and merciful. Representing the tree of good and evil and striving to be a god, Nebuchadnezzar’s pride is the ultimate rebellion towards God,² the sin as such. Yet, when Nebuchadnezzar in humble recognition lifts his eyes towards heaven and confesses, God is ready to show mercy, even to the archenemy of his people.

**Nebuchadnezzar, the pray-er**

The character of Nebuchadnezzar is developed throughout the narratives of the first four chapters in the Book of Daniel. In the first chapter he is simply the conqueror of Jerusalem, the ruler of Babylon. He is the representative for the gentile kingdom that stands in opposition to the kingdom of God, and whose temple is in conflict with the temple of Jerusalem. Yet, we are told (1:2) that he unwittingly has received his power from God. In

¹The names for God used by Nebuchadnezzar are consistent with the figure of a gentile king. As stated by Fewell regarding the royal decrees: “In each of these proclamations, God is defined relationally. God is given no personal name. God is the God of Daniel or the god of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Even Nebuchadnezzar’s use of the appellatives “Most High” and “king of heaven” reflects the relationality of God: Nebuchadnezzar is “high.” . . . The god who has brought him down, however, is higher than he” (Fewell, 160).

²At times the Greek term *hubris* is employed for the attitude of Nebuchadnezzar. Strictly speaking, this term involves a completely different philosophy of life than found in Daniel, and I prefer to avoid it.
the second chapter he enters the scene as a person. The religious foundation of his reign is shattered by the content and the interpretation of his divinely sent dream. Though he is forced to acknowledge the wisdom of the God of the people he has conquered, his attitude is truly disclosed in chap. 3 where he attempts to counter the divine message about the temporary nature of his reign. In the end of the events in chap. 3, he reluctantly has been forced to admit the power of the God of the Jews to save those who choose to worship no other god.

From the beginning of the narrative in chap. 4, things have changed. In retrospect, Nebuchadnezzar tells his remarkable story. In his proud attempt to become like a god, he became less than a man, a beast. Yet, in mercy God not only warned him beforehand, but also restored him when he acknowledged his true relationship to the King of Heaven. Now Nebuchadnezzar confesses the sovereignty of God. He acknowledges the justice of the punishment received by stating that no one can say to God: "What have you done?" (vs. 32). He realizes that he himself has been one of the lowest of men (vs. 34, cf. vs. 14) and only has been installed again as ruler because of the will of God.

Yet, Nebuchadnezzar addresses "all people, nations, and languages" (3:31) as the ruler, as "king." The narrative's description of Nebuchadnezzar even in the end is not without its ambiguities.¹ The king does not hide the fact that his restored glory far exceeded

¹See the discussion in Fewell (89-90).
his former power. He is still the sole ruler of his pagan empire, not a converted Jew worshiping in the temple in Jerusalem.

These reflections should not detract from the sincerity of his doxologies or be used to argue that they are not manifestations of genuine prayers from his heart. Toews has noted how the king in his encyclical deliberately refers to himself in such a way that we realize that "the proclamation is that of a king, humbled before the King of kings." The nominal resource "king" is used for Nebuchadnezzar first in the initial address, understood as a necessary part of the official greeting, second in his conversation with Daniel in 4:15, also seen as natural in the setting of the royal court, and finally, in relation to his statement of vss. 25-27 where his pride reaches its climax. In all other texts of the narrative, Nebuchadnezzar does not present himself as king, but simply as "I" or "I, Nebuchadnezzar" (4:1, 31, 34). Because his humility before God is sincere, his praises and prayers can be regarded as honest and genuine.

Conclusion: The Function of Prayer

Themes and Characters

The attitude of Nebuchadnezzar towards prayer is in this chapter markedly different from the preceding narratives. In the communication between God and Nebuchadnezzar, this narrative contains several climaxes. The negative climax is heard in the heavenly voice

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1Had the problem been the Greek *hubris*, this overwhelming restoration would create a problem. But in OT abundant material blessings do not in themselves constitute a human threat against the gods or God; cf. the ending of the Book of Job (42:11-17).

2Lacocque remarks how the wording of the doxology in 4:32 employs "terminology proper to a tyrant such as he was" (*The Book of Daniel," 89).

3Toews, 185.
addressing the pagan king with the verdict of judgment (vss. 28-29). The positive climax is the confessions by the king.

It is important to notice that just as the king’s attitude passes through a development that links this narrative to the book at large, so are his confessions connected with the preceding by reflecting the prayer of Daniel in 2:20-23. A common theme dominates the doxologies and the prayer by Daniel: God’s sovereignty over human kingdoms (2:21 and 3:33; 4:31-32). Common terminology is employed to describe both part of the content and the very circumstances of the confessions: the installment of human kings (from מָלָע, Dan 2:21, cf. 4:14) as well as their removal (from רָשָׁב, Dan 2:21, cf. 4:28); the “understanding” of God’s truth (from חָרֵם, Dan 2:21-22, cf. 4:14, 22, 29, 31, 33), and the “blessing” and “praising” of God (רֵם, Dan 2:19-20, cf. 4:31; תֵּבֵן, Dan 2:23, cf. 4:31, 34).

The Prayer Event

The continued deliberately expressed similarity between the confession of Nebuchadnezzar and the private prayer of Daniel in 2:20-23 helps one to understand some of the questions related to the praying of Nebuchadnezzar. The narrative in chap. 4 makes it clear that the king is praying both in the specific situation of personal need in 4:31 and, after his experience, as a general habit (4:34). The doxologies may reflect the content of his prayers, yet his actual words are not recorded. The effect of this feature is to highlight the prayer of Daniel in 2:20-23. Nebuchadnezzar’s prayers reflect Daniel’s prayer. Daniel is the example of praying. Nebuchadnezzar has learned from this example. Daniel’s prayer in chap. 2 is in the center both of the narrative structure and of the narrative time. Nebuchadnezzar’s confessions come at the end. His prayers are genuine, but only the result of repeated, patient, and merciful divine intervention.
In the process of divine-human communication in the book, no chapter more clearly shows that the attitude of humility is a prerequisite for genuine prayer. God may, as with Nebuchadnezzar, make repeated attempts to enter into personal contact. He may reveal Himself in many ways, but when God finally has to make a direct address to a person who shares no humble prayer-relationship with Him, the experience may be frightening as it was for Nebuchadnezzar (vss. 28-29) and anticipate the final judgment.

**Dan 5**

**Identifying the Prayers**

**Interactions between God and Man**

Unique for the narrative in chap. 5 is the presence of three speeches that draw out the final closure of the events, first by the queen mother\(^1\) to the king (vss. 10-12), next by king Belshazzar to Daniel (vss. 13-16), and finally, Daniel’s prophetic address to the king (vss. 17-28). This last speech also serves as an explanation to the events that have taken place during the short dramatic section in the beginning of the story (vss. 1-9).

The chapter opens with a royal orgy (vs. 1). From Daniel’s later commentary we are ascertained that Belshazzar had brought in the temple vessels from Jerusalem as a deliberate provocation against the Lord of Heaven (vss. 22-23). The event itself already implies this interpretation as Belshazzar and his nobles, immediately following their blasphemous usage

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\(^1\)The question about any actual historical character is outside the frame of this study. The role of a queen mother fits best with the actual function and power of the queen in the narrative, so Lacocque (*The Book of Daniel*, 97) and Goldingay (*Daniel*, 109). See also the discussion in Montgomery (247-248).
of the holy golden and silver vessels, praise their gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, tree, and stone (vs. 5).¹

The divine reaction does not tarry. A hand shows and writes a mysterious message on the wall (vs. 5). From Daniel’s words we know for sure that this is the hand (יְדִי) of God (vss. 23-24). The message is a message of doom. In vain the sages are brought forward to explain the writing (vss. 7-9), and only upon the suggestion of the queen (vss. 10-12) is Daniel summoned (vs. 13a). Challenged by Belshazzar, Daniel presents his long "indictment speech."² In this, Daniel sets the record straight (vss. 17-28). Though fully aware of king Nebuchadnezzar’s remarkable experience, Belshazzar in a proud and defiant mood chooses to exalt himself above the Most High and praise the pagan gods in his place (vss. 22-23). The narrative framework is closed with a brief statement of the results: Daniel is honored by the king (vs. 29), and the king is killed (vs. 30).³

Prayers, References to Prayer, and Allusions to Prayer

Chap. 5 contains no recorded prayers, but the following references and allusions to prayer:

1. The royal court’s unanimous praise (רָחָשָׁה) of the pagan gods in vs. 4 refers to public prayers. The words are not recorded. They are directed towards pagan deities, the nonexistence of these implied by their nature: the gods are made of gold, silver, bronze,

¹Fewell has noted the metallic link between the vessels and the pagan gods (117).

²Collins, Daniel with an Introduction, 68.

³I follow Milne (222-223) and Toews (53) in counting 6:1 with chap. 6; see also the discussion of the structure of Dan 6 in chapter 1 above. Fewell (143-144) notes that 6:1 is a transitional verse that ends chap. 5 and begins the subsequent chapter.
iron, tree, and stone. The word נָבָש is, as we have seen earlier, a keyword in the Book of Daniel, employed in 2:23; 4:31, 34; 5:4, 23.

2. In Daniel's explanation, the defiant action by Belshazzar is mentioned again in retrospect: the king praised (נָבָש) the heathen gods (vs. 23).

3. Daniel mentions (vs. 23) what the king did not do: he did not “honor” God, the word for “honor” (נָבָש) denoting Nebuchadnezzar's prayers in 4:31, 34. Thus Belshazzar's lack of prayer to the true God is added to the active praise of his own gods.

Situating the Prayers

In the Structure of the Chapter

The narrative flow is straightforward, but short. Flashbacks and explanations are provided by the speeches. Yet the various outlines presented by scholars differ widely, one reason being the particular perspective chosen. The suggested structure (see table 14) keeps the sermons of Daniel and Belshazzar as individual units, addressed from one person to another, and framed by the narrative events, though not least Daniel's words may be divided into several units. From a thematic perspective, this is done by Doukhan in his chiastic structure of the chapter. In this, Daniel's actual explanation of the graffiti (vss. 25-28) is placed in parallel with its occurrence in the narrative (vss. 5-9); the preceding part of the speech by Daniel (vss. 17-24) is equaled to the speech by the queen (vss. 10-12); and the

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'Doukhan, *Le soupir*, 121. Also the chiastic structure proposed by Michael Hilton, "Babel Reversed—Daniel Chapter 5," *JSOT* 66 (1995): 99-112, is valuable. The center is seen as vs. 13a in which Daniel is brought in. Hilton reads vss. 1-4 as the crime in parallel with vss. 26-30, the retribution; the writing in vs. 5 as parallel to the explanation of it in vss. 24-25. Hilton understands vss. 6-9 as mainly a speech by the king, paralleled with the first part of Daniel’s speech in vss. 17-24; and finally, he sees the speech by the queen about Daniel in vss. 10-12 as a parallel to Belshazzar's speech to Daniel in vss. 13b-16.'
## TABLE 14
INTERPERSONAL STRUCTURE
OF DANIEL 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Verses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>The problem presented: the feast of Belshazzar</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>drinking from the vessels</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>praising the gods</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the writing on the wall</td>
<td>5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>Belshazzar seeks a solution</td>
<td>7-13a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>calls for the sages</td>
<td>7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the queen suggests a solution</td>
<td>10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel is summoned</td>
<td>13a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>Belshazzar challenges Daniel</td>
<td>13b-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a Daniel an exile brought up from Judah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b &quot;I have heard of you . . .&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c the sages were not able</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b' &quot;I have heard of you . . .&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a' if able, you will rule as third in the kingdom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Daniel explains the solution</td>
<td>17-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a¹ promise of explanation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b¹ Nebuchadnezzar’s success and pride</td>
<td>18-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b² God’s intervention:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>madness and restoration</td>
<td>20-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c¹ Belshazzar’s pride and self-exaltation</td>
<td>22-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c² God’s intervention: the hand</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a² actual explanation</td>
<td>25-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>The problem solved</td>
<td>29-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel rewarded</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belshazzar killed</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
address by Belshazzar to Daniel is in the center. The structure presented in table 14 may be
seen as chiastic as well, letting D equal B, and E parallel A. In A (vss. 1-6) the problem
is presented by three actions during the royal orgy. Belshazzar had ordered the vessels
from the temple brought in. They had been taken (hafel from הָפֵל) to Babylon from
Jerusalem by his father Nebuchadnezzar, for the reader a clear link to the opening of the
book in 1:2. Now, the king and his nobles first drink from the vessels, next, they praise
their gods. The third event is the divine reaction: a hand "went forth" (note the play on
words: here the p'al conjugation of נפל is employed to indicate the reversal of
Nebuchadnezzar's overthrow of Jerusalem and its temple).

Stricken with terror, Belshazzar attempts to find a solution, described in B (vss. 7-
12). Three actions of "bringing in" (from הָבִין) combine the events. He brings in the sages,
but in vain. Next, the queen enters (from בָּעַס) and refers to the great days of

1A different chiastic structure is presented by William H. Shea, "Further Literary
Structures in Daniel 2-7: An Analysis of Daniel 5, and the Broader Relationships within
Chapters 2-7," AUSS 23 (1985): 290. The separation of the last sentence by the queen (vs.
12b) from the preceding, and the division of Daniel's speech into three separate parts, in
which the introduction (vs. 17) is united with the king's request in vs. 16, are elements that
make this structure unconvincing. Also Kratz presents a chiastic structure, in which he sees
the speech by the queen as the center (91). The thematic importance of this speech seems,
however, less obvious.

2Toews regards 5:1 as the stage, vss. 2-5b as the pre-peak, vss. 5c-9 as the peak, and
vss. 10-30 as the post-peak (52-53 and 128-130).

3The concern here is not with the historical issues. The concept of "father" was broad
in the Ancient Near East, spanning from biological father to ancestors or predecessors; see,

4This verbal link is noted by Collins (Daniel, 241), though he places Daniel's entry in
the next unit of the chapter. Earlier, Collins (Daniel with an Introduction, 66) separated 7-
12 into two parts.
Nebuchadnezzar, suggesting that Daniel should read the handwriting and interpret it. Finally, Daniel is summoned (also from בָּשָׁנָה).

The speech of Belshazzar stands in the center and is chiastically structured. The structure illuminates the pride and arrogance of the king. The first and last elements of the chiasm, a and a', show how the king tempts Daniel with a promise to be exalted to the third in rank in the kingdom as opposed to his humble position as one of the exiles from Judah.

Also the speech by Daniel is well structured. Its center is a parallel between the past experience of Nebuchadnezzar and the present actions and attitude by Belshazzar. It is framed by an initial promise to interpret the mysterious writing (vs. 17) and a fulfillment of this promise (vss. 25-28). The presence of three promises in the narrative and their fulfillment adds an ironic flavor to the events. Belshazzar promises any wise man who is able to solve the riddle exaltation to the third in the kingdom (vss. 7, 16). He keeps his promise (vs. 29), though the interpretation implies that he has no power left to share. Likewise, Daniel makes a promise and keeps it. The third promise is the very content of the writing on the wall. God makes a promise to overthrow the kingdom of Babylon. The result of the narrative confirms that God keeps His word.

1Collins (Daniel, 241) views the speeches of the king and Daniel together as one unit.
2See Fewell (126).
3Contra Porteous who finds that "Belshazzar treated Daniel with the utmost courtesy" (80). Ferguson acknowledges that "there may well be a touch of drunken cynicism in Belshazzar's address to Daniel, especially his emphasis on Daniel's origin" (120).
4Once again there is a play on the repetition of a word. Belshazzar places Daniel among those whom his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had brought up (חַפֵל from נֵכֶד) from Judah (vs. 13). During the orgy, the king had ordered the vessels brought in (חַפֵל from נֵכֶד, vs. 2). Belshazzar implies power and status with his wording: Daniel had been brought up from Jerusalem as the vessels from the temple were brought in by Belshazzar.
In the Plot of the Narrative

The immediate question raised by the narrative events is very simple. It concerns the content of the writing on the wall: What does it mean? The tension reaches a first peak in the terrified reaction of the king when he witnesses the hand (vss. 5-6), and it progresses as the sages stand powerless and the king horrified (vss. 8-9). The question about who is able to solve the riddle and bring the interpretation is solved by the speech of the queen, but is in this context of minor importance.¹

But the words by the queen mother bring another issue to the surface: What does Belshazzar know? This may already be hinted at in the description of his orgy: Did he know about the origin of the vessels? It may be further accentuated by his reaction to the writing: his terror would seem to imply that he knew that the message was a sinister one. Could it really be that the excellent wise man during his father’s reign, according to the queen the famous Daniel, was completely unknown to Belshazzar? Is he just a fool,² or does he know?

The structural center of the narrative, the address by Belshazzar to Daniel, reveals that he does know. Belshazzar is able to describe Daniel as one of the Jewish exiles, a fact

¹Contra Collins (Daniel with an Introduction, 67), the court contest between Daniel and the wise men is not seen to be a decisive issue.

²The description of Belshazzar is throughout a caricature of a powerful monarch. Note how during his feast, with seeming authority, he orders (יָנָה) the vessels to be fetched (vs. 2). But after seeing the hand, he loses his composure and shouts to summon the wise men (vs. 7, to this text see also Fewell, 120). And Daniel simply enters (vs. 13), as if Belshazzar has completely lost control of events, even in court. When he finally, in the end, resumes his authority by ordering (יָנָה) Daniel to be rewarded, the whole setting makes his action deeply ironical. In her description of the character of Belshazzar, Fewell argues convincingly that the king makes a futile attempt to be as powerful and successful as the predecessor on the throne, the great Nebuchadnezzar (118-123).
that has not been disclosed by the speech of the queen.\textsuperscript{1} Is he also aware of the other important facts that the queen omitted, the dramatic events of Nebuchadnezzar's greatness and fall, his madness and subsequent restoration? To that question Daniel's speech gives an affirmative answer: "you knew all this!" (vs. 22).

The end of the narrative relieves the tension. The riddle has been solved. The king's request has been answered, and the reader has been informed that Belshazzar all along knew far more than he professed. The verdict of judgment contained in the writing on the wall is fully justified.

Conclusion: The Function of Prayer

Prayer and praise function in chap. 5 first of all as a means to depict the character of Belshazzar. Against the background of the narratives in the Book of Daniel, his attitude and actions are compared with Nebuchadnezzar's. In the narrative, the direct references are made to Nebuchadnezzar's experience in chap. 4.\textsuperscript{2}

In light of Belshazzar's knowledge of this event, the praise to his gods must be seen as a deliberate refusal to acknowledge the might of God. He was aware of the fact that God

\textsuperscript{1}So Fewell (124) and Lacocque (\textit{The Book of Daniel}, 97-99), contra Delcor (129). Collins (\textit{Daniel}, 248) views the oblivion of the wise man as a traditional motif.

\textsuperscript{2}The chapter shares elements with all the preceding narratives, yet the connections with Nebuchadnezzar's pride, downfall, and restoration in chap. 4 are the most dominating. In bringing in the vessels of the temple, a link is provided to chap. 1. The unsuccessful attempt of the wise men to interpret the writing and the appearance of another court figure (the queen) to introduce Daniel (like Arioch, 2:24-25) are literary links to chap. 2. Fewell has pointed to strong similarities between chap. 5 and chap. 3 in which Nebuchadnezzar makes (נֵבֶשׁ) a golden image, just like Belshazzar now makes (נֵבֶשׁ) a banquet (113-116).
holds all the ways of man in His hand, yet he would not give Him honor (vs. 23). Belshazzar’s treatment of the holy vessels as well as his address to Daniel implies that he wants to turn the clock back to the situation in chap. 1: Babylon and its religion is victorious, Jerusalem and YHWH are defeated. He deliberately chooses to ignore the humiliation of Nebuchadnezzar and the subsequent public acknowledgment of the “King of Heaven.”

The prayer situation during the orgy of the king therefore highlights the reasons for the divine verdict of destruction. When praying to nonexisting gods against better knowledge, fully aware of the mighty acts of the living God, the experience of the divine presence is terrifying: the hand of God no longer protects, but executes judgment.

Dan 6

The situations relevant for prayers in which we find king Darius in Dan 6 are the fasting in vs. 19 and the public royal decree in vss. 27-28. Though the doxology of vss. 27-28 is addressed to the people of the kingdom and not directly towards God, it may

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1The word for way in 5:23, נור, echoes the words of the doxology in 4:34: “all God’s ways are right.”

2The hand, ינ, is in these verses used in its double sense as both the divine power of protection and the divine execution of judgment; cf. 2:34, 45; 8:25.

3To the verbal links between Belshazzar’s praise of his gods in 5:4, 23 and Nebuchadnezzar’s doxologies in chap. 4, mentioned above, could be added the use of the verb נר for Nebuchadnezzar in 4:34, where he exalts (polel participle) the King of Heaven. In chap. 5, it is first employed in the chapter in vs. 19 (in hafel) about the power of king Nebuchadnezzar to exalt or humble whomever he wanted; next it is used in vs. 20 (in p’al) about the king’s self-exaltation in his heart; and finally, it describes the act of Belshazzar in vs. 23: “You have exalted yourself (hitpolel) over the ‘Lord of Heaven’,” the last name for God reflecting the “King of Heaven” in the mouth of Belshazzar’s predecessor in 4:34.

4For the identification of prayers, references to prayer, and allusions to prayer in this chapter, see chapter 1 above in the section dealing with Dan 6, pp. 129-131.
nevertheless reflect genuine prayer by the king. As in the study of the confessions by Nebuchadnezzar in chap. 4, the doxology is investigated in more detail before the discussion of the significance of these situations for the narrative of the chapter.

The Theological Content of the Doxology in Dan 6:27-28

The parallel between 3:31-33 and 6:26-28 has already been touched upon. The common introduction is an argument in favor of beginning the poetic piece with the jussive verb "let be" (וּלְאָה, vs. 27).

Translation

27 Let people tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, he endures forever; his kingdom is indestructible, his rule has no ending.

28 He delivers and rescues, he performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth.

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1 See the discussion of Nebuchadnezzar's doxologies in the section on Dan 4 above, 253-254.

2 Containing greeting, sender, intention/type of decree, and addressee, the difference being that in 6:26-27 some of the elements are doubled as the decree is already introduced in the narrative (vs. 26).

3 So Prinsloo (101-102), who finds it unlikely that the poem should begin with a causal clause with אֵין; cf. the similar argument regarding the demarcation of the poem in 4:32. Contra Di Lella ("Strophic Structure," 94), BHS, and Collins (Daniel, 258). Goldingay (Daniel, 120) avoids the problem by not translating the causal clause as such. Prinsloo (102) also notes the similarity with the poem in Dan 2:20-23 that commences with the jussive of הוה.

4 The prepositional phrase מַעַן הָאֵין has the meaning forever, in perpetuum, as also in Dan 7:26 (Vogt, 118), not "until the end" (Collins, Daniel, 258, and Goldingay, Daniel, 120) as if to indicate a chronological limitation.
He delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

Literary Form

Poetical analysis

As seen in table 15, the poem consists of two stanzas, the first with three bicola, the second with one tricolon and one bicolon. A formal analysis of the elements of communication will help to bring out the significance of the poetic structure.

Communicative structure

A structural outline is presented in table 16. The first stanza consists of an exhortation with motivation. The motivation is typically (cf. Dan 2:20-23) based on general characteristics of God, in this instance His everlasting nature. The motivation in strophe 2 is further enlarged by the parallel description of the rule of God in strophe 3. The second stanza is concerned with God’s specific intervention on behalf of Daniel (strophe 5), letting the general description of God’s activities (strophe 4) be the background.

The fact that there is no address to God, neither in the poem itself nor in the introduction to it, indicates that the doxology is not to be understood as a prayer to God.

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1From a poetic perspective, the passage is fairly simple. The analysis of the lines (or strophes) presented here is identical with both Prinsloo’s (101) and Di Lella’s (“Strophic Structure,” 94-95), the difference being that Di Lella includes the preceding lines from the edict in the poem.

2Di Lella (“Strophic Structure,” 95) also has two stanzas. The second is set to begin with the causal clause “for he is the living God.” In my view such clause belongs to the previous sentence in any division of the stanzas because of the close connection in meaning.
### TABLE 15

**POETICAL ANALYSIS OF DANIEL 6:27-28**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>Strophe</th>
<th>Meter</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Verse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>לְחֹנְךָ אִתְּנְךָ וּרְדֹלְךָ</td>
<td>27a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>מֵן קְרָם אֲלֹהָהוּ רֵֽעְנְאֶֽלָּ</td>
<td>27b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>ריּ הָאֲלֹהָהּ צֱֽהָא</td>
<td>27c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>וְקֵם לְעַלְדָּךְ</td>
<td>27d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>נְלַבַּ֝הָהּ רֵֽעְנְאֶֽלָּ חַדָּבָּל</td>
<td>27e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>וְשָלֹמְךָ עַֿרְבָּא</td>
<td>27f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>מִסָיוֹב וְנַעֲלָּ</td>
<td>28a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>יִנְבֵּר אֶתְּנְךָּ תְבוֹתֵּךְ</td>
<td>28b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>בְּשָנָּא אֲבָרָעְךָ</td>
<td>28c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>רוּ שֵיְבִּרְנֵאָל</td>
<td>28d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>בָּאָלְדָּ אַרְיוֹתָ</td>
<td>28e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Contra Baumgartner in BHS, but according to the Masoretic punctuation, I read נַעֲלָ with the subsequent words, indicated by the ר־בְּי over נַעֲלָ, so also Prinsloo (102) and Di Lella ("Strophic Structure," 95)."
Table 16

STRUCTURAL OUTLINE OF THE DOXOLOGY
IN DAN 6:27-28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>Strophe</th>
<th>Verse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>exhortation</strong></td>
<td>Let people tremble and fear before the God of Daniel:</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>motivation</strong></td>
<td>for he is the living God, he endures forever;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(description)</td>
<td>his kingdom is indestructible, his rule has no ending.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>description</strong></td>
<td>He delivers and rescues, he performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth.</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(general)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>description</strong></td>
<td>He delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(specific)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Words and Themes in Context

The content of this doxology is closely connected not only with the narrative in chap. 6, but with the preceding narratives, prayers, and doxologies of the book. Because it is only a short poem and in order to avoid repetitions, the investigation of the words and themes of this poem is not separated from the tracing of the semantic and thematic links between the doxology and its literary context, but treated simultaneously.


Vs. 27: Exhortation and motivation

Vs. 27 contains an initial exhortation with accompanying motivation. The word pair for "tremble" and "fear" (רָדַשׁ and בָּנֶת) is found only once as a pair in biblical Aramaic besides this text: it is employed in Dan 5:19 to describe the awe and respect demanded by the power delegated to Nebuchadnezzar. This association points to the theme of kingship and accentuates the sovereignty of God in comparison with earthly kingdoms. The phrase "God of Daniel" is characteristic for the narrative in chap. 6 and an indication of the unique personal relationship between Daniel and God, illustrated in his worship and prayer life.

The motivation in the description of God employs the term "the living God" (אֱלֹהִים סָמוּאֵל), paralleled with and further explained by the statement that God "endures forever." The phrase contrasts God with the gods of gold, silver, etc., mentioned in the previous narratives (chaps. 3 and 5 in particular). It also contrasts God with the human rulers who, when the situation demands the message to be clear regarding their mortality and the temporary character of their rule, are addressed by Daniel or his friends without the courteous and customary wish for eternal life (2:27; 3:16; 5:17; cf. 2:4; 3:9; 5:10). While the adjective implies these contrasts, the expression "the living God" as such is unique in the Book of Daniel for the narrative in chap. 6 (vss. 21, 27) about Daniel in the lions' den. In this context, it points to God as the one who is able to conquer death, even the certain death of capital punishment.

The motivation is strengthened by a parallel description of the kingdom of God. The words resemble the confessions of Nebuchadnezzar (כֶּלֶשֶׁת and מָלָאכִים, cf. 3:33 and 4:31) and further contrast the earthly dominions with the heavenly reign. God's kingdom is indestructible (the hitpaal of יְבָשָׂל is used, as earlier in 2:44 and later in 7:14). This word hints on the power struggle in the narrative. It is used by Daniel to tell the king that the
lions did not "hurt" or "destroy" him (vs. 23).\textsuperscript{1} The lions are seen as representing the power of the human kingdom in opposition to God’s rule.

\textit{Vs. 28: Description of God’s actions}

In vs. 28 we find a general as well as a specific description of the deliverance and salvation wrought by God. The verbs שלם (participle in vs. 28a, finite verb in vs. 28d) and עלי (participle in vs. 28a) are used. First, these terms provide a link to the narrative itself. As a word pair, we find the infinitives employed to characterize the king’s futile attempt to “deliver” and "rescue" Daniel: the king decided and tried to, but all in vain. In the king’s two subsequent addresses to Daniel, he puts his trust in the unlikely possibility that God may be able to deliver (vss. 17, 21, from שלם). Next, the terms connect us to the story about the three friends in the fiery furnace. We meet them as a word pair in the royal decree in 3:28-29, framing the proclamation (שלם in vs. 28, דעל in vs. 29). Besides this text, שלם is also used in chap. 3 in vss. 15 and 17 (twice) and is a key term in the dialogue between the king and the young Jews.\textsuperscript{2}

The second stich of strophe 4 contains the three words שלם, א än, and עלי. They combine the two poetic doxologies by Nebuchadnezzar: השלם ("to do, perform") is the key verb in 4:32, א än and עלי ("signs and wonders") central for the decree and the doxology in 3:32-33. In the narrative in chap. 4, the signs and wonders denoted God’s intervention in the personal life of Nebuchadnezzar. Here in chap. 6, the divine action saved Daniel.

\textsuperscript{1}The same root is present in vs. 23 in the word תיליה, "crime, evil." Daniel had done no crime or evil against the king, that is, he had done nothing to destroy Darius’ kingdom.

\textsuperscript{2}The fact that these verbs do not show up anywhere else in the Book of Daniel helps to establish even further the close parallel between these two narratives.
The merismus of “heaven and earth” accentuates the theme of the sovereignty of God’s heavenly rule and relates to the narrative’s clash between the two empires. It further develops this theme from the previous doxologies; compare the divine epithet used by Nebuchadnezzar in 4:34: “the King of Heaven.”

The specific reason for exhortation is presented in the last strophe of the poem: God delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. Once again the contrast is between heaven and earth, between God’s kingdom and the earthly rule, represented by the power (“hand”) of the lions. This understanding also implies that in the narrative Daniel belongs to the heavenly kingdom of God.

Conclusion: The Function of Prayer

Themes and Characters

Though king Darius is the only gentile actually involved in situations of prayer in the narrative, the formal identification pointed out that the ministers and satraps in vs. 9 address the king in the form of a petition. In a chapter basically concerned with prayer and worship, this feature of literary finesse has a function. The conspirators seem to share nothing but political motives, but by the very edict they suggest, the king receives a religious, almost divine role. Their petition to him ironically discloses both the king’s lack of divine status (how easily he is fooled!) and their own lack of genuine religious sentiments.

But besides the prayers by Daniel himself, the prayers of this chapter first of all serve to depict Darius. By the events, he is led through a personal development. As his own attempts to save Daniel fail (vs. 15), he comes to rely on Daniel’s God alone to deliver. This is indicated by his words to Daniel in vs. 17: “May your God whom you continually
serve save you." The sentence is formed as a petition. Though expressed to Daniel and not directly to God, it is addressed to Daniel because of his constant prayer life. When the king next returns to spend the night fasting in 6:19, corresponding in the structure of the narrative to Daniel’s prayers in 6:11, it is implied that he in some sense joins Daniel in prayer. Moreover, also the fact that his final public doxology very closely resembles the doxologies by Nebuchadnezzar in 3:32; 4:32, 34, and by analogy has a similar function, implies that Darius is personally praying to God. During the night, Darius has pleaded for Daniel. Now he acknowledges God as the “living God” (vs. 27). For that reason Daniel is able to address the king with the wish of eternity without tempting him with self-exaltation or pride (vs. 22).

Yet, though his praying is implied, the words of his prayers are not recorded. This fact, as was the case in regard to king Nebuchadnezzar in chap. 4, has the effect of accentuating Daniel as the man of prayer. King Darius is mirroring Daniel. He has learned to acknowledge and praise God because of Daniel’s life of prayer. This is in part to be deduced from the structural parallel between the king’s fasting and Daniel’s prayer. But this conclusion is also reached because of the similarities between Darius’s public confession in vss. 27-28 and Daniel’s prayer of thanksgiving in 2:20-23. Several features are parallel. The themes of kingship and time are shared by both: in Daniel’s prayer, only God is eternal (2:20a), the earthly kingdoms pass away (2:21b); the eternal character of the kingdom of God is the main theme of Darius’s proclamation (6:27d-27f).\(^1\) The two poems also share the jussive of the verb זוהי in their respective openings (2:20a and 6: 27a) and a common

\(^1\)Note how the prayer by Daniel employed the *hafel* conjugation of the verb כָּבָל (2:21b) to express that God installs the kingdom for a time, and how Darius’s decree by the use of the derived adjective (6:27d) underlines that God as the living God endures forever.
structure, moving from the general description of God to the specific reason for thanks (2:23 and 6:28, respectively), stated by a causal clause with the conjunction "because."

The Prayer Event

Just as the doxologies by king Nebuchadnezzar in chaps. 3 and 4, the public proclamation by Darius is the final outcome of the events. Yet, the fasting of Darius in vs. 19 places him in a unique position among the world leaders of the book.

First of all, the situation parallels the experience by Daniel and his friends in chap. 2. They were in a life or death situation and begged God for mercy during the night (2:18-19). A similar crisis of life or death is central to the plot of chap. 6. Thrown into the lions' den, Daniel's habitual and constant praying and service indicates to the readers that he continues praying in the midst of these animals of prey. The unique element is that the king is fasting (and praying) for someone else. Darius's prayers are unselfish. Even when Nebuchadnezzar was brought to the point where he addressed himself directly to God (4:31), it was in a moment of dramatic personal crisis. He prayed for himself and begged for his own life, for the return of his sanity and his glory. His subsequent public praises were likewise reflecting his own interest. They acknowledged that he had received his power from the Most High. Darius, however, is praying for another person. Also, in this experience, he reflects the habitual prayers of the "man of prayer," Daniel who, turned towards Jerusalem, offered his petitions on behalf of his people, not himself.

Summary

In the discussion of the kings and gentiles in prayer, it has been natural to compare the situations and trace the development in the course of events within the narratives of the book in which they occur.
The references and allusions to prayer in relation to the sages (chap. 2) and the officials (chap. 3) of Babylon primarily serve to contrast them with Daniel and his friends and to emphasize the absence of their gods (chap. 2) and expose these gods as nonexistent beings or non-living images (cf. chaps. 3 and 5).

In king Nebuchadnezzar’s relationship to God as it is illustrated by the references and allusions to prayer, he passes through a definite development: at first, he appears as an emotionally volatile, yet mighty pagan ruler with no knowledge of God. Receiving divine information through the dream with Daniel as the mediator (chap. 2), Nebuchadnezzar publicly acknowledges the wisdom of God (2:46-47), but subsequently reacts in stubborn defiance (chap. 3) to the interpretation of history implied by the divinely given dream. Frightened into a reluctant acknowledgment of God’s power to save (3:28-30), he continues his achievements in an attitude of pride that makes him strive to be like a god (chap. 4); and he is cut down and turned into an animal at the height of his career. In his complete humiliation he turns to God in humble acknowledgment of God’s right to endow kings with power and remove them according to his wishes (4:31-32, 34). In a public proclamation Nebuchadnezzar sincerely expresses that he now habitually is praising and praying to God.

Belshazzar is depicted as the failed successor to the great king Nebuchadnezzar (chap. 5). Ignoring Nebuchadnezzar’s personal experience, he foolishly and rebelliously praises his pagan gods, opposes the Lord of Heaven (vs. 23), and receives the just verdict of death and destruction.

In the kingdom replacing the Babylonian empire, the Median king Darius is tricked into condemning Daniel to the lions because of his prayers to God (chap. 6). But also Darius passes through a personal development that is illuminated by his relationship to prayer. Inspired by Daniel’s example, he unites with him in a night of prayer and fasting,
and, following the miraculous divine deliverance, Darius publicly praises God as the living
God in a way that indicates that he is now honoring God in prayer.

Common for all references and allusions to prayers in relation to these pagan kings is
a literary and thematic dependency upon the prayer of Daniel in 2:20-23. The character of
Daniel is the example in prayer. The kings are all but reflections of this example.

The major themes contained in the royal proclamations are power and time. The
divine sovereignty over the earthly kingdoms is exemplified by the narratives and finally
fully expressed by the kings. The importance of time is underscored by the eternal nature
of God's heavenly kingdom.
CHAPTER III

THE SYNOPSIS OF PRAYERS
IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

The focus of the first two chapters has been prayer, references to prayer, and allusions to prayer in the narrow context of the chapters in which they occur. But the prayers within the book have further implications than what can be learned from the individual situations in which we find them. It is the purpose of this chapter to study the combined function of the prayers within the Book of Daniel as a whole.

First, the prayers, the references to prayer, and allusions to prayer will be compared with regard to identification. Next, the prayers will be positioned in the structure and viewed in relation to the progression of events within the book. Subsequently, the significance of the prayers will be discussed in the following three areas: the thematic relationship between the prayers and the book at large, the contribution of the prayers to the depiction of the characters, and the theological implications of the prayer events as part of a divine-human dialogue.

The study is based upon the investigations in the previous chapters and therefore at times, by comparing the prayers and by evaluating the combined impact of the prayers, summarizes the results of these investigations.
The Identification of the Prayers: A Comparison

In the review of the literature pertinent to prayer in the Old Testament and in the discussion of the definition of prayer, it has been emphasized that prayer not only is defined by its formal characteristics, but also by its function.¹ For that reason, the prayers have in chapters 1 and 2 consistently been identified against the background of the divine-human communication taking place, that is, the divine activities and the human response. The comparison in this section consequently follows a similar outline.

Interactions between God and Man

The divine activities in the Book of Daniel to which humans respond in prayer may be divided into three categories,² as they have been identified in chapters 1 and 2. First, God reveals Himself in human history on a collective level. The book opens with a statement about the sovereignty of God: He "gave king Jehoiakim of Judah into the hand" of king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (1:2). The remark is editorial and part of the overall frame of the book, but by the words of the first recorded prayer in 2:21, the reader is made sure that Daniel also acknowledges that God is in charge of and governs the fate of human kingdoms. Only at the end of his insanity is this also the case for Nebuchadnezzar (4:31-32).

Second, God intervenes on a personal level in the lives of the two major groups of the book: the kings and the gentiles, and Daniel and his friends. These divine activities are all part of the narrative events. God reveals Himself to these groups in the following ways:

¹Cf. the discussion in the introduction above, pp. 38-42.

²In chaps. 1 and 2, the divine activities explicitly referred to have been identified in all chapters of the Book of Daniel, except for chap. 7. That this vision of the beasts from the sea has a divine origin is not explicitly stated, but inferred from the parallel to the other dreams and visions of the book.
1. He speaks through dreams and visions, both to the kings (2:1-2; 4:1-2) and to Daniel (2:18; 7:1-2; 8:1-2; 10:7).

2. He sends messengers: Daniel is the interpreter of the royal dreams to the kings (2:26-28; 4:16; 5:17), and angels explain the visions to Daniel (7:15-16; 8:15-16; 9:20-23; 10:21). But the four Jews also represent God to the kings because of their lifestyle and choices, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego by their loyalty (3:16-18), Daniel by his constant relationship to God in prayer (6:14-15, 19).

3. He shows His will by acts of judgment and deliverance: the negative aspect of God's judgment is experienced temporarily by Nebuchadnezzar, when he hears the voice from heaven (4:28) and becomes like an animal, and in its finality by Belshazzar, when he beholds the hand of God (5:5, cf. 2:45 and 8:25) and meets his doom; the positive aspect, the deliverance, is experienced by the three young men in the fiery furnace (3:25) and by Daniel in the lions' den (6:23).

The third way in which the Book of Daniel refers to the activities of God is through the content of the dreams or visions and the prayers. The prayer in chap. 9 points to divine actions in the past history of Israel (vss. 7, 11, 14), the thanksgiving in chap. 2 mentions God's continuous governing of the historical changes of the world empires (vs. 21), and the dreams and visions reveal yet future divine interventions (e.g., 2:44-45; 7:3-10). Though these divine activities are not part of the narrative events as such, it is possible for the characters in the book to react to them because these future events have been revealed in the content of the dreams and visions.

Turning now to the human response in prayer to these divine activities, there is a significant difference between the role of the prayers by Daniel and his friends and the references or allusions to prayers by the gentile kings.
All prayers offered by Daniel and his friends are characterized by belonging to the center of an ongoing process of interaction between God and man. Each of them calls forth a divine revelation or intervention. The prayers by Daniel in 6:11-12 are found in the center of the narrative plot and are, like 10:2-3, a part of his general habit of praying. The two recorded prayers in chaps. 2 and 9 are both positioned in the context of a longer divine-human process of communication that contains a parallel sequence (see table 17): a divine-given dream/vision that reaches to the end, disturbance of the emotions of Nebuchadnezzar/Daniel, the seeking of information from wise men/Scriptures, the communication with God in prayer, and the sending of a messenger from God with the explanation (Daniel/Gabriel). One major difference is Daniel’s changing role, at first in chap. 2 sent by God to Nebuchadnezzar, in chaps. 8 and 9 himself the recipient of divine visions. Another difference is due to the fact that Nebuchadnezzar never in the narrative of chap. 2 enters into prayer. Instead, Daniel is the mediator (2:18, 27-30).

Contrary to Daniel and his friends, whenever the kings express themselves in terms that belong to or resemble prayer, their utterances are the end result of one or several divine interventions. Their reaction is forced by public events, as in 2:46-47 and 3:28-29. Moreover, at first king Nebuchadnezzar is responding only to the fact of the divine revelation, not to the content of the dream (2:46-47) which he completely ignores. Yet, the present study has pointed out how the confessions in the narrative of chap. 4—though brought forth only through God’s dramatic intervention—reflect real prayers offered by king Nebuchadnezzar. Darius’ fasting (6:19) and final doxology (6:27-28) is likewise the end

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1For this, see the discussion of the depiction of the character of Nebuchadnezzar in relation to chap. 4 above, pp. 262-264.
**TABLE 17**

**THE DIVINE-HUMAN DIALOGUE IN DANIEL 2 AND DANIEL 8-9: A COMPARISON**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 2</th>
<th>Chapters 8-9*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| God sends a dream to king Nebuchadnezzar (1):  
*content:* the kingdoms until the end (30-45)  
*psychological effect:* the king's emotions are disturbed (1) | God sends a vision to Daniel (8:1-2):  
*content:* to the time of the end (8:17-19)  
*psychological effect:* Daniel's emotions are disturbed (8:27) |
| Nebuchadnezzar seeks information from the wise men of Babylon (3-11) | Daniel seeks information from God through the Scriptures (9:1) |
| Daniel communicates with God in prayer (18-23) | Daniel seeks God in prayer (9:3-19) |
| Daniel is sent to the king as a divinely appointed messenger to explain the problem (27-45) | Gabriel is sent to Daniel as a heavenly messenger to explain the problem (9:20-27) |

*The reasons for viewing the prayer in chap. 9 against the background of the previous vision are briefly given in the discussion at pp. 196-200 above and worked out in more detail in the following section of chapter 1, pp. 200-217.*

result of divine messages to the king, first through the prayers of Daniel, next by his miraculous deliverance from the mouth of the lions. It is a common characteristic for these situations and for the prayers by Daniel and his friends that genuine personal prayer only is present when God's sovereignty is fully acknowledged also on the collective level. By praying, the pray-er acknowledges God's explanation of historical events (1:2, cf. 2:21) and responds to the very content of the dreams and visions, that is, to the revelations of future history (as in 2:44-45, cf. 2:21).
As a contrast, the prayers addressed to pagan gods (3:7 and 5:4) are found in the beginning of the course of events. They result in no answers from the gods and are not a part of any actual communication with these.

The Forms of the Prayers

As part of a working definition of prayer, the distinction has been made between recorded prayers, references to the fact of prayer, and allusions to the issue of prayer.\(^1\) The study has revealed that the Book of Daniel mentions prayers in a number of ways with a richness of nuances that denounces too rigid a categorization. They are distinguished by direction, whether addressed to God, pagan gods, or human beings; or by formal criteria such as terminology, quotation formulas or direct references, either in the course of events or later by the narrator or another character. Summarizing the investigations of chapters 1 and 2, the prayers, the references to prayer, and the allusions to prayer can be divided into the following groups:

1. There are two recorded, or stated, prayers: a thanksgiving in 2:20-23 and an intercessory lament in 9:4b-19. Both of these prayers by Daniel are introduced by quotation formulas.

2. There are several specific acts of praying without the words of the prayers recorded. This group can be subdivided into:

   a. "unstated" prayers (in which a quotation formula is present)\(^2\) at the moment they occur in the narrative: a petition to God by Daniel in 6:12, a thanksgiving to God by Nebuchadnezzar in 4:31-32 (with the reason for prayer

\(^1\)See the section on "definitions" in the introduction, especially p. 42.

\(^2\)Using the definition by Staudt (68-69).
given), worship of a pagan god by the officials of Babylon in 3:7 (though no wording necessarily would be expected in this act of worshiping or praying to the golden statue), and a praise to pagan gods by Belshazzar and his nobles in 5:4.

b. references to prayers: a petition in 2:18, implied by the narrative context; a praise by Belshazzar and his court to their gods, mentioned by Daniel in 5:23; and prayers of petition by Daniel, referred to by the angel in 10:12.

3. There is a general activity of praying: Daniel's continuous habit in 6:11 and the thanksgivings by Nebuchadnezzar in 4:34 (with reasons for prayer given).

4. References to prayer and to the act of praying are found which are indicated by the narrative function: a public confession by Nebuchadnezzar in 3:33 that resembles the kind of praise that Nebuchadnezzar is said now to be generally praying (4:34); a public declaration by Darius in 6:27-28 that, though not directed to God, implies that the king is praying (note its close parallel to 3:33); the fasting of the king in 6:19 also suggests that he does so.1

5. In a few specific situations the lack of any prayer is significant: there is no petition by the sages of Babylon to their gods in 2:11, and there is no worship, or prayer, by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to the golden image (3:7, 12, 17-18).

6. In one situation, the general lack of prayer is important: Belshazzar avoids to give his thanks to God (5:24).

7. Allusions to prayer are found in several texts: the mentioning of the royal injunctions in 6:8, 13, 14, directed towards the Persian king, not to God; the form of

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1This is supported by the parallel to Daniel's praying (6:11-12). In the light of the book as a whole, the observation is substantiated by the association between prayers of supplication and fasting in 9:3 and 10:2-3, 12.
petition in the address by king Darius to Daniel in 6:17; and the proclamations by Nebuchadnezzar in 2:46-27 and 3:28-29, directed towards all people, not towards God.¹

Terminology and Genre

When it comes to the question of terminology, various expressions are employed in the book for prayer or praying, dependent on the setting and purpose of the individual prayer. In the Aramaic part of the book, the verb מָרְצוּ ("petition") is used for petitions (2:18; 6:8, 12, 13);² in thanksgivings, the verbs בָּנָב ("bless," 2:19; 3:28; 4:31), כָּפֵר ("praise," 2:23; 4:31, 34; 5:4, 23), and כָּרֹת ("honor," 4:31, 34; 5:23), and כָּרֹת ("elevate," 5:23) are found. The verb כָּרֹת is found in both languages, as "confessing" or "honoring" God in 6:11 (and within the prayer in 2:23), and as "confessing" in the sense of "interceding" in 9:4a. Paired with the הַתִּפְאָל of כָּרֹת in 9:4a is the common Hebrew term for "to pray," יָבֹא. In the Book of Daniel, it is found only here. In the parallel in 6:11, the verb מָרְצוּ, "to entreat," is paired with כָּרֹת. The verb כָּמְשָׁה, "supplicate, ask for mercy," is used once in 6:12; in chap. 9 we find two related nouns with the meaning "supplications," כְּפַרְפֹּת (vss. 3, 17, 18, 23) and כְּפַרְפֹּת (vs. 20), together with the common Hebrew noun for "prayer," כְּפַרְפֹּת (vss. 3, 17, 21).

This terminology reveals the many nuances with which the book refers to prayer. The usage of these terms is consistent with their contextual function in each individual situation. It is significant that all situations of prayer to be classified as praise or thanksgiving are found in the narrative section (chaps. 2-6), while the prayers in the

¹One of the criteria for identifying prayer, discussed in the introduction in relation to the definition of prayer, p. 40, is the direction towards God, an element important for the understanding of these texts as just allusions to the issue of prayer.

²The verb is used only twice in the Hebrew part of OT (DCH, 236). An equivalent may be מָרְצוּ, "to seek," used in the introduction to the prayer in chap. 9 (vs. 3).
visionary part of the book (chs. 9 and 10) are related to situations of lament and penitence. This observation leads us to the question of the position of the prayers within the larger unit of the book as a whole.

**The Position of the Prayers**

To situate the prayers within the book, two complementary approaches are employed. The prayers are positioned within the literary structure of the book. But they are also related to the progression of the book, that is, to the course of events as they transpire in the narrative flow or in the movements taking place throughout the book. In the discussion of the prayers in the narrative part of the book, the prayers have also been viewed from these two perspectives, first situating them within the literary structure, next placing them in the narrative plot, in which the stories are viewed as the events progress.

**In the Structure of the Book**

The question of the literary structure of the Book of Daniel is extremely complex because of its multiplex genres, the bilingual problem, the seeming inconsistency in the chronological markers, and the changes in narrative aspects. The variety of suggestions illustrates that a structure may differ according to the chosen perspective. In reviewing them, it is not the purpose to exhaust the subject or present its final solution, but to evaluate their consequences for the placement and the function of the prayers in the book.

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\(^1\) Also, most scholars have been more concerned with the editorial process than with the structure of the final work. See the discussion in the introduction above, the section "Redaction Criticism" at pp. 17-20.

Though not completely without problems,1 there seems to be a growing consensus of the validity of the concentric structure of the Aramaic chaps. 2-7 suggested by Lenglet:2 ABCC'B'A'/2-3-4-5-6-7. Its perspective is language3 rather than genre or narrative aspect.4 But as a symbolic vision, chap. 7 is naturally read along with chaps. 8-12, not with the stories of chaps. 1-6. Moreover, told in first person by Daniel, the vision (7:2b-27) and its closure (7:28) belong to the subsequent chapters.5 In spite of these observations, the treatment of the narratives in chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation has basically confirmed the thematic, structural, and linguistic parallels between Dan 3-6 and 4-5, respectively.6

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1David (71) speaks about "the generally affirmed validity of Lenglet's structure-critical observations," but finds also some of the weaknesses in Lenglet's approach: the link between chap. 7 and chaps. 8-12 is severed, and there are some important differences between chaps. 2 and 7, for instance, the setting, in which Nebuchadnezzar in chap. 2 takes over (66-72).

2Lenglet is followed by Collins (Daniel, 33-34), Baldwin (59-60), Goldingay (Daniel, 325), Doukhan (Daniel: The Vision, 6), J. C. H. Lebram ("Perspektiven der gegenwärtigen Danielforschung," JSJ 5 [1974]: 9), and Shea ("Unity," 165-169). The structure is also implied by the figure presented by Lacocque (Daniel in His Time, 11).

3Though scholars in general read 2:1-4a as part of this Aramaic section as well.

4John Elias Stanley, "The Use of the Symbol of Four World Empires to Inspire Resistance to or Acceptance of Hellenism in Daniel 2" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Iliff School of Theology/The University of Denver, 1986), 86-106, prefers to see chaps. 1-6 as the basic unit of Daniel A instead of chaps. 2-7 and presents a thorough review of the arguments for and against the thesis.

5David presents a historical review of the various theories of the content of a "Daniel A" (41-96).

6For links between chaps. 3 and 6, see, in particular, pp. 134-135 above; between chaps. 4 and 5, see p. 274.
Building partly upon Lenglet,¹ several scholars have proposed structures for the remaining part of the book as well. Concerned with the process of the redaction of the book, James E. Miller, for instance, suggests also that the Hebrew section is structured as a chiasm.² He finds evidence for an original Hebrew version of chap. 2 and links the unit as follows: chaps. 1 and 10-12, 2 and 9; chap. 8 is the center. Like Goldingay,³ Miller notes similarities between the prayer chaps. 2 and 9, and like Lacocque,⁴ he sees connections between the introductory chapter and the concluding vision of chaps. 10-12. Working inside the limit of the final product, however, James Miller's structure is imprecise as no Hebrew version of chap. 2 is present.

Doukhan has suggested that the visionary part of the book should be seen as concentric as well, with chaps. 7 and 12, 8 and 11, and 9 and 10 as parallels, and the whole

¹One of the few who does not follow Lenglet in structuring the Aramaic part of the book is David W. Gooding, "The Literary Structure of the Book of Daniel and Its Implications," *TynB* 32 (1981): 43-79. He divides the book into two parallel blocks with 5 sections in each, chaps. 1-5 and 6-12 (counting chaps. 10-12 as one unit). Though finding his overall structure unconvincing (neither consistent with the narrative aspect, the different genres, nor the two languages), many perceptive observations are provided. The link between Dan 7 and Dan 2, in which we find the thanksgiving by Daniel, is part of Lenglet's structure as well. The reading of the narrative about Daniel in the lions' den along with the apocalyptic visions points to some thematic connections between the two that have also been noted in the present investigation of prayer in Dan 6, see pp. 142-144 above.

²James E. Miller, 121-123.

³Very briefly and cautiously Goldingay (Daniel, 325) states that "it may be that the rest of the book can be seen as structured around" a chiasm paralleling chaps. 1 and 10-12, 2 and 9, 3 and 8, 4 and 7, 5 and 6. As this suggestion stands, it is unconvincing and lacks support from more detailed observations.

⁴Lacocque (Daniel in His Time, 10-11) is primarily concerned with solving the bilingual problem. He understands 1 and 11-12 as forming an inclusio. Building partly upon Ploger (Das Buch Daniel, 26-27), Lacocque finds theological reasons for the changes of language into Hebrew in chap. 8 where Israel, for the first time, "comes into the foreground" (9). He understands chap. 1 as an introduction, chaps. 2-7 in Aramaic as referring to the past, and the Hebrew section of chaps. 8-12 as pointing to the future.
book as a chiasm with chap. 1 as introduction and chap. 7 as the center. This structure is further elaborated by David who presents detailed argumentation for the links between the parallel chapters. One of the major advantages of this structure is the central position of chap. 7.

The same holds true for the concentric-chiastic structure proposed by Steinmann (see table 18). In this structure, the two chapters of introduction, 1 and 7, each contain topics central to the narratives and the visions that follow. Chap. 1 presents the historical setting, the young Jews, and the temple vessels; chap. 7 introduces the vision style of the second part of the book, the animal imagery (cf. chap. 8), and the feature of an angelic interpreter. The two parts are bilingual: the Hebrew chap. 1 introduces a chiasm in Aramaic, the Aramaic chap. 7 a chiasm in Hebrew. In sections D and D', that fit perfectly on the top of sections C and C' in which Babylon is judged, the visions are concerned with more details.

Doukhan, Daniel: The Vision, 6. Shea makes a somewhat similar structure, yet he does not place chap. 7 in the center of the book as a whole or connect it with chap. 12 ("Unity," 248). He subdivides chap. 9 into four different units, a feature which in my view is less convincing.

David (182-206) seems strangely unaware of the works by Doukhan and Shea. His study combines a synchronic point of view with a diachronic analysis. He understands the period of seven years in 4:31 and the seventy weeks in 9:24 as parallels, the centers of the two halves of the book (395), speaking about "restoration after 7 years' atonement" and "restoration after 70 weeks' atonement." Also Gooding sees a structural and thematic connection between these two time periods (52 and 59).

James H. Sims, A Comparative Literary Study of Daniel and Revelation: Shaping the End (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Biblical Press, 1995), 39, states that the vision in chap. 7 marks "the watershed in the persona of Daniel in his book." Other scholars note the structural significance of the chapter. Collins (Daniel, 37) says that "the fact that chap. 7 was in Aramaic formed a connecting link between the visions and the tales." For Paul Raabe it is "a hinge which binds together chaps. 1-6 and 8-12" (Daniel 7: Its Structure and Role in the Book, HAR 9 [1985]: 267).

Steinmann, 38-42.
TABLE 18
STRUCTURAL OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chap.</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>C’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>B’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A’/Introduction #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>D’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

related to the dominating kingdoms in the period after the end of the Babylonian empire:
they both take the Persian kingdom as their starting point. Among other features common
to the visions in chaps. 8 and 10-12 is the fact that only here do we find the geographical
location mentioned.1 A common trait of the three visions in the Hebrew part of the book is

1"In 8:2 he (Daniel) is on the bank of the Ulai canal and in 10:4 he is on the bank of
the Tigris river" (Steinmann, 41). Among other details in the parallel, Steinmann refers to
the phrase “and I lifted up my eyes” (וַיַּעֲנֵא, 8:3, 10:5 adding the object marker נָשָׁה before
“my eyes”), unique for these two vision-reports of the book. In addition to these
similarities, mention could be made of the structural parallels between the visions in chaps.
that they end with a poetic passage,1 section D in 8:23-25, section E in 9:25-27, and section D' in 12:1-3.2

While the structure proposed by Doukhan and David emphasizes the similarities between chaps. 9 and 10, Steinmann's structure builds on the connections and parallels between the visions in chaps. 8 and 10-12. In line with Goodwin and James Miller, he also treats chaps. 10-12 as a single unit,3 consistent with the chronological markers of the text itself.4

Turning now to the significance of the position of the prayers within the structure, it may initially be deduced from the various outlines proposed that linguistic expressions, 8 and 10-12 described in the treatment of Dan 10-12 in chap. 1 above, pp. 230-231.

1Though he is not discussing the literary structure of the book as such, Segert's identification of these passages is important ("Poetic Structures," 271-275). In chaps. 8 and 11, these poetic sections both close what in formal analysis is defined as "dynastic prophecy"; cf. the discussion of Dan 10-12 in chapter 1 above.

2To this observation should be added that the rise of Michael in the poetic text in 12:1-3 follows immediately after the description of the judgment of the enemy (the king of the North) in 11:45 (no one comes to his rescue, לָיָנִי אַחֲרָי; this destruction is also the exact content of the last part of the parallel poem in 8:23-25 (where the enemy is the little horn who is to "be crushed, yet not by human hand," vs. 25). Furthermore, the poetic section in 9:25-27 refers to the prince that is cut off without anyone coming to his aid (vs. 26, לָיָנִי אַחֲרָי). The structure suggests that this prince in chap. 9:26 most likely is to be understood as a contrast to the little horn/the king of the North in chaps. 8 and 11. So Doukhan for other reasons ("The Seventy Weeks," 16, 18-19). The destruction of the enemy may be seen as the end-time retribution of the historical attack at the "prince of the people."

3Which is the natural way to delineate these chapters, so Collins (Daniel, 371) and Porteous (149).

4The time reference in 11:1 should not be read as marking a new unit in the book. It is part of the angel's explanation to Daniel about the heavenly battle that had been going on after the collapse of the Babylonian empire. Furthermore, "the date serves to identify the speaker with Gabriel (cf. 9:1)" (Collins, Daniel, 376), contra Sims (16), Davies (Daniel, 63), and Gammie ("The Classification," 195). I find David's suggestion (250-252) of the sentence as a future reference to Darius III (Codomanus) unconvincing.
themes, and subgenres of the book are interwoven and united in a very delicate way. This makes it possible from one perspective to compare the prayer chaps. 2 and 9 (so James Miller), from another perspective to compare chaps. 2 and 7 (e.g., Goodwin and Lenglet, each from his own structural angle). To some scholars, the similarities between 9 and 10, both related to prayer and fasting, are the most striking (David, Doukhan), to others, chap. 9 with its recorded prayer is to be seen as unique (Steinmann).

For the study of the prayers, the differences between the concentric-chiastic structures by Doukhan/David and Steinmann are of minor importance, and based on a general understanding of a two-part division of the book in which chap. 7 is “the literary hinge” that unites them, we are now able to position the prayers in the book.

A first observation concerns Daniel. He is the only character in the book who is found in prayer in both the narrative and the apocalyptic sections. The situations are equally divided between the two sections: among the stories, we meet a specific prayer in chap. 2 and the general habit of praying emphasized in chap. 6; in the visionary section, we find a specific prayer in chap. 9 and a more general habit of praying indicated in chap. 10.

Second, each of the two major sections of the book contains one recorded prayer, each spoken by Daniel, and these prayers are placed in complementary structural positions. Dan 2 stands out among the narratives as unique because it contains an apocalyptic prophecy about the future history of the world. The prayer by Daniel in 2:20-23 is concerned with the basic philosophy of history. Likewise, Dan 9 is exceptional in the visionary part with its long prayer and its emphasis on events in Israel’s past. Within the historical narratives, we thus find a recorded prayer in connection with a prophecy that

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1David, 97.
deals with the future, and within the prophetic visions about the future, we find a recorded prayer that reviews past history.

Third, all situations that are related to kings or gentiles in prayer are found in the narrative section of the book. These narratives reflect a development in the attitude of the kings towards prayer. At first, there is no direct personal communication between the reigning monarch (Nebuchadnezzar in chap. 2) and God, but at the end, both Nebuchadnezzar (chap. 4) and Darius (chap. 6) express personal praise and gratitude, while Belshazzar (chap. 5) exhibits stubborn and foolish rebellion. The attitude towards prayer by the kings in the visionary part is primarily exemplified by the little horn and the King of the North in their opposition to genuine worship (8:11-12; 11:31-32, 36-38) and may serve to link these rulers more to Belshazzar than to Nebuchadnezzar and Darius.

The fourth and final point has to do with the genre of the prayers. Within the narratives, the aspect of praise is stressed. Though situations in which Daniel and his friends are pleading with God are present (2:18; 6:12), it is the hymn of thanksgiving that is recorded (2:20-23), and the end result is public confessions or praises by the kings (3:33; 4:32; 6:27-28). In the second part of the book, Daniel’s prayers are prayers of penitence or lament, connected with fasting (9:3-4; 10:2-3), consistent with the cry “how long?” (8:13; 12:7; cf. the delay in 9:19). The presence of these cries in chaps. 8, 9, and 10-12 fits well with the structure proposed by Steinmann. They are elements common to sections D, E, and D’ (see table 18).¹

¹This fourth point may be further illustrated by the content of the poetic passages of the book. In the narrative part, they contain praises and/or reflect prayers (2:20-23, 47; 3:33; 4:32; 6:27-28); in the visions, they are not related to prayers, but are placed towards the end where they epitomize the basic elements or final outcome of the battle between good and evil (8:23-25; 9:24-27; 12:1-3).
In the Progression of the Book

The Book of Daniel is not a narrative, and it is not possible to treat it as such and in a strict sense to detect the basic elements of a plot. But though the book is a complex literary product, composed by many different subgenres, a progression of the events can be detected by paying attention to some important movements on the level of space and time (see tables 19 and 20). By these movements, the tension of the book is accentuated and its most significant questions raised. The purpose of this section is to point out the relationship between the prayers and these movements. As in the investigation of the narratives in chapters 1 and 2 above, the progression or the plot is viewed with three levels in mind: the events as they transpire, the way they are told, and the effect they have on the reader when told.¹

First, the events of the conquest of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon (1:2) and the captivity of the temple vessels and the young Israelites (1:3-7) introduce a spatial movement that leads the reader from Jerusalem to Babylon (see table 19). The narratives of chaps. 1-6 all take place in Babylon.² From the outset, they reveal a struggle between the religions of the two cities (chaps. 1-3). Also the closing narrative (chap. 6), in which the Babylonian empire has been replaced by the Median, contains a clash between two empires, the human domain and the reign of God. The outcome of this struggle may help to strengthen the longing for the eternal kingdom of God (cf. 6:27). But it is the prayers by Daniel (6:11) that explicitly redirect the reader's attention toward Jerusalem.

¹Cf. the literary theory by Genette; see p. 55 above.

²Illustrated from 2:4b with the use of the Aramaic language, so Lacocque (Daniel in His Time, 9-10).
After the scene of universal judgment is presented in chap. 7, the focus from chap. 8 and onwards is on Israel, illustrated by the return to the Hebrew language and by the emphasis on the topic of the sanctuary. In Daniel’s prayer in 9:4b-19 and in the subsequent angelic oracle, the promise of restoration makes Jerusalem the focal point. This comes to the fore with the petition in 9:16c, entreating God to let His “anger and wrath turn back from your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain.” Turning the anger away from Jerusalem implies that God once again looks upon His city with favor, as expressed in the petition in 9:17: “let your face shine over your destroyed sanctuary.”

The events as they transpire bring the reader from Jerusalem to Babylon. The way they are told makes the reader aware of the promised restoration of the kingdom of God (2:44-45; 6:27; 7:27). Identifying in general with the character of Daniel, the hero of the narratives, the reader therefore also naturally identifies with the supplications and the longing expressed in the prayer in 9:4b-19, and turns his eyes toward Jerusalem in expectation.

But in a sense the end is open. Though Jerusalem according to the prophetic promise will be physically restored (9:25), neither Daniel nor the readers reach the future glorious kingdom of Jerusalem. The events lead from Jerusalem to Babylon, and the prayers of chaps. 6 and 9 point back to Jerusalem. But they never arrive there. This point is illustrated by the genre of the prayers and the doxologies in the two sections of the book. The presence of thanksgiving (2:20-23) and praise (3:33; 4:32; 6:27-28) in the narratives implies closure: God has revealed His power, and His intervention has been experienced by men. But the lament and fasting of the visionary part (9:3-19; 10:2-3, 12) indicate that God’s promises have not yet been fulfilled.
### TABLE 19

THE PROGRESSION IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL:
SPATIAL MOVEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Spatial movement: From Jerusalem → Babylon → Jerusalem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>from Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babylon (1:1-3)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Spatial movement: From earth → heaven → earth</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>on earth</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This lack of arrival is further exemplified by another spatial movement within the book (see table 19). This second spatial movement reaches beyond the mere political or geographical boundaries. It is a movement from earth to heaven. Its starting point is the first prayer of the book, the petition in 2:18. Exiled from Jerusalem, Daniel and his friends in crisis turn towards the "God of heaven" in prayer (2:18). The two-way traffic between heaven and earth is central in the narratives of chaps. 2-6 that all speak about divine
intervention in the affairs of human kingdoms. Examples are the appearance of someone like a son of God in the midst of the fiery furnace (3:25) and the protection by the angel of God in the lions’ den (6:23). But it is the prayers that explicitly direct the reader toward heaven. It is significant that when king Nebuchadnezzar finally gives praise and honor to God, he speaks about him as “the King of heaven” (4:34).¹

The vision in chap. 7 leads Daniel himself into the heavenly throne room, and from that moment he is in constant communication with the heavenly world. Angels explain the significance of the visions to him (7:15-27; 8:15-26; 9:20-27; 10:15-12:12), and heavenly beings constitute his prayer fellowship in chaps. 9 and 10. In Dan 10, prayer is the vehicle that takes Daniel into heaven to catch a glimpse behind the scenes of the history of the world. His people on earth are represented in heaven by the figure of Michael (10:21; cf. 7:13). At the time of resurrection, the wise remnant of the people will shine as stars of heaven (12:3). This movement from earth towards heaven serves to modify the implications of the movement from Jerusalem to Babylon and the turning of the attention back toward Jerusalem: the issues are not simply geographical or political. They are spiritual.² In the end, the reader expects a movement from heaven back to earth to establish a kingdom based

¹The expressions “God of heaven” (2:18) and “King of heaven” (4:34) as divine epithets carry a universal connotation that in particular is relevant in the exilic situation. It matters less that God at the present has no earthly kingdom of His own when He in reality is the Lord of all.

²The effect of the references to Jerusalem may strengthen this modification. Besides the initial events of the book (the conquest and the vessels, 1:1 and 5:2), the name of the city Jerusalem is only explicitly mentioned in direct connection with the prayers by Daniel (6:11 and 9:2, 7, 16). None of the angelic explanations in the visionary section refer to the city by name, thereby perhaps implying a hesitant attitude towards the political entity of Jerusalem.
upon spiritual values. Such a reverse movement is indicated in the coming of the stone to earth in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in 2:35, 44-45, (cf. 7:18, 27). Yet, the Hebrew section of the book is open-ended. The kingdom does not arrive. In full accordance, the mood of the prayers is penitence, fasting, and supplications (9:3; 10:2-3).

The chronological movements add to our understanding of the role of the prayers within the structure of the book (see table 20). The book contains two linear sequences that at first may seem to be in conflict. The strict chronological outline of the events in the narratives in chaps. 1-6 is broken in chap. 7. This vision takes the reader back into the time of the Babylonian empire. The outline in the second part of the book is, however, also chronological, with the effect that the two linear sequences overlap.

The narrative sequence begins in chap. 1 in Jehoiakim’s third year (1:1). Chap. 2 is dated to Nebuchadnezzar’s second year (2:1). Though not dated, the narratives in chaps. 3 and 4 take place during his reign, too. The events in chap. 5 happen in Belshazzar’s last year as ruler (5:30), and Daniel is thrown into the lions’ den in the first year of Darius’s

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1The two spatial movements are significant for another issue because they combine the direction “towards Jerusalem” (6:11) and its temple (9:16-18) with the direction towards heaven. In this way, the temple in heaven enters into focus as the temple for the kingdom to come. This may be implied in the cultic references in 8:11-14 with the little horn’s attack at heaven—and in the phrase יִשָּׁר יְשֵׁר in 9:24 for which see further Doukhan (“The Seventy Weeks,” 11-12).

2It is characteristic for the structure of the book that the establishing of the kingdom of God is described in the dreams of chaps. 2 and 7, A and A’ (see table 18), while the Hebrew part of the book never lets the reader reach the final end. It is consistent with this fact that all the praises of the book belong to the narrative section.

3So far, chap. 7 has been understood as the center of the book, belonging in a sense to both narrative and apocalyptic sections as a bridge between the two. The perspectives of language, genre, and narrative aspect have been employed in the study. Chronology is another perspective.
TABLE 20

THE PROGRESSION IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL: TEMPORAL MOVEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of</th>
<th>Babylon</th>
<th>Media/Persia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar</td>
<td>Belshazzar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narratives</td>
<td>1-4: experience in Babylon</td>
<td>5 (last year): judgment of Babylon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving of visions</td>
<td>7-8 (1st and 3rd year): animal kingdoms</td>
<td>9: prayer and angelic oracle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content of visions</td>
<td>2 and 7: from Babylon to God's kingdom</td>
<td>8-9 and 10-12: from Media/Persia to time of the end</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

reign (implied by 6:1). Chap. 6 closes with a reference to Darius and/or Cyrus, and the time-frame of the narratives in 1-6 is thus encapsulated in chap. 1, a chapter that leads us from the time of Jehoiakim to the time of Cyrus (1:21).²


²Likewise, chap. 7 as an introduction (see table 18) may be said to encapsulate the subsequent visions.
The visionary sequence from chap. 7 and onward takes its starting point in the reign of Belshazzar. The visions in chaps. 7 and 8, which reveal scenes of a heavenly judgment of the kingdoms, the great enemy, and the vindication and justification of the saints (cf. 7:18, 22), are both dated to his reign. Thus, they chronologically follow the experience of Nebuchadnezzar in chap. 4, but precede the historical judgment of Belshazzar and the Babylonian empire as told in chap. 5. The effect of this overlapping between the two sequences is that Daniel's study of the prophecies and his prayer of confession in chap. 9 is positioned along with his prayers in chap. 6 and the clash between the earthly and the heavenly kingdom that they provoke. This is consistent with the fact that the events in these two chapters are simultaneous. Chronologically speaking, the prayers in chaps. 6 and 9 therefore function as the point of intersection. Before this point in time, the events take place in the era of the Babylonian empire. After this point in time, the reader through these prayers is invited to look beyond this period, into the future. As a consequence, the time-reference to the third year of Cyrus in 10:1 in the final vision of the book "takes us beyond" the time-frame established in 1:21 and into what may be called a period of waiting. Such a

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1 The dating to 1st and 3rd years is repeated in the visionary section (7:1 and 8:1 speaking about the time of Belshazzar, 9:1 and 10:1 referring to the reign of Darius/Cyrus).

2 For the literary connections between these two chapters, see the treatment of Daniel in prayer in regard to chaps. 6 and 9, respectively. For the significance of chap. 6 in leading into the apocalyptic section of the book, see further Boogaart. Hilton understands chap. 6 as the turning point in the book (100).

3 Goldingay, Daniel, 290. Several commentators have been puzzled by the date, see Sims (16-17). The Old Greek reads the 1st year of Cyrus in 10:1.

4 The understanding above corresponds to the theological interpretation by Doukhan who labels the vision of chaps. 10-12 "A Vision of Waiting" (Daniel: The Vision, 45).
mood of waiting corresponds to the patience of Daniel expressed in his fasting and prayers in 10:2-3. Once again, the book is open-ended.¹

Thus, the chronological markers of the narrative and the visionary sections share a linear sequence. They have different starting points, but while the historical sequence of the narratives reaches a closure with the arrival of Cyrus (6:29, cf. 1:21), the time sequence of the visions moves further. The temporal juxtaposition of the prayers of chaps. 6 and 9 in the very point of intersection has the effect of highlighting the longing for the future kingdom of God that is expressed in these prayers. Both outlines lead into the reign of Cyrus. By moving further into his reign, the last vision of the book (cf. 10:1) reaches the time for the expected return from the exile, the restoration of Jerusalem, and the establishment of the kingdom. Yet, it is not realized.

This leads to another temporal movement within the book. The simple spatial movement from Jerusalem to Babylon and back was deepened by the movement from earth to heaven. In a similar manner, a time movement takes place that is far broader than the one indicated by the historical dates given in the opening of the various chapters. The book brings the reader from the period of captivity in Babylon to the end of the world, from history to eschatology. The vehicles are primarily the dreams of the four empires in chaps. 2 and 7, the only two prophetic outlines in the book that actually arrive in God's eternal kingdom. By doing so in the setting of the local and limited history of Babylon, the book employs the experience of Daniel and his friends during the exile in Babylon as a microcosm in its description of the universal end-time, the macrocosm.² The role of the

¹Or in the words of Fewell, "in the end of Daniel, there is no end" (162).

²In a similar vein, Davies speaks about "Nebuchadnezzar and the exiled Jews" as "both the predecessors and the prototypes of the persecuting monarch Antiochus IV and the
prayers and the doxologies is important to enhance our understanding of this parallel. In the narrative events of chaps. 1-6, the intervention by God is experienced and praised (2:18-23; 3:22-33; 4:31-34; 6:27-28). Readers are thereby ascertained of the divine liberation, and through his historical interference on behalf of both the three friends (3:24-27) and Daniel himself (6:22-23), God confirms that His kingdom is everlasting (6:27, cf. 3:33 and 4:31-32). God's intervention to rescue the citizens of His kingdom during the local, historical exile in Babylon thus becomes the guarantee of the future eschatological kingdom (cf. 2:44-45 and 7:14, 18, 22, 27), the not-yet realized establishment of God's reign so intensely longed for (8:13; 9:19; 12:6).

Summarizing, attention has been paid to several movements within the Book of Daniel as a whole, spatial movements from Jerusalem to Babylon and back and from earth to heaven and back, and chronological movements from the Judean kingdom through the Babylonian kingdom until the reign of Cyrus and from the setting of the exile in Babylon until the end of days. These movements accentuate the basic question of the "plot" of the book: When will the heavenly kingdom of God be established upon earth? In the spatial movements, it is the prayers that explicitly direct the attention toward Jerusalem (6:11) and toward heaven (2:18). In the first temporal movement, the prayers in chaps. 6 and 9 function as the point of intersection: after these prayers we look towards the fulfillment. In the second temporal movement, the praise offered in gratitude for God's historical deliverance in Babylon (2:20-23; 3:28; 6:27-28) strengthens the certainty of God's final eschatological intervention at the time of the end, an intervention hoped for and longed for persecuted Jews of Palestine centuries later" (Daniel, 13).
in prayers of petition and lament (9:4b-19), and in the mood of mourning, fasting, and waiting (9:3; 10:2-3; 12:12).

The Thematical Content

The basic question to be discussed in this section is the thematical relationship between the prayers and the book. The procedure chosen is based upon the previous observations in this chapter regarding the identification of the prayers and their position in the book.

The thanksgiving in 2:20-23 and the lament in 9:4b-19 have been identified as the only recorded prayers of the book. In the wording of these, the themes of the prayers of the book are to be found. As a consequence, the content and context of these two prayers will first be summarized and compared.

Some structural features have been observed that have a bearing upon the thematical relationship between the prayers and the book. These features are due to the book’s unique combination of narratives and visions: the two recorded prayers are positioned in each of the two structural halves of the book. They are both spoken by Daniel, the only person found in prayer in both sections. Moreover, it has been noted above that the two recorded prayers have a complementary function: the thanksgiving in chap. 2 is found within a narrative context that presents the basic philosophy of history in relation to a prophetic dream about the future; the prayer of lament and confession in chap. 9 is reviewing the past history of Israel in the setting of divine visions and revelations. Following the discussion of the themes of the two recorded prayers, the correlation between these themes and the book at large will therefore be pursued with proper attention to its various structural parts.
The Themes of the Recorded Prayers

A detailed exegesis of each of the two recorded prayers of the book has been provided in chapter 1 above. Summarizing, the main themes of the thanksgiving in 2:20-23 are wisdom and power. Possessing wisdom, God gives it to wise men like Daniel whom He entrusts with revelation. Likewise, God delegates power to the earthly kingdoms in the changing times of human history. The prayer in 9:4b-19 is dominated by the theme of covenant, reviewing the past history of Israel and confessing the sins that have led to the present desolations.

A first glance may give the impression that the contents of these two prayers are completely different. Yet, they share some basic themes in relation to three areas: the relationship between God and the pray-er, the topic of wisdom and revelation, and the philosophy of history.

First, though the prayers are “quite different in form and purpose,” James Miller observes a similar attitude in the relationship between God and the pray-er:

A thematic link between chaps. 2 and 9 is the sharp statement of human inadequacy in the presence of God. In chap. 2 Daniel’s prayer and his speech before the king emphasize the inability of humans to discover what only God can reveal (vss. 20-23, 27-28). In chap. 9 Daniel’s prayer criticizes the faithfulness of his own people—God’s people—and asks God to restore them not because they are worthy, but for the sake of God’s own honor (9:14-19). Elsewhere in Daniel such themes are illustrated, but here they are directly expressed.1

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1For the prayer in 2:20-23, see pp. 76-92 for a discussion of its words and themes and pp 92-93 for a summary; for the prayer in 9:4b-19, see pp. 169-183 in regard to the words and themes and p. 183 for a summary.

2James E. Miller, 122.
James Miller here points to the human inadequacy before God and to the honor of God as common denominators for the two prayers. Several features can be added that characterize the person praying. The prayer in chap. 9 contains as an essential element a confession (indicated in the introduction to the prayer in 9:4b by the verb הָדַּא); the pray-er in chap. 2 employs the same verb (2:23) to relate his attitude towards God, an attitude that in both prayers is characterized by humility. In both situations, Daniel is the representative of the people: he links himself to the “fathers” (2:23 and 9:16), and in chap. 2 the purpose of his petition is to save the loyal members of his prayer fellowship (2:17-18, 23), while in chap. 9 he prays to save the people, though sinful (9:5-6, 16, 19). This element of solidarity with “all the people” (9:6, cf. “all Israel” in vss. 7 and 11) is central to the confession in chap. 9.2

Next, the prayers share the important motifs of revelation, wisdom, and prophecy. The thanksgiving speaks in both general and specific terms of revelation (2:22-23), the confession confirms the veracity of past prophecies (9:6, 12), and both prayers are set in the context of divine revelation regarding the future (2:19, 28-30 and 9:23-27). In 2:21 and 23, genuine wisdom is stressed as a prerequisite for receiving revelation, its basic characteristic being the quality of humility that Daniel as the pray-er possesses in both chaps. 2 and 9. Moreover, like the prayer in chap. 2, the prayer in 9:4b-19 and its context underscore the aspect of wisdom: in the past history of Israel, the people could have avenged the desolations by “seeking insight” (הֵיתֶל from the root בָּזָה) from God’s revealed “truth” (9:13); 2

The honor of God is underlined by the reference to the name (יהוה) of God in 2:20 and 9:15, 18, 19; the mentioning of the name of God is unique in the book for these two prayers.

2See the discussion of these expressions on p. 174 above; cf. further pp. 192-194 for the subject of solidarity in the prayer and its context.
in his appeal to Daniel to "know and understand" the prophetic explanation (9:25), Gabriel also employs the hifil of יְשַׁע. Both by his study of the Scriptures (9:1-2) and by his prayer of confession, Daniel is, in a sense, acting like a genuine wise man.

Finally, both prayers are characterized by a deep concern for the philosophy of history, an issue even more prominent than the topic of wisdom. The concept of time is essential in both, the prayer in 2:21 speaking about the consecutive changing of times and periods in history, the prayer in 9:19 underscoring the delay of the time for God's deliverance and restoration. In his prayer in chap. 9, Daniel explains a pattern of history in which (1) the sin of the people (9:5-6) leads to (2) the destruction of the sanctuary (9:16). Facing this situation during (3) the punishment of the exile (9:12), (4) Daniel turns to God in a faithful covenant prayer (9:4b-19) and (5) receives a divine answer that promises restoration and redemption (9:24-27). The prayer in Dan 2:20-23 is placed in a narrow literary context within the first part of the book that shares elements of this pattern of history: (1) the people are given into the hand of the enemy (1:2), (2) the sanctuary is desecrated (1:2), and (3) the people are taken into exile (1:3-7). During this captivity, Daniel and his friends are threatened by the death decree of Nebuchadnezzar (2:13), but (4) as they turn to God in their predicament, (5) they receive a divine answer that reveals the establishment of the kingdom of God.

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1 Cf. the discussion on p. 187 above.

2 For the possible presence of a similar pattern of historical events in the vision in chap. 8, see the discussion on pp. 201-211 above.

3 For the close contextual links between chaps. 1 and 2, see the discussion on pp. 106-110 above.

4 The sentence most likely implies that the event was caused by the sin of the people, see the discussion on p. 107 above.
The focus of the prayer in 2:20-23 is universal history; in the prayer in 9:4b-19 it is God's dealings with His people, concisely expressed by the covenant theme (9:4). This major thematical difference between the two prayers is, however, not contradictory, but due to their individual purpose. Both prayers emphasize the sovereignty of God as the Lord of history.

Thematical Correlations between the Prayers and the Book

The two major thematical clusters of the prayers center around, on the one hand, wisdom and revelation, on the other hand, history, power, and the sovereignty of God, but the prayers may also by themselves imply the feeling of either God's presence or His absence. In this section, these basic themes of the prayers will be followed throughout the book in relationship to its structural parts.

The Prayers and the Narrative Section

It is a unique feature for the book that the kings are found in relation to prayer only in the narrative part. The prayer by Daniel in 2:20-23 and the royal proclamations in the narratives (2:47; 3:28-29; 3:31-33; 4:31-32, 34; 6:27-28) have been studied in detail in chapters 1 and 2 above. They are very closely related. They are all expressed in poetry, and all the public decrees and the doxologies by the kings mirror Daniel's prayer of thanksgiving in vocabulary, forms, and themes. Thematically, they share the emphasis on God's sovereignty and His eternal kingdom. The doxologies by Nebuchadnezzar in chap. 4

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1For detailed comparisons between the thanksgiving by Daniel in 2:20-23 and the royal proclamations, see chapter 2: for 2:46-47 in particular, see pp. 235-236; for 3:26-29, see pp. 238-240; for 3:31-33 and 4:31-34, see pp. 265; for 6:26-28, see p. 282-283.
like the prayer in chap. 2 also point to God as the creator (4:32, cf. 2:22). In comparison.

Daniel’s hymn of praise places a specific emphasis on the theme of revelation.¹

These poetic passages are also unique in the narrative section of the book because they are the only explicit theological statements of the truths that the narrative events illustrate. As expressed by Soeliso:

All the four poems of Dan 1-6, and the shortened doxological poem as well, have similar linguistic elements, form, and function. They bear close resemblance to the consistent forms of the Book of Psalms, and function as the theological summary of the main thrust of the narrative texts. Thus they were definitely intentional, and so chosen by the writer and/or editor.²

In the investigation of these passages in chapters 1 and 2 above, the veracity of Soeliso’s statement has been confirmed. The themes of the prayers and the doxologies of the narrative section are all precisely to the point of the individual stories in which they occur.

But they also help to underline that a thematical development takes place in the sequence of the narratives. This may be exemplified by the basic theme of power and kingship. In chap. 3, Nebuchadnezzar reacts against the previous dream revelation of chap. 2 that discloses the temporary nature of his kingdom and reveals the true divine origin of his power. Yet, by rescuing His servants, God demonstrates His power. The judgment and restoration experienced by the king in chap. 4 accentuate God’s heavenly dominion over earthly regimes—and the doom of Babylon and Belshazzar in chap. 5 confirms it. In the last

¹"The doxology in 2:20-23 stands apart from the others because of its greater emphasis on the theme of revelation . . ." (Collins, Daniel, 35).

²Soeliso, 433. He regards 2:20-23; 3:31-33; 4:31-32; and 6:26-28 as the major poems; 2:47 as the shortened one (432).
narrative in chap. 6, the eternal dominion of the future kingdom of God is implied by the praying of Daniel toward Jerusalem (6:11).

Not only history, power, and kingship, but also the theme of wisdom and revelation penetrates the prayers and the doxologies as well as the narratives and is developed throughout these. In chaps. 2, 4, and 5, God reveals His secrets to Daniel, the genuine wise man (cf. 2:27, 30; 4:6, 16; 5:11-16). Divine interventions in human history are further revealed by the liberation of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego from the fiery furnace in chap. 3 and Daniel from the lions' den in chap. 6.

Towner has argued that the poetic passages "should be seen as fulfilling an important role in the didactic purpose of the canonical text of Dan 1-6." Two important elements are emphasized by Towner: the combined function of the poems and the theme of theodicy, linking the poetic passages to the Old Testament at large:

Examination of the text as it stands in its final, canonical form has shown that text to be essentially coherent. In fact, it is only when the several parts are seen working together as a whole that the purpose for which the text was originally assembled becomes clear. I have argued that 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.2

The present research has basically confirmed Towner's view on these points. The thematical and phraseological connection to the learned psalmody and to some parts of Job (especially chap. 12) has been shown for Daniel's praise in 2:20-23 in particular.3 Daniel's acknowledgment of the divine wisdom and power, of God as the revealer of wisdom and the giver of power and as the God of creation and Lord of history, corresponds to basic

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1 Towner, "Poetic Passages," 326.

2 Ibid.

3 For more details, see the section on the words and themes of the prayer of Dan 2:20-23 on pp. 76-92 above with a summary on pp. 92-93.
themes in the Old Testament at large and serves, as so often in the Psalms, to defend the righteousness of God amidst the human experience of suffering and defeat.\textsuperscript{1} In comparison with the Old Testament in general, the positioning of Daniel’s prayer and the royal doxologies within narrative events happening in a foreign and hostile country adds a more universalistic element to this theme of theodicy.\textsuperscript{2}

In light of the content of the lament in Dan 9:4b-19, the theme of power, kingship, and history binds the narratives to the prayers in several other ways. A common pattern of historical events regarding Israel’s exile has in the previous section been discerned between the prayer in Dan 9 and the context of the prayer in Dan 2, emphasizing how Israel has been given into the hands of the enemy and led into captivity. The focus from chap. 2 and onwards is primarily on the world empires and universal history, but also here the prayer in chap. 9 provides a broader explanation of the development of events. The content and the context of Daniel’s prayer in chap. 9, dealing with Israel, follow a pattern of judgment and restoration for the kingdoms that in the narratives of the first part of the book is illustrated by the course of events (see table 21).

When Belshazzar, and the kingdom that he symbolizes, meets his judgment, God has already been at work through several phases. Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar have received a number of warnings with Daniel as the agent, some in general and philosophical terms

\textsuperscript{1}Besides the discussion in chapter 1 above, one such example is Ps 73, treated from this perspective by Martin Buber ("The Heart Determines: Psalm 73," in \textit{Theodicy in the Old Testament}, ed. James L. Crenshaw, Issues in Religion and Theology 4 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press; London: SPCK, 1983], 109-118) and by James L. Crenshaw (\textit{A Whirlpool of Torment: Israelite Traditions of God as an Oppressive Presence}, Overtures to Biblical Theology [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984], 93-109). Both these works are in particular concerned with the issue of theodicy.

\textsuperscript{2}Towner, "Poetic Passages," 324-325.
(chap. 2), some on a more personal level (chap. 4). God has repeatedly shown His 

willingness to forgive (chs. 3 and 4), but when continuing in stubborn and conscious 

rebellion (chap. 5), the kingdoms face the heavenly verdict (chs. 4 and 5). In this way, 

the pattern of information through divine messengers, repeated sins, and divine forgiveness, 

and judgment when the sins have reached their limit,\(^1\) is clearly established. It is significant 

that exactly the same pattern of events is part of chap. 9.\(^2\) The prayer retells the history of 

\(^1\)Note how this thought also is verbally expressed in 8:23 “when the sins (sinners) 
have filled their measure.”

\(^2\)Gooding has also noted this similarity in sequence between chap. 9’s description of 

Israel’s sin, the warnings received, the destruction of Jerusalem and the promised 

restoration, and chap. 4’s description of the experience of Nebuchadnezzar. He finds it to 

be one of many arguments that supports the understanding “that the Book of Daniel is a 

literary unity in which every constituent part has been carefully written and deliberately 

positioned in relation to its immediate context and to the book as a whole so that the book
divine messengers to Israel (Moses and the prophets, vss. 6, 10), of repeated sins and forgiveness, and of the calamity brought upon the people as a result (vss. 11-13). In the prayer, this pattern is applied to the people of Israel, but in the narratives, it is implemented in a more universalistic manner to the pagan empires. The major difference is that the angelic oracle (9:24-27) that follows the prayer in chap. 9 contains a promise of future restoration to the faithful community of God. Such a promise is not part of any message to the pagan empires.

This parallel may help to illuminate further why the narrative section emphasizes the praise and thanksgiving. The sequence of events used by God in His judgment of the nations is patterned upon the method He has been using towards His people in history as retold in the prayer in chap. 9. In the narratives, the basis for the judgment of the kingdoms is outlined, and God's future reign is praised in prayer (2:20-23) and doxology (e.g., 4:32, 34). In the prayer in chap. 9, a similar basis for the past judgment of Israel is given, but God's kingdom has not yet arrived, and His future dominion is only longed for. The praises in the narrative part ascertain the yet-future judgment of the kingdoms and, by way of the parallel, they also serve to assure the reader that the final vindication of the saints will come true.

The Prayers and the Apocalyptic Vision in Chap. 7

The visionary part of the book is introduced by chap. 7. In light of the previous discussion of its literary structure, the vision of chap. 7 is of particular interest for the study of the prayers for two reasons: first, the chapter is the structural parallel of chap. 2 in which shall achieve a carefully balanced presentation of its message" (Gooding, 66).
we find the only recorded prayer of the narrative section (2:20-23), and second, the nature of chap. 7 as the hinge of the book has as a consequence that the consecutive development of the themes in the narratives, stated explicitly in the prayers and the doxologies, leads to a climax in the vision about the four beasts and the heavenly judgment.  In this section, therefore, the contribution of the content of the prayer in 2:20-23 to the literary and thematic parallel between chaps. 2 and 7 will first be discussed; next, the theological developments from the prayers and doxologies within the narratives into the vision in chap. 7 will be pursued.

The foundation for establishing the structural parallel between chaps. 2 and 7 is generally regarded as the scheme of the four world empires, beginning with Babylon and ending with a kingdom of iron, succeeded by the final judgment and the arrival of God's kingdom, a unique feature for these two chapters in the book.

With regard to chap. 2, this parallel is often based exclusively on the dream-report. But the prayer by Daniel in 2:20-23 that epitomizes the basic philosophy of the chapter also contains several important elements that recur in chap. 7. The prayer explains the fall of the kingdoms: God removes (from הוראת) the kings (2:21b). This verb is used in chap. 7 to denote how God takes away the dominion of the empires (in vs. 12 from the beasts in general, in vs. 26 from the little horn), and to indicate that the dominion of the Son of Man will never pass away (vs. 14). The prayer also accentuates the fact that God possesses and

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1 In the articles quoted above when discussing the relationship between the prayers and the narratives, Soeliso and Towner deal almost exclusively with chaps. 1-6. The concern here is the book as a whole.

2 For more details, see Lenglet (171-180), Gooding (58), and David (123-143).

3 In his groundbreaking article, Lenglet makes no reference to the narrative part of chap. 2 as such.
gives (יָדַע) the power (2:20b, 23b), whether to wise men or to the earthly kingdoms. This verb is employed repeatedly in chap. 7 to underscore the divine leading of history: the beasts were granted power (vss. 4, 6, 12, 14, 25, 27). Finally, the prayer praises God as being in charge of time (2:21a): he changes (from times (תֵּמַנְי) and seasons (פסח)) In the vision in chap. 7, one of the highlights is the attempt by the little horn to change (from) the holy times (vs. 25, plural of עָשָׂר). The philosophy of history1 contained in Daniel’s prayer of thanksgiving is the basis for the view of history and the final judgment presented by chap. 7.

The themes of the narratives in chaps. 1-6 are stated explicitly only in the prayers and the doxologies. Turning to the development of these themes in the progress of the narrative events as they are leading into the central chap. 7, some direct verbal links to the prayers and doxologies of the narratives should first be noted. In the doxologies by Nebuchadnezzar and Darius in 3:33, 4:31, and 6:27, the word for “dominion” or “rule” (מְדִינָת) describes God’s Lordship in comparison with the human dominions. This noun occurs repeatedly in chap. 7. The oppressive dominion (מְדִינָת) exercised by the fourth beast in its little-horn phase will be removed (וֹדֵע, vs. 26) forever (כ-ָּל תָּנִי, resembling the doxology in 6:27). God has entrusted the various kingdoms with such dominion (vs. 6), but after the heavenly judgment, it will be given to the Son of Man (vs. 14) and to the saints (vs. 27). A similar verbal connection is present with the word for “kingdom” (מלך), employed in the doxologies in 3:33; 4:31; and 6:27 to describe God’s eternal kingdom. In chap. 7 we meet it in vss. 14 and 27, referring to the kingdom of the Son of Man, entrusted to the saints.

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1The importance of the prayer for the philosophy of history in chap. 2 is emphasized by Jones (“Ideas of History,” 258).
Other important elements from the narratives reach their climax and consummation in the vision in chap. 7. The kingdoms are presented as beasts, in contrast to the Son of Man. The narrative about Nebuchadnezzar's madness and transformation into a beast (chap. 4) gives a premonition of what any human ruler will become the moment he in pride attempts to be a god. But an even stronger link to the apocalyptic visions is found in the story about Daniel in the lions' den in chap. 6, the narrative that immediately precedes the visions. This connection is of major importance for the present study because the main topic of chap. 6 is the prayer life of the faithful servant of God, Daniel.

The apocalyptic nature of this narrative with its "trial of the night" (6:19) is already noted.1 Two other features strengthen the bond to chap. 7.2 The first is the close relationship between kingdom and law. In the narrative plot in chap. 6, the tension between the unchangeable law (הָרִים) of the Medes and Persians that cannot pass away (vss. 9, 13, 16) and the law (רַם) of the God of Daniel (vs. 6) concerning worship and prayer is a major issue. The verbs used for "change" or "pass away" are תָּמַש (vss. 9, 13, 16) and יָשָׁב (vs. 9), verbs closely linked to the temporary nature of the kingdoms by their use in the prayer by Daniel in 2:21a. In the description of the arrogant ambitions of the little horn in the vision in chap. 7, the key phrase in vs. 25 combines several of these essential concepts by saying...

1See chapter 1, pp. 143-146.

2A literary association between the two chapters is also created by the use of the verb עִבָּד, "ascend," in the closing of chap. 6 and the opening of chap. 7. In 6:24 the king orders Daniel to be "lifted up" (הָפָל) from the lions which he consequently is (הֹפָל). In 7:3 it describes how the beasts "came up" (עִבָּד) from the sea, the first of them likened to a lion. The morphologically unusual forms of this verb in 6:24 are due to two factors: in the hafel and hofal conjugations, (1) the lamed is assimilated with the samekh, and (2) gemination of samekh may occur by nasalation, i.e., by adding the letter nun. See Rosenthal (§ 172, 54); Vogts (118-119); and Segert (Altaramäische Grammatik, 3.7.5.2.1, 113-114).
that it intends to "change (from הָעָלָה) holy times (from יוֹם) and law (דְּרָשָׁה),"¹ thereby implying that the attack by the little horn concentrates on the issues of worship and time.

The second major feature connecting chaps. 6 and 7 is found in the description of Daniel's prayer life and of the worship presented in chap. 7. The verb.strictEqual("serve") repeatedly describes Daniel's relationship to God (6:17, 21; cf. its use in 3:17, 28 in parallel with崇ד, "to worship") and is thus closely associated with his prayers. It recurs twice in the vision in chap. 7: in the future kingdom "all people, nations, and languages" (نسي נָאֲמָה רֵעַשָׁה; cf. the royal orders or decrees in 6:27 and 3:5, 29) shall serve the Son of Man (vs. 14), and "all dominions (from מְלָカード) shall serve" the kingdom of the saints (vs. 27). Thematically, the term is also linked to the service rendered to God by the innumerable angelic hosts in 7:10 (here the verb служит is used). The function of these links between Daniel's praying in chap. 6 and the worship envisioned in chap. 7 is twofold: first, it connects Daniel with the present heavenly world, a theme that is enlarged upon in the subsequent chapters; second, it strengthens the notion that Daniel as a man of prayer is already a member of the future eschatological kingdom.

These observations make it evident that the themes of the prayers and the royal doxologies of the narrative section, when viewed in their combined function, reach a climax in "the hinge" of the book, chap. 7, both in relation to the structure of the Book of Daniel as a whole, and in relation to the progressive development of the theological themes of the narrative part.

The close connection between the character of Daniel and the people of God also provides a link between the vision in chap. 7 and the prayer of confession of sin in Dan

¹For this link between 2:21 and 7:25, see also Lacocque (Daniel in His Time, 66).
9:4b-19. In the narrative part, the people in exile are represented by Daniel and his friends. As a man of prayer and worship, Daniel foreshadows the serving community of 7:10 and 14 and already belongs to the eschatological people of the Highest (7:22, 27). This question of the people of God is central to the prayer, and the identity and the fate of the people are important issues in the visionary part of the book.

The Prayers and the Visionary Section

The previous section was concerned with chap. 7, a major part of the visionary section. The prayer by Daniel in 9:4b-19 has been studied in detail in chapter 1 above and placed not only in its narrow context within chap. 9, but also against the background of the preceding vision in chap. 8. The study has pointed out several thematic links to its setting in the visionary part of the book: a common pattern of historical events and their cause has been discerned in chaps. 8 and 9, and a parallel has been observed between Daniel's fasting and praying in chaps. 9 and 10 and his subsequent reception of an angelic oracle (chaps. 10-12).

But also the themes of the recorded prayer from the narrative part (2:20-23) are essential for the visionary section of the book. The idea of history expressed in this prayer

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1See pp. 200-211 above.

2See pp. 229-230 above.

3Towner remarks on the thematic relationship between the two parts of the book that "there is an interesting similarity in theological interest between the narrative/prayer sequences of Dan 1-6 and the apocalyptic visions of Dan 7-12. The apocalyptic scheme, with its stress on the penultimate evil to be overcome in the day when God's hegemony is ultimately established and universally recognized, can be viewed as another vast example of theodicy-logic. The literary vehicles for the apocalyptic form of the argument are, of course, different; however, the arguments themselves are the same. Though reaching it by different literary-formal routes, both halves of the Book of Daniel are witnesses to one and the same faith: soon there will be a vindication of God's ways with evil which will be
with its divine delegation of power—"removing and installing kings" (2:21b)—functions as
the presupposed philosophy of the prophetic outlines of the coming kingdoms in both chaps.
7, 8, and 11. As in the narrative in chap. 2, the divine sovereignty in history does not
abrogate the choice and the freedom of the individual. The seeming determinism of the
apocalyptic dream in chap. 2 is modified by the fact that the prayers by Daniel and his
friends influence the outcome of events. Likewise, the prayers by Daniel in the visionary
part remind the reader that though the final result of the history of the world empires is
decided, the fate of the individual is not. The uncertainty at the very end of the book
(12:13) may serve to illustrate this point, as may the general shift in mood from praise in the
narrative part to lament in the visionary section. This change in mood functions as an
exhortation to the reader to study the visions (12:4), stay faithful (12:10), and wait in
patience (12:12), in short, to become a wise man.

The topic of the people of God is therefore, in the visionary part, naturally described
in conjunction with the concept of wise men. The insightful maskilim (cf. 1:4 and also the
wise men of 2:22, Aramaic חכמים) of the people (11:35) will be purified through tribulations
and in the end-time be ready for the final glory (12:3, 10). The revelation referred to in the
prayer in 2:22 corresponds in the second part of the book to the very giving of the visions to
Daniel, and the divine presence experienced in the prayer of thanksgiving in the narrative
unmistakable the world over and which will bring the hated powers to their knees in
profound submission—to the everlasting benefits of Israel's saints" (Towner, "Poetic
Passages," 325-326).

1Jones underscores that the Book of Daniel is concerned with a concept of history that
includes "temporal categories and earthly political realities" which according to the prayer in
2:21 "are considered to be firmly under God's control" (Jones, "Ideas of History," 258).
section is longed for during God's absence in the visionary part, as the time for the establishing of His kingdom approaches.¹

**Thematrical Summary**

Spoken by its main character and being the only two recorded prayers in the book, the thanksgiving in 2:20-23 and the lament in 9:4b-19 in a special way epitomize the basic theological statements of the book. One of their most important functions is to help link the Book of Daniel to the Old Testament tradition and theology. Narrative parallels are often drawn between Daniel and the wisdom literature,² and thematic links are discerned to the prophets, especially Isaiah,³ yet the apocalyptic outlook of the book often places it on the fringe of Old Testament theology.⁴ But it has been shown in the exegesis of the prayers in 2:20-23 and 9:4b-19 that the vocabulary and the forms as well as basic theological statements of these prayers are rooted in what is generally understood as the theological core

¹To these features, explicitly mentioned in the prayers, could be added some elements in the narrative background for the prayers of the first section which may create associations or form patterns similar to the events prophesied in the visions: the idea of purification through tribulation and wrath (chap. 3:13, 19; cf. 11:34-36), the sequence of a definite time period followed by testing/investigation and/or vindication (examples are the "trial of the night" in chap. 6 followed by deliverance—or the examinations in chap. 1 of ten days, vss. 14-15, and 3 years, vss. 18-20; cf. 12:7-10 and maybe 8:13-14).


of the Old Testament, and they thus serve to connect the theology of the book to the themes of the Old Testament at large.

The major theological issue in the Book of Daniel is often understood as God's sovereignty or "the kingdom of God." Important themes such as the idea of history, the identification and nature of the people of God, the vindication of God's reign and the final judgment, and the presence and power of God can be understood in connection with this basic concept.

In juxtaposing the theological statements contained in the prayers and doxologies of the book along its two basic structural parts, various aspects of the theme of the kingdom appear more clearly. Within the narrative section, the poetic praises by Daniel and by the kings accentuate God's eternal dominion, as it is illustrated also in the events of the stories. The comparison between the prayers of the narratives and the vision in chap. 7, the "hinge of the book," brings the two earthly antagonists into focus: it highlights the attack on the kingdom of God both throughout history and in the eschatological future, but it also underlines that the loyal worshiper in his (or her) present prayer life already belongs to the kingdom to come. Compared thematically with the narratives of the first part of the book, the prayer in 9 illustrates the judgment of the earthly kingdoms; compared with the visions

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1 Or the theological "constants"; cf. Fretheim, 25. See also the summaries of the investigations of these prayers in chapter 1 above, for 2:20-23, pp. 114-115, for 9:4b-19, pp. 223-224.

2 Concluding his study, Towner, "Poetic Passages," remarks "that the Book of Daniel ought to be seen more clearly in the light of the 'normative' OT tradition than has often been the case," 325. Contra von Rad who, regarding the prayer in Dan 9 as a "secondary interpolation," writes that "in fact, the traditions connected with the patriarchs, Exodus, or Zion all seem to lie quite outside Daniel's mental world" (2:308-309).

3 So, for instance, Goldingay (Daniel, 330), with a reference to J. Boehmer, Reich Gotes und Menschensohn im Buch Daniel (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899), 16-17.
of the second part of the book, the prayer by Daniel in 2:20-23 illuminates the philosophy of
history that will lead to the final establishing of the kingdom.

In the Book of Daniel, however, the theme of God's sovereignty is also linked to
another major issue, the issue of revelation and wisdom. Just as God is delegating His
power to the kingdoms throughout history, He is revealing His truth to the genuine wise
men. This correlation between wisdom and power is explicitly stated in the words of the
first prayer of the book (2:21-22) and henceforth illustrated in the narrative events as well as
in the apocalyptic dreams and visions. Prayer plays an important role in this process. It is
because of Daniel's humble and constant prayer life that he remains a genuine wise man and
lives in a relationship with God that makes him receptive to the divine revelations.
Therefore it is due to his prayers that the eternal dominion of God is ascertained: his prayer
life leads to the deliverance from the lions' den, and it inspires Darius to spend the night
fasting (6:19) and in the final end to praise God and His everlasting kingdom (6:27-28).
Moreover, it is the prayers of Daniel (2:18-19; 9:23; 10:12) that call forth the divine
explanation of the history to come.

The Depiction of the Characters

In the Book of Daniel, all major characters are in some way involved in prayer and
can be analyzed in light of their relation to prayer. The role of these characters in relation
to prayer is consistent with their role both in the individual narratives in which they appear
and in the book at large.

1Exceptions are some minor characters, such as the court officials Ashpenaz (1:3, 9-10) and his guard (1:11) and Arioch (2:14-15, 24-25). The main characters are Daniel and the gentile kings. Other characters include Daniel's three friends, the sages of the royal
court, the officials of Babylon, and the ministers and the satraps of Darius's administration.
In his two recorded prayers, Daniel mentions wise men (2:21) and prophets (9:2, 6, 10), respectively, the latter group as divine spokesmen to the people of Israel and its various subgroups (9:6, 7, 8). The references to these two major groups correspond to their position in each of the two halves of the book and add to the complementary aspect of the two recorded prayers, positioned in each half of the book. In the narratives, Daniel is, as a genuine wise man, contrasted with the sages of Babylon (especially in chaps. 2, 4, and 5). The mentioning of the prophets is unique for chap. 9, and prophets never appear as characters in the book.\(^1\)

The minor characters involved in situations of prayer appear exclusively in the narrative section. Of these, the friends of Daniel are the most important. They are praying (2:18) as Daniel’s supporting group or prayer fellowship, they are directly referred to in the recorded prayer of Daniel (2:23), and their refusal to worship the golden image sets the events in chap. 3 in motion. Afterwards they disappear from the book, but their importance for the prayers is consistent with their role in the narratives.

The various gentile groups are primarily described in their relation to prayer for the purpose of contrast. The sage’s lack of contact with their gods (2:11) is placed opposite Daniel’s and his friends’ genuine communication with the God of heaven (2:18-23). The enforced worship by the officials of Babylon in chap. 3 both contrasts them with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego and accentuates that they behave like a group, not as individuals making personal choices. The satraps and ministers in chap. 6 have no personal relation to prayer, but make an attempt to use it as a means to gain power, in contrast to Daniel and his

\(^1\)Except, it could be said, for Daniel himself whose apocalyptic visions constitute the bulk of the second part of the book and contain prophetic forecasts.
friends who pray to God or refuse to pray to any other god independent of the consequences of their choice.

The Gentile Kings

The kings in prayer have been studied in depth in chapter 2. This section will summarize the findings with regard to the depiction of the characters of the world rulers by pointing to two major observations and some of their consequences.

First, whenever we meet the kings in situations involving or implying prayer, they reflect Daniel. The themes and wording of both Nebuchadnezzar’s public declarations in chaps. 2 and 3 and his doxologies in chap. 4 resemble Daniel’s prayer of thanksgiving in 2:20-23. Darius’s fasting (6:19) corresponds in the structure of chap. 6 to Daniel’s prayer (6:11) and his final public proclamation (6:27-28) is verbally closely linked to Nebuchadnezzar’s doxologies (3:32 and 4:32, 34) and thematically to Daniel’s poem of praise (2:20-23). Belshazzar’s praise to his pagan gods (5:4) is performed in deliberate opposition to these hymns. The major effect of this relationship between the doxologies and the prayer of Daniel is to accentuate Daniel as the example of prayer from whom the kings learn. A similar effect is achieved by never recording the words of the kings in prayer, even when the narratives, as in chaps. 4 and 6, imply that the kings are in fact praying to God.

It is worth noting that the wording of the public royal proclamations all in detail are mirroring the narratives in which they are found. The effect of this phenomenon is not only to link them even more strongly to their immediate context, it is also part of the depiction of the characters of the kings. They are gentiles. They do not share a knowledge of the Old Testament liturgic tradition or hymnic vocabulary with Daniel, as reflected in his recorded
prayers. Thus, whereas the content of their decrees, with their acknowledgment of God, may sound surprising from the mouth of gentile rulers, the wording of these decrees are, within the framework of the narratives themselves, quite natural.

Second, the kings undergo a development in their relation to prayer within the narrative section of Daniel. At first, Nebuchadnezzar only reluctantly recognizes the wisdom of God and His sovereignty over history (2:46-47). The king reacts in response to the fact of the interpretation, but pays no attention to its actual content. Next, he in defiance opposes (chap. 3) the divine interpretation of history that has been given the reader from the very beginning (1:2) and which has been further elaborated by Daniel in his interpretation of the dream (2:37-38). By the events the king is forced to issue a public declaration (3:28-29). Only after a dramatic personal experience does he finally change into a man of praise, acknowledging the divine dominion over human affairs (4:34), and responding properly to the divine activities by turning to God in humble prayer (4:34). His successor, Belshazzar, rebels against this conclusion (cf. 5:2, 13) and receives his judgment as a result. In the period of a new kingdom, the character of Darius ends up not only being willing to acknowledge and publicly praise God as did Nebuchadnezzar in chap. 4, but also unselfishly prays on behalf of Daniel and thereby in behalf of the people that Daniel represents.

This development of the personal characters of the kings in the narrative adds to the links between the narrative and the visionary part of the book. Several scholars have for a variety of reasons stumbled over the seeming discrepancy between the at times favorable depiction of the gentile kings in the narratives and the completely negative description of the little horn in the visions.¹ It is evident that the portrayal of the kings does not give exact

¹An example is Humphreys ("A Life-Style," 223), who finds an unsolvable tension as he understands the visions to speak about Daniel in the narrative section as being loyal to
historical examples of the great future enemy. But in revealing the pattern for the divine judgment, the narratives prepare the readers for eschatological times, and if not likened to Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, the little horn or the king of the North may be so to king Belshazzar.¹

Daniel, the Pray-er

Daniel is the only person in the book who is recorded as praying in both its halves, the narrative and the visionary part. His prayers thus belong to the most important features that bind the two together. The two complementary aspects of example and representative characterize Daniel as a pray-er.

As the man of prayer, he is the example who teaches and inspires gentile kings also to praise God. It is interesting that we are not given the words of the more selfishly motivated prayers that he is praying when his own life is at stake, neither when facing Nebuchadnezzar’s death decree (2:18) nor when spending the night amidst the lions (6:19). This fact helps to accentuate his role as a model. The humility displayed by Daniel in his words and acts of praying further serves to present him as such. It is significant for Daniel’s attitude in prayer that, from the very beginning, in contrast to the kings, he is responding not only to the fact of God’s revelation, but also to the very content of the dreams and visions. Thus, by praying, he acknowledges not only God’s interventions in his

"the same monarchs and nations" that in the apocalyptic section are seen "as oppressive and condemned in the divine plan."

¹One specific text in the oral prophecy of 11 hints at the similarity. 11:38 tells how the king of the North honors (from the Hebrew חרב) the "god of the strongholds" with among other things gold and silver and thus creates an association to king Belshazzar who according to 5:23 did not honor (from the Aramaic הוהי) God, but instead praised the gods of gold, silver, iron, etc. Zdravko Stefanović finds parallels between Belshazzar in chap. 5 and the little horn in chaps. 7-8 ("Thematic Links Between the Historical and the Prophetic Sections of Daniel," AUSS 27 [1989]: 126).
His role as a representative is developed throughout the book. In the immediate context, in his thanksgiving in 2:20-23, he first of all represents his close prayer fellowship, the three friends whose lives are also at stake. Receiving not only wisdom, but also power from God (gebûrâh, 2:23). Daniel becomes a representative of God's kingdom. The fact that his prayers in 6:11 are directed towards Jerusalem suggests that he is praying on behalf of his people, an indication that is supported by the temporal juxtaposition of chaps. 6 and 9 (see table 20). In the long prayer of confession in 9:4b-19, his function as an intercessor becomes explicit. Praying as a representative of Israel in chaps. 9 and 10, his prayers are cultic and eschatological. For the understanding of the function of prayer, it is important to note that this representative role of Daniel, such an important feature in the book, is known to us only because of his prayers.

By the previous positioning of the prayers in the progression of events within the Book of Daniel, several movements have been seen to enhance the understanding of the way the characters are depicted. The book contains yet another movement. It is found on the level of characters, and concerns the person Daniel. In the narrative section, he is the divinely appointed interpreter of royal dreams and visions, the wise maššîl (1:4, 17). In the prophetic part of the book, his role is reversed. As the hero of the stories in chaps. 1-6, the figure of Daniel functions as a model for the reader, his prayer life being an integral part of

\textsuperscript{1}The movement is exemplified by the change in narrative aspect, from 3\textsuperscript{rd} to 1\textsuperscript{st} person.

\textsuperscript{2}Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego share this function in the narrative in chap. 3.
the example and intended as an exhortation.¹ The movement from wise man, the interpreter of the royal dreams, to the receiver of visions in need of angelic explanation may be significant in two ways. Both are concerned with the effect upon the reader, and both are related to the prayers.²

First, the movement discloses the human vulnerability of Daniel. He may also be troubled (7:28; 8:27). His wisdom is limited. Maintaining the identification with Daniel from the preceding narratives, the reader may now be attached to the narrator—the "I"—in a more subjective manner.³ Daniel fights with God.⁴ His struggles, his longings, and his problems are made explicit to us not least because of his praying. His supplications in 9:15-19 and his long fasting and praying in chap. 10 reveal the core of his predicament.⁵ But

¹As expressed by Shalom Paul ("Daniel," The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion, ed. R. J. Zwi Werblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997], 186): "All of these stories (Dan 1-6) offer a paradigm for Jews living in the Diaspora, showing that a person can maintain complete fidelity to his religion against the religious demands of pagan rulers."

²Beate Ego makes the interesting observation from the history of interpretation that the rabbis of Judaism in general have been most concerned with the ethical aspect and Daniel as the pious example, while Daniel in Christian circles to a higher degree has been seen in relation to eschatology as the end-time prophet ("Daniel und die Rabbinen," Judaica 51 [1995]: 18-33).

³Somewhat similar conclusions regarding the reader is drawn by Davies (Daniel, 125), Fewell (158-159), and Sims (16-17).

⁴In discussing the figure of Daniel (Daniel in His Time, 182-198), Lacocque rightly remarks that if we only knew Daniel from "Daniel B (the visionary part), Daniel would appear unremarkably pale, almost totally disappearing behind a message that he would merely record for our instruction" (183). Conversely, it should be realized that if we had only Daniel A (the narrative part), we would tend to see Daniel simply as a hero, and we would miss his feeling of despair in his attempts to understand, and the intensity of his spiritual struggle as illuminated especially in the prayer in 9:4b-19.

⁵Lacocque naturally compares the narratives about Daniel as a wise man with "popular hero tales such as the Joseph novella, the Book of Esther, the story of Ahikar, and so forth" (Daniel in His Time, 185). The unique feature characterizing Daniel in
second, the movement may help the reader towards another role in the process of identification. In the narratives, the readers are encouraged to be like Daniel, the hero. Maintaining the identification with Daniel in his capacity as a wise man, the reader in the prophetic visions of Daniel himself is urged to take on the role assigned to Daniel in the narrative part of the book and becomes wise interpreters of the visions of Daniel, in the same way that Daniel has been the interpreter of the dreams of the kings. This is explicitly expressed by the term משלי (maskilim, "wise men") in 1:4 describing Daniel and his friends, but in 12:3, 10 denoting the faithful and insightful at the end of the days, having been purified through the tribulation (cf. 11:33, 35). The "knowledge" of Daniel's prophecies that these wise men are said to obtain is described by the term עשה, a term that in full consistency with this understanding is employed in the beginning of the book, characterizing the four young Jews in 1:4 (cf. the similar Aramaic words used for the wise men in Daniel's prayer in 2:21).

The movements within the Book of Daniel as a whole on the level of space and time (see tables 19 and 20) take the readers from the microcosm in the setting of the exile in Babylon until the macrocosm in the end of days. In light of these movements, the shift in the narrative aspect between the two parts of the book and the change in the role of the reader in his identification with Daniel suggest another important message of the book: the wise men of the end-time are to reflect the character of Daniel and his friends as depicted in the narratives.

comparison with these figures is his praying.
God, the Addressee

In the Book of Daniel, the prayers help to describe God in several ways. First, the various communicative elements of the prayers are means to characterize God. In the recorded prayers (2:20-23 and 9:4b-19), the addresses or invocations along with the descriptions and the motivations provide direct information about the God to whom prayer is directed. As the royal doxologies basically consist of description and motivation (3:33; 4:32, 34), they do the same. Moreover, the specific petitions and thanksgivings, whether explicit (9:19; 2:23) or implicit (2:18; 6:12; 4:31-32), as well as the allusions to prayers, help to depict the character of God because of the expectations shared by the pray-ers regarding the nature of the God addressed. Second, as has been discussed in chapters 1 and 2 above, the explicit references to God in the narrow context of each prayer help to present to the reader the kind of God who is presupposed by the literary setting in which the prayer is present.

The purpose of this section is to review in a more systematic way how the prayers of the book as a whole contribute to our understanding of God. The questions to be answered in this section are the following: What does the fact that people are praying, the fact that they are praying this way, and the fact that they are praying under these circumstances tell about the God whom they address?

The answers to these questions can be divided into four major elements. First of all, the fact of prayer from the very outset of the book denotes God's presence. Contrary to the wise men, Daniel and his friends are able to plead to God because he is there (2:11, 18). He is "the living God," (6:27), the creator, not an image or an idol made by man (3:1; 5:4, 23). As the living God, He shows His presence by rescuing at specific times of need (3:25,
28; 6:23, 28), but Daniel's constant prayers and worship (6:11) indicate that He is always there.

Second, the fact that Daniel is praying the way he does, that is, that the content of his prayers are what they are, points to God's wisdom. He is a giving God. He shares information with the wise men (2:21b-22). He gave the law to Moses (9:5, 10, 13) and revealed His will through the prophets (9:2, 6, 10). Likewise, He shares His revelation by giving dreams and visions to Nebuchadnezzar (chaps. 2 and 4) and Daniel (chaps. 7, 8, and 10-12).

Third, the fact that humans are praying the way they do emphasizes the power of God. He is the sovereign God that can not be forced to act (3:16-18). His sovereignty and freedom is testified in the doxologies of Nebuchadnezzar (3:33; 4:32). He is sovereign in creation and history (2:22; 4:32), in relation to collective groups like the people of Israel (9:7) and the gentile kingdoms (2:21), or to individual sinners such as Nebuchadnezzar (4:34) or within Israel (9:5-6), whether in chastising (9:11-14; 4:32, 34) or showing mercy (3:33; 9:9, 16, 19). His sovereignty applies to both past (9:7), present (2:21), and future (6:27) history. But though His kingdom is everlasting (3:33; 4:31; 6:27), as the God who gives, He has delegated His power to the rulers of human empires (2:21).

Fourth, the fact that the humans are praying to God under the circumstances in which we find them in the Book of Daniel has an eschatological significance. God is the God of the future. Daniel is praying in patient endurance and waiting (10:2, 3; cf. 12:12). Though God may be felt as absent, and His intervention delayed (9:19), He is addressed as the God of covenant promises (9:4).

The nature of God is such that it calls forth thanksgiving before the deliverance (2:20-23), loyalty in spite of apparent divine absence and defeat (3:17-18), and endurance in
prayerful waiting for the kingdom to come (6:11; 9:4-19; 10:3, 12). Addressing God in prayer leads to a personal relationship in which His presence is experienced in His absence, in which human beings may receive what He is giving even with the prospect of losing, and proclaim His sovereignty though oppressed by earthly kingdoms that misuse the power entrusted them by God.

The human waiting for God in prayer is in the book related to God's waiting and God's freedom. In mercy (as shown towards the people of Israel, 9:9, 16, and even towards the enemy, Nebuchadnezzar, 3:32-33), God patiently waits, though the prolonged time may imply suffering. In freedom, God chooses to intervene in His own time though it may cost His servants their lives (3:17-18). But the final divine intervention is certain, anticipated by examples of divine providence (chap. 1), revelation (chap. 2), and rescue (chaps. 3 and 6), and ascertained in doxologies and prayers of praise and thanksgiving (3:33; 4:32; 6:27-28; 2:20-23). The prayers of the Book of Daniel look for this future deliverance (6:11; 9:15-19), for the day of judgment, when the human kingdoms will be held accountable for the power they for a time have been given (2:21, 37; 7:10, 12).

Prayer in the Book of Daniel is a "cry for the kingdom,"¹ and the God addressed in prayer is a God who is coming.²

Summarizing, the character of God is depicted by the prayers directed to Him in relation to four major areas. Three of these are thematic and penetrate the book from its very first references to God in chaps. 1 and 2: His presence or absence: God as the living

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¹Grenz, 17-18.

²The judgment scene in the central chapter of the book (chap. 7) emphasizes this element by two scenes of "coming." God is coming (ερχόμενος) to His heavenly temple (vs. 22) to judge (cf. this theme in texts like Pss 96:11-13; 98:4-9; 50:1-6 and Hab 3:3); and the "Son of Man" is coming (ερχόμενος) on the clouds (vs. 13).
God; wisdom and revelation: God as giver; power and the kingdom: God as sovereign.

These themes of presence, wisdom, and power are set against the background of a fourth area, the theme of time, i.e., the eschatological movement within the book towards the establishing of God's kingdom, from Jerusalem to Babylon and back, from the period of the Babylonian empire and until the universal end-time, describing God as the God who comes.

**The Prayer Event**

The purpose of this section is to summarize how the presence of prayer and the situations in which we find prayer in the Book of Daniel contribute to the theology of the book because of the nature of prayer as such.

First, the prayers of the book are understood as real. They are not just placed there to indicate the piety of Daniel and his friends. They change the outcome of historical events. Had Daniel and his friends not been praying, the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and its interpretation would never have been revealed to them and subsequently the message never disclosed to Nebuchadnezzar. Had Daniel not been praying regularly, Darius would never have understood the decisive importance of Daniel's personal relationship with God, he would never have witnessed the divine deliverance, would never have realized the power of the living God and never praised this God himself. Also, Daniel's prayers in the apocalyptic section of the book influence events. The divine responses to Daniel's prayers in chaps. 9 and 10 confirm God's promises of restoration and serve to comfort and encourage generations in the periods following the Babylonian exile. But his covenant prayer also exemplifies the type of prayer to be offered in order to remove one of the obstacles for the establishing of the kingdom of God, and his constant warfare in prayer in 10:2-3 helps to release the heavenly army in the battle against evil. The presence of the
prayers thus serves to modify or balance the otherwise deterministic view of history  

dominating the apocalyptic visions.

Second, prayer is always an existential issue in the book.1 Prayer is a matter of life  
or death. Daniel and his friends plead with God for mercy (2:18) to escape the death decree  
issued by king Nebuchadnezzar. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego prefer obedience to  
God rather than bowing down to the golden image (3:17-18) and are sentenced to death  
because they do not worship or pray to it. In chap. 5 Belshazzar faces his death decree  
because he is praising the gods of his own making and not praying to the true God. Daniel  
is thrown into the lions' den as an execution of a death sentence because he constantly  
serves and continually prays to God. In praising God as the deliverer of Daniel from certain  
death, king Darius consequently calls him the "living God." Though not concerned with his  
individual fate, the prayers by Daniel in the visionary part of the book focus on the very  
survival of his people during troubling times.

Third, the prayer situations of the book encompass the broad range of human  
experience with God that we meet in the Old Testament at large. The pray-ers move  
between petition (2:18) and thanksgiving (2:20-23), and between sorrow (10:2-3) and joy  
(6:27-28). Existential in nature, the prayers nevertheless combine individual (2:18-23) and  
communal concerns (6:11-12; 9:3-20). They are offered while in grave danger (2:18), or in  
accordance with the rhythm of the cultic times (9:21; 6:11).

1In his discussion of the definition of prayer, Balentine underscores the intentionality  
of genuine prayer: "The subject of that which is communicated to God is not peripheral or  
isignificant. It is a subject of deep concern to the one that brings it" (Prayer, 31). In the  
Book of Daniel, the question of life and death in conjunction with the prayers highlights this  
basic element of Old Testament prayer.
Fourth, we observe that in the setting of the Book of Daniel as a whole, the prayers are closely related to the issue of revelation. Prayers bring human beings into contact with God. In the Book of Daniel in particular, this aspect of prayer forms a link to the topic of prophecy: God's revelations, given through the media of royal dreams, are only interpreted and publicly understood because of Daniel's connection to heaven in prayer. Daniel's own revelations are given him as part of an ongoing process of divine-human dialogue in which the visions constitute heaven's communication to Daniel, and the prayers are Daniel's address to God.

Fifth, humility is seen as a prerequisite for genuine prayer. In the Book of Daniel, this aspect of prayer is a connection to the two major themes of wisdom and power. Daniel receives divine information because he sincerely acknowledges his need and realizes that his wisdom is due to God alone (2:28-30; cf. his prayer of thanksgiving, vs. 21). His fasting and sorrow are external expressions for his humble attitude (9:2-3; 10:2-3). Conversely, Nebuchadnezzar's pride prevents him from reaching God in prayer, and only after a dramatic humiliation, does he acknowledge the sovereignty of God and is able to address God directly. As a consequence, genuine prayer throughout the book implies an acknowledgment of the human powerlessness against the sovereignty of God. Only when reaching this understanding, do the kings enter into a prayer relationship with God (4:31-34; 6:27-28).

Finally, the very nature of prayer corresponds to the theme of divine presence, so important for the theology of the book. Prayer is an expression of a longing for God because He is not there. Yet, in giving Him thanks, His presence may be experienced in apparent absence (2:20-23). The spatial and temporal movements of the book highlight this aspect of prayer: the direction towards Jerusalem (6:11) and towards heaven (4:31; cf. the
expression "the God of heaven" in 2:18 and 20) exemplifies the distance in space, the waiting for the eschatological end (10:2-3 and 12:12), the distance in time. The assured establishing of God's eternal kingdom is praised in the hymn of thanksgiving in 2:20-23 and in the royal doxologies of 3:33; 4:32; and 6:27-28. The kingdom will come, yet it is not here, and it is longed for in the question of the heavenly dialogues, "how long?" (8:13 and 12:6), and in the climactic petition of the prayer in 9:19: "make no delay!"

Summarizing the investigations of the prayer events of chapters 1 and 2, it may be said that the presence of prayer in the book further links it to the Old Testament at large. The existential nature of prayer, encompassing the broad range of human experience, and the reality of prayer, in the sense that it influences historical events, are both in accordance with the general Old Testament understanding of prayer. The issue of prophecy comes to the fore because the prayers call forth a divine answer, the themes of wisdom and power because of the necessity of humility and an acknowledgment of His sovereignty in order to enter into a genuine dialogue with God and experience His presence.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this dissertation has been to study the theology and the function of the prayers within the Book of Daniel.

Review of Literature, Justification, and Methodology

The introduction reviewed the literature pertinent to Old Testament prayer in general and to the prayers in the Book of Daniel in specific. Until recently, most studies of prayers have been approaching the topic from either a historical or a formal perspective. As a result, the theological function of Old Testament prayers in their present literary setting has been neglected. Thanks not least to the studies by Samuele Balentine and Patrick Miller,¹ the door has been opened for a more theological and a more functional approach in which prayers are understood as part of a process of divine-human communication.

As an apocalyptic book, the Book of Daniel places a unique emphasis on both the mode and the issue of God's revelation. Though prayers and references and allusions to prayers abound and in themselves indicate a human response to the divine activities, no study has yet focused exclusively on the prayers of the book. This is in part due to a general critical understanding of the book's intricate redaction history. Studies of the Book of Daniel have for that reason primarily dealt with either historical or form-critical issues.

¹Samuel E. Balentine, Prayer, and P. Miller, They Cried.
Theological studies looking at the function within the final canonical work are very rare and at best very brief.

This review of the scholarly situation has not only justified the present study, but also provided some basic criteria for its methodology. First, a study of the theological function of the prayers within the book as a whole naturally takes the final literary work as its starting point, independent of the possible prehistory of the text. Second, prayers may be related to their literary context by semantic and thematic links as well as by their narrative function within the plot. They also contribute to the depiction of the characters involved in communication, that is, the pray-ers and God. Furthermore, the very event of prayer as part of a divine-human dialogue brings a distinct message to be further described by the specific type of prayer present and by its function in the literary context. Consequently, these are the major issues that the dissertation has explored in regard to the theology and the function of the prayers within the Book of Daniel as a whole.

Based upon an understanding of prayer as part of an interpersonal relationship, the first two chapters of the study have dealt with the two major groups involved in prayer, on the one hand, Daniel and his friends, on the other hand, the gentiles, that is, the kings and their officials and wise men.

First, in chapter 1, the situations related to prayer in which we find Daniel and his friends have been studied. These are found in chaps. 2, 3, 6, 9, and 10. In each of these chapters, prayers, references to the fact of prayer, and allusions to the issue of prayer have been identified against the background of the interactions between God and man. The prayers have been situated in the structure of the chapter as well as in the narrative plot. Two recorded prayers—prayers in which the words spoken are stated—have been identified, an individual hymn of thanksgiving in 2:20-23 and an individual, intercessory lament in
9:4b-19, both spoken by Daniel. Exegesis has been performed on these two prayers, their
semantic and thematic links to their immediate setting have been explored, and their
characterization of God, the addressee, and Daniel, the pray-er, has been compared with the
depiction of these characters in the context in which the prayers are found. For each
relevant chapter of the book, a final section has focused on the function of the prayers
within that chapter, both in relation to the themes and characters and as prayers, that is, as
part of the process of communication between God and man.

Second, in chapter 2, the relationship of the kings and gentiles to prayer has been
investigated, following a similar outline. The relevant situations are found in chaps. 2, 3, 4,
5, and 6. No recorded prayer has been identified, yet the royal doxologies in 3:33; 4:31b-
32; 4:34; and 6:27-28 resemble prayers, and exegesis has been performed on these poetic
passages.

Based upon these investigations, chapter 3 has presented a synopsis of the prayers of
the book. Prayers, references to prayers, and allusions to prayer have been compared with
regard to formal and functional identification. They have been positioned in the structure of
the book as well as in the progression of the events, and their significance has been further
explored in relation to the thematical content of the book at large, to the depiction of its
characters, and to the divine-human dialogue taking place.

In the following, the results of the study are summarized.

**Daniel and Friends in Prayer**

The divine-human communication is positioned in the center of the structure of the
narrative in Dan 2 (vss. 17-23). In vain, Nebuchadnezzar has addressed his wise men.
They have no contact with the gods (2:11). In contrast, Daniel and his friends share a
genuine personal relationship with God in prayer, and, as a consequence, the secret of the royal dream is revealed by the “God of Heaven” (2:18-19) to Daniel who subsequently offers a prayer in a praise of thanksgiving (2:20-23). The prayers and the divine intervention are closely linked to the basic tension of the plot of the narrative, the question about divine revelation. They are regarded by the narrator as real events and belong to the core of the story.

The exegesis further links the recorded prayer with the narrative context on both a semantic and a thematic level. The basic concepts of the prayer are divine wisdom and power. Wisdom is given to wise men and power is delegated to human kingdoms throughout history (vs. 21). These themes, so central to the narrative in Dan 2, are continuing an emphasis introduced by the preceding narrative in Dan 1, in which the three explicit statements about God mention him as the giver of power in human history (1:2), the giver of favor on an existential level in interhuman relationships (1:9), and the giver of wisdom to the wise men, exemplified by Daniel and his friends (1:17).

In Dan 2, the dream and its interpretation add the element of the eschatological establishment of the universal kingdom of God (vss. 44-45), but the observation of the semantic and thematic links between the prayer and its narrative context supports the conclusion that the chapter is to be understood as a coherent unity in which the thanksgiving epitomizes the basic philosophical content of the story at large.

In the narrative in Dan 3, prayer functions by its absence. In arrogant power Nebuchadnezzar forces a public worship of an idol, but the three young men who refuse to bow down and pray are the ones who actually experience the divine presence. Their act of defiance and their stated motivation in 3:16-18—the structural center of the narrative—contribute to our theological understanding of prayer in relation to the theme of
power: God never enforces prayer, and prayer must, in order to remain genuine, respect the sovereignty of God and his freedom to intervene and act according to his own decision.

The unique feature in the narrative in Dan 6 is the emphasis on God as "the God of Daniel" (6:27). The expression helps to highlight the prayer life of Daniel as the axis around which the events turn. His personal relationship with God in prayer has several functions. From a literary point of view, it activates the plot. Theologically, it exemplifies the unchanging and unbreakable character of the "law of God" and his universal kingdom. It also contributes to our understanding of prayer in the Old Testament by pointing out that the "man of prayer" already belongs to the future kingdom of God.

The prayer in Dan 9 is unique in several ways: it is a very long prayer, occupying the major part of the chapter, and the literary context is not as in Dan 2 in a strict sense to be characterized as a narrative. The scholarly discussion has therefore naturally been concerned with the theological relationship between the prayer and its present context.

In the exegesis of the prayer, its major structural elements are shown to be the invocation (vs. 4), the confession (vss. 5-6), the acknowledgments (vss. 7-14), and the supplications (vss. 15-19). These elements are unified into a coherent prayer in which the thematic content is uniquely illustrated by the literary features employed. The basic theological concept of the prayer is the covenant that expresses the relationship between God and his people. Within the framework of the covenant, the prayer describes cause and effect in the past history of Israel. Because of their sin, the people has been scattered into exile, and the temple and Jerusalem have been desolated.

Acknowledging that God has been completely just in his dealings with the people, Daniel maintains that the character of God and the nature of his covenant yet gives hope of
favor for the penitent. His final and specific petition in 9:19 reflects the typical “how long?” of the Old Testament laments and thus deals with the element of time: “make no delay.”

In spite of the literary difference between the prayer and the pericopes that surround it—the introduction to the prayer in Dan 9:1-4a and the epiphany and the oracle by Gabriel in 9:20-27—this study points to a long list of semantic and thematic connections between the prayer and its context and to important common features in the depiction of the characters. Central is here Daniel’s continued role as intercessor and his solidarity with all the people (cf. vss. 7 and 11) as exemplified in the use of the personal pronouns in plural and singular (vss. 5-6, 18, and 19-20). The differences between the angelic oracle and the prayer, however, point beyond the prayer as the sole background against which the Gabriel’s discourse is to be understood. The specific references to the vision in Dan 8 (see 9:21) broadens the literary context of the prayer to include the preceding visionary part of the book.

This study notes a series of important semantic and thematical links between Dan 8 and 9. The chapters share a common pattern of events related to the people of God and also a similar description of the cause of the desolations brought upon the sanctuary. In their conclusion, both express the hope for the end of the period of wrath and the divine intervention through the mood of the lament: the “how long?” in 8:13 and the cry “make no delay!” in 9:19. These observations help to establish the interrelationship between the chapters. The obvious differences are understood in light of the tension (or the “plot”) created and solved in the course of the events of Dan 8 and 9.

Contrary to the prevailing, though in no way unanimous, scholarly opinion, this study has not found Daniel’s major problem in chap. 9 to be his lack of understanding of the prophecies by Jeremiah. In stead, the central question becomes why Daniel is praying as he
does if he has already perceived the clear prophecy of the period of the desolations of Jerusalem referred to in the writings of the prophet. This question is answered in light of the historical context that the literary framework presupposes and against the background of the vision and the explanation given in the preceding chapter. Daniel pours forth his prayer because of the tension between the long time-period of the audition in 8:13-14 which he did not understand and the prophetic period contained in the writings of Jeremiah which he did understand.

This tension between the time element of the vision in chap. 8, reaching the universal end time, and the shorter period of seventy years in Jeremiah provides the rationale for both form and content of the prayer. In confessing his sins and the sins of the people, Daniel is simply performing the acts pertinent to the covenant between the people and God. In Dan 8, he has seen a vision in which the basic restoration of the temple seems to be pushed into the far future. The element of time was left unexplained. When in his study of the prophet Jeremiah he comes to realize that the time is up, he hurries to seek the Lord in prayer on behalf of his people in order that the period of wrath may cease, and that the promised return may not be delayed as he would easily come to believe from the preceding. Daniel is not told that the prophecy of Jeremiah would not be fulfilled in time. Rather, the explanation points to the previous vision as dealing with a period of a much longer duration because it was leading to the final eschatological end time. Therefore, the angelic oracle indicates a limitation of the Deuteronomistic outlook of Daniel in the prayer compared with the apocalyptic vision of the previous chapter. It is confirmed that Jeremiah's prophecy will come true, the people return, and the city rebuilt. But destructions and desolations will not come to an end. They will recur during a longer period of time and reach their final end with the universal divine intervention at the end of days.
Consequently, the often perceived conflict between the Deuteronomistic view of history in the prayer with its emphasis on human responsibility, on the one hand, and the deterministic outlook of the apocalyptic visions, on the other, is not to be seen as a logical contrast. The expressions indicating determinism primarily stem from the cultic sphere and provides a modification: "the apocalyptic determinism only concerns the external course of events. The fate of individuals is not predetermined."⁴¹

In Daniel 10, the main character of the book is found in prayer for the last time. Though never recorded, his praying is indicated by the words of the angel in 10:12. His supplications and fasting provide a parallel to chap. 9, and the prayer in chap. 10 further emphasizes an aspect of prayer that has been developed throughout the book: in praying, man enters into fellowship with the heavenly community whose powers are released in favor of the people to secure their final deliverance and ultimate victory.

**Kings and Gentiles in Prayer**

In Dan 2, king Nebuchadnezzar and his wise men are primarily depicted in contrast to Daniel and his friends. They have no direct communication with God, and for that reason the wise men possess no genuine wisdom. Moreover, the mighty king of Babylon has only received his power as a gift from the God of Heaven, and the subsequent narrative in Dan 3 further accentuates the powerlessness of a ruler lacking any direct contact with God.

In retrospect, the royal epistle of Dan 4 recounts the circumstances that change the proud and stubborn king Nebuchadnezzar, attempting to be like a god, into a humble ruler who acknowledges God's heavenly dominion. Formally, the royal confessions that frame

the story (3:33; 4:31b-32 and 34) are not prayers, yet they resemble the actual prayers that Nebuchadnezzar is now said to be offering to God. The basic thrust of these doxologies is God's sovereignty over human kingdoms. Theologically, this narrative emphasizes that genuine prayer is only present when man in humility acknowledges this divine sovereignty. In the context of the development of the characters in the course of the narratives, the effect of excluding the actual wording of the royal prayers is to highlight Daniel as the "man of prayer."

The function of prayer in the narratives in chaps. 5 and 6 is best seen in light of the preceding events. By praising the pagan gods and by refusing to honor the true God (5:4, 22-24), in spite of full knowledge of what had transpired, king Belshazzar makes an attempt to reject the divine sovereignty that Nebuchadnezzar has learned to acknowledge. For this reason, his judgment is just. In contrast, king Darius, though at first tricked by the conspirators of his court, like king Nebuchadnezzar in chaps. 2-4 passes through a personal development which is illuminated by his relationship to prayer. Inspired by Daniel's example, he unites with him in a night of prayer and fasting (6:19), and, following the miraculous divine deliverance, Darius publicly praises God as the living God in a way that indicates that he is now honoring God in prayer (6:27-28).

The major themes contained in the royal proclamations are power and time. The divine sovereignty over the earthly kingdoms is exemplified by the narratives and finally fully expressed by the kings in their public decrees. The importance of time is underscored by the eternal nature of God's heavenly kingdom. Common for the royal doxologies is a literary and thematic dependency upon the prayer of Dan in 2:20-23. The character of Daniel is the example in prayer of whom the kings are but reflections.
The Synopsis of Prayers in the Book of Daniel

God's activities in the Book of Daniel are described in three categories: (1) his leading of collective history (1:2); (2) his intervention on a personal, existential level through revelations in dreams and visions, by messengers, and by acts of judgment or deliverance; (3) the content of the revealed dreams and visions. It is by genuine prayer that the characters of the book explicitly acknowledge God's sovereignty in past, present, and future human history. Daniel and his friends are found in such communication with God at the very center of the narratives (as in 2:18-23), while the pagan kings, when they do so, only arrive at prayer and humble recognition of God's dominion at the very end of events (4:34; 6:27-28).

In the book, prayers are referred to in a variety of ways, each of which is consistent with the contextual function. The thanksgiving in 2:20-23 and the intercessory lament in 9:4b-19, both spoken by Daniel, stand out as the only recorded prayers of the book. While the kings are only found in prayer in the narrative part of the book, Daniel's praying is an essential feature also of the visionary section.

It has been observed that all situations of prayer to be classified as praise or thanksgiving are found in the narrative section (chaps. 2-6), while the prayers in the visionary part of the book (chaps. 9 and 10) are related to situations of lament and penitence.

These observations are significant when reviewing the position of the prayers within the structure of the book. Only Daniel is praying in both its halves, and his two recorded prayers are one of the features that bind the narrative and the apocalyptic part together. These prayers are placed in complementary structural positions. Within the historical narratives, a prayer is recorded (2:20-23) in connection with a prophecy that deals with the
future, and within the apocalyptic visions about the future, a prayer is recorded (9:4b-19) that reviews past history.

The prayers have also been situated in the progression of the events within the book. Important spatial and chronological movements help to accentuate the question of the time for the establishing of the heavenly kingdom of God upon earth. In these movements, the prayers and the doxologies play a central role. They direct the attention towards Jerusalem (6:11) and towards heaven (2:11). The prayers of chaps. 6 and 9 function as the point of intersection: after these prayers we look towards the fulfilment. The praise offered in gratitude for God’s historical deliverance in Babylon (2:20-23; 3:28; 6:27-28) strengthens the certainty of God’s final eschatological intervention at the time of the end, as it is longed for in prayers of petition and lament (9:4b-19), and in the mood of mourning, fasting, and waiting (9:3; 10:2-3; 12:12).

Discussing the thematical function of the prayers, this study has found important similarities between the themes of the two recorded prayers by Daniel. Though quite different in form and purpose, they nevertheless share the sense of the human inadequacy before God and also the important motifs of revelation, wisdom, and prophecy. Furthermore, the two prayers are both concerned with the philosophy of history. The focus of the prayer in 2:20-23 is universal history; in the prayer in 9:4b-19 it is God’s dealings with his people. This major thematical difference between the two prayers is, however, not contradictory, but due to their individual purpose. Both prayers emphasize the sovereignty of God as the Lord of history.

In juxtaposing the theological statements contained in the prayers and doxologies of the book along its two basic structural parts, aspects of the basic theme of the kingdom of God appear more clearly. Within the narrative section, the poetic passages praise God’s
eternal dominion, as it is illustrated also in the events of the stories. The themes, explicitly expressed by the prayers and the royal doxologies, reach a climax in the apocalyptic vision in chap. 7 in which the final clash of the human kingdoms with the heavenly dominion takes place. The links between this vision and the preceding narrative in chap. 6 underline that the loyal worshiper, like the servant Daniel, by praying (6:11-12, 17, 21, cf. 7:10, 14), already belongs to the eschatological kingdom to come. Compared thematically with the narratives of the first part of the book, the prayer in chap. 9 illustrates the judgment of the earthly kingdoms; compared with the visions of the second part of the book, the prayer by Daniel in 2:20-23 illuminates the philosophy of history that will lead to the final establishing of the kingdom.

In the Book of Daniel, however, the theme of God's sovereignty is also linked to the issue of revelation and wisdom. Just as God is delegating His power to the kingdoms throughout history, he is revealing His truth to the genuine wise men. This correlation between wisdom and power is explicitly stated in the words of the first prayer of the book (2:21-22) and henceforth illustrated in the narrative events as well as in the apocalyptic dreams and visions. Prayer plays an important role in this process. It is because of Daniel's humble and constant prayer life that he remains a genuine wise man. Due to his prayers, the eternal dominion of God is ascertained: his prayer life leads to deliverance (6:21-23). It inspires Darius to spend the night fasting (6:19) and in the final end to praise God and his everlasting kingdom (6:27-28). Moreover, it is the prayers of Daniel (2:18-19; 9:23; 10:12) that call forth the divine revelations that explain the history to come.

Another major function of the prayers is that of characterization. Almost any character in the book can be analyzed by his relation to prayer. The major results of this part of the investigation has already been mentioned in connection with the summary of
chapters 1 and 2 above. Throughout the narratives, the kings are undergoing a
development, succinctly illustrated by their relation to prayer. Daniel is the "man of
prayer," and the royal doxologies all mirror Daniel's praying in 2:20-23 in terminology and
syntactical features, thereby underlining Daniel's role as the example of genuine prayer.
Resembling Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius end up praising God. Belshazzar does not.
Their words closely reflect the narrative context, but in contrast to Daniel, the vocabulary is
not unique in the book and provides no specific link to the liturgical phrases of the Old
Testament as such. This feature helps to characterize them as pagan kings. The wording of
the prayers of Daniel, however, resembles the great prayers of the Old Testament at large
and therefore more directly connects the narratives and the visions with basic theological
themes of the Old Testament.

Prayers not only serve to depict the character of the speaker, but also the character of
the God addressed. In the Book of Daniel, four major aspects of the character of God are
seen reflected in the theology and the function of the prayers: three of these are thematic
and penetrate the book from its very first references to God: his presence or absence: God
as the living God; wisdom and revelation: God as giver; power and the kingdom: God as
sovereign. These themes of presence, wisdom and power are described in light of another
aspect, the theme of time, that is, the eschatological movement within the book towards the
establishing of God's kingdom, from the period of the Babylonian empire and until the
universal end time, describing God as the God who comes.

Against the background of Old Testament prayers in general, the function of prayer in
the Book of Daniel is to highlight important aspects of the divine-human dialogue of which
prayer is understood as a part: the prayers of the book are real and influence historical
events; they are existential, and to communicate with God is a matter of life or death; they
encompass a broad range of human experience and move from petition, confession and lament to praise and thanksgiving; because of prayer, divine revelation is imparted to the genuine wise man who in humility acknowledges his powerlessness; and finally, prayer is both an experience of and an intense longing for divine presence.

Conclusions

Stated shortly, the prayers in the Book of Daniel serve three major functions.

1. They summarize and explicitly express the basic theological themes of the narratives or the visions, whether they emphasize and continue or contrast and balance the central message of the surrounding material.

2. They depict the main characters because prayer is the vehicle through which the individuals of the book acknowledge God's sovereignty, but also because prayer serves to illuminate the character of God to whom the prayers are addressed.

3. They are part of an ongoing process of communication in which God reveals His will to man through dreams and visions and acts of judgment and deliverance, and in which an essential part of man's response is prayer.

These three functions correspond very well to the role of prayer in the Old Testament in general. In relation to the study of the Book of Daniel in specific, this dissertation has been concerned with the final literary product, independent of any possible prehistory of the text. Understood as part of a process of divine-human dialogue, the issue of prayer has provided a perspective from which the book can be viewed as a thematic unity. Much further work is to be done in this regard so that the theological message of the Book of Daniel as such may be better understood and placed in its proper relationship to the theology of the Old Testament at large.
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