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ABSTRACT

WHY DID DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS REFUSE THE KING'S FOOD AND WINE?

A STUDY IN DANIEL 1

By

Sung Jae Park

Adviser: Richard Davidson

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Thesis

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: WHY DID DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS REFUSE THE KING'S FOOD AND WINE? A STUDY IN DANIEL 1

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Date completed: June 2018

Problem

The first chapter of Daniel contains a well-known story of Daniel and his three friends' refusal to eat the king's food and wine. To the casual reader, this story may not solicit any probing questions as to the rationale for their decision. However, commentators of the book of Daniel have long been puzzled over this. The purpose of this study is to raise this question and propose a rationale for Daniel and his three friends' refusal of the king's food and wine.

Method

This study will encompass the entire first chapter of Daniel. Although the entire chapter will be considered, greater attention will be paid to specific verses and words. Verbal links between Daniel 1 and the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 will be explored. The chiasmic structure of the book of Daniel and, in particular, the first chapter, will be studied. A study of the religion of the Mesopotamians will enlighten the background of the place food and drink has in the cult of their belief system.

Results

The first chapter of the book of Daniel orients the entire book. Studies of the chiasmic structure reveals that the center of the first chapter apexes around the 8th verse. The concept of defilement and the resistance of it is shown as the ultimate theme of the book. In the first chapter, scholars have attempted to link the resistance of Daniel and his three friends around three primary points: (1) loyalty to the king, (2) unclean foods, and (3) food offered to the Mesopotamian gods. Faults within each of these arguments limit any of these answers as satisfactory. This study shows that the rationale is found in the creation account. A study of the verbal connection to the creation account, provides the strongest argument. Finally, the theme of the book of Daniel can be seen in the theme of the first chapter.

Studies in the Mesopotamian cultic system reveals that a prebend system was in operation at the time of Daniel and his three friends' exile. Studies in this system reveal that all the food, drink and items of everyday comfort were offered to the gods of Mesopotamia. These were then redistributed to the king as his portion. The temple officials and courtiers were also

apportioned accordingly. The Mesopotamian belief system is revealed in their religious text or stories. Such stories add to the understanding of the story of the first chapter of Daniel.

Conclusion

Although previous attempts by commentators of the book of Daniel have tried to find the rationale of Daniel and his three friends' refusal in the Levitical dietary laws, this study will propose that the ultimate rationale is found in the creation account.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

WHY DID DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS REFUSE THE KING'S FOOD AND WINE?
A STUDY IN DANIEL 1

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Religion

by
Sung Jae Park

2018

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A STUDY IN DANIEL 1

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of the requirements for the degree
Masters of Arts

by

Sung Jae Park

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Richard Davidson, Ph.D., Adviser

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Dedicated to
my loving and supportive wife Claire
and my children
Justin, Ashley, Preston, and Kaley

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASV	American Standard Version
BDB	Brown-Driver- Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon
ESV	English Standard Version
GNB	Good News Bible
HALOT	Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament
JPS	Jewish Publication Society Bible
KJV	King James Version
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NIDOTTE	New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
REB	Revised English Bible
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
TLOT	Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament
TWOT	Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Statement of the Problem

The first chapter of Daniel contains a well-known story of Daniel and his three friends' refusal to eat the king's food and wine. This story is rather straightforward. To the casual reader, it may not solicit any probing questions as to the rationale for their refusal. However, commentators of the book of Daniel have long been puzzled over their decision.¹ Why do Daniel and his three friends refuse the king's portion?² Why did Daniel link partaking of the king's portion with defilement?³ How does this struggle illuminate the theme of the entire book?

Importance of Study

The book of Daniel has generated much debate among Bible scholars of this book.⁴ The debate has not been limited to just a few aspects of the book. The debate has involved such issues as the date, composition, author, social setting, genre, intention,

¹ Anne E. Gardner, "The Eating of "Seeds" and Drinking of Water by Daniel and Friends: An Intimation of Holiness " *Australian Biblical Review* 59 (2011): 53.

² Daud Soesilo, "Why Did Daniel Reject the King's Delicacies?," *The Bible Translator* 45, no. 4, Oct (1994): 441.

³ Carol Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 47.

⁴ Les P. Bruce, "Discourse Theme and the Narratives of Daniel," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160 (2003): 174.

interpretation, canonicity, apparent discrepancies, authenticity and theme among others.⁵ It is not the purpose of this study to tackle all these issues regarding this book. This study will focus on the question and the rationale of the refusal of Daniel and his three friends. The prophetic sections of the book have generated the most discussion and various schools of interpretations have resulted.⁶ However, commentators of the first chapter of Daniel generally agree that this chapter sets the stage and provides the theme of the entire book of Daniel.⁷ This study will explore this theme in the light of the story of the first chapter of the book. How this story contributes to the biblical emphasis on dietary laws and a healthy lifestyle, especially just prior to the Parousia (second coming), will be explored.

Method of Study

This study will encompass the entire first chapter of Daniel. Each verse will be addressed in turn. However, greater attention will be paid to specific verses in particular verses 7 and 8. Such key terms as **נָתַן, שִׁים, גִּאֹל, זֶרַע** will be studied in detail. Verbal links between Daniel 1 and the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 will be

⁵ John J. Collins, *Daniel: With an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), 27-39; John J. Collins, "Current Issues in the Study of Daniel," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002), 2-12.

⁶R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 1127. Collins, "Current Issues in the Study of Daniel," 12-13.

⁷ Commentators see this narrative setting the theme of the entire book including the prophetic sections of the book, Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel* ed. William F. Albright and David N. Freedman, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978), 131; Collins, *Daniel: With an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, 44; Newsom, 38; John Goldingay, *Daniel*, ed. David Allan Hubbard, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 30 (Dallas: Word Pub., 1987), 8; Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 55.

explored.⁸ The chiastic structure of the first chapter and as well as the entire book of Daniel will be studied.⁹ The chiastic structure of the first chapter will reveal the peak around verses 7 and 8.¹⁰ In verse 8, the central focus of the chapter will be revealed, namely in the concept of defilement and purification.¹¹ It is the cleansing which leads to atonement or restoration of the land,¹² temple,¹³ and its people¹⁴ back to a right relationship with their God. How this struggle sets the stage and theme for the first chapter and also for the entire book of Daniel will be explored. A seeming contradiction of Daniel's diet in the first chapter against the tenth chapter will be discussed and a resolution suggested.

A study of the Mesopotamian religion will enlighten the background of the setting of the narrative. Specific focus will be paid to the place food and drink had within the

⁸ Jacques B. Doukhan, "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 (Louvain, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1993), 285-286, 289.

⁹ Goldingay, 8; Ernest C. Lucas, *Daniel*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 49; Newsom, 39; James M. Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, ed. D. A. Carson, New Studies in Biblical Theology vol. 32 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2014), 83; Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 53; Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, ed. Donald J. Wiseman, The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978), 59-62; John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Hermeneia- a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993); Ad. Lenglet, "La Structure Littéraire De Daniel 2-7," *Biblica* 53, no. (1972): 169-190.

¹⁰ Bill T. Arnold, *Pun and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2000), 247.

¹¹ These terms are antonyms or total opposites. Holy/profane, unclean/clean. Lev 10:10 Israelites are called to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, between the unclean and clean. Ezek. 22:26 the Israelites are charged with not making the distinction between holy and profane/unclean and clean. Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 15-29.

¹² Amos 7:17 unless otherwise stated the Bible Text is from NASB

¹³ Lucas, 54.

¹⁴ Lev. 16:33, Hos 9:3-4, Amos 7:17.

cult of the Mesopotamian belief system. Mesopotamian stories about origins and the purpose of mankind reveals their belief and practice regarding food and drink. Stories such as the Atrahasis Epic, Enuma Elish, and Gilgamesh Epic help give a glimpse behind the rationale of the Mesopotamian cult.¹⁵

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL

In the 19th century Pusey in his lectures laid down the gauntlet in the debate that was raging over the book of Daniel by stating emphatically,

The book of Daniel is especially fitted to be a battlefield between faith and unbelief... It is either Divine or an imposture. To write any book under the name of another, and to give it out to be his, is, in any case, a forgery, dishonest in itself, and destructive of all trustworthiness... The writer, were he not Daniel, must have lied, on a most frightful scale, ascribing to God prophecies which were never uttered, and miracles which are assumed never to have been wrought. In a word, the whole book would be one lie in the Name of God.¹

The book of Daniel has been called a “most intriguing work[], filled with timeless truths,”² a book that “stands apart from the rest of ... the Old Testament,”³ “a book of paradoxes,”⁴ “a book of polarities” from simplest to the most complex of all the books of

¹⁵ Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others*, Rev. ed., Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1-38, 39-153, 228-277.

¹ E. B. Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet* (Minneapolis, MN: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1885 reprint 1978), 75.

² Miller, 22.

³ Baldwin, 13.

⁴ Tremper Longman III, *The NIV Application Commentary: Daniel*, ed. Terry Muck, The NIV Application Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 19.

all the Bible,⁵ a book that stands in “a unique place” in Scripture,⁶ and a book that “has fascinated readers through the ages.”⁷ It is claimed that the book “has had a powerful effect on the religious imagination of Judaism and Christianity.”⁸ The stories of the book has

inspired great works of art: frescoes and sculptures in Roman catacombs, ornamentations on architectural structures of churches, colorful illustrations on medieval manuscripts, and masterpieces by some of the greatest artists in history, including Rubens, Rembrandt, and Michelangelo. In music, too, the stories have had their impact, including in the last century Benjamin Britten’s *The Burning Fiery Furnace*, Louis Gruenberg’s musical score of *The Daniel Jazz*, Louis Armstrong’s rendition of *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*, not to mention the now popular church musical, *It’s Cool in the Furnace*.⁹

Again, Doukhan reminds us that the book of Daniel has had a special place within western society and history.

Beyond the religious traditions, philosophers such as Spinoza, psychologist such as Jung, and scientist such as Newton have paid special attention to Daniel, and the book has even inspired the poet and the artist. From the bare paraphrase of the Middle Ages liturgical drama to the elaborate compositions of Darius Milhaud, to the hoarse melodies of Louis Armstrong, the themes in Daniel have taken multiple forms: seventeenth-century tragicomedies, the catata, and the twentieth-century jazz. Painters have drawn inspiration from it... Indeed, the book of Daniel does not exclusively belong to the religious tradition but also to the secular heritage. In fact, we may perceive the universal character of the book of Daniel from within the work itself.¹⁰

⁵ Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman, III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 329.

⁶ André LaCocque, *The Book of Daniel*, trans., David Pellauer (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1976), 1.

⁷ Choon L. Seow, *Daniel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 1.

⁸ Newsom, 1.

⁹ Seow, 1.

¹⁰ Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile*, prologue.

Mahatma Gandhi was also affected by the book of Daniel. Gandhi read and referred to much of the Christian Bible in particularly the New Testament.¹¹ However, later in his life he started to pay more attention to the Old Testament with “Daniel being the most prominent.”¹² It has even been said that “Gandhi found much consolation in reading the book of the prophet Daniel.”¹³ He saw Daniel as one who revealed in his life and acts what it means to be a “model citizen”¹⁴ and one who “was one of the greatest passive resistors that ever lived.”¹⁵ Clearly, the Christian Bible and Daniel in particular had an impact on Gandhi as some of his own resistance can be said to be inspired and patterned after Daniel.

It could be said that the book of Daniel also stands at the center of the Christian faith.¹⁶ It speaks about the individual resurrection, it gives the precise date for the

¹¹ William W. Emilsen, "Gandhi, Scripture and the Bible," *Pacifica* 14, February (2001): 80-86.

¹² *Ibid.*, 81.

¹³ William W. Emilsen, *Gandhi's Bible* (Delhi: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2009), xxxiv. Daniel L. Smith-Christopher observes that a “culturally specific” or “culturally influenced” reading of the text can lead to a new or “contemporary interpretations” of the stories of Daniel. Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "Gandhi on Daniel 6: Some Thoughts on a “Cultural Exegesis” of the Bible," *Biblical Interpretation* 1, 3 (1993). According to Gandhi, Daniel was a model for his Satyagraha (holding on to truth) and he offered Daniel's act in particularly in the sixth chapter as an example “satyagraha in its purest form.” *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. Vol. XVII (India: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Government of India, 1965), 152.

¹⁴ *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, 153.

¹⁵ Emilsen, "Gandhi, Scripture and the Bible," 81; *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. IX (Ahmedabad, India: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Government of India, 1963), 539-543; *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. XII (Ahmedabad, India: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Government of India, 1964), 445-447. M. Gandhi “Talk With Missionaries” Before April 23, 1946, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. LXXXIV (Ahmedabad, India: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Government of India, 1981), 52.

¹⁶ Newton asserted that, “Daniel was the greatest credit amongst the Jews... and to reject his [Daniel] Prophecies, is to reject the Christian religion. For this religion is founded upon his Prophecy concerning the Messiah.” Sir Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St John* (Cave Junction, OR: Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine, 1733), 25.

messianic prophecies, it speaks about the second coming and gives the sweeping prophecies of the western history.¹⁷ Its influence in western history cannot be denied.¹⁸ Perhaps, it is because of such a standing that the book has generated so much controversy within the Christian faith and within the scholarly world.¹⁹ It is within the scholarly world, in particular, that the book of Daniel has been a source of significant controversy.²⁰ Such controversies have generated much variance in opinions regarding the date, authenticity, nature, unity, and authorship.²¹

Date of the Book of Daniel

Current historical studies regarding the book of Daniel distinguishes “between the time when the book was written and the time referred to in the book itself.”²² It is argued that the question of unity is interwoven with the issue of date and authorship.²³ Wenham succinctly contrasts the liberal view versus the conservative which

¹⁷ John J. Collins, "Current Issues in the Study of Daniel," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001), 1.

¹⁸ Collins, "Current Issues in the Study of Daniel," 1.

¹⁹ Baldwin, 13-17; Dillard and Longman, 329. Robert L. Alden, *Study of the Prophets since World War II*, ed. J. Barton Payne, New Perspectives on the Old Testament (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1970), 138.

²⁰ Jan-Wim Wesselius, "The Writing of Daniel," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002), 291.

²¹ Ibid.; Brevard Springs Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 611; Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans., P. R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 513-529; James King West, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Macmillan 1971), 419-421; Harrison, 1105-1134; Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 423-447; Donald J. Wiseman, *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, ed. D. J. Wiseman (London: Tyndale Press, 1965), 9-79; Dillard and Longman, 329-352.

²² H. J. M. Van Deventer, "The Function of Daniel 1 in a Second Century BCE Historical Context," *Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa* 7, no. 2 (2011).

²³ Dillard and Longman, 347. Zdravko Stefanovic, "Thematic Links between the Historical and Prophetic Sections of Daniel," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 27/2 (1989): 121.

holds that its stories tell of real events in which God's power was demonstrated and real prophecy disclosing his knowledge of the future: the other that its stories are parables, perhaps with a historical core, and that its prophecies are by and large interpretations of the past history. The conservative believes that the book was written by a real Daniel living in the sixth century BC; the liberal by an unknown writer using Daniel as his pseudonym.²⁴

It is argued that one of the main points of theology of the book is the idea "that God declares his future purposes to his servants."²⁵ Such issues impress on the reader the significance of the dating of the book, which would impact one's understanding of the theology of the book.²⁶ Within the book itself, Daniel purports to record the life and historical events of himself at about the sixth century BCE.²⁷ Such view has been the uniform view until approximately the 19th century.²⁸ Porphyry's, a Neoplatonic philosopher who lived in the third century after Christ, ideas and assertions were brought back to the mainstream Christian scholarship by various biblical scholars.²⁹ Porphyry wrote 15 books entitled, "Against the Christians"³⁰ which were his attempts "to refute the leading tenets of Christianity."³¹ It was his twelfth book which was his polemic dealing with the book of Daniel and its prophecies that has had a significant impact in the studies

²⁴ Gordon J. Wenham, "Daniel: The Basic Issues," *Themelios* 2/2 January (1977): 49.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

²⁶ Miller, 22-23.

²⁷ Eissfeldt, 517. John F. Walvoord, *Daniel*, The John Walvoord Prophecy Commentaries (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2012), 13.

²⁸ Childs, 611-613.

²⁹ Bruce K. Waltke, "The Date of the Book of Daniel," *Bibliotheca Sacra* Oct-Dec (1976): 319-320; Childs, 611-612.

³⁰ Eissfeldt, 517.

³¹ Harrison, 1110.

of Daniel up to present day.³² Porphyry was a “noted antagonists of the Christian faith”³³ and possibly “one of the earliest hostile critics of the Old Testament.”³⁴ He denied that it was composed by a person named Daniel in the sixth century BCE but a person living in Judea at the time of Antiochus Epiphanies in the Second century between 167 and 163 BCE.³⁵ He based his reasoning “from the *a priori* assumption that there could be no predictive element in prophecy, (*si quid autem ultra opinatus sit, quia future nescient, esse mentitum*).”³⁶ Daniel’s prophecies had to be therefore *vaticinia ex eventu* (prophecies after the event)³⁷ and not *vaticinia ante eventu* (prophecies written before the event).³⁸ He claimed that historical inaccuracies cannot be inspired or authoritative.³⁹ Modern critical scholarship is fairly unanimous in finding agreement with Porphyry’s assertions.⁴⁰ Among others, the question of dates is argued on the basis of three Greek

³² St Jerome, *Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel*, trans., Gleason L. Archer (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock 2009), 15.

³³ Edward J. Young, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Melksham, England: Cromwell Press, 1972), 317.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Eissfeldt, 517-520. Some are able to give a more specific date as to the final composition, especially the second half of the book (chap 7-11). The “account must have been completed near the end of the reign of Antiochus but some time before his death in December 164 B.C.E., or at least before the information of his death reached Palestine, Probably in the spring of 163 B.C.E.” Seow, 7. LaCocque puts the date “with a very comfortable certainty, in 164 B.C.E.” LaCocque, 8.

³⁶ Harrison, 1110.

³⁷ Childs, 611; Jerome, 15-16.

³⁸ Arthur J. Ferch, *Authorship, Theology, and Purpose of Daniel*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, Symposium on Daniel (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1986), 20.

³⁹ Seow, 5. Seow avers that by tacitly agreeing to these premises, traditional scholarship allows “Porphyry to define the terms of debate.” (Seow, 5) He further argues that authenticity of a work should not ride on the accuracy of the historical details in every minutia. (Seow, 5)

⁴⁰ Childs, 611-613. Collins, “Current Issues in the Study of Daniel,” 1-2. Michael A. Knibb, “The Book of Daniel in Its Context,” in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002), 16-18. Eissfeldt, 517-522. J. A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Reprint ed., International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1927). This work is considered the definitive culmination of this process of bringing consensus among critical scholarship, Collins, “Current Issues in the Study of Daniel.” Hartman

loan words,⁴¹ the Hebrew,⁴² and the Aramaic of Daniel.⁴³ The placement of the book of Daniel in the Hebrew bible, not among the Prophets (*Nevi'im*) but among the Writings (*Ketubim*), has been used as another argument for it being a non-prophetic book.⁴⁴ It is one argument that is used to bolster it as a book written *vaticinia ex eventu*.⁴⁵ However,

and Di Lella, 16. Norman W. Porteous, *Daniel: A Commentary*, ed. Ernest G. Wright et al., The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 13. Newsom, 10-11.

⁴¹ Edwin M. Yamauchi, *The Greek Words in Daniel in the Light of Greek Influence in the near East*, ed. J. Barton Payne, New Perspectives on the Old Testament (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1970), 170. "One of the strongest of the stock arguments for a late Hellenistic date for the composition of the book of Daniel has been the presence of three Greek words in the text." See, T. C. Mitchell and R. Joyce, *The Musical Instruments in Nebuchadnezzar's Orchestra*, ed. Donald J. Wiseman, Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel (London: Tyndale Press, 1965), 19-27. See also, Carl Friedrich Keil, *Daniel*, ed. Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, trans., James Martin and Easton M. G., 10 vols., Commentary on the Old Testament, vol. 9 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 507-508. S. R. Driver famously stated, "The verdict of the language of Daniel is thus clear. The *Persian* words presuppose a period after the Persian empire had been well established: the Greek words *demand* the Hebrew *supports* and the Aramaic *permits*, a date *after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great* (B.C. 332)." Samuel R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), 508. This argument is an argument from silence. Montgomery aware of this implication stated, "The rebuttal of this evidence for a low date lies in the stressing of the potentialities of Gr. Influence in the Orient from the 6th cent. And on..." Montgomery, 22.

⁴² "The Hebrew of Daniel is ... in all distinctive features it resembles, not the Hebrew of Ezekiel, or even of Haggai or Zechariah, but that of the age subsequent to Nehemiah." Driver then gives a list of over 25 expressions in support of his late dating of the book. Driver, 506-508. See, W. J. Martin, *The Hebrew of Daniel*, ed. Donald J. Wiseman, Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel (London: Tyndale Press, 1965), 28-30. See, Keil, 514-515. See, Gleason L. Archer, *The Hebrew of Daniel Compared with the Qumran Sectarian Documents*, ed. John H. Skilton, Milton C. Fisher, and Leslie W. Sloat, The Law and the Prophets: Old Testament Studies Prepared in Honor of Oswalt Thompson Allis (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed 1974), 470-481. See, Baldwin, 29-35. See Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 20-23. See also, Andrew Steinmann, *Daniel*, Concordia Commentary (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia, 2008), 6-8.

⁴³ For a discussion of this topic see, Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 12-18. See, Gleason L. Archer, *The Aramaic of the "Genesis Apocryphon" Compared with the Aramaic of Daniel*, ed. J. Barton Payne, New Perspectives on the Old Testament (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1970), 160-169. See, Peter W. Coxon, "Syntax of the Aramaic of Daniel: A Dialectal Study," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 48 (1977): 107-122. See, Baldwin, 29-35. See also, Steinmann, 8-9.

⁴⁴ Collins, *Daniel: With an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, 27-28; Judah Slotki, *Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah*, ed. Abraham Cohen, Soncino Books of the Bible (New York: Soncino Press, 1985), xii. The Talmud speaks of Daniel as not a prophet (Tractate Bava Basra 14b) like Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi (Tractate Sanhedrin 93b-94a Megilla 3a). Maimonides explained why Daniel was not considered prophetic in the Hebrew Bible by distinguishing the revelations he received as dreams and not prophecies as other prophets declare their messages. Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans., M. Friedländer, Second ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 243. Klaus Koch, "Is Daniel Also among the Prophets?," *Interpretation* 39, no. 2, no. April (1985): 117-130. Eissfeldt, 521.

⁴⁵ Koch: 118-119.

Daniel was regarded as a prophet by many such as Josephus in *Jewish Antiquities* X, xi (4),⁴⁶ and in such writings as in the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Qumran,⁴⁷ in Matthew 24:15, Ben Sira (Sirah or Ecclesiasticus) may have adapted some text from Daniel,⁴⁸ and in the Septuagint.⁴⁹ Although the traditional and uniform view was challenged in various times and for various reasons by such as Uriel Acosta (1590-1647), Anthony Collins (1727), and Bertholdt (1806),⁵⁰ it was the German literary-critical movement in the 19th century that “seized avidly upon the supposition that the prophecy could contain no predictive element, and repudiated the Jewish and Christian tradition of a sixth century B. C. date of the composition for the book.”⁵¹ However, we are reminded that this argument was made first made “by one whose heart and soul were hostile”⁵² to the Christian faith. Despite the arguments made by many conservative scholars,⁵³ these critical arguments continue.

⁴⁶ William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, New updated ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 285.

⁴⁷ John M. Allegro, *Qumran Cave 4: I (4Q158-4Q186)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 53-57. Quotes Daniel 12:10 with the words “as it is written in the book of Daniel, the prophet.” Martin G. Abegg, Peter W. Flint, and Eugene Charles Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1999), 483.

⁴⁸ Steinmann, 13-17. Solomon Schechter and Charlss Taylor, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Portions of the Book Ecclesiasticus from Hebrew Manuscripts in the Cairo Genizah Collection Presented to the University of Cambridge by the Editors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899), 17, 18. Scholars date this book to about 180 BCE.

⁴⁹ Koch: 121.

⁵⁰ Harrison, 1111.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Young, 320.

⁵³ Waltke: 319-329; Gleason L. Archer, "Modern Rationalism and the Book of Daniel," *Bibliotheca Sacra* April-June (1979): 129-147; Robert I. Vasholz, "Qumran and the Dating of Daniel," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* December (1978): 315-321; Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Hermeneutical Issues in the Book of Daniel," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* March (1980): 13-21; Edwin M. Yamauchi, "The Archaeological Background of Daniel," *Bibliotheca Sacra* January-March (1980): 3-16; Mitchell and Joyce, 19-27; K. A. Kitchen, *The Aramaic of Daniel*, ed. Donald J. Wiseman, Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel (London: Tyndale Press, 1965), 31-79; Martin, 28-30; Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Book of Daniel Confirmed by the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 1/2 (1990): 37-49; Douglas E. Fox, "Ben Sira on OT Canon Again: The Date

Harrison asserts that “objections to the historicity of Daniel were copied uncritically from book to book, and by the second decade of the twentieth century no scholar of general liberal background who wished to preserve his academic reputation either dared or desired to challenge the current critical trend.”⁵⁴ It will be the position of this paper that based on the evidence discovered regarding the language and history currently available, a sixth century writing of this book best suits the evidence.⁵⁵

Unity of the Book of Daniel

Questions regarding the unity of the book have been raised from the 17th century and onwards by such authors as Spinoza and Sir Isaac Newton.⁵⁶ Among the various arguments against the unity of the book, some of the primary rationales are based on the genre, language, and changes in the narration from third person to first person. The

of Daniel," *Westminster Theological Journal* 49 (1987): 335-350; Wenham, "Daniel: The Basic Issues," 49-52; Robert W. Wilson, "The Book of Daniel and the Canon," *Princeton Theological Review* 13, no. 3 (1915): 352-408; Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Book of Daniel and Matters of Language: Evidences Relating to Names, Words, and the Aramaic Language," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 19, no. 3, Autumn (1981): 211-225; Gerhard F. Hasel, "Establishing a Date for the Book of Daniel," in *Symposium on Daniel*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1986), 84-164; Harrison, 1110-1134; Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 423-447; Dillard and Longman, 330-337; Steinmann, 1-19; Miller, 22-32; Baldwin, 13-46; Young, 15-26; Slotki, xii-xiii; Robert W. Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel: Second Series* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1938); Ferch, 3-83.

⁵⁴ Harrison, 1111.

⁵⁵ Waltke; Archer, "Modern Rationalism and the Book of Daniel."; Vasholz; Yamauchi, "Hermeneutical Issues in the Book of Daniel."; Yamauchi, "The Archaeological Background of Daniel."; Mitchell and Joyce; Kitchen; Martin; Hasel, "The Book of Daniel and Matters of Language: Evidences Relating to Names, Words, and the Aramaic Language."; Hasel, "Establishing a Date for the Book of Daniel."; Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Book of Daniel: Evidence Relating to Persons and Chronology," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 19 no. 1, Spring (1981); Hasel, "The Book of Daniel Confirmed by the Dead Sea Scrolls."; Fox; Wenham, "Daniel: The Basic Issues."; Wilson, "The Book of Daniel and the Canon."; Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel: Second Series*; Harrison; Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*; Dillard and Longman; Steinmann; Miller; Baldwin; Young; Ferch. For a critical critique of the position of the conservative scholars see, Lester Grabbe, *Fundamentalism and Scholarship: The Case of Daniel*, ed. Barry P. Thompson, Scripture: Meaning and Method; Essays Presented to Anthony Tyrrell Hanson for His Seventieth Birthday (Hull, England: Hull University Press, 1987).

⁵⁶ Steinmann, 3; Harrison, 1107; Dillard and Longman, 347; Newton, 10.

division of genre within the book with chapters 1-6 being “tales or stories” and 8-12 being visions, leads to the question of its unity.⁵⁷ The division of the language within the book, Daniel 1:1-2:4a and chapters 8 to 12 being composed in Hebrew while sections 2:4b to 7:28 being in Aramaic, lends to the question of multiple authors.⁵⁸ The fact that the accounts in chapters 7-12 are in the first person and chapters 1-6 are in the third person is used to argue for a composite author.⁵⁹ Critical scholars argue for multiple redactors having a hand in the final form of the book of Daniel, with some even argue for up to 10 distinct authors for the book based on these observations.⁶⁰ It is mostly from the critical scholars that such arguments are raised for the disunity of this book;⁶¹ however even within both critical and conservative scholars its unity has been defended.⁶² Within the conservative and evangelical view, the book of Daniel is viewed as a unified work of a single author written about the 6th century BCE.⁶³ Firm bases can be seen in the discoveries and studies that have been made in the area of philology, history, and archaeology to establish the traditional and conservative views of the date and unity.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ Dillard and Longman, 347.

⁵⁸ Steinmann, 5-6.

⁵⁹ Collins, *Daniel: With an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, 28. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 24. Hartman and Di Lella, 3.

⁶⁰ Hartman and Di Lella, 13-14.

⁶¹ Ibid., 11-14. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 29-38. Harold L. Ginsberg, "The Composition of the Book of Daniel," *Vetus Testamentum* 4 no. 3, July 1954 (1954): 246-275.

⁶² Robert H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), xxxviii-xlvi. Harold H. Rowley, "The Unity of the Book of Daniel," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23, pt 1 (1950-1951): 233-273. Porteous, 120-121.

⁶³ Steinmann, 1-17; Miller, 22-43; Baldwin, 13-46; Young, 15-26; Harrison, 1105-1134; Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 421-447; Dillard and Longman, 329-352; Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel: Second Series*. Stefanovic.

⁶⁴ Waltke: 319-329; Archer, "Modern Rationalism and the Book of Daniel," 129-147; Vasholz: 315-321; Yamauchi, "Hermeneutical Issues in the Book of Daniel," 13-21; Yamauchi, "The Archaeological Background of Daniel," 3-16; Yamauchi, *The Greek Words in Daniel in the Light of Greek Influence in the*

Authorship

Steinman states, “perhaps no other OT prophetic book has been dissected and denied as the work of its putative author as Daniel has been.”⁶⁵ Many have seen several writers of the book of Daniel.⁶⁶ Early exponents in the 17th and 18th century who expressed this view, included Spinoza and Sir Isaac Newton.⁶⁷ Subsequently, critical scholars have been uniform in expounding for more than one author.⁶⁸ Arguments for this assertion of more than one author redacting the final form of the book of Daniel are the diversity of language,⁶⁹ genre,⁷⁰ and change in the narration from third to first person.⁷¹ Critical scholars have made suggestions to reconcile such issues by proposing for more than one author. However, such device is a known framework of a literary style and device in the Ancient Near Eastern works.⁷² Facing such evidence, some scholars

near East, 170-200; Mitchell and Joyce, 19-27; Kitchen, 31-79; Martin, 28-30; Hasel, "The Book of Daniel Confirmed by the Dead Sea Scrolls," 37-49; Fox: 335-350; Wenham, "Daniel: The Basic Issues," 49-52; Wilson, "The Book of Daniel and the Canon," 352-408; Hasel, "The Book of Daniel and Matters of Language: Evidences Relating to Names, Words, and the Aramaic Language," 211-225; Hasel, "Establishing a Date for the Book of Daniel," 84-164; Harrison, 1110-1134; Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 423-447; Dillard and Longman, 330-337; Steinmann, 1-19; Miller, 22-32; Baldwin, 13-46; Young, 15-26; Slotki, xii-xiii; Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel: Second Series*. These references are certainly not comprehensive but merely representative.

⁶⁵ Steinmann, 1. Wesselius states, “scholarly ideas on the origin and writing of the book of Daniel are probably more diverse than for most other biblical or no-biblical books...” Wesselius, 293.

⁶⁶ Harrison, 1107-1110.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1107; Newton, 10.

⁶⁸ Harrison, 1107-1110; Steinmann, 1-6.

⁶⁹ Baldwin, 39.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 46-59. John J. Collins, "Inspiration or Illusion: Biblical Theology and the Book of Daniel," *Ex Auditu* 6 (1990).

⁷¹ Collins, *Daniel: With an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*.

⁷² Harrison, 1109-1110. Harrison presents a brief summary which shows from growing knowledge of ANE literature showing these devices in operation. Baldwin, 38-40. Baldwin presents arguments against multiple authors based on internal coherence and cohesiveness, ANE literary devices showing the diverse

have looked for a modified view. As such, current scholarship may be thought to be dominated by a theory that the book came into its final form by a gradual process of composition and development.⁷³ However, conservative scholarship has staunchly seen evidence within the book for a single author. Internal evidence points to the author as “I, Daniel.” (Dan 7:15, 28; 8:1, 15, 27; 9:2; 10:2, 7; 12:5) In Dan 7:1, it states that Daniel “wrote the dream down.”⁷⁴ The New Testament spells out Daniel as the author of the book (Matt 24:15). It can be argued that “disinclination to take Daniel’s own words at their face value”⁷⁵ would alter the intended message of the author.

Critical scholars have confidently asserted that since the 19th century, scholarship has had “amazing consensus”⁷⁶ in accepting “unequivocally the Maccabean dating of the book”⁷⁷ of Daniel. Childs points to the commentary of S. R. Driver of 1900⁷⁸ as the book that “broke the back of the conservative opposition”⁷⁹ of the traditional views and having “established definitively the critical position.”⁸⁰ Collins wrote that “the great issues that made Daniel the focus of controversy for centuries were laid to rest” and “a broad

use of different styles within the work is seen in such works as the Law Code of Hammurabi, and the argument that the back ground is the same in the entire book of Daniel speaks against multiple writers being involved in the composition of the book,

⁷³ Newsom, 7. Seow, 7-9.

⁷⁴ Steinmann, 1.

⁷⁵ John Goldingay, *Story, Vision, Interpretation: Literary Approaches to Daniel*, ed. A. S. Van Der Woude, *The Book of Daniel* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1993), 309.

⁷⁶ Childs, 612.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Samuel R. Driver, *The Book of Daniel: With Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900).

⁷⁹ Childs, 612.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

consensus on several key issues has existed since”⁸¹ the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He asserts further that “in academic circles... the defeat of the Fundamentalist,”⁸² who held to the traditional view regarding the date and authorship of the book of Daniel has occurred. However, the traditional views regarding the date and authorship of the book of Daniel have not been abandoned and still are ably defended by many strong and respected scholars.⁸³ At the very least, we can affirm that “the weight of opinion is heavy on both sides”⁸⁴ and that recent research in “archaeology has not tipped the balance in favour of the critical view.”⁸⁵ It is not the intent of this study to argue this point definitively one way or another. It will be the position of this study that the book, in its current form, is from the pen of “Daniel the prophet”⁸⁶ written in a unified form in the 6th to 5th century BCE. As stated previously, the questions of unity, authorship and date cannot be separated. One conclusion leads to another and the theology and its message inevitably flow from these presuppositions. This paper will now focus on the central

⁸¹ Collins, "Current Issues in the Study of Daniel," 2.

⁸² Ibid., 1.

⁸³ Waltke: 319-329; Archer, "Modern Rationalism and the Book of Daniel," 129-147; Vasholz: 315-321; Yamauchi, "Hermeneutical Issues in the Book of Daniel," 13-21; Yamauchi, "The Archaeological Background of Daniel," 3-16; Yamauchi, *The Greek Words in Daniel in the Light of Greek Influence in the near East*, 170-200; Mitchell and Joyce, 19-27; Kitchen, 31-79; Martin, 28-30; Hasel, "The Book of Daniel Confirmed by the Dead Sea Scrolls," 37-49; Fox: 335-350; Wenham, "Daniel: The Basic Issues," 49-52; Wilson, "The Book of Daniel and the Canon," 352-408; Hasel, "The Book of Daniel and Matters of Language: Evidences Relating to Names, Words, and the Aramaic Language," 211-225; Hasel, "The Book of Daniel: Evidence Relating to Persons and Chronology," 37-49; Hasel, "Establishing a Date for the Book of Daniel," 84-164; Harrison, 1110-1134; Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 423-447; Archer, *The Aramaic of the "Genesis Apocryphon" Compared with the Aramaic of Daniel*, 160-169; *ibid.*; Dillard and Longman, 330-337; Steinmann, 1-19; Miller, 22-32; Baldwin, 13-46; Young, 15-26; Slotki, xii-xiii; Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel: Second Series*; Steinmann, 6.

⁸⁴ Slotki, xiii.

⁸⁵ Ibid. According to the Talmud B. Bat. 15a, “the men of the great assembly wrote ... Daniel...”

⁸⁶ Matt 24:15

question stated as the purpose statement. In order to further this line of focus, this study will to turn to the historical background.

Theme

While studies on the theme of Daniel have revolved around the concept of “resistance to assimilation and persecution”⁸⁷ others have concluded “that one of the major theological meanings of the sanctuary was the reign of God”⁸⁸ or that “all components of the book agree on the ultimate sovereignty of the God of the Jews.”⁸⁹ Others have argued that one of the major themes of the book of Daniel is the sanctuary or temple theme.⁹⁰ Another theme that has been put forth is that the stories offer an example of “resistance to cultural and spiritual assimilation of a minority by a dominant foreign power,”⁹¹ and that especially Daniel 1-6 “speaks of surviving and flourishing in a foreign land, in a hostile

⁸⁷ Barry A. Jones, "Resisting the Power of Empire: The Theme of Resistance in the Book of Daniel," *Review and Expositor* 109, Fall (2012): 542. It is logical that if, the book of Daniel is a 2nd second century work, then it would revolve around the persecution of the Jews at the time of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the year 168 to 164 BCE, then such a theme would be rational.

⁸⁸ Winfried Vogel, "Cultic Motifs and Themes in the Book of Daniel," *Journal Of The Adventist Theological Society* 7/1, Spring (1996): 28.

⁸⁹ Carol Newsom, "Political Theology in the Book of Daniel: An Internal Debate," *Review and Expositor* 109, Fall (2012): 558. As for the entire book's theme, the central theme may be summed up as "the sovereignty of the God of Israel over political and historical process" and "the complex relationship between knowledge and power." Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 38. Choon L. Seow, *The Rule of God in the Book of Daniel*, ed. Bernard F. Batto and Kathryn L. Roberts, David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004).

⁹⁰ Greg Goswell, "The Temple Theme in the Book of Daniel," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 55/3 (2012): 509-510. Carla Sulzbach argues that the temple "is the main theme that runs through the entire book." Carla Sulzbach, "From Here to Eternity and Back: Locating Sacred Spaces and Temple Imagery in the Book of Daniel" (PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 2009), 129.

⁹¹ Referring especially to Daniel 1-6. Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *Daniel*, ed. Leander E. Keck, The New Interpreter's Bible, vol. 7 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996), 20. W. Lee Humphreys, "A Lifestyle for Diaspora: A Study of the Tales of Esther and Daniel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (1973). Danna Nolan Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: A Story of Stories in Daniel 1-6* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988). Philip Chia, *On Naming the Subject: Postcolonial Reading of Daniel 1*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah, The Postcolonial Biblical Reader (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 171-185.

environment.”⁹² The theme of the book is significant as the theme of the first chapter sets the stage for the rest of the book.⁹³ While each of the previously stated themes have some justifications, defilement and the resistance of defilement is argued as the ultimate theme of the first chapter and ultimately the entire book of Daniel. Also., the theme can be summarized in the statement, “final victory will be granted to those who remain faithful to God.”⁹⁴

Text

Many ancient versions of the text of Daniel are attested. It can be said that there is an “unusual amount of variation both in the K (Kethibh- the written Hebrew text) and the Q (Qere- the Hebrew text to be read out loud) and in variant readings of the ms (manuscript).”⁹⁵ However, many of the variations can be said to correspond to what is actually found in the current version. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls that were discovered at Qumran, at least eight Daniel scrolls were discovered. Of these, 4QDan^c is thought to be no later than the second century BCE.⁹⁶ Among all the other books of the Bible, this manuscript has the distinction of being closest to its autograph than any others,⁹⁷ this

⁹² Smith-Christopher, 20-21.

⁹³ Goswell: 509, 511. Luc Dequeker, *King Darius and the Prophecy of Seventy Weeks, Daniel 9*, ed. A. S. Van Der Woude, *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1993), 209. Dequeker states that “the problem of the temple stays at the centre of the eschatological expectations of Daniel.”

⁹⁴ Paul Z. Gregor, "Daniel's Message to a Modern Man," *Journal Of The Adventist Theological Society* 21/1-2 (2010): 99, 112-113.

⁹⁵ Lucas, 19.

⁹⁶ Peter W. Flint, *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation*, *Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 108.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

according to those who see the date of the writing to be in the Maccabean period (about 165 BCE). As such, it is argued that within about 40 years of the writing of Daniel, it was viewed as authoritative and popular.⁹⁸ This proximity of dates is one strong reason for the argument that the date of the composition is from an earlier period. Traditionally, the date of the composition of the book has been placed in the sixth century BCE and “Daniel would have completed his prophecy as an old man soon after the last dated event recorded in the book (10:1; 536 B.C.)”⁹⁹ The Qumran materials can be said to argue for an early date for the book of Daniel for several reasons: (1) the large number of copies found at Qumran, (2) the unusually early date for the manuscript 4QDan^c as noted previously, (3) the fact that the “Florilegium” (4QFlor) has a quote “written in the book of Daniel the prophet” which indicates its early canonical status.¹⁰⁰ “On the whole, the Qumran discoveries provide powerful evidence of the antiquity of the textual tradition of the MT.”¹⁰¹ Greek versions come to us in the form of the Septuagint (100 BCE), which was according to Jerome, in the fourth century, replaced by the Theodotion’s version (200 CE) because it “greatly differs from the Hebrew original.”¹⁰² The translations of Aquila and Symmachus are attested from quotations from Suro-Hexapla and patristic quotes.¹⁰³ In the second century a revision of the Theodotion’s text is known possibly drawing on the Septuagint, Aquila, and Symmachus.¹⁰⁴ Other versions that attest to the

⁹⁸ Abegg, Flint, and Ulrich, 482.

⁹⁹ Miller, 23.

¹⁰⁰ Hasel, "Establishing a Date for the Book of Daniel," 148. Allegro, 54.

¹⁰¹ Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 3.

¹⁰² Ibid., 3-4. Jerome, 48. Lucas, 19.

¹⁰³ Lucas, 20.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

text of Daniel are the Old Latin, Jerome's translation into Latin about 389 and 392 CE, Peshitta version a Christian translation in the third century, Coptic version, Sahidic, Bohairic, Arabic, Armenian version, Georgian version, and the Ethiopic version.¹⁰⁵ These other versions are usually a translation of the earlier Greek or Hebrew texts.

Genre

J.J. Collins offers six categories as an overall classification of Daniel 1-6:

Märchen, Legend, Court Tale, Aretalogical Narrative, Midrash, and Story or Tale.¹⁰⁶

Humphries suggests the form of the narrative in Daniel 1-6 as "that of the tale of the courtier."¹⁰⁷ Others have seen simply a folktale in Daniel 1-6.¹⁰⁸ John Goldingay sees in Daniel 1-6 a combination of features such as a midrash, court-tale, legend, aretalogy and stories, romance, myth, quasi prophecy, apocalyptic.¹⁰⁹ Goldingay also states that "there

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Collins defines each: 1) "Märchen is a traditional narrative set in a mysterious world of fantasy, provoking sympathy for the principle figure." 2) "Legend may be defined as a narrative primarily concerned with the wonderful and aimed at edification." 3) "Court Tale ... is the story of adventures at a royal court." 4) "Aretalogical Narrative ... is simply an elaborate legend artfully told." 5) Midrash starts with the biblical text and furthers it as a way of explaining the text. 6) "Story or Tale ... a narrative which creates interest by arousing tension or suspense and resolving it." Collins, *Daniel: With an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, 41-42. The limit of this thesis being focused to Daniel 1, no further elaboration will be made on the discussions around the genre of the rest of the book of Daniel.

¹⁰⁷ Humphreys: 217. Humphreys also labels two types, "tales of court conflict" and "tales of court contest." However, chapter 1 does not fit either category.

¹⁰⁸ Susan Niditch and Robert Doran, "The Success Story of the Wise Courtier: A Formal Approach," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96/2 (1977). Pamela J. Milne, "Narrative Structure in Daniel 1-6: An Analysis of Structure in a Group of Old Testament Texts, Based on Vladimir Propp's Morphology of the Folktale" (McGill University, 1982). Goldingay argues that although chapters 3 and 6 may come "closest to folk material" chapters 1 and 2 are "far away from it." Goldingay, *Story, Vision, Interpretation: Literary Approaches to Daniel*, 300.

¹⁰⁹ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 6-8, 320-322. Danna Nolan Fewell seems to take an eclectic approach. Fewell sees not one genre but a mixture, typical and non-typical elements in the narratives. She argues that the structure is "paratactically constructed - one plot line is linked with another plot line which is linked with another and so forth." Fewell, 13-14.

is indeed no one method of study appropriate to all texts, and no one method which will give an audience access to all features of any single text, certainly not Daniel.”¹¹⁰ Wills has posited that chapter 1-6 are “court tales” or “court legends.”¹¹¹ Court tales has been widely accepted as the best categorization of the narratives.¹¹² Within critical scholarship, views vary regarding the genre or categorization of chapter 1-6 of Daniel. Goldingay probably sets the middle ground of critical scholars when he states that the “stories belong somewhere on the continuum between historiography and imaginative writing.”¹¹³ However, the traditional view asserts that “the book of Daniel purports to be serious history.”¹¹⁴ This view holds to the position that “the book consist primarily of history, prophecy, and apocalyptic.”¹¹⁵ The book has been seen to form divisions: chapter 1-6 being history with a prophecy in chapter 2 and chapter 7-12 being “prophetic-apocalyptic.”¹¹⁶ Critical scholars admit that “there is no passage in Daniel 1-6 that is necessarily understood as an allusion to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes or is now generally accepted as such.”¹¹⁷ It must be admitted that the message of the narratives fits

¹¹⁰ Goldingay, *Story, Vision, Interpretation: Literary Approaches to Daniel*, 313.

¹¹¹ Lawrence M. Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King: Ancient Jewish Court Legends* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 75-81. For a discussion of court tales from an evangelical perspective, Richard D. Patterson, "Holding on to Daniel's Court Tales," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 36/4 (1993).

¹¹² Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 42. For a discussion of the different genre and specific court tales categorization see, Lucas, 22-31.

¹¹³ Goldingay, *Story, Vision, Interpretation: Literary Approaches to Daniel*, 313.

¹¹⁴ Young, 25.

¹¹⁵ Miller, 45.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 33.

best with the time of the exile and not the Maccabean era.¹¹⁸ This thesis will take the position that Daniel and his friends were part of the exile experience of Israel in the sixth century BCE and the first chapter is a historical narrative of their experience.¹¹⁹

Translation

In this section, I will offer my own translation of the Masoretic text of Daniel 1. The translation will be a more of a literal rendering.

Verse 1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babel came to besiege upon it.

2 The Lord gave into his hand Jehoiakim king of Judah, with part of the vessels of the house of God, and he brought them to the land of Shinar to the house of his god and he brought the vessels to the treasure-house of his god.

3 Then the king said to Ashpenaz the chief of his officials that he bring from the sons of Israel even of the royal seed and from the nobles.

4 Young men who were without any blemish, pleasant in appearance, and skillful in all wisdom, and skillful in knowledge, perceptive in thought, and who were capable of serving in the king's palace and to teach them the letters and the language of the Chaldeans.

¹¹⁸ Humphreys observes regarding Daniel chapter 1-6, "as a series of tales these would not, in and of themselves, be at home in Palestine in the crisis of the period of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and it is difficult to understand how they could have been created at that period when the line between things Jewish and things pagan was being so sharply drawn. For in these tales the possibilities of life in contact and interaction with things foreign is affirmed; there has been no polarization of the situation." Humphreys: 221.

¹¹⁹ Goldingay does not agree that the stories are historiography but "the stories reflect historical experiences and events." Goldingay, *Daniel*, 321.

5 The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's portion and from his wine which he drank, and that they should be nourished for three years that at the end they might stand before the king.

6 Now among them were from the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

7 The chief of the officials set names to them: and he set to Daniel, Belteshazzar and to Hananiah, Shadrach and to Mishael, Meshach and to Azariah, Abednego.

8 But Daniel set upon his heart that he would not defile himself from the king's portion and from his wine which he drank, therefore he requested of the chief of the officials that he might not defile himself.

9 Now God gave Daniel favor and compassion before the chief of the officials.

10 The chief of the officials said to Daniel, I fear my lord the king who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking grim in comparison from the others who are your age then you will endanger my head with the king.

11 Then Daniel said to the steward that the chief of the officials appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

12 Please test your servants ten days. Let them give to us from seed-bearing foods to eat and water to drink.

13 Then observe our appearance and the appearance of the youth who have eaten the king's portion then according to what you observe, do with your servants.

14 So he listened to them concerning this matter and tested them for ten days.

15 At the end of ten days they appeared healthier and fatter in flesh than all the youth who ate from the king's portion.

16 So the steward took away their portion and the wine which was their drink and he gave them seed-bearing food.

17 Now as for these four youths, God gave to them knowledge and skillfulness in all literature and wisdom, as for Daniel, he had understanding in all vision and dreams.

18 At the end of the time, that the king had said to bring them, the chief of the officials brought them before Nebuchadnezzar.

19 The king spoke with them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; so they stood before the king.

20 In every matter of the art of reasoning that the king sought from them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom.

21 And it was that Daniel remained until the first year of King Cyrus.

Literary Structure

The structure of the first chapter of Daniel can be arranged in a diagram as put forth by Goldingay:

A verse 1-2 Babylon overcomes Israel.

B verse 3-7 young men taken to train.

C verse 8 Daniel resists defilement.

D verse 9-14 Test given.

D₁ verse 15 Test triumphant.

C₁ verse 16 Daniel avoids defilement.

B₁ verse 17-20 young men triumphant in training.

A₁ verse 21 Daniel survives until after Babylon.¹²⁰

Lucas puts forth a simpler structure:

A Historical Introduction (1-2).

B The young men taken for training (3-7).

C The story of the test (8-16).

B¹ The young men excel in their training (17-20).

A¹ Historical conclusion (21).¹²¹

Lucas would see the center of the chapter revolving around verses 8-16 with verse 8 as the beginning verse of the apex.

Newsom composes the first chapter in a series of balanced scenes with the beginning and the ending sections introducing and resolving the conflict seen in the center of the narrative.¹²²

A. Introduction: (1:1-2)

B. Nebuchadnezzar's instruction to the head of staff concerning the Israelites (1:3-5)

C. Encounter between the head of staff and Daniel (1:6-10)

C¹. Encounter between Daniel and the supervisor (1:11-17)

B¹. Nebuchadnezzar's interview of the trainees (1:18-19)

A¹. Conclusion: Proleptic overview of chapter 1-6 with concluding historical note (1:20-21)¹²³

¹²⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹²¹ Lucas, 49.

¹²² Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 39.

¹²³ Ibid.

Stefanovic structures the first chapter as a story that is concentric and “clearly built on a reversal from defeat to triumph.”¹²⁴

1. Defeat (verses 1-2)
2. Training (verses 3-5)
3. Resistance (verse 6-16)
4. Triumph (verse 17-21)¹²⁵

The resistance of Daniel is the key to this section that allows for their triumph. The 8th verse being at the crux of the matter.

Doukhan sees a structure that can be diagrammed below:

In this structure we see the center or crossroad of the chapter occurring around verse 8.

This would indicate that the content of verse 8 is the turning point of the message of

¹²⁴ Zdravko Stefanovic, *Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise, Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2007), 45.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile*, 22.

chapter 1. Goldingay comments that in verse 8, “for the first time in the book an Israelite becomes the subject of a main verb.”¹²⁷ Again, commenting on this point of the story, Goldingay points out that, “the story begins that reversal of movement that characterizes chap. 1 and the book as a whole.”¹²⁸ The narrative can be said to reverse here when Daniel and his friends resist the king’s food in verse 8. Therefore, it can be stated that the central scene of the chapter revolves around verses 8-13.¹²⁹ The central theme that sums up their resistance is in their refusal to be defiled.¹³⁰ It is as a result of this resistance that Daniel and his friends find victory also in chapter 2, 3, 6.¹³¹

As for the structure of the book as a whole, Hamilton proposes the structure as:

1 Exile to the unclean realm of the dead

2 Four kingdoms followed by the kingdom of God

3 Deliverance of the trusting from the fiery furnace

4 Humbling of proud king Nebuchadnezzar

5 Humbling of proud King Belshazzar

6 Deliverance of the trusting from the lions’ den

7-9 Four kingdoms followed by the kingdom of God

10-12 Return from exile and resurrection from the dead¹³²

¹²⁷ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 11.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 14. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 39.

¹³¹ Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 38-39.

¹³² Hamilton, 83.

The structure of the book can also be seen as a dual chiasm with the central chapter 7 being the bridge that holds both halves together.¹³³

A Vision of world kingdoms Ch. 2

B Faithful tested Ch. 3

C Judgment on a king Ch. 4

C₁ Judgment on a king Ch. 5

B₁ Faithful tested Ch. 6

A₁ Vision of world kingdoms chi 7

A Coming of the One “like the son of man” Ch. 7

B Clash of the east and west Ch. 8

C Revelation about the “Anointed One” Ch. 9

C₁ Vision of a Celestial (Divine) Being Ch. 10

B₁ Clash of the north and south Ch. 11

A₁ The rise of Michael Ch. 12¹³⁴

Lenglet was the first to demonstrate the chiastic structure in Daniel 2-7.¹³⁵ Since then a number of scholars have proposed other arrangements.¹³⁶ Thereafter, Steinmann was the first to recognize the fact that there are two chiasms that are interlocked around

¹³³ Stefanovic, *Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise, Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 29.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Lenglet. Steinmann, 22.

¹³⁶ John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), 11-14. Baldwin, 59-63. André LaCocque, *Daniel in His Time* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 8-12.

chapter 7.¹³⁷ As such he points out that “chapter 7 serves as the hinge connecting the two parts of the book” and that the author therefore highlighted the chapter as the “pivotal chapter of the entire book.”¹³⁸ As stated previously, chapter 1 has been generally agreed and viewed by scholars that it should be seen as an introduction to the entire book of Daniel.¹³⁹ The first chapter “presents the characters and the themes that will be important throughout Daniel.”¹⁴⁰ While studies on the theme of Daniel have revolved around the concept of “resistance to assimilation and persecution”¹⁴¹ or “the sanctuary [as] the reign of God”¹⁴² or “the ultimate sovereignty of the God of the Jews”¹⁴³ or the sanctuary or temple theme.¹⁴⁴ An understanding of the theme of the book is significant. As stated previously, the theme of the first chapter sets the stage for the rest of the book.¹⁴⁵ It will be the position of this paper that the theme is that the “final victory will be granted to

¹³⁷ Steinmann, 22.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 23.

¹³⁹ Collins, *Daniel: With an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, 44. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 38. Hartman and Di Lella, 131. Miller, 55. Longman III, 42. Seow, *Daniel*, 20. Steinmann, 77. Porteous, 24. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 8. LaCocque, *The Book of Daniel*, 24. Stefanovic, *Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise, Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 43. Ford states, “All the major themes to be developed later by narrative and vision are present in this introductory passage,” Desmond Ford, *Daniel* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1978), 75.

¹⁴⁰ Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 38.

¹⁴¹ Jones: 542. It is logical that, if the book of Daniel is a 2nd second century work, then it would revolve around the persecution of the Jews at the time of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the year 168 to 164 BCE, then this theme would be rational.

¹⁴² Vogel: 28.

¹⁴³ Newsom, “Political Theology in the Book of Daniel: An Internal Debate,” 558. As for the entire book’s theme, the central theme may be summed up as “the sovereignty of the God of Israel over political and historical process” and “the complex relationship between knowledge and power.” Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 38. Seow, *The Rule of God in the Book of Daniel*.

¹⁴⁴ Goswell: 509-510. Sulzbach argues that the temple “is the main theme that runs through the entire book.” Sulzbach, 129.

¹⁴⁵ Goswell: 509, 511. Dequeker, 209. Dequeker states that “the problem of the temple stays at the centre of the eschatological expectations of Daniel.”

those who remain faithful to God.”¹⁴⁶ This structure and theme is first introduced in the struggle to resist defilement in chapter 1.

Historical Background

The Book of Daniel comprises the divine revelation as it relates to the life and circumstances of Daniel. In order to better understand the life and circumstances of Daniel, we must first consider the divine act of the exile in the history of God’s redemptive acts.¹⁴⁷ Israel as a nation was chosen as God’s chosen people with the call of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3). A covenant relationship was made with Abraham and his posterity, Israel, who was to inherit “the sacred trust of being God’s chosen representatives on earth (Heb 11:9).”¹⁴⁸ A promise of salvation for the entire human race was planned thru these chosen people (John 4:22) who were to be “messengers of salvation to all men” (Gen 12:2, 3; 22:18; Isa 43:10; Gal 3:8,16, 18).¹⁴⁹ It was at Mt. Sinai that God entered a covenant relationship with the nation of Israel (Ex 19:1-8; 24:3-8; Deut 7:6-14).¹⁵⁰ The covenant of Sinai was a covenant of choice between life or death and a blessing or a curse (Deut 30:15-20).¹⁵¹ The nation was set as a theocratic nation and the sanctuary was designated as God’s dwelling place among His people (Ex

¹⁴⁶ Gregor: 99, 112-113.

¹⁴⁷ Young, 15.

¹⁴⁸ Francis D. Nichol, *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Rev. ed., 7 vols., vol. 4 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1976), 26.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ralph W. Klein, *Israel in Exile: A Theological Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 4.

25:8).¹⁵² It represented His will to dwell among His people (Ex 15:17; 25:8; 29:45-46). As a result, the sanctuary was understood as representing God's presence among His people. This was central to the thought of the Jews.¹⁵³ Ultimately, the temple was seen as "the sacred precinct ... being located at the cosmic center of the universe, at the place where heaven and earth converge and thus from where God's control over the universe is effected"¹⁵⁴ (Ps 48:1-4; Ps 78:69-70; Ps 96:6, 9, 10). Mt Zion was the location designated as the location of the sanctuary (Ps 74:2; Ps 132:13-14; 135:21; Isa 8:18; Isa 18:7; Ps 2:6; Ps 99:1-2; Ps 110:2). The priesthood and the sanctuary service was set up as an object lesson for the ultimate symbol of Jesus Christ and His ministry (Heb 5:1; 8:3; 9:1-10; 10:1-12). Within this relationship, the holiness code was set by God. It may be a surprise to some that this is limited to a few codes that are enjoined to holiness: the Priesthood (Exo 19:6), Idolatry (Lev 20:6-7, Deut 7:4-6, Deut 14:1-2), and the Dietary laws (Exo 22:31, Lev 11:44-47, Lev 20:22-26, Deut 14:4-21).¹⁵⁵ Within the divine acts of God, distinctions are made and seen in the Bible. From the first chapters of the Bible to the last, God makes distinctions. Distinctions are seen in the sanctification of the Sabbath, God's call of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God distinguishing the nation of Israel as His chosen people, dietary food laws, and ultimately the Judgment of God at the end of the ages, these among other examples. He calls upon His people to imitate His actions, *imitatio dei*. We are not called to act on our own will but to follow His will. We are

¹⁵² Nichol, 26.

¹⁵³ Carol Meyers, *Temple, Jerusalem*, ed. David N. Freedman, 6 vols., Anchor Bible Dictionary, vol. 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 359.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, ed. David N. Freedman, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 730.

called to exercise our free will to choose to follow God's will. Among this is the call to distinguish between the clean and unclean animals in Lev 11. Enjoined upon this act is the association made by God with holiness. Lev 10:10 states "make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean." It is in the act of distinguishing between what is declared clean and unclean by God, that God declares holiness. Lev 11:44-47 states,

For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy... For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy...to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the edible creature and the creature which is not to be eaten.¹⁵⁶

We read again in Lev 20:22-26,

You are therefore to keep all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them, so that the land to which I am bringing you to live will not spew you out. Moreover, you shall not follow the customs of the nation which I will drive out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I have abhorred them. Hence I have said to you, You are to possess their land, and I Myself will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am the Lord your God, who has separated you from the peoples. You are therefore to make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and you shall not make yourselves detestable by animal or by bird or by anything that creeps on the ground, which I have separated for you as unclean. Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.

For some, this may seem as a trivial matter. However, one must recognize that the first sin can also be seen as trivial. The first man and woman failed to distinguish the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In the creation story, we see God distinguishing the food that is allowed and the food that is forbidden (Gen 1:29-30, 2:16-17, Gen 3:2-3).

¹⁵⁶ Unless otherwise stated the biblical references are from the NASB.

God called for man to distinguish between these two (Gen 2:16-17). In the biblical text, no clear reference is made as to what differentiates between the allowed and the forbidden fruits. Both the allowed fruits of the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of the good and evil came from the same ground (Gen 2:9). No difference in the two fruits of the two trees can be deduced from the text except for God's pronouncement. Within the texts, we see that both the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil came from the same ground, it was good for food, pleasing to the sight or delight to the eyes and the knowledge of good and evil was mistaken for wisdom (Compare Gen 2:9 and Gen 3:6). What the woman sees in Gen 3:6 is the reaction that is occurring in the mind of the woman and not in the fruit itself.¹⁵⁷ It is clear that it was this lack of distinguishing of what was allowed and what was forbidden that led to the separation from their maker (Gen 3:11). Perhaps, said in another way, this led to their impurity or defilement, which is equal to death (Gen 3:17-19).¹⁵⁸ The lessons are clear, being faithful to God's command, however trivial it may seem, is what ultimately gives life or salvation.

Eventually the covenant was broken by Israel (Jer 31:32; Heb 8:8-12). As a result, God's wrath in judgment was "manifested toward His chosen people"¹⁵⁹ for their "failure

¹⁵⁷ The text indicates that both the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil came from the same ground, was good for food, pleasing to the sight or delight to the eyes and the knowledge of good and evil was mistaken for wisdom. The distinction being that God commanded that they distinguish between these at the cost of life.

¹⁵⁸ Jiří Moskala, *The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals in Leviticus 11: Their Nature, Theology, and Rationale: An Intertextual Study*, Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 2000), 364-365.

¹⁵⁹ Young, 15.

which had so marked Israel's history."¹⁶⁰ God's judgment was executed by Nebuchadnezzar when "he destroyed Jerusalem, plundered the Temple and deported many of the inhabitants."¹⁶¹ In the eyes of the people of Israel, the exile was seen as God's judgment (Jer 25:9, 27:6).

The exile for the nation of Israel should be regarded as a period of God's indignation, anger or wrath of God as it "manifested toward His chosen people."¹⁶² Daniel regards this period as the "period of indignation" (Dan 8:19). Isaiah describes it in similar terms, "Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger, and the staff in whose hands is My indignation" (Isa 10:5). Again, a few verses later, he writes, "for in a very little while My indignation against you will be spent and My anger will be directed to their destruction" (Isa 10:25). God's purpose was for the people to be "high above all nations of the earth" (Deut 28:1). The desired result was for "all the nations" to witness their temporal and spiritual prosperity and call them "blessed" and they were to "be a delightful land" (Mal 3:12). These terms were based on conditions or a covenant between God and His people (Deut 4:6-9; 7:12-15; 28:1-14). The covenant of God with His people has been articulated on several different times and occasions in the Old Testament.

I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth.

¹⁶⁰ Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), 49. Brueggemann states the exile "could be understood ... theologically as the end of Yahweh's patience with this people... the biblical literature ... focuses deliberately and almost exclusively on the latter theological point. Thus, Babylonian expansionism is subordinated to and explained in terms of Yahweh's judgment (Jer 25:9, 27:6)." Walter Brueggeman, *Hopeful Imagination: Prophetic Voices in Exile* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 1.

¹⁶¹ Philip R. Davies, *Daniel*, Old Testament Guides (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 23. Smith-Christopher states, "the exile is correctly seen as the last event in a series that can be thought of as "the fall" of Israelite power..." Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1989), 17.

¹⁶² Young, 15.

(Gen 9:11)

And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing;
And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”
(Gen 12:1-3)

Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.
(Ex 19:6)

When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took *it* away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.
(2 Sam 7:13-16)

Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord, I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.
(Jer 31:31-34)

From the first, the response of the people was, “all that the Lord has spoken we will do!”

(Ex 19:8). Yet, the Bible is replete with stories of the failure of God’s people to the covenant. From the beginning, the nation of Israel was established as a theocracy.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Ibid.

God indicates that if the chosen nation followed His will then the blessings was to fall on the nation of Israel and then it was intended to extend to the rest of the world (see Lev 26; Deut 27-28).

He says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel;
I will also make You a light of the nations
So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth. (Isa 49:6)

I am the Lord, I have called You in righteousness,
I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You,
And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people,
As a light to the nations,
To open blind eyes,
To bring out prisoners from the dungeon
And those who dwell in darkness from the prison. (Isa 42:6-7)

With these promises of blessings, also came warnings and consequences of sin and apostasy.

... this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going, and will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide My face from them, and they will be consumed, and many evils and troubles will come upon them; so that they will say in that day, is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us? But I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they will do, for they will turn to other gods. (Deut 31:16-18)

The era of David and Solomon may be marked as “Israel’s golden age”¹⁶⁴ (1 King 10:1-

9). As apostasy, idolatry, disobedience and rebellion increased, prophet after prophet

¹⁶⁴ John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 217. Nichol, 31.

were sent to God's people as a reproach and warning of the coming calamity.¹⁶⁵ Such messengers as Elijah, Elisha, Micah, Amos and Hosea were sent to the nation with messages of warning and admonitions without success.¹⁶⁶ First the northern kingdom, which had already broken off from the southern kingdom of Judah shortly after the death of Solomon, was carried into Assyrian captivity about 722 BCE.¹⁶⁷ Then the warnings came to the land of Judah about their impending fall and eventual exile into a foreign land according to their faithfulness (Jer 18:7-10, 26:2-6, Zech 6:15, 2 Chr 36:16-17, Jer 22:6-9, Ezek 16:37, 7:2-15, 12:3-28, 36:18-23). Historical record speaks of the Neo-Babylonian dominance of this area starting with the capture of the Assyrian capital, Nineveh in 612 BCE.¹⁶⁸ When the last Assyrian stronghold of Haran fell to Nabopolassar in 610 BCE the road to the Levant was opened to him.¹⁶⁹ In 609 BCE, Neco II (610-594) marched to Haran to assist Asshur-uballit against the Babylonians, which failed.¹⁷⁰ It was in this setting that Josiah went out to stop Neco and his Egyptian army from marching through Judah, which failed and ultimately cost him his life (2 Kgs 23:29; 2 Chr 35:20-24).¹⁷¹ It could be said that the subjugation of Judah began here with Neco, who at the same time lost the battle of Haran to the Babylonians in the same year.

¹⁶⁵ Young, 15.

¹⁶⁶ Nichol, 31.

¹⁶⁷ Bright, 229-230; Michael Coogan, *Into Exile*, ed. Michael Coogan, *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (New York: Oxford University 1998), 244. Alfred J. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2009), 335.

¹⁶⁸ Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *King Nabonidus and the Neo-Babylonian Empire*, ed. Jack M. Sasson, 4 vols., *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, vol. vol 1 & 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 972.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Bright, 324-325.

¹⁷¹ Bill T. Arnold, *Who Were the Babylonians?* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 92.

Jeremiah recognized that the death of Josiah was the first step in the process that would end with destruction. With the death of Josiah the greatest spiritual protection against the destruction was removed. The kingdom of Judah fell under foreign domination and began to unravel... the slide to exile had begun.¹⁷²

For Israel, it may be argued that the reign of Babylon began at this time.¹⁷³ This would mark the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy from 609 to 539 BCE (2 Chr 36:20-23; Ezra 1:1). Eventually, in 605 BCE, Judah was conquered by the Babylonians with Nebuchadnezzar as its king by this time.¹⁷⁴ Jeremiah predicted that the exile would be for 70 years (Jer 25:1-11, 29:1, 10). The nation as a theocracy came to an end with the exile in Babylon.¹⁷⁵ The nation that was to be a light to the rest of the world was now under the judgment of God.¹⁷⁶ The failure was on the side of the people.¹⁷⁷ As such, the exile was seen as a judgment of God upon His people (Jer 25:9, 27:6).¹⁷⁸ The "exile

¹⁷² Nosson Scherman, *The Prophets: Kings* (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah, 2008), 419.

¹⁷³ Jer 25:11 speaks of, "these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years." Historians aver different times as the defining time of the start of the Babylonian empire. However, the general consensus would attribute the start of the Neo-Babylonian empire with Nabopolassar from 626-605 BCE. Nebuchadnezzar being attributed as the king who brought the empire to its zenith. Arnold, 91. Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East Ca 3000-323 Bc*, Blackwell History of the Ancient World, vol. 2d ed (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 276. Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East C. 3000-330 Bc*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (New York: Routledge, 1997), 589-590. Beaulieu, 969-972. William W. Hallo and William K. Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 143. Nebuchadnezzar, the crown prince, was already mentioned as commanding his own forces operating independently from the king's forces in 607 BCE, Donald J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1956), 20. Jewish sources and commentators argue that the 70 years does not necessarily require that the Jews exclusively be under the sovereignty of the Babylonian kings, Yosef Rabinowitz, *The Book of Ezra* (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah, 1984), 61-62.

¹⁷⁴ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, 25, 46; Van de Mieroop, 276-277; Arnold, 92; Miller, 43; Steinmann, 81; Longman III, 45; Young, 35; Hoerth, 362; Lawrence E. Stager, "The Fury of Babylon: Ashkelon and the Archaeology of Destruction," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 22/1 (1996): 58.

¹⁷⁵ Young, 16.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 17.

¹⁷⁷ Klein, 4. Jer 31:32.

¹⁷⁸ Ackroyd, 49. Brueggeman, 1.

meant death, deportation, destruction, and devastation.”¹⁷⁹ Even more, for Israel, it meant “tremendous religious disorientation.”¹⁸⁰ The loss of their land, king (Davidic Dynasty), and the temple¹⁸¹ was “tantamount to God’s abandonment”¹⁸² of Israel. However, the exile was a period of opportunity for a repentance or turning back of His people to God.¹⁸³ This time was not to be the complete end of the people of Israel (Jer 4:27, 5:18, 46:28).

For thus says the Lord,
The whole land shall be a desolation,
Yet I will not execute a complete destruction. (Jer. 4:27)

Yet even in those days, declares the Lord, I will not make you a complete destruction.
(Jer. 5:18)

O Jacob My servant, do not fear, declares the Lord,
For I am with you.
For I will make a full end of all the nations
Where I have driven you,
Yet I will not make a full end of you;
But I will correct you properly
And by no means leave you unpunished. (Jer. 46:28)

The exile would serve as an opportunity for “reorientation” towards God “that accommodates new growth and a new depth of relationship”¹⁸⁴ with God. It is “linked

¹⁷⁹ Klein, 2.

¹⁸⁰ Lee Beach, "A Spirituality of Exile: Responding to God's Absence," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* Vol. 10, no. 1 (2017): 34.

¹⁸¹ Klein, 3-8.

¹⁸² Beach: 34, 36.

¹⁸³ Young, 17. Beach: 49. Klein, 149-154.

¹⁸⁴ Beach: 49. Smith-Christopher writing about the impact of the exile on the people of Israel and its theological impact states, “that the exile was both catastrophic and transformative for Hebrew existence.” Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 32.

with God's judgment over man due to his abandonment of God's way, and with the return to God and his will."¹⁸⁵ It would also be a "witnessing opportunity" of the God of Israel to the heathen nations.¹⁸⁶ In the book of Daniel, God reveals His intent by His deliverance of His faithful who stay loyal to Him. The miracles wrought on behalf of those who remain faithful are seen in the stories of the book of Daniel; Daniel and his friends' refusal of the king's food and God honoring them with wisdom and understanding (Chap 1), the episode of deliverance of the wise men from the king's death threat (Chap 2), the episode of the deliverance from the fiery furnace (Chap 3), and Daniel's deliverance from the lion's den (Chap 6). God does not only reveal Himself to the Israelites, He reveals His sovereignty to all the nations that He is sovereign over all of man's affairs and its history.¹⁸⁷ This situation can be aptly summarized by the observation made by Rainer Albertz,

Of all the era in Israel's history, the exilic period represents the most profound caesura and the most radical change. Its significance for the subsequent history can hardly be overstated. Here the religion of Israel underwent its most severe crisis, but here too was laid the foundation for the most sweeping renewal... Here, too, the religion of Israel opened itself for the first time to the nations, a development that made possible the subsequent appearance of Christianity.¹⁸⁸

In the book, "Daniel is presented as the living embodiment of Israelite exile."¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ Hendrik J. Koorevaar, "The Exile and Return Model: A proposal for the Original Macrostructure of the Hebrew Canon," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57/3 (2014): 510.

¹⁸⁶ Young, 18.

¹⁸⁷ See Dan 2:27-28, 47; 3:17-18, 25, 28-29; 4:2-3, 34-37; 5:11, 18-22; 6:16, 20, 26-27. In all these episode, God is revealed or acknowledged by the faithful Israelites and by the pagan kings.

¹⁸⁸ Albertz Rainer, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 1.

¹⁸⁹ Ron Zvi, "Daniel as the Embodiment of the Exile and Redemption," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* Jan-Mar, no. 45/1 (2017): 23.

In the stories of the challenges that was faced by Daniel and his friends in exile, a lesson is revealed regarding God's ultimate plan.

We have ask the question, why has God allowed this to happen to His people? What is the response that God desires? How do the prophets of the time like Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Habakkuk, Zephaniah and Daniel understand the events of the exile that was predicted and experienced? The stories of Daniel and his friends help answer these questions. This study will focus on the first chapter of Daniel as an example of God's desired response from His people.

Daniel 1

It has been established that the first chapter of Daniel sets the stage of the rest of the book.¹ The central focus in the first chapter of Daniel is on the struggle against defilement for Daniel and his three friends. Why is defilement the central focus of this chapter? This paper will focus on the biblical concept of defilement as presented in this book of Daniel and the rest of the Old Testament. An exegesis of the entire first chapter of Daniel will be done. As the process of exegesis is performed such topics as the textual, linguistic, literary, historical, theological, interpretation, relevance, translation and my own contribution will be reviewed and discussed in the course of this paper.

¹ Collins, *Daniel: With an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, 44. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 38. Hartman and Di Lella, 131. Miller, 55. Longman III, 42. Seow, *Daniel*, 20. Steinmann, 77. Porteous, 24. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 8. LaCocque, *The Book of Daniel*, 24. Stefanovic, *Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise, Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 43. Ford states, "All the major themes to be developed later by narrative and vision are present in this introductory passage." Ford, 75. "There is considerable evidence... Daniel 1 was placed at the beginning of Daniel corpus to introduce what followed." Wills, 121.

Interpretation

Daniel 1:1 In the third year² of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar³ king of Babel came⁴ to besiege⁵ upon it.

The historical background of the book of Daniel will help enlighten an understanding of its message.⁶ Daniel lived during the final days of the kingdom of Judah.⁷ During this period the last five kings of Judah were first Josiah (640-609 BCE) who died at Megiddo in 609 BC. Josiah, trying to block the Egyptians from passing through Judah on their way to assisting Asshur-uballit against the Babylonians, died in battle. Josiah attempted this military endeavor against Egypt's Pharaoh Neco. It is significant that the warning not to interfere came from the Pharaoh Neco but ultimately this warning is attributed, "from the mouth of God" (2 Chr 35:22). The sweeping reforms of Josiah ended with his death. It is at this point that the nation of Judah can be argued to have started their exile.⁸ Then his son, Jehoahaz (2 Kings 23:30-34) became king for only

² (May 11-June 9) of 605 BCE. See below.

³ נְבוּכַדְרֶצְצַר Nabū-kudurru-ušur "Nabu has protected the son who will inherit" (HALOT s.v. נְבוּכַדְרֶצְצַר). Alternate spelling נְבוּכַדְרֶצְצַר or נְבֻכַדְרֶצְצַר in Daniel נְבוּכַדְרֶצְצַר elsewhere (BDB s.v. נְבוּכַדְרֶצְצַר).

⁴ בָּא "he came" Fewell observes that two points of view is represented here. From Nebuchadnezzar's point of view, it is his actions with the help of his gods that allows for his conquest. "He comes (bô'), he besieges (bô'), he takes (bô'), he places (bô')." Fewell, 35. But the narrator is clear that it is the Lord (אֱלֹהֵי) that gives (נָתַן) (vv. 2, 9, 17). The subtle use of the same verbs may imply that to Nebuchadnezzar that Daniel and his three friends were no more different than the capture of Jerusalem (v. 1), temple treasures (v.2), and the sons of Israel (v.3). The fourth most frequent verb in the OT used 43 times in Daniel and the most frequent verb indicating movement, Jenni, TLOT, s.v. "bô'".

⁵ וַיִּצֹר עָלֶיהָ to encircle, lay siege to (HALOT s.v. צָוַר I, 3), besiege (BDB s.v. צָוַר II,2). See Joüon 23b.

⁶ Miller, 43.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Although, Egypt subjugates Judah and sets up the king in Judah (2 Chr 36:3-4), the Babylonians defeated the last stronghold of Assyria with the victory at Haran. Therefore, Babylon may be recognized as

three months as the Egyptian pharaoh, Neco, deposed him and set Jehoiakim upon the throne (2 kings 23:34-24:6, Dan 1:1). He ruled from 609-597 BCE.⁹ During Nebuchadnezzar first campaign, shortly after defeating the Egyptians at Carchemish in the month of Ziv (May 11-June 9) of 605 BCE,¹⁰ he invaded and subdued Judah (Jer 46:2).¹¹ Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians after defeating the Egyptians at Carchemish, pursued them to Hamath¹² and “conquered the whole area of Hatti”¹³ which included “the whole area of Syria and Palestine.”¹⁴ One of the most significant battle for the Jews, which paved the way for Babylon to become a world power, was at the battle at Carchemish with the defeat of Egypt (Jer 25:8-14, 46:1-12, 36:29-31).¹⁵ It is at this time that Daniel and his friends were taken to Babylon as captives (Dan 1:2). As a result of the rebellion of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar sieged and captured Jerusalem in March

now the new ruling power over the land that now encompasses the Levant. Jewish sources and commentators argue that the 70 years does not necessarily require that the Jews exclusively be under the sovereignty of the Babylonian kings, Rabinowitz, 61-62. See fn 203.

⁹ Miller.

¹⁰ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, 25, 46. Van de Mieroop, 276-277. Arnold, 92. Siegfried H. Horn, "The Babylonian Chronicle and the Ancient Calendar of the Kingdom of Judah " *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 5.1 (1967): 20.

¹¹ Steinmann, 81-82; Longman III, 45; Young, 35; Miller, 43. It was probably shortly after the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish in May-June of 605 BCE that Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, 25.

¹² Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, 25, 46. Donald J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 17. Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient near East C. 3000-330 Bc*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (New York: Routledge, 1997), 590.

¹³ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, 25. Wiseman states that the geographical term “Hatti” at this time period included all of Syria and Palestine.

¹⁴ Ibid. Nebuchadnezzar apparently made efforts, 9 campaigns in a 10 year span, to solidify his dominion. Kuhrt, *The Ancient near East C. 3000-330 Bc*, 590-597. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, 25. Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 16-17.

¹⁵ “The victory had an immediate impact on sensitive opinion in the west. Jeremiah foresaw [sic] the Babylonians taking control over the whole of the west (25:8-14; 46:1-12) and emphasized defeat (36:29-31).” Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 15.

15/16 597 BCE.¹⁶ Jehoiakim died during this time and his son Jehoiachin reigned for three months before he and others including Ezekiel (Ezek 1:1-2) was taken captive to Babylon (2 Kings 24:6-16). Then Nebuchadnezzar replaced Jehoiachin with Zedekiah who reigned from 597-586 BCE (2 Kings 24:17-25:21). Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, which prompted him to come against Judah again and destroyed Jerusalem completely, this the third time on August 14, 586 BCE.¹⁷ As no clear mention is made in the discovered annals of Nebuchadnezzar campaigning in Judah in 605 BCE, critical scholars claim that “the historicity of the episode cannot be salvaged...”¹⁸ Therefore, critical scholars have dismissed the history of the first chapter of Daniel as “legend rather than historiography.”¹⁹ However, a lack of discovery of extra-biblical data does not preclude its authenticity as biblical history has proven its reliability over and over again.²⁰

¹⁶ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, 32-33.

¹⁷ E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 190.

¹⁸ Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 131.

¹⁹ Ibid., 133.

²⁰ William F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine*, First Edition ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1949), 127-128. “The excessive skepticism shown toward the Bible by important historical schools of the eighteenth-and-nineteenth centuries, certain phases of which still appear periodically, has been progressively discredited. Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details and has brought increased recognition to the value of the Bible as a source of history.” Again, Albright states, “there can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of Old Testament tradition.” William F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 2006), 176. Glueck stated, “it may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of Biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries. They form tesserae in the vast mosaic of the Bible’s almost incredibly correct historical memory.” Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1959), 31. Millar observes that, “On the whole ... archeological work has unquestionably strengthened confidence in the reliability of the Scriptural record. More than one archeologist has found his respect for the Bible increased by the experience of excavation in Palestine ... Archeology has in many cases refuted the views of modern critics. It has shown in a number of instances that these views rest on false assumptions and unreal, artificial schemes of historical development ... This

In May-June of 605 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar's victory over the Egyptians at Carchemish secured the dominance of Babylon.²¹ Nebuchadnezzar's father Nabopolassar died on the 8th of Ab (15/16 August, 605 BCE).²² Receiving news of his father's death, Nebuchadnezzar set the affairs of Egypt and other countries he had conquered up to this point in order and committed the captives he had taken from the Jews, Phoenicians, Syrians and of the other nations from the Egyptians and went in haste back to Babylon to secure the throne.²³ On September 6/7 of 605 BCE the young Nebuchadnezzar ascended the throne on the same day he arrived in Babylon.²⁴ Then he returned to his army to continue his campaign,²⁵ which turned out to be one of many under his kingship. He is certainly considered one the greatest early world leader.

Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest ruler of the Neo-Babylonian period and one of the most competent monarchs of ancient times. He brought Babylon to the zenith of its economic affluence and political power. With his death in 562 B.C., the glory of Babylon immediately began to fade, and within twenty-three years the empire had totally collapsed. Nebuchadnezzar played a large part in biblical history. With the possible exception of the pharaoh of the exodus, more is said of Nebuchadnezzar in the Old Testament than of any other foreign ruler.²⁶

Another author sums up the achievements of Nebuchadnezzar;

is a real contribution, and not to be minimized.” Millar Burrows, *What Means These Stones* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1957), 1, 291-292.

²¹ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, 25.

²² Ibid., 26, 46.

²³ Whiston, 781-782. (*Against Apion* 1.19)

²⁴ Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.- A.D. 75* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), 12; Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, 26-27, 46.

²⁵ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, 27, 46-47.

²⁶ Miller, 44.

What is remarkable is that in the space of thirty-five years at the most Nebuchadnezzar had gained an 'empire' larger than lost by Ashurbanipal of Assyria only ten years earlier. Not only so but his skillfully planned operations were followed up by a series of measures to govern and ensure law and order of the traditional Babylonian type. Harshness was mingled with mercy which made the Babylonian overlordship acceptable to many though deadly for the independence of most.²⁷

Amel-Marduk who was also called Evil-Merodach (2 kings 25:27-30 and Jeremiah 52:31-34) ruled Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar died. He ruled from 562 to 560 BCE.²⁸ Then Neriglissar who was also called Nergal-Sharezzer (Jeremiah 39:3,13) reigned from 560-556 BCE.²⁹ Then his son Labashi-Marduk became king for a few months in 556 BCE before he was assassinated.³⁰ Nabonidus then became the ruler from 556 BCE until the fall of the Babylonian empire to the Medo-Persian empire in 539 BCE.³¹ His son, Belshazzar, who was a coregent with Nabonidus is a prominent figure in Daniel 5.³²

Daniel speaks of Jehoiakim as the king of Judah in the third year of his reign (Dan1:1) when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem.³³ Critical scholars in the past have raised questions about the discrepancies between Daniel and Jeremiah's reckoning of the time of this conquest (compare Dan 1:1 with Jer 25:1). It is now known and recognized that two systems of accounting the reigns of the kings were in use at this time.³⁴ Daniel

²⁷ Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 41.

²⁸ Miller, 44.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 12.

³³ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, 26.

³⁴ Thiele, 43-60. Accession versus the nonaccession- year reckoning. Also, there was a difference of when the count for the year began. One system began the count from Tishri to Tishri versus Nisan to Nisan.

appears to have been using the ascension-year system that was in use in the Babylonian and Persian periods to denote their year of reign (Dan 1:1).³⁵ The difference with Jeremiah's reckoning as opposed to Daniel's can be compared here,

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon).
(Jer 25:1)

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.
(Dan. 1.1)

Jeremiah appears to have employed the nonaccession-year system which equates to the 4th year of Jehoiakim's reign.³⁶ Daniel appears to be utilizing the accession year system.³⁷ It is most likely at this time that Daniel and his three friends were taken captive to Babylon (Dan 1:1-2).³⁸ These events are significant since this background is important as it sets the stage for Daniel and his friends' acts in Daniel 1.

The narrative is set from the framework and perspective of the Israelites. As stated previously Daniel embodies, in his experience and life, the lessons for God's

³⁵ Steinmann, 80-81. Thiele, 43.

³⁶ Thiele, 182-184. The two systems of reckoning a king's reign was the accession year system or the non-accession year system. In the accession year system (also called "postdating"), the first year of the king was counted when he ruled through the first New Year's Day. According to this system, a king's first year does not start until he is king at the start of a New Year. The time before the first year would be counted as his accession year and the following year his first year. Babylon was one of the nations that utilized this system. In the non-accession system (also called "antedating"), the king's first year was counted the year he became king irrespective of when it occurred. Ibid., 43. Therefore, the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim in Dan 1:1 would be the same year as the fourth year of his reign in Jer 25:1

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Wiseman, 26. Miller, 43. Lucas, 37. Longman III, 45. Regarding 2 Chron 36:4-8 "it should be associated with the deportation of Daniel and his friends along with articles from the temple (36:7; Dan 1:1-3; Jer 46:2) in Jehoiakim's third year (605 BC) after Nebuchadnezzar defeated Neco at Carchemish." Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word, 1987), 299. Nichol, 20.

people.³⁹ The framework is set here by the careful choice of expression (בָּרַח)⁴⁰ that is used for the action of Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem. He came (Dan 1:1), he took (Dan 1:2), and he brought (Dan 1:3) the temple vessels from Jerusalem to the temple in the land of Shinar. From his point of view his god defeated the god of Jerusalem.⁴¹ However, the text makes it clear that, although the events are not in dispute, it is the God of Israel that gave בָּרַח (Dan 1:2, 9, 17) Jehoiakim and the temple vessels to Nebuchadnezzar.⁴² Nebuchadnezzar and his officials are associated with the verb בָּרַח (come) and God is associated with the verb בָּרַח (give).⁴³ The reader of the narrative knows what Nebuchadnezzar does not, namely, “the God of Israel is the effective agent in history.”⁴⁴ Appealing to the divine power and associating the events with the will of the God of Israel,⁴⁵ the exile is given a theological explanation.⁴⁶

³⁹ Zvi: 23.

⁴⁰ בָּרַח is used three times in the first three verses (Dan 1:1-3, Dan 1:18) to express the actions of Nebuchadnezzar. בָּרַח used 2570, is the fourth most frequently occurring verb in the Old Testament. Among several aspects of its use, one is the reference to a worshiper who comes to the sanctuary to pray and bring sacrifice (Deut 12:5; 31:11; 2 Sam 7:18; Isa 30:29; Jer 7:2, 10; Ps 5:7; 42:2), Martens, TWOT, s.v. “bô’.” It’s range of meaning includes the concept of “movement directed toward a certain goal in space and time.” Preuss, TDOT, s.v. “bô’.” or to “express physical movement toward a specific goal.” Arnold, NIDOTTE, s.v. “bô’.”

⁴¹ Chia, 173.

⁴² Fewell.

⁴³ Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 41.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Robert A. Anderson, *Signs and Wonders: A Commentary of the Book of Daniel*, International Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1984), 1. Longman summarizing these events as the “result of the will and action of God himself.” Longman III, 46.

⁴⁶ Fewell, 35-36.

2 The Lord⁴⁷ gave⁴⁸ into his hand Jehoiakim king of Judah, with part of the vessels of the house of God, and he brought them⁴⁹ to the land of Shinar⁵⁰ to the house of his god and he brought⁵¹ the vessels to the treasure-house⁵² of his god.

As previously noted, the contrast of Nebuchadnezzar's action בָּא (come) and God's actions נָתַן (give) are characterized by the deliberate use of these verbs in the first several verses. The implication is that although Nebuchadnezzar came "בָּא", it was God who gave "נָתַן".⁵³ From the opening of the book, the author is stressing the sovereign power of God in the course of his life and of events of Israel as a nation.⁵⁴ These first verses orient the reader to the rest of the book.⁵⁵ This sets the theme or conflict for the rest of the book.⁵⁶ Although it may seem that world leaders and powers "come",

⁴⁷ אֱלֹהֵי "Lord" 9:3-4, 7, 9, 15-17, 19 not יְהוָה 9:2, 4, 8, 10, 13-14, 20.

⁴⁸ נָתַן "he gave" see above in comments. The fifth most common verb in the OT, used 17 times in Daniel, Labuschagne, TLOT, s.v. "ntn." Arnold reminds us that, "the narrator's use of *nātan* ("he gave") in verse 2 is important for our reading of the chapter as a whole." Arnold, 234. It is Nebuchadnezzar who comes but it is God who gives.

⁴⁹ וַיָּבִיאוּ Hiphil imperfect with the third masculine plural suffix, "he brought them" probably refers to the previous verb נָתַן which the Lord gave into his hand, both "Jehoiakim" and the "vessels." Steinmann, 79. It could indicate that Nebuchadnezzar put both the king and the vessels into his temple. That would be unusual. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 4. Also, it may be too literalistic to imply that both were placed in his temple. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 134. 2 Chron 36:6-7 indicates that just the vessels were taken into his temple.

⁵⁰ שִׁנְעָר "Shinar" see above in comments. in the OT the territorial name שִׁנְעָר Shinar refers to the whole of Mesopotamia, with one exception Dan 1:2, Babylonia. (HALOT s.v. שִׁנְעָר § 3).

⁵¹ הֵבִיֵּא "cause to come, bring, bring near" (BDB s.v. הֵבִיֵּא Hiphil 2) "he brought."

⁵² בֵּית אוֹצָר אֱלֹהֵיו "treasury house of his god" (HALOT s.v. אוֹצָר).

⁵³ Bill T. Arnold, *Word Play and Characterization in Daniel 1*, Pun and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2000), 234.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 235. Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 322.

⁵⁶ Arnold, *Word Play and Characterization in Daniel 1*, 243.

“besiege”, “take” and seemingly control the events that effect God’s people and their lives, it is God who “gives” to achieve His purpose.⁵⁷ Another contrast is seen in the reference of “the house of God” against “the house of his god”⁵⁸ (twice in this verse).⁵⁹ The reference of “his god” as opposed to “the God” of Israel highlights the theological tension.⁶⁰ This wordplay in this narrative sets the stage for the entire chapter as well as the entire book of Daniel.⁶¹ The stage is set for the rest of the narrative, God’s will for His people and “asserting the providence and judgment of the sovereign God.”⁶² The vessels that were plundered were also taken from the “house of God.”⁶³ This signifies their seeming dominance over the Israelites.⁶⁴ The land of Shinar is a traditional name for Babylon.⁶⁵ The Tower of Babel was built in the land of Shinar (Gen 11:1-9).⁶⁶ In the Old Testament, Shinar had the meaning of “a place of false religion, self-will, and self-

⁵⁷ Fewell, 35. The author uses these verbs to highlight God’s sovereignty.

⁵⁸ Probably Marduk. Young, 38. Walvoord, 41. Slotki, 1.

⁵⁹ Daniel frequently uses repetition to highlight specific theological points. Here a contrast is made between the house of the true God and the false god of Babylon. Lucas, 47. Walvoord, 41. Miller, 58.

⁶⁰ Seow, *Daniel*, 22. Miller, 58.

⁶¹ Arnold, *Word Play and Characterization in Daniel 1*, 232.

⁶² Seow, *Daniel*.

⁶³ Some undoubtedly was shown by Hezekiah to the Babylonians (Isa 39:2,4). Isaiah also predicted that they would be taken to Babylon (Isa 39:6).

⁶⁴ “...the Babylonians were highly aware of the propaganda value of placing captured religious symbols “under” the Babylonian gods in the Babylonian imperial shrines, thus symbolizing the captivity of conquered gods as well as people.” Smith-Christopher, *Daniel*, 38. Keil, 535.

⁶⁵ Ran Zadok, “The Origin of the Name Shinar,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 74, issue 2 (1984). The Talmud explains that the land was named Shinar because the dead of the Flood were deposited there. b. Sabb. 113b.

⁶⁶ In the account of Gen 11, God wills for people to be scattered from the land of Shinar and He is said to confuse the language there. However, Nebuchadnezzar brings the people back to Shinar or Babylon and teaches them the language of Babylon. Seow, *Daniel*, 23. This symbolism of their situation would have not been lost to the readers of the book of Daniel.

aggrandizement (Gen 11:1-9, Zech 5:11).⁶⁷ Baldwin makes a note that, “the land of Shinar is a deliberate archaism... was synonymous with opposition to God; it was the place where wickedness was at home (Zech 5:11) and uprightness could expect opposition.”⁶⁸

3 Then the king said to Ashpenaz⁶⁹ the chief of his officials⁷⁰ that he bring⁷¹ from the sons of Israel⁷² even of the royal seed⁷³ and from the nobles⁷⁴. 4 Young men⁷⁵ who were

⁶⁷ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 15.

⁶⁸ Baldwin, 78.

⁶⁹ אֲשַׁפְנַז no certain etymology, (BDB s.v. אֲשַׁפְנַז) Possibly Old Persian *ashpinja*, “lodging.” Steinmann, 86. May be a proper name or title. Chief eunuch at the Babylonian court. (HALOT s.v. אֲשַׁפְנַז). Perhaps “inn-keeper” see LaCocque, *The Book of Daniel*, 21-22. Potiphar is called an “eunuch” even though he was married. Gen 39:1,7. According to Josephus these four young men were made eunuchs, Whiston, 278. Montgomery states that, “It is not necessary to draw the conclusion that the youth were made eunuchs.” Montgomery, 119. “The perfection here asserted is physical, as in Lev. xxi. 17. Such perfection could not belong to eunuchs.” Charles, 7. Probably should be considered in a general sense an official in charge of the captives well-being and care, as the text seems to indicate his role (see Dan 1:3, 7, 10, 18,). Sharon Pace, *Daniel*, ed. R. Scott Nash, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2008), 27.

⁷⁰ רֹבֹעַ קְרִיִּים “chief” (BDB s.v. רֹבֹעַ § II) “eunuch” (BDB s.v. קְרִיִּים) see above. “Chief of his [Nebuchadnezzar’s] eunuchs.” Steinmann, 86. See note below verse 7.

⁷¹ לְהָבִיא “to lead,” Keil, 535. “bring in,” Slotki, 2. “to bring,” as in verse 2 bringing in the vessels. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 5. See above in notes of verse 1.

⁷² בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל “Israel is the theocratic name of the chosen people.” Keil, 535. Stone arguing against R.H. Charles states, “Thus Daniel and his companions were the only Jews at court and the *seed royal* and *nobles* were non-Israelites.” Michael Stone, “A Note on Daniel 1.3,” *Australian Biblical Review* Dec (1959): 71.

⁷³ The Talmud implies that these were of royal descent. b. Sanh. 93b.

⁷⁴ הַפְּרָתָמִים Persian loanword *fratama*, (pl) aristocrat or noble. Only here and Esth 1:3; 6:9. (HALOT s.v. פְּרָתָמִים).

⁷⁵ According to Ibn Ezra, Daniel was about 15 years old. Slotki, 2. “designates youth of from fifteen to twenty years of age.” Keil, 535. LaCocque, *The Book of Daniel*, 22. “Teachable age.” Montgomery, 120.

without any blemish,⁷⁶ pleasant in appearance,⁷⁷ and skillful in all wisdom,⁷⁸ and skillful in knowledge,⁷⁹ perceptive in thought⁸⁰, and who were capable of serving⁸¹ in the king's palace and to teach them⁸² the letters and the language of the Chaldeans.⁸³

The king commands his officials to bring (בָּא, hiphil form)⁸⁴ from the some of the Israelites with specific characteristics, they must be: (a) of the royal family מְצֹרַע הַמְּלוּכָה,

⁷⁶ The Talmud says not even a scratch. b. Sanh. 93b. LaCocque reminds us that the priest and animals of sacrifice were to be without blemish (Lev 21:17-23; 22:17-25). Therefore he sees these four in a priestly context. LaCocque, *The Book of Daniel*, 27. Fewell sees an issue of sovereignty between God and the king. She asks are these four being offered as sacrifice along with Jerusalem, Jehoiakim, and the temple vessels being “sacrificed” to Nebuchadnezzar. Fewell, 170. Collins reminds us that מאום (usually spelled מום) is also found without cultic connotation (1 Sam 14:25 referring to Absalom and Prov 9:7 and Job 31:7 with a sense of moral “fault”. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 136-137. It was also expected that Babylonian diviners were to be “without blemish in body and limbs.” Wilfred G. Lambert, “Enmeduranki and Related Matters,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 21, no. (1967): 132.

⁷⁷ מְרָאָה characterizing the figure, the appearance, depends upon טוֹב point toward a more external evaluation (“pretty,”), Stoebe, TLOT, s.v. “*tób*.”

⁷⁸ מְשָׁכִילִים “skillful, intelligent.” Keil, 535. “skillful in all wisdom.” Slotki, 2. “have insight, comprehension.” (BDB s.v. שָׁכַל I, Hiphil, 3) “shrewdness, wisdom” (BDB s.v. חֲכָמָה). “sometimes used just to refer to ordinary intelligence and skill (Ex 35:35; Dan. 1:4), but even there sometimes the divine and moral wisdom is in view,” Goldberg, TWOT, s. v. “*hākam*.” מְשָׁכִילִים בְּכָל-חֲכָמָה “suitable for instruction in every type or art of wisdom” (HALOT s.v. שָׁכַל I.5). “particularly of the courtly skill of political advising (among the neighboring peoples)” Sæbø, TLOT, s.v. “*hkm*.”

⁷⁹ יָדָעִי דַעַת “having knowledge, showing understanding.” Keil, 535. “skillful in knowledge.” Slotki, 2. “discriminating in knowledge.” Hersch Goldwurm, *Sefer Daniyel Daniel: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and Rabbinic Sources* (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah, 1979), 62.

⁸⁰ וּמְבִינֵי מַדָּע “possessing a faculty for knowledge, strength of judgment.” Keil, 535. “Discerning in thought... able to convey their thoughts clearly and intelligently.” Slotki, 2. “Perceptive in learning... people who can articulate their knowledge and transmit it to others.” Quoting Ibn Ezra, “there are wise men who despair of bringing to their tongue what is in their mind.” Goldwurm, 62.

⁸¹ וְאִשָּׁר כֹּחַ כְּהֵם, לַעֲמֹד “in whom was strength” Keil, 535. “Had ability to stand.” Slotki, 2.

⁸² וּלְלַמְּדֵם “to teach.” Slotki, 2.

⁸³ סִפְרָא וּלְשׁוֹן כַּשְׁדִּים “the literature and language of the Chaldeans... the two constructed nouns, being analogous, have been taken as constituting a unit.” Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Roma, Italia: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2005), § 129 footnotes 4. “book... i.e. literature, the art of reading and writing.” Slotki, 2. The term Chaldeans probably refers to the “Babylonians” and “Babylonian sages.” Goldingay, *Daniel*, 16. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 137-139. see Jer 24:5, 25:12; Ezek 1:3; 2 kings 25:4; Dan 5:30, 9:1. The language of the Chaldeans may be Akkadian Cuneiform. Hallo and Simpson, 141.

⁸⁴ See interpretation above on verse 1 and 2.

and or nobility הַפְּרָתִּים, (b) without blemish מאומ, (c) pleasant in appearance טוֹבֵי מְרָאָה, (d) skillful in wisdom and knowledge יָדְעֵי דַעַת, (e) perceptive מְבִינֵי מַדָּע, (f) those who are capable of serving the king כֹּחַ בָּהֶם לְעֹמֵד הַמֶּלֶךְ. These characteristics makes it clear that the king wants to have those chosen that are of the very best of the captives of Israel.⁸⁵

These features are important as the test that is to come in the narrative revolves around maintaining these features.⁸⁶ The Bible rarely characterizes the protagonists so blatantly⁸⁷ and it rarely describes its character⁸⁸ in such grand traits as we see here. It can be said that as a general rule, in the Bible; “the ratio of description in general to action and dialogue is relatively low, and character tends to be subordinate to plot. Thus, when we are given some detail about a character’s appearance or dress, it is usually because this information is needed for the plot.”⁸⁹ It can be said that in this narrative, we see the opposite of the usual trend of the Bible. Here in Daniel, the descriptions are used to help the reader understand the characteristics that embody the victorious people of God.⁹⁰

The four were chosen with the intent that they would serve in the king’s court or service (Dan 1:5). Perhaps, their knowledge of the Jewish language and culture was of value to the king in his court?⁹¹ Although some see the learning of “the letters and the

⁸⁵ Fewell, 36.

⁸⁶ See Dan 1:10, concerns appearance, 13 מְרָאָה, 15 טוֹב מְרָאָה, 17 מַדָּע, 19-20 עֹמֵד.

⁸⁷ Arnold, *Word Play and Characterization in Daniel 1*, 235.

⁸⁸ Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 34.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Berlin states, “the purpose of character description in the Bible is not to enable the reader to visualize the character, but to enable him to situate the character in terms of his place in society, his own particular situation, and his outstanding trait-in other words, to tell what kind of a person he is.” Ibid., 36.

⁹¹ Smith-Christopher, *Daniel*, 39.

language of the Chaldeans” as meaning “the omen reading lore of the Babylonians astrologers,”⁹² it is more likely that they were designated to be taught the Babylonian literature and their language.⁹³ The learning of the language implies that they will be learning the Chaldean culture.⁹⁴ “Maximizing the efficiency”⁹⁵ of the Babylonian rule being clearly the desired end.

5 The king appointed⁹⁶ for them a daily ration⁹⁷ from the king's portion⁹⁸ and from his wine which he drank⁹⁹, and that they should be nourished¹⁰⁰ for three years¹⁰¹ that at the end they might stand before the king.¹⁰² 6 Now among them were from the children of

⁹² W. Sibley Towner, *Daniel*, ed. James Luther Mays, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Teaching (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 23.

⁹³ See above in footnote of Dan 1:4, סִפְרָא וּלְשׁוֹן פְּשָׁדִים.

⁹⁴ Chia, 175. Fewell, 37.

⁹⁵ Smith-Christopher, *Daniel*, 39.

⁹⁶ וְיָמֵן “to send, appoint.” (HALOT s.v. מָנָה) “appoint, ordain, food.” (BDB s.v. מָנָה).

⁹⁷ דְּבַר-יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ lit. the think of a day in its day. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 5. “the daily portion.” Keil, 539. Ex 5:13, 5:19, 16:4; Lev 23:37; 1 Kgs 8:59; 2 Kgs 25:30; Jer 52:34; Ezra 3:4; Neh 11:23, 12:47; 1 Chron 16:37; 2 Chron 8:14, 31:16.

⁹⁸ מִפַּת-בָּג “portion (of food) for king, delicacies” (BDB s.v. פַּת-בָּג) It is a Persian loanword, Old Persian *patibaga*, or Sanskrit *pratibhāga* “food, provisions from the king's table.” (HALOT s.v. פַּת-בָּג) “(patbag), (royal) food quota, table ration; however, by popular etymology, פַּת (pat), bit/morsel + בָּג (bag), (Q: בָּז [baz] prey, meat, food) > bit/morsel of food... This term probably derives from Old Persian *pitfa-baga* (cuneiform *pitipabaga*) portion, ration... food(-ration), food supply, ration.” The sending of food or drink portions from the royal table to his designates are attested. O’Connell, NIDOTTE, “pat-bag.” It “comes from *path*, in Zend. *paiti*, Sanscr. *prati* = προτί, προς and *bag*, in Sanscr. *bhāga*, portion, provision.” Keil, 539.

⁹⁹ וּמִיַּין מִשְׁתֵּיו lit. from wine of his feast. or from his wine which he drank.

¹⁰⁰ וּלְגַדְלֵם piel infinitive construct of גָּדַל with ל preposition, 3 masculine plural suffix, and ו conjunction. lit. “to make them great” “cause to grow” (BDB s.v. גָּדַל). “educate” (HALOT s.v. גָּדַל). “and one had to raise them” Joüon and Muraoka, 405. nourished “to educate and train.” Slotki, 3. “and one had to raise them” Joüon and Muraoka, § 124l. “to raise, rear” Jenni, TLOT, s.v. “gādōl.”

¹⁰¹ שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים lit. three years.

¹⁰² יַעֲמִדוּ Qal Imperfect 3 masc plural “to stand”

Judah, Daniel,¹⁰³ Hananiah,¹⁰⁴ Mishaël,¹⁰⁵ and Azariah.¹⁰⁶ 7 The chief of the officials¹⁰⁷ set¹⁰⁸ names to them: and he set to Daniel, Belteshazzar¹⁰⁹ and to Hananiah, Shadrach¹¹⁰ and to Mishaël, Meshach¹¹¹ and to Azariah, Abednego.¹¹²

¹⁰³ דָּנִיֵּאל *my judge* “אֱלֹהִים is God” also in Ezek 14:14, 20, 28:3; Ezra 8:2; Neh 10:6; and 1 Chron 3:1. Steinmann, 88. “God is my judge” Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 140. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 17. Longman III, 50. “God has judged” Porteous, 28. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 53. Conservative scholars have seen a reference to Daniel the prophet in Ezek 14:14, 20, and Ezek 28:3. However, critical scholars have argued against this identification as it would argue against a second century date for the book. Walvoord, 45.

¹⁰⁴ הַנְּנִיחַ “gracious” *הַנְּנִיחַ is Yah* “יָהּ” This name occurs 36 times in the Bible, Steinmann, 88. “Yah has been gracious” Goldingay, *Daniel*, 17. Longman III, 51. “the Lord is gracious” Seow, *Daniel*, 24. Eric W. Heaton, *The Book of Daniel*, ed. John Marsh and Alan Richardson, Torch Bible Commentaries (London: SCM Press, 1964), 118.

¹⁰⁵ מִישָׁאֵל “who + מִי is what + אֵל is God” “Who is like God?” (HALOT s.v. מִישָׁאֵל)

¹⁰⁶ יָצַח “Yah hath helped” (BDB s.v. יָצַח)

¹⁰⁷ שַׂר הַכְּרִיסִים “trad. chief eunuch ... “state official” in the Babylonian court” (HALOT s.v. כְּרִיס) (chief) and שַׂר (prince) are synonymously used here. Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1973), 35-36. It has been disputed whether the title refers to a high official or a “eunuch.” The title is found in Jer 39:3 as one of the “princes of Babylon.” Akkadian *ša rēši* (*rēši*), “he who is the head, chief” (BDB s.v. כְּרִיס) Potiphar is called a כְּרִיס though he was married, Gen 37:36; 39:1.

¹⁰⁸ וַיִּשֶׂם “to set” to give a name or name someone (HALOT s.v. שָׂם 11.c.ii)

¹⁰⁹ בַּלְטַשְׁצָר Greek versions render Βαλτασζαρ Baltassar; Babylonian name for Daniel, Possibly Akkadian *Balaṭ-šarri-ušur* “protect the life of the king” or *Balaṭsu-ušur* “protect his life” (HALOT s.v. בַּלְטַשְׁצָר). However, scholars do not agree on the precise meaning of their names and admit that the names are complex. Chia, 176; LaCocque, *The Book of Daniel*, 29. The names may be a combination of Babylonian, Persian, and Aramaic names. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 46.

¹¹⁰ שְׁדַרְךָ the origin and meaning of this name uncertain. *Šudur-Aku*, “command of Aku” (BDB s.v. שְׁדַרְךָ) Miller, 65. Steinmann, 89. Zadok sees the origins of the name in Persian *Čiθraka* “seed, offspring” Ran Zadok, “Short Notes on Five Iranian Names in the Old Testament” *Vetus Testamentum* 26 (1976): 247.

¹¹¹ מִישָׁךְ most obscure of the four names. *Mi-sha-aku* “who is what Aku (the moon-god) is?” (BDB s.v. מִישָׁךְ). May be a pagan equivalent of the Hebrew name *Mishaël*, who is “what God is?” Miller, 65.

¹¹² עֲבֶד נְבוֹ generally more agreed may be a corruption of Aramaic עֲבֶד “servant of nevo” Steinmann, 89. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*. Possibly corresponding to the Babylonian name *Arad-Nabu* “servant of Nabu” Hartman and Di Lella, 130. Lucas, 53. For further discussions of these names see Montgomery 1927:128-130; LaCocque 1976: 29-30. For discussion of the possible deliberate corruption to obscure the Babylonian theophoric elements see William H. Shea, “Daniel 3: Extra Biblical Texts and the Convocation on the Plain of Dura,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* Vol. 20, No. 1 (1982): 48-50. William H. Shea, “Mutilation of Foreign Names by Bible Writers: A Possible Example from Tell El-Umeiri,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* Vol. 23, No. 1 (1985): 114. The change from a “beth” to a “gimmel” changes the name of the Babylonian deity. This is argued as a reason why the “Jews may call

In order to help illuminate the background of this narrative, a study of the Mesopotamian religion will need to be pursued at this point. This may help in our understanding of where the king's portion came from.

It is stated, "the oldest religion we are aware of ... is the religious system of ancient Mesopotamia, dating from the fourth millennium B.C. to shortly before the birth of Christ."¹¹³ We may not be able to write a comprehensive or systematic presentation of the Mesopotamian religion, nor should we attempt one, according to one eminent Assyriologist, A. Leo Oppenheim.¹¹⁴ Trying to understand why a particular cultic act was taken is difficult alone, but when the involved ones leave no trace of their thought processes involved in their acts, it is nearly impossible to be dogmatic. Bottéro and Fagan states that "the Ancient Mesopotamians did not specify or define their unique religiosity anywhere in what they left behind."¹¹⁵ Jacobsen, also, states that the Mesopotamian religious system "fails to be self-evident."¹¹⁶ Yet, in the acts themselves, a trace of their intent can be deduced. Vast amounts of archeological remnants in the form of monuments, buildings, artifacts and writings that have been unearthed all throughout the land of the Mesopotamians. For example, it is estimated that the number of tablets with written symbols or words found could total about 500,000.¹¹⁷ They also

them by these names even though they are derived from the names of pagan deities." A. J. Rosenberg, *Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah: A New English Translation* (New York: Judaica Press, 1991), 7.

¹¹³ Jean Bottéro and Teresa Lavender Fagan, *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), vii.

¹¹⁴ A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 172.

¹¹⁵ Bottéro and Fagan, 29.

¹¹⁶ Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness : A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976), 25.

¹¹⁷ Bottéro and Fagan, 22.

left behind many monuments and building structures, such as temple buildings which is a testimony to their belief system. Their paintings and drawings, also, attest to their belief system. It is from these vast data and remains that we can deduce the intent of the offerors to the gods of Mesopotamia.

The Mesopotamian religion is considered a non-salvation religion.¹¹⁸

Mesopotamian myths regarding their understanding of their origins and their purpose in life has been better understood as a result of the discoveries, among others, of The Epic of Gilgamesh, The Atrahasis Epic and The Enuma Elish. In the Epic of Gilgamesh, Gilgamesh a king of Babylon goes in search of Utnapishtim, who survived a flood, in search of eternal life.¹¹⁹ In the Atrahasis Epic, man is created “out of clay mixed with the blood of a slain god called Ilawela: man’s purpose in life was to relieve the gods of hard labour.”¹²⁰ Atrahasis, which means “extra wise”, is to have “survived the flood and was granted a form of immortality by the great gods.”¹²¹ In the Enuma Elish, a creation account is given relating the creation story and purpose of man’s existence. Man is created out of the blood of Qingu and created to work instead of the gods “so they shall be at leisure”.¹²² What these stories and myths have in common, among other things, is an attempt at giving man a purpose in life and a quest for immortality. What appears from these myths is that the Mesopotamian’s believed that their role in life was to work

¹¹⁸ Jo Ann Scurlock, "The Techniques of the Sacrifice of Animals in Ancient Israel and Ancient Mesopotamia: New Insights through Comparison. Part 2," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 44, no. 2 (2006): 241.

¹¹⁹ Dalley, 95-96.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹²¹ Ibid., 1-2.

¹²² Ibid., 261.

the fields and produce food. They were to not only produce food for themselves but for the gods. "It is a *communis opinio* of the Sumerian and Babylonian literature that the human race was created solely to serve the gods by providing their food and drink."¹²³ The Mesopotamians believed that their existence was identified with this purpose of "support of the gods."¹²⁴ They were expected to provide provisions to their gods that would be enough for "a life even better and more blessed than that of the kings of the [sic] earth."¹²⁵ To fulfill this requirement, they provided all things necessary for their well-being. The offerings consisted of serving god's meals by offering them food, looking after their temporal needs like clothes and jewelry and keeping their place of residence in all its details.¹²⁶ Their food offerings to their gods were considered "purely and simply... as the god's 'meals.'"¹²⁷

Most would see the food offerings in the Sumerian-Babylonian religion as sacrifices to their gods; however, these must be differentiated from the Hebrew sacrifices. These are more appropriately labeled "donations of food and drink to the gods."¹²⁸ The Hebrews saw in all slaughtering of animals a religious act in that the blood was taboo from being consumed. Such restrictions did not exist in the Sumerian-Babylonian

¹²³ Wilfred G. Lambert, "Donations of Food and Drink to the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East* (Louvain, Belgium: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Orientalistiek, 1993), 198.

¹²⁴ Jean Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods*, trans., Marc Van De Mieroop and Zainab Bahrani (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 225.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Jacobsen, 81.

¹²⁷ Bottéro, 225.

¹²⁸ Lambert, "Donations of Food and Drink to the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 191.

religion.¹²⁹ There were two meals served to the gods, *naptanu* and *tardennu*, which were prepared and served by the priest in the various rituals.¹³⁰ They were known as the formal main and second ritual meals and normally divided into four meals presented during a given day. Specifically, the meals were divided into a main meal (*naptanu*) and a second meal in the morning, and the main meal (*tardennu*) and a second meal in the evening.¹³¹ The meals in style and manner were similar to those of a king's table.¹³² First a table is set before a god, then a bowl of water was offered for washing. The most precious serving plates were utilized which were comprised of vases, plates, cups, and bowls that were made of gold and silver and even inlaid with some rare precious jewels.¹³³ Drinks were laid out on the table. Then cuts of meat were served as a main dish. Then, fruits of various kinds were brought.¹³⁴ A pleasing scent was also used for ridding the odor created by the foods.¹³⁵ Smoke or scent was used as fumigation that acted as a means to purify the atmosphere in the "room,"¹³⁶ and to delight and attract the gods to the ritual feast.¹³⁷ Music and song were added to the offering ceremonies at some of these feasts.¹³⁸ Varied instruments have been unearthed and documented in the

¹²⁹ Ibid., 194.

¹³⁰ Marc J. H. Linssen, *The Cults of Uruk and Babylon: The Temple Ritual Texts as Evidence for the Hellenistic Cult Practices*, Cuneiform Monographs (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, Styx, 2004), 130.

¹³¹ Ibid., 130-131.

¹³² Oppenheim, 188.

¹³³ Bottéro and Fagan, 130.

¹³⁴ Oppenheim, 188.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 189.

¹³⁶ Linssen, 145.

¹³⁷ Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 433.

¹³⁸ Bottéro and Fagan, 131.

remains in the land of Mesopotamia. All sorts of instruments including stringed (lyres and harps), percussion instruments (rattles, bells, tambourines, drums of varied sizes), and wind instruments (trumpets, horns, flutes) have been discovered.¹³⁹ Finally, food was cleared and a bowl of water again presented to the gods for cleaning their hands.¹⁴⁰

As to the foods that were offered to the gods, no specific mention or direct records were made to its destination after the offerings were made. This was made certain by the fact that the gods were served behind a curtain.¹⁴¹ Perhaps, an attempt to explain the ultimate destination for these offerings can be found in the Book of Daniel. In the “Bel and the Dragon,” perhaps a satirical illustration was made to help make a point. In the Apocrypha Dan 14:1-22 (NRSV), Cyrus and Daniel have an argument that the gods do in fact consume the daily food offerings. To test each person’s assertions, an experiment is set and Cyrus seals the door after the food offering is set. Daniel, wisely, spread ashes on the floor of the temple before Cyrus sealed the doors. At night, the priests and their family come in through a secret tunnel and eat all the food. The next day Cyrus, seeing the food gone, declared that the gods indeed consumed the food. Daniel points to the floor showing all the footprints at which point they discover the secret door that the priests used to consume the food.

The elements of an offering or a “divine meal” are attested to in the ritual texts of Uruk and Babylon in the Hellenistic period.¹⁴² The offerings made to the gods is

¹³⁹ Ibid. some of these instruments may be represented in those Found in Daniel 3.

¹⁴⁰ Oppenheim, 189.

¹⁴¹ Bottéro and Fagan, 130.

¹⁴² Linssen, 1, 129.

considered one of the most important elements of the cult.¹⁴³ Since, “the idea that man was created to relieve the gods of hard labour by supplying them with food and drink was standard among both Sumerian and Babylonian,”¹⁴⁴ one can see the importance placed on the meal offering within the cult. Although the ideology of the ritual or ceremony is never fully expressed by the Mesopotamians, Atrahasis and also the Enuma Elish myths are used to explain or provide a purpose or a rationale for the offering. The lessons clearly give human beings their purpose, they were created to do the hard work of supplying the foods to the gods.¹⁴⁵ Linssen sees allusions, made by the ancient Mesopotamians, that explain their cultic activities, “according to the Mesopotamians a ritual is often a re-enactment of a myth, because... they considered myths not to have happened once in a remote past, but were regarded to occur at regular intervals.”¹⁴⁶ In the divine meal the principle *do ut des* (I give so that you will give) was an important belief of the participants.¹⁴⁷ The offering for the feeding of the gods was the ultimate offering that could be made so that the gods will return the favor of prosperity and protection.¹⁴⁸ In the mind of the Mesopotamians the

...statues or symbols used in rituals were believed to be in every sense the deities which we regard them as representing. A ritual in which the statue or symbol of a deity participated was therefore in effect a myth. On the other hand, myths which we would conceive of as having happened once in the past

¹⁴³ Ibid., 129.

¹⁴⁴ W. G. Lambert, A. R. Millard, and Miguel Civil, *Atra-Hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood; the Sumerian Flood Story* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 15.

¹⁴⁵ Linssen, 129.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 23.

¹⁴⁷ Scurlock: 241.

¹⁴⁸ Linssen, 129.

were believed by the ancient thinkers to be capable of repetition, like rituals.¹⁴⁹

At the conclusion of the ritual, it is believed that the food and drink offerings were re-distributed in a temple prebend system¹⁵⁰ or even shared in a royal banquet, such as the ceremony of the so-called Shebat-Adar cycle of Assur, that could have served about 70,000 people for 10 days,¹⁵¹ although it was still believed that the food offerings served the purpose of feeding the gods.¹⁵² It was due to practical considerations that led them to redistribute the items to the temple personnel involved in the temple service. As for the food offered, Lambert states, “as to the choice of foodstuffs, there is nowhere any hint of ideological preferences. Practical common-sense considerations seem to have prevailed. ...each brings according to his resources.”¹⁵³ In particular, the choice of the meat offerings was thought to reflect a desire to provide only the best and most expensive of the meats for the gods.¹⁵⁴ It has been speculated that meat consumption was rare for a commoner in Mesopotamia.¹⁵⁵ Ability to consume different kinds of meats was

¹⁴⁹ Alasdair Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 169-170.

¹⁵⁰ Paolo Coro Capitano, "Meat, Prebends and Rank, on the Distribution of Sacrificial Meat in Seleucid Uruk," in *Food and Identity in the Ancient World*, ed. Lucio Milano Cristiano Grottanelli (Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N. Editrice e Libreria, 2004), 257-267.

¹⁵¹ Simo Parpola, "The Leftovers of God and King. On the Distribution of Meat at the Assyrian and Achaemenid Imperial Courts," in *Food and Identity in the Ancient World*, ed. Lucio Milano Cristiano Grottanelli (Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N. Editrice e Libreria, 2004), 290-291.

¹⁵² Linssen, 129.

¹⁵³ Lambert, "Donations of Food and Drink to the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 198-199.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 199.

¹⁵⁵ Michael G. Kozuh, "Lamb, Mutton, and Goat in the Babylonian Temple Economy," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53, no. (2010): 531-532.

associated with status and high rank within society.¹⁵⁶ When one reviews the list of offering made to the gods, truly it has the appearance of indifference except in quality as reflected in value within the society and to the offeror.¹⁵⁷

A central feature of the Mesopotamian priesthood was the prebend associated with their cultic system.¹⁵⁸ A prebend can be defined as “the right to an income from the temple in return for the performance of service connected to the cult”¹⁵⁹ or “the right to an income from the temple in return for service connected to the cult.”¹⁶⁰ It served a practical need of compensating those involved in the cultic system. The system has been said to have reached its mature phase by the Neo-Babylonian period (7th century BCE).¹⁶¹ The prebend was considered a legal title that could be passed on to sons and even sold to others.¹⁶² Even the hides of animals were used as “payment” to the temple personnel and to the king (Lev 7:8).¹⁶³ The value placed on hides during this period of time in Mesopotamia is well attested.¹⁶⁴ Instead of burning the food, the donated foods to the gods were taken to the king and the personnel associated with the temple service. The

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 533, 557.

¹⁵⁷ See Appendix A.

¹⁵⁸ Caroline Waerzeggers and Reinhard Pirngruber, "Prebend Prices in First-Millennium B.C. Babylonia," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 63, no. (2011): 111.

¹⁵⁹ A.C.V.M. Bongenaar, *The Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple at Sippar: Its Administration and Its Prosopography* (Belgium: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut Te Istanbul, 1997), 140.

¹⁶⁰ Capitanio, 257.

¹⁶¹ Waerzeggers and Pirngruber: 111.

¹⁶² Ibid. Stefan Zawadzki, "Another Babylonian “Prebend Text” from the British Museum," *Archiv für Orientforschung* Bd. 42/43 (1995/1996). John MacGinnis, "Neo-Babylonian Prebend Texts from the British Museum," *Archiv für Orientforschung* Bd. 38/39 (1991/1992): 76-78.

¹⁶³ Gilbert J. P. McEwan, "Distribution of Meat in Eanna," *Iraq* vol. 45, no. 2 (Autumn, 1983): 191, 193. The text are remains of a temple ordinance for the Eanna in Uruk during the Middle Assyrian and early Neo-Babylonian periods.

¹⁶⁴ Capitanio, 266.

prebendary was divided in a fixed ratio according to rank and importance.¹⁶⁵ Studies of this system show that the “kings owned prebends in the local temple organizations.”¹⁶⁶ A study of the distribution of the sacrificial remains of the cuts of meat show that the king received some of the choicest of the cuts.¹⁶⁷ To the king was sent the shoulder, the rump, rib roast, half of the hide, lambs, and kids.¹⁶⁸ Among some of the remains, the mention of wine is found in some texts.¹⁶⁹ Wine was probably introduced from the Syro-Armenian region, the mountainous regions of the north of Mesopotamia.¹⁷⁰ Although the Mesopotamians knew how to make wine, it was considered mainly an imported product that made its way along the Euphrates river into Mesopotamia.¹⁷¹ This meant that wine was a precious and expensive beverage, no doubt for the privileged.¹⁷²

An archive consisting of over 35,000 tablets and fragments relating to the Neo-Babylonian empire (from Nabopolassar to Nabonidus 626-539 BCE) and of the Achaemenid rule of Babylon covering the period of Cyrus up to the early reign of Xerxes (539-484 BCE) has been studied and documented by Bongenaar.¹⁷³ The archives cover “the administration of the temple Ebabbar, dedicated to the god Šamaš, in the Neo-

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 266-267.

¹⁶⁶ Bongenaar, 141.

¹⁶⁷ McEwan.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 191-193.

¹⁶⁹ MacGinnis: 75.

¹⁷⁰ Jean Bottéro, *The Oldest Cuisine in the World: Cooking in Mesopotamia*, trans., Teresa Lavender Fagan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 94. Wine was even called the “beer of the mountain.” Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 95.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Bongenaar, 1. Bongenaar states that the temple organization seems to have been stable during both of these periods. He also indicates that the economic affairs of this temple seems to have prospered and was expanded. Ibid.

Babylonian city of Sippar.”¹⁷⁴ He reports the temple activities in great detail. What is significant to this study is the mention of various prebendary in effect during this time period. Specific records show the resident (*qīpu* possibly meaning “trustee”) of Ebabbar and the temple administrator (*šangū*) of Sippar rationing out different food items to different workers and temple personnel.¹⁷⁵ The food items that are of record in the archives that remain show food ration of barley, dates, oil, cress, salt, bread, meat, sheep, and wool.¹⁷⁶

As sacrificial animals were utilized in the temple as offerings, the temple officials did not just rely on offerings from the people. It is known that herdsman of the temple kept herds in the countryside from which the animals were withdrawn for the offerings.¹⁷⁷ This economic use of the animals for meat offerings can be stated as a definitely Mesopotamian feature.¹⁷⁸

There are other discoveries of tablets showing detailed records listing the foods that were offered to the gods. Such details are available because of the excavations and discoveries that were made in pre-Sargonic Lagas, Ur Archaic, Jemdet Nasr, Surupak,¹⁷⁹ Ebla, Mari,¹⁸⁰ and Drehem.¹⁸¹ Paul-Alain Beaulieu in his monumental piece of research,

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 1.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 6.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 36-38. Mention of the enormous quantities of food ration for different personnel who were to receive rations exceeded 10,000 liters of barley and dates per month. Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 294.

¹⁷⁸ Capitanio, 227.

¹⁷⁹ Krystyna Szarzynska, "Offerings for the Goddess Inana in Archaic Uruk," *Revue d'Assyriologie et D'Archeologie Orientale* 87, no. 1 (1993): 7.

¹⁸⁰ Bottéro and Fagan, 24.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 127.

“The Pantheon of Uruk During the Neo-Babylonian Period,” collected an extensive collection of data. His research includes the published and the unpublished data from the tablets preserved in Yale Babylonian Collection, Princeton Theological Seminary, as well as other cuneiform collections. The data includes, some rather detailed, lists of food offerings from the Eanna temple during the Neo-Babylonian period (5th -9th centuries BCE).¹⁸² He lists the various items that were offered during the cultic service that was then distributed according to the prebend system. What these records show is that the gods were offered not just meats and wine but with clothes, furniture, jewelry, musical instruments, spices, grains, vegetables, water for bathing and washing, and housing.¹⁸³ The list includes cultic paraphernalia, ornaments, clothing, food offerings that included both processed and unprocessed foods. In these offerings, among other things, the food items included: ox, sheep, lamb, goose, fish, duck, turtledove, many other unspecified animals, dates, honey, butter, emmer, raisins, pomegranates, eggs, flour, sesame, sesame oil, milk, salt, dried figs, barley, bread, various beers, cake, pastry, and confections.¹⁸⁴

The King of Babylon utilizes several methods to accomplish his plan to impose the rulership of Babylon (Chaldean) upon Israel.¹⁸⁵ In order to accomplish his subjugation and domination, Nebuchadnezzar first segregated the people. One of the instructions were to teach them his language thru the Babylonian educational system. Along with that, new names were assigned to them. Their provisions were provided for

¹⁸² Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Pantheon of Uruk During the Neo-Babylonian Period*, Cuneiform Monographs (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill/Styx, 2003). See Appendix A.

¹⁸³ See Appendix B.

¹⁸⁴ Beaulieu, *The Pantheon of Uruk During the Neo-Babylonian Period*, 28-29.

¹⁸⁵ No doubt that other nations and people were subjugated to the same process of domination and rulership.

them from his own table. The ultimate goal was for them to serve in the court of the king.

These steps are seen as he selects those who would be segregated from the royal and noble seeds (Dan 1:3-4). He separates them from their land and culture. He brings them to Babylon (Dan 1:3). They are to be physically and mentally the best of the best (Dan 1:3-4). The narrative makes clear that Nebuchadnezzar has set the qualifications and competence, of at least these four youths, to serve in the king's court before they have started their training.¹⁸⁶ They are then instructed to be educated in "the letters and the language of the Chaldeans" (Dan 1:4). This has the purpose of, also, teaching them the Babylonian culture.¹⁸⁷ The king provides for them their food and provides for their daily needs (Dan 1:5). This in effect creates a dependence on the king which would affect loyalty to the king.¹⁸⁸ He, then, has them renamed according to Babylonian names (Dan 1:7). However, it should be noticed that the author of this narrative continues to refer to themselves by their Hebrew names throughout this chapter (Dan 1:6-11, 17, 19, 21).¹⁸⁹ Nebuchadnezzar's ultimate aim seems clear, he intends to rule in a "downward filtration"¹⁹⁰ manner. He wants them to become Babylonians, indoctrinated in their language and culture. Ultimately, it was the goal of this process to lead their people into becoming incorporated into the Babylonian empire.

¹⁸⁶ Smith-Christopher, *Daniel*, 39.

¹⁸⁷ Chia, 175. Fewell, 37.

¹⁸⁸ Fewell, 37. Perhaps to secure his throne and rule, David orders Mephibosheth to eat at his table "all the days of his life" (2 Sam 9:9-13). When Saul recognizes that David has stopped eating at his table, he assumes that David has rebelled against him (1 Sam 20:27-34). Jehoiachin in exile eats from the king of Babylon's table "all the days of his life" (2 kings 25:27-29).

¹⁸⁹ Chia, 176.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 175.

From the perspective of the Israelites, the exile was seen as a judgment of God upon His people (Jer 25:9, 27:6). The loss of their land, king (Davidic Dynasty), and the temple¹⁹¹ was “tantamount to God’s abandonment”¹⁹² of Israel. However, the exile was a period of opportunity for a repentance or turning back of His people to God. The exiled Israelites must resist the Babylonian king’s attempts and remain true to their God. However, we do not see any hints of resistance from these four in any other process of subjugation and domination except the choice of food they are willing to consume (Dan 1:8). Why is this the central issue that is set up for us in this chapter? Why does Daniel and his friends refuse the king’s food? Why is the king’s food associated with defilement, while the other aspects are not? These questions will be taken up further, as the narrative continues.

¹⁹¹ Klein, 3-8.

¹⁹² Beach: 34, 36.

8 But¹⁹³ Daniel set¹⁹⁴ upon his heart¹⁹⁵ that he would not defile¹⁹⁶ himself from the king's portion¹⁹⁷ and from his wine which he drank,¹⁹⁸ therefore he requested of the chief of the officials that he might not defile himself.

The importance of Daniel's use of a particular word here and twice in verse 7 will be examine further. His use of the verb שָׁם (twice in verse 7 and once in verse 8) are an example of word play¹⁹⁹ used by Biblical narrators. This is a particular example of antanaclastic paronomasia.²⁰⁰ The Hebrew terminology for paronomasia is לשון נופל על

¹⁹³ The ׀ is a disjunctive ׀.

¹⁹⁴ שָׁם "put, place, set" (BDB s.v. שָׁם).

¹⁹⁵ שָׁם עַל-לִבּוֹ "resolves" (HALOT s.v. לֵב 6) lay to heart (BDB s.v. לֵב) "Daniel set on his heart" may be better "Daniel made up his mind" can also mean "joy" (Isa 24:7), "fear" (Josh 2:11), "despair" (Prov 2:2) "critical evaluation" (Josh 14:7), "human will" (2 Sam 7:3; 1 Kgs 8:17) Steinmann, 95-96. "decided" Slotki, 4. Rosenberg, 7.

¹⁹⁶ יִתְגַּדֵּל "to defile oneself (ritually)" (HALOT s.v. גָּדַל). יִתְגַּדֵּל twice within this verse introduces an object clause, Joüon and Muraoka, § 157c. with a hithpael imperfect of גָּדַל forms a negated purpose clause that would translate, "that he would not defile himself." Steinmann, 96. Transitive "to pollute" is also expressed by גָּלַח II pi. (Mal 1:7) and hi. (Isa 63:3), "to become unclean" by גָּלַח ni. (Isa 59:3, form?; Zeph 3:1; Lam 4:14) and pu. (Mal 1:7, 12; Ezra 2:62; Neh 7:64), and "to make oneself unclean" by גָּלַח hitp. (Dan 1:8[bis]); cf. *gō'al* "defilement," Neh 13:29. Generally translated "not defile himself" (NASB, ESV, KJV, NIV, JPS, NRSV) also "to contaminate himself" (NEB), "not to be contaminated with" (REB), "not to incur pollution" (NJB), "become ritually unclean" (GNB).

¹⁹⁷ מִן-בֶּרֶךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ "food, provisions from the king's table" (HALOT s.v. בֶּרֶךְ).

¹⁹⁸ וּבִינְיָן מִשְׁתֵּי "wine" (HALOT s.v. בִּינְיָן) "consumption of drink" (HALOT s.v. מִשְׁתֵּי).

¹⁹⁹ "A word-play ... is based on ambiguity, i.e. the use of a word in such a manner as to imply a meaning and draw in image other than the one expected in the context, or in addition to it as a secondary or tertiary idea." J. J. Glück, "Paronomasia in Biblical Literature," *Semitics* 1 (1970): 50.

²⁰⁰ Arnold, *Word Play and Characterization in Daniel 1*, 236. Antanaclastic being defined as same word being repeated for effect. Paronomasia can be defined as use of ambiguous word that exploits multiple meaning of words. Such with the purpose of exciting curiosity and to draw the reader to find meaning that may not be readily apparent. *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1976), s.v. "Wordplay in the Old Testament." Paronomasia can be simply defined as "the repetition of same or similar consonants" or words. Scott B. Noegel, "Paronomasia," in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, ed. Geoffrey Khan (Boston: Brill, 2013), 24. Antanaclastic can be simply defined as "the repetition of the same words in a different meaning." Immanuel M. Casanowicz, "Paronomasia in the Old Testament," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 12 (1893): 113.

לְשׁוֹן literally “language falling on language.”²⁰¹ Repetition is a common device utilized in Biblical prose.²⁰² Among various purposes for the use of repetition, one purpose was utilized to this device to, “bring out the relationship between events that on the surface might seem unrelated or only loosely connected... [and] wordplay often highlights the sharp distinction between the divine and human perspectives.”²⁰³ Lead words (*Leitwörter*)²⁰⁴ are repeated to bring focus and attention to an important and significant thought within the narrative.²⁰⁵ Here the lead word (*Leitwort*) is the term שֵׁם. Although, this word play has been noticed by some commentators,²⁰⁶ the significance has not been probed by most. It is averred that in these verses and this play on words in particular that the main theme and character of the rest of the book of Daniel can be set.²⁰⁷

In verse 7, we are told that the chief of the officials sets (שֵׁם) names to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. We are reminded that the common Hebrew idiom for naming is usually קָרָא (to call) plus שֵׁם (name).²⁰⁸ In Daniel 1:7 a less common term is used שָׂם (to set/place) plus שֵׁם (a name) which is most commonly used when God places His name on His people (Num 6:27) or on Jerusalem or on its temple.²⁰⁹ However, it

²⁰¹ Glück: 52. (*Bereshit Rabba* 31:8).

²⁰² Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 92-113.

²⁰³ Robert B. Chisholm, "Wordplay in the Eighth-Century Prophets," *Bibliotheca Sacra* January-March (1987): 52.

²⁰⁴ Alter, 92-93.

²⁰⁵ Arnold, *Word Play and Characterization in Daniel I*, 236-237.

²⁰⁶ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 11. Fewell, 39. Steinmann, 92-94.

²⁰⁷ Arnold, *Word Play and Characterization in Daniel I*, 236-237.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 237-238; Steinmann, 92.

²⁰⁹ Examples are many such as Deut 12:5, 21; 14:24; 1 Kgs 9:3; 11:36; 14:21; 2 Kgs 21:4, 7; 2 Chr 6:20; 12:13; 33:7.

must be pointed out that this pattern of Hebrew idiom is not absolute as seen in at least three passages where the terms שׁוּם (to set/place) plus שֵׁם (a name) is used; when Gideon names Abimelech (Judg 8:31), in the referencing of the name of Jacob into Israel (2 Kgs 17:34), and the referencing the name of Abram into Abraham (Neh 9:7).²¹⁰ The significance of this word play is perhaps best summarized by Arnold,

the irony of the word play is that the Babylonians think they have changed Daniel's character, but the narrator knows otherwise. They succeeded in changing all the circumstances of his life, and the name change in verse 7 represents Daniel's complete transformation, at least from the Babylonian perspective. But the inner resolve and dedication revealed by the word play in verse 8 is the narrator's full portrait of Daniel and transcends even the description of his impressive personal and intellectual skills in verse 3-4. It is his commitment to God that sets Daniel apart, and prepares the reader for the continued conflict between aggressive world powers and God's servants.²¹¹

Daniel determines in his heart or mind that he will not defile himself, יִתְאַזָּל (Hitpa'el 3 masculine singular of אָזַל). Daniel's choice of אָזַל instead of טָמַא or חָלַל should be noticed. The verb טָמַא²¹² has the meaning of "be or become unclean,"²¹³ "ceremonially unclean,"²¹⁴ and "defile, desecrate."²¹⁵ The verb חָלַל²¹⁶ has the meaning of "to be

²¹⁰ Arnold, *Word Play and Characterization in Daniel 1*, 237-238. Steinmann, 92-93. The last two examples cited are later Biblical Hebrew for renaming which may be pertinent to the Daniel 1:7, Arnold, *Word Play and Characterization in Daniel 1*, 238.

²¹¹ Arnold, *Word Play and Characterization in Daniel 1*, 248.

²¹² The verb occurs 155 times and the noun form occur 136 times, André and Ringgren, TDOT, s.v. "ṭm'."

²¹³ BDB s.v. אָזַל.

²¹⁴ HALOT s.v. אָזַל.

²¹⁵ Averbek, NIDOTTE, s.v. "ṭm'."

²¹⁶ Verb occurs 136 times, 66 in the piel, 56 in the hiphil, niphil 10 times, once in the pual and hophal, "to desecrate," Maass, TLOT, s.v. "ḥll." "ḥll" used to mark the act of violating the law of God (Zeph 3:4), breaking the covenant of God (Ps 55:21) or His statutes (Ps 89:31), profaning the name of God (Lev 18:21), or Sabbath (Ex 31:14). Wiseman, TWOT, s.v. "ḥālāl II."

defiled,”²¹⁷ “profane, defile, pollute, desecrate,”²¹⁸ and “to degrade.”²¹⁹ The usual term to denote defilement נִטְמָא is not used but instead, Daniel chooses to use a less common term for defilement, לִטְמָא. The verb לִטְמָא, is possibly a secondary form from a similar root גַּעַל which is also found in Aramaic, “abhor” or “loathe.”²²⁰ There is a, “consensus of opinion ... that לִטְמָא II is a byform of *g’l*,”²²¹ which has a meaning of loathe. The verb לִטְמָא, occurs in two homographic verbs in the Old Testament.²²² The root verb לִטְמָא I, occurs 118 times in the Old Testament²²³ while לִטְמָא II, occurs 11 or 12 times, depending how Job 3:5a is read, “let darkness and black gloom claim it (וַיִּטְמָאֵהוּ), let a cloud settle on it...”²²⁴ The semantic range for לִטְמָא I includes redeem, act as kinsman,²²⁵ reclaim as one’s own, be bought back,²²⁶ avenge, ransom,²²⁷ deliver,²²⁸ and avenger.²²⁹ The semantic range for לִטְמָא

²¹⁷ HALOT s.v. לִטְמָא I.

²¹⁸ O’Kennedy, NIDOTTE, s.v. “*hll I*.” “Most numerous are the passages that speak of the profaning the name of Yahweh,” Dommershausen, TDOT, s.v. “*hll I*.”

²¹⁹ Jastrow, Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature, s.v. “*hll I*.”

²²⁰ Harris, TWOT, s.v. “*gā’al*.” HALOT s.v. גַּעַל.

²²¹ Averbeck, NIDOTTE, s.v. “*g’l II*.”

²²² Steinmann, 96.

²²³ Stamm, TLOT, s.v. “*g’l*.”

²²⁴ Averbeck, NIDOTTE, s.v. “*g’l II*.”

²²⁵ BDB s.v. לִטְמָא I.

²²⁶ HALOT s.v. לִטְמָא I.

²²⁷ Harris, TWOT, s.v. “*gā’al*.”

²²⁸ Hubbard, NIDOTTE, s.v. “*g’l I*.”

²²⁹ Stamm, TLOT, s.v. “*g’l*.”

II includes, defile,²³⁰ desecrate,²³¹ pollute,²³² and stain.²³³ The two homographic verbs appears to be distinct.²³⁴ The late usage of גָּלַח II is found in Isa 59:3; 63:3; Zeph 3:1; Mal 1:7, 12; Lam 4:14; Dan 1:8; Ezra 2:62; and Neh 7:64. It is averred that the word is mostly used “in a metaphorical sense denoting ‘moral failure,’ ‘wickedness’ - although the ceremonial sense of ritual defilement is also evident.”²³⁵ The usage of the verb in Isa 59:3 and Lam 4:14 is due to the “pollution” due to blood of murder, in Isa 63:3, it is due to the blood of vengeance and in Zeph 3:1, it is due to the pollution of Jerusalem, it’s princes, judges, prophets, priest (cf. verses 2-4). In Mal 1:7, 12, the pollution is due to the imperfect sacrifices or the defiling of the Lord’s table by bringing defiled food. In Dan 1:8, Daniel requests not to defile himself with the food of portion of the king’s food and wine. In Ezra 2:62 and Neh 7:64, the priestly lineage could not be located therefore they were considered unclean and excluded from priesthood. The usage of the verb in Job 3:5 is uncertain and could mean “let darkness and black gloom claim²³⁶ (or stain)²³⁷ it (יִגְלַח־הוּא), let a cloud settle on it...” Its usage can be categorized as physical ritual

²³⁰ BDB s.v. גָּלַח II.

²³¹ HALOT s.v. גָּלַח II.

²³² Harris, TWOT, s.v. “g’l.”

²³³ Averbek, NIDOTTE, s.v. “g’l.”

²³⁴ Harris, TWOT, s.v. “g’l.” Stamm, TLOT, s.v. “g’l.” Which is against the proposal of Johnson who proposes a common basic meaning of “cover” for both verbs. The resulting meaning lead to the idea of “to protect” for the first and “to stain or soil” for the second. A. R. Johnson, "The Primary Meaning of גָּלַח," *Supplements to the Vetus Testamentum* 1 (1953): 71-74.

²³⁵ Stephen D. Renn, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 256-257.

²³⁶ So ESV, NASB, NJB, REB, NIV, JPS, NRSV, ASV.

²³⁷ KJV.

defilement.²³⁸ This term is used in the Biblical literature from the time 722 BCE after the fall of Israel.²³⁹ The root לִאֵץ is almost exclusively Hebrew.²⁴⁰ The LXX uses several different roots to render this term with the most common being αλισγεω,²⁴¹ defile or pollute.²⁴² The root is seen once in the New Testament in Acts 15:20, where the Jerusalem Council sends a letter to the Gentile believers to, among other things, “abstain from the things polluted by idols (ESV).”²⁴³ It is noted in the discoveries of the Qumran literature that this verb root was utilized in 3 perhaps 4 places.²⁴⁴ In the War Scroll, the priest who are to blow the trumpets in battle, are exhorted to stay a safe distance from the dead, “lest they be defiled with unclean blood.”²⁴⁵ In the Hebrew, at least on one occasion, the two verbs לִאֵץ and אָמַץ are used together which may indicate its close link in concept of ritual defilement.²⁴⁶

²³⁸ Averbeck, NIDOTTE, s.v. “g’l II.”

²³⁹ Steinmann, 96.

²⁴⁰ Ringgren, TDOT, s.v. “gā’ al.” Averbeck, NIDOTTE, s.v. “g’l II.”

²⁴¹ Averbeck, NIDOTTE, s.v. “g’l II.”

²⁴² Bauer, BDAG, s.v. “alisgeō.”

²⁴³ Bauer, BDAG, s.v. “alisgēma.”

²⁴⁴ Averbeck, NIDOTTE, s.v. “g’l II.” The Temple Scroll requires animal skins of sacrifices of the temple to be used to carry wine, oil, and other foods, “they shall not defile my temple with the skin of the sacrifices of their abominations which they sacrifice in their land,” Florentino G. Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*, trans., G. E. Watson Watson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 168. Even the dust of an impure man “will make whoever touches them impure,” *ibid.*, 43. or “defiled by their defilement,” Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* 3ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 96.

²⁴⁵ Vermes, 114. “When the dead fall, the priest shall follow, blowing at a distance, and they shall not enter in the midst of the fallen so as not be defiled with their impure blood ...” Martínez, 102.

²⁴⁶ The War Scroll (1QM) 9:8 “להתגאל בדם טמאתם.”

The question of the nature of defilement has been asked by many commentators.²⁴⁷ Why was the king's portion²⁴⁸ defiling? What was meant by the term defilement? What does this term convey and what was Daniel's intent by his resistance? The term defilement has been defined as "the passage from the state of being clean to the state of being unclean".²⁴⁹ Opposing terms such as pure²⁵⁰ versus impure convey similar concepts. It has been shown, in the Old Testament, that multiple Hebrew roots are used to describe purity and impurity. The main root words for purity are: pure, be pure, purify, purified, purify oneself, purifying, declare clean, be cleansed or holy. The main root words for impurity are: impure, impurity, be impure, become impure, defile oneself, defile, declare unclean, become unclean, and be polluted.²⁵¹ Therefore, it seems apparent that Daniel resisted defilement, impurity, and uncleanness. He was seeking the opposite state which is purity, a clean or holy state. His intent seems to be clear, he was seeking an atonement with God and not a separation which the state of the exile meant.

At least five different types of defilement have been set forth by Soesilo: (1) ceremonial (Lev 15:19); (2) physical (Cant 5:3); (3) religious (Jer 3:1); (4) sexual (Lev 15:24); (5) ethical (Ezek 37:23).²⁵² However, defilement can be simply generalized into three categories: ritual, ceremonial or moral.²⁵³ Ceremonial defilement is when a person

²⁴⁷ Gardner. Soesilo.

²⁴⁸ For a discussion of the king's portion see comments on verse 5.

²⁴⁹ Nilton Dutra Amorim, "Desecration and Defilement in the Old Testament" (PhD dissertation, Andrews University, 1985), 9.

²⁵⁰ See Appendix B.

²⁵¹ David P. Wright, "Unclean and Clean," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:729-741.

²⁵² Soesilo: 442.

²⁵³ Ibid.

or object becomes ritually defiled leading to disqualification for religious service or worship. Ceremonial defilement should not necessarily be equated with sin but rather with unfitness for cultic service. Such defilements can be organized into four classes: death related, sexual, disease-related, and cultic. Persons were defiled by contact with a human corpse (Num 6:12), animal carcasses (Lev 11:24), or by eating a carcass (Lev 22:8). Sexual defilement resulted from abnormal issues from the genitals, either from male or female (Lev 15:2, 25), by menstruation (Lev 15: 19), by contact with anyone thus unclean (Lev 15: 24), by copulation (Lev 15:16-18), a lochial discharge after birth (Lev 12: 2–5). Defilement also relates to the disease of skin lesions and certain fungal growth in houses and on fabrics (Lev 13: 1–46, 14: 1–32, 14: 33–53, 13: 47 – 59). Holy objects were ceremonially defiled by contact, entrance or approach of the defiled (Lev 15: 31, Num 19: 13), by the presence of dead bodies or its remains (Ezek 9:7), by the entrance of foreigners (Ps79:1) or by forbidden treatment, such as the altar by being tooled (Exod 20: 25).²⁵⁴ Moral defilement can be said to occur by bloodshed (Num 35:33), by adultery (Jer 3:1), by idolatry (Lev 20:3). The Temple can be said to be defiled by disrespect (Mal 1:7, 12), unrighteousness (Ezek 36:17), idols (Jer 7:30), unfaithfulness (Hos 5:3), by offering that which is unclean (Hag 2: 14), sins of his people (Ezek 37:23).²⁵⁵

Eating and drinking is an of worship.²⁵⁶ Eating and drinking leads to life and abstaining from it leads to death. One of the first commands God gave to man was in

²⁵⁴ Philip W. Crannell, "Defile; Defilement," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey William Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 1: 912.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Martin Buber has said that when, "one eats in holiness... the table becomes an alter." Adrian Butash, *Bless This Food: Ancient & Contemporary Graces from around the World* (Navato: New World Library, 2007), 10.

regard to what to eat (Gen 1:29). In the Bible defilement/purity are considered antonyms or opposites.²⁵⁷ From a Biblical standpoint defilement is equal to death²⁵⁸ and purity is equated with life.²⁵⁹ From the beginning, God's call was for his followers to seek that which leads to life and shun death. "So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD" (Lev. 18:5). Again, the Bible says "I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live..." (Deut 30:19). Neusner posited,

Two important ideas about purity and impurity come down from ancient Israel: first, purity and impurity are cultic matters; second, they may serve as metaphors for moral and religious behavior, primarily in regard to matters of sex, idolatry, and unethical action. Purity furthermore closely relates to holiness.²⁶⁰

When confronted with the question of diet, the foundation is found in the first book of the Bible (Gen 1:29). The dietary food laws in Lev 11 is founded on Gen 1 and the creation account.²⁶¹ It is recognized by commentators of Gen that man was originally created as a vegetarian.²⁶² It should be pointed out that it is not the act of resisting flesh foods that is

²⁵⁷ These terms are antonyms or total opposites. Holy/profane, unclean/clean, purity/impurity. Lev 10:10 Israelites are called to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, between the unclean and clean. Ezek. 22:26 the Israelites are charged with not making the distinction between holy and profane/unclean and clean. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 15-29.

²⁵⁸ Milgrom, 1002. Klawans has associated and studied "the relationship between impurity and sin," Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), v. For a discussion of Clean and Unclean see, David P. Wright, "Unclean and Clean," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 729-741.

²⁵⁹ Moskala, 83. Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, ed. Nahum M. Sarna, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 346.

²⁶⁰ Jacob Neusner, "Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 43, no. 1 (1975): 16.

²⁶¹ Moskala, 160-233.

²⁶² Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis*, ed. Nahum M. Sarna, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 21. Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 1-17*, ed. Robert Hubbard, The

the goal but the control of one's desire and appetite that is the desired end result.²⁶³

Daniel understood that to resist defilement, one needs to start at the foundation. The rest of his acts, seen in the book of Daniel, attests to this foundation.

In the New Testament, the concept of defilement is taught from a spiritual sense, "but the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man" (Matt 15:18).²⁶⁴ In the Bible, time periods are frequently tied to purity and impurity. Various time limits for uncleanness are set forth in scripture (Lev 11:24, Num 19:11, Lev 15:19). Time separation was a means of moving from impurity to purity. Washing with water is the primary means of being restored from ritual defilement (Isa 1:16, 1 Cor 6:11, Rev 22:14).²⁶⁵

In this section, a survey of proposed rationale for the refusal of the king's food and wine will be reviewed. As stated previously, scholars have attempted to link the resistance of Daniel and his three friends around three primary points: (1) loyalty to the king, (2) unclean foods (violation of the Mosaic food laws), and (3) food would have been first offered to the Mesopotamian gods.²⁶⁶ Several objections have been raised that limits the rationale fitting within each of these points. Ford points out that the young

New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 140. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans., Israel Abrahams, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Skokie: Varda 1992), 58-59. Meir Zlotowitz, *Genesis*, Artscroll Tanach Series, vol. 1a (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 1995), 75-76. Jacques B. Doukhan, *Genesis*, ed. Jacques B. Doukhan, Seventh-Day Adventist International Bible Commentary (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2016), 66.

²⁶³ "Man is called upon by God to exercise restraint and self-discipline in the gratification of his appetite. This prohibition is the paradigm for the future Torah legislation relating to the dietary laws," Sarna, 21.

²⁶⁴ Crannell, 1: 912. Defilement is what is in the heart of man.

²⁶⁵ *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, s.v. "Purity."

²⁶⁶ Lucas, 54.

Jews had three matters that confronted them; “(1) Gentile learning, (2) Gentile names, [and] (3) Gentile customs, such as the eating of food offered to idols.”²⁶⁷ They did not necessarily have a conflict with the first two (Dan 1:7 and Dan 1:17-20), but clearly with the third (Dan 1:8).²⁶⁸ Ford summarizes his rationale,

A well-instructed Israelite shunned rich, spiced foods on the basis that he was the property of God and should not defile his body or lessen its usefulness in any way. Second, meats used by the Babylonians would not have been prepared the way Moses had instructed. Third, some of the foods eaten would have been among those believed to be unclean by the Jews. But most of all, eating and drinking involved as act of worship to idols and drinking involved as act of worship to idols in that the blessing of the gods was invoked upon the food. Inasmuch as the Torah had no specific prohibitions regarding drink, we must see in this last aspect the cardinal one.²⁶⁹

Keil summarizes these points by stating that,

The partaking of the food brought to them from the King's table was to them contaminating, because forbidden by law; not so much because the food was not prepared according to the Levitical ordinance, or perhaps consisted of the flesh of animals which the Israelites were unclean, for in this case the youths were not under the necessity of refraining from the wine, but the reason of their rejection of it was, that the heathen at their feasts offered up in sacrifice to their gods a part of the food and drink, and thus consecrated their meals by a religious rite; whereby not only he who participated in such a meal participated in the worship of idols, but to me and the wine as a whole where the meat and the wine of an idle sacrifice, partaking of which, according to the saying of the apostle (1 Cor 10:20f.), is the same as sacrificing to the devils.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ Ford, 80.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 80-81.

²⁷⁰ Keil, 539-540.

Edward Young agrees with Keil but adds that, "Dan. displays no fanaticism or rudeness...He never yields in devotion to principle..."²⁷¹ These are valid points but it needs to be recognized that all the foods came from the king's portion including the water which was all offered to the gods of Mesopotamia.²⁷² It should be kept in mind that the seed-bearing foods came from the king's portion also. The implication is that the issue was not the source but type of food. Joyce Baldwin takes a slightly different stance on the reason for Daniel and his friends' rejection of the king's food.

To say that the food has been offered to idols and was therefore to be shunned is to import a New Testament controversy into an Old Testament setting where the subject is not mentioned. True, the Babylonians did offer blood sacrifices to their gods, but they also offered every other kind of food and on this ground, nothing could have been guaranteed to be ritually clean...but the text includes wine, against which there was no prohibition, except in the case of the Rechabites and Nazirites, and there is no indication that Daniel and his friends were in either of those categories. Thus, the Levitical food laws do not satisfactorily explain Daniel's resolve. All food in Babylon or Assyria was ritually unclean (Ezekiel 4:13; Hosea 9:3, 4) and from that there was no escape... By Eastern standards to share a meal was to commit oneself to friendship; it was a covenant significance (Genesis 31:54; Exodus 24:11; Nehemiah 8:9 – 12; cf. Matthew 26:26–28). Those who had thus committed themselves to allegiance accepted an obligation of loyalty to the King. It would seem that Daniel rejected the symbol of dependence on the king because he wished to be free to fulfill his primary obligations to the God he served. The defilement he feared was not so much a ritual as a moral defilement, arising from the subtle flattery of gifts and favours which entailed hidden implications of loyal support, however dubious that king's future policies might prove to be.²⁷³

²⁷¹ Young, 44.

²⁷² Oppenheim, 189. "... it was anciently believed that springs, wells, streams, rivers and lakes drew their water from and were replenished from a freshwater ocean which lay beneath the earth in the *abzu* (*apsû*) or *engur*... The term *abzu/apsû* was also used to designate a tank for holy water in a temple courtyard," Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, "Abzu (Apsû)," in *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1992), 27.

²⁷³ Baldwin, 82.

John Goldingay summarizes the scholarly consideration by positing seven considerations that caused the exiles to fear defilement:²⁷⁴ (a) food and drink would have come from the Temple and offered to their gods, but what about the flour? Daniel does not refuse all the food from the king's portion, we see that he accepts the seed-bearing foods. These foods would most likely have come from the king's portion also. Elsewhere, refusal of all foods from the pagan source were shunned even at the price of death (Jdt 10:5; 12:1-4; Esth 14:17; Tob 1:10-11; 1 Macc 1:62-63), (b) the food would not have been kosher but the reference to wine goes against this focus, (c) meat and wine is considered festival food and refusing it is a sign of mourning and penitence. Meat and wine suggest nobility but Daniel and his friends request food that would be more in line with peasant food or the diet of a commoner of Babylon.²⁷⁵ However, this does not explain Daniel's reference to defilement, (d) Daniel refuses the king's food to show an outward distinctiveness, however, this does not explain his lack of conflict with name changes or learning the Chaldean literature and wisdom, (e) accepting the king's provisions indicate commitment and loyalty to the king, however, Daniel and his three friends do accept positions in the king's court (Dan 1:19), (f) grain does not become unclean even though it may come in contact with meat as long as it is kept dry (Lev 11:37-38), but it is not clear that Daniel has this in mind from the reading of the first chapter. His request does not seem to encompass this restriction which makes this point dubious, (g) Daniel and his friends were trying to avoid assimilation, but again what of the other source of assimilations such

²⁷⁴ In this section, I first summarize Goldingay's considerations then offer my critique.

²⁷⁵ Ford, 82.

as the name change and the learning of the languages etc...?²⁷⁶ Some commentators see no hint of vegetarianism or foods based on superior nutritional choices.²⁷⁷ However, current nutritional knowledge would clearly argue that their choices were in fact superior nutritionally (see for instance the Adventist Health Study among others).²⁷⁸ It may not be justifiable to import this knowledge to Daniel and his friends, however, clearly they were witnesses of the positive effects of their dietary choices to their captives (Dan 1:15-16, 19-20). Jewish commentators give an alternate reason; they suppose that eating the

²⁷⁶ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 18-19; Miller, 66-67; Steinmann, 99; Lucas, 54-55; Louis F. Hartman, "Daniel," in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 450; Iain Provan, "Daniel," in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, ed. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 665.

²⁷⁷ John H. Walton, Victor Harold Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *Daniel*, The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 731. Anderson, 6.

²⁷⁸ Michael J; Singh Orlich, Pramila N; Sabaté, Joan; Jaceldo-Siegl, Karen; Fan, Jing; Knutsen, Synnove; Beeson, W Lawrence; Fraser, Gary E "Vegetarian Dietary Patterns and Mortality in Adventist Health Study 2," *JAMA Internal Medicine* 173, no. 13 (2013). The Adventist Mortality Study evaluating 23,000 individuals between 1958-1966 showed that life expectancy was increased by 6.2 years for men and 3.7 years for women between Seventh-day Adventist compared to others then living in California. Gary E. Fraser, *Diet, Life Expectancy, and Chronic Disease* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 46. The Adventist Health Study 1 evaluating 34,000 Californians compared data between Seventh-day Adventists against non-Seventh-day Adventists revealed that vegetarian Adventist lived 9.5 years longer for men and 6.1 years longer for women. Ibid., 47. A more comprehensive study currently ongoing titled the Adventist Health Study 2 started in 2002 and 2007 which has a total of 96,469 participants has continued to show benefits in reduced cardiovascular mortality, non-cardiovascular non-cancer mortality, renal mortality, and endocrine mortality. Orlich, Gary E. Fraser, "Vegetarian Diets: What Do We Know of Their Effects on Common Chronic Diseases?," *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 89 supplement (2009). Serena Tonstad and others, "Type of Vegetarian Diet, Body Weight, and Prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes," *Diabetes Care* 32, no. 5 (2009). Nico S. Rizzo and others, "Vegetarian Dietary Patterns Are Associated with a Lower Risk of Metabolic Syndrome," *Diabetes Care* 34, no. (2011). Timothy J. Key and others, "Mortality in Vegetarians and Nonvegetarians: Detailed Findings from a Collaborative Analysis of 5 Prospective Studies," *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 70 (Suppl.) (1999). Gary E. Fraser, "Associations between Diet and Cancer, Ischemic Heart Disease, and All-Cause Mortality in Non-Hispanic White California Seventh-Day Adventists.," *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 70 (Suppl.) (1999). Some popular media has taken notice such as NY Times, CNN, BBC etc. and as seen in such publications, Dan Buettner, "An American Blue Zone," in *The Blue Zone* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2008), 123-165. Dan Buettner, "The Secrets of Long Life," *National Geographic*, November 2005, 22-27. T. Colin Campbell and Thomas M. Campbell, *The China Study* (Dallas: Benbella Books, 2005). It can be stated that "diet is the single most significant risk factor for disability and premature death." Amy Locke, Jill Scheiderhan, and Suzanna M. Zick, "Diets for Health: Goals and Guidelines," *American Family Physician* 97, no. 11, June 1 (2018).

king's food would have led to intermarriage and any offspring would not be considered Daniel's own.²⁷⁹ However, the Jewish commentaries also recognize the unclean nature of the food that would have been put before them. They also recognize that this would most likely have come after "a libation to a heathen deity."²⁸⁰ John Collins observes that Daniel's primary concern is with defilement. Yet, he observes that there is no biblical prohibition against wine, although gentile wine is forbidden in the Mishnah.²⁸¹ So why did these Hebrew youths refuse the king's food and drink? Collin's posits, "their abstinence does not reflect any general opposition to gentile culture but insist on a limit to assimilation."²⁸² As for the water, it should be pointed out that in the Mesopotamian sacred ritual, the food and as well as the water was considered blessed especially those who shared it.²⁸³ These food items were distributed to the servants along with others associated with the court and temple service.²⁸⁴ Most likely Daniel and his friends were granted a part of the king's portion from the "prebend." As noted previously, the meat was butchered ritually and non-ritually and distributed thereafter, accordingly.²⁸⁵ The choice parts of the sacrificial meat were sent to the king first, the king's portion, and then to the temple officials.²⁸⁶ This may be the reference to the king's portion in Dan 1:5.

²⁷⁹ Goldwurm.

²⁸⁰ Slotki, 4.

²⁸¹ m. 'Aboda Zar. 2:3; 4:8-12; 5:1-12. These prohibitions probably developed later, Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 48. There is no evidence for this prohibition in the Second Temple period Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 142..

²⁸² Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 141-143.

²⁸³ Oppenheim, 189.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Capitanio, 266.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 267.

Most likely, it was from this portion that Daniel and his friends were rationed for their food and wine. The “king’s meal” called *naptan šarrim*, was to be similar to the meal of the gods.²⁸⁷ A clear difference was that there was a “blood consciousness” in the Hebrew concept while there is no such concern in the Mesopotamian culture.²⁸⁸ It is known that even the grains were considered sacrificially blessed as a special blessing was offered during the preparation of the sacrificial bread.²⁸⁹ As stated previously, a complete list of offerings made to the gods in the Neo-Babylonian period has been categorized in the monumental work of Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “*The Pantheon of Uruk During The Neo-Babylonian Period*.”²⁹⁰

Gardner divides the various proposed motives for Daniel’s refusal of the king’s food into 9 categories.²⁹¹ First, the clean and unclean meats were not differentiated by the Babylonian’s.²⁹² Therefore it would be practically impossible to avoid unclean meats. As noted previously, this does not account for the wine which would not be forbidden. Second, he refused because the food was offered to idols first.²⁹³ It has been recognized that first, all foods were offered to the gods, therefore it could be argued that all food was

²⁸⁷ Oppenheim, 188.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 192.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 190-191.

²⁹⁰ Beaulieu, *The Pantheon of Uruk During the Neo-Babylonian Period*. See Appendix A.

²⁹¹ In this section, I will first summarize Gardner’s proposal then offer my critique, Gardner: 54-58.

²⁹² Driver, *The Book of Daniel: With Introduction and Notes*, 8. Montgomery, 130. Most commentators recognize this issue.

²⁹³ Charles, 10. Lucas, 54. Miller, 66-67. Walvoord, 46-47. Wood, 37. Young, 44. H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1969), 66. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 142. Steinmann, 99. Most commentators also recognize this issue.

thus ritually unclean (cf. Ezek 4:13; Hos 9:3-4).²⁹⁴ Third, some argue that the defilement was not “ritual” but more “moral.”²⁹⁵ The argument would be that this would put Daniel and his friend’s under obligation to king Nebuchadnezzar. However, it has been pointed out that Daniel and his friends accept a position as the king’s courtier.²⁹⁶ Fourth, the refusal stems from a desire to live austere.²⁹⁷ This is suggested by Josephus which tends to relate tendencies within the framework of Graeco-Roman philosophies.²⁹⁸ In Daniel 10:3, he seems to indicate that at times he did partake of choice foods, meat and wine. However, as noted below, the specific timing of this refrain indicates that the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was in view. His refusal seems to argue for a time of mourning (Dan 10:2) for his people, Jerusalem and God’s name²⁹⁹. Fifth, some argue that they were avoiding Gentile food.³⁰⁰ Yet, they do accept the seed-bearing foods of the Gentiles. Sixth, some argue that abstaining from meat and wine suggest a sign of mourning.³⁰¹ Meat and wine is considered festival foods and abstaining from such is an act of mourning and penitence which would be appropriate in the setting of exile.³⁰²

²⁹⁴ Oppenheim, 188-198. Heaton, 119. Among others.

²⁹⁵ Baldwin, 83.

²⁹⁶ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 19.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ *Antiquities of the Jews* 10.10.2.

²⁹⁹ See Dan 9 and 10. It could be argued that his note of refusal of these foods does not necessarily speak about his usual habit of consuming these foods but he may be making a special point of not participating in the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread until the return of the exile to the promised land. Also see below on comments on Dan 1:15-16.

³⁰⁰ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 18. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 142-143. See Jdt 10:5; 12:2; Esth 14:17; 1 Macc 1:61-62.

³⁰¹ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 19. Dan 10:3.

³⁰² Ibid.

However, it is noted that such would not explain Daniel's reference to defilement.³⁰³ Seventh, some see ritual defilement as the rationale of the refusal.³⁰⁴ Again, this does not answer the refusal of the wine. Eighth, some have seen their refusal as resisting indoctrination.³⁰⁵ Yet, they do go thru the process of education in the language and literature of the Chaldeans. Fewell posits that the source of the food, that it came from the king, is what he was rejecting too.³⁰⁶ However, it is pointed out that this does not account for their acceptance of the other foods from the king, like seed and water.³⁰⁷ In other words, why does he refuse the king's portion but accept the seed-bearing foods and water from the king? Why does the king's portion defile while the seed-bearing foods and water do not, which also come from the king?³⁰⁸ Again, as previously noted, they do accept positions in the king's court.³⁰⁹ Ninth, Satran³¹⁰ argues, based on previous suggestions by Moore³¹¹ and Ginsberg³¹² focusing on the choice of seed-bearing foods and on Lev 11:37-38, as long as the seeds are kept dry, it is not considered unclean.³¹³ Yet, no clear intention that this is what is requested can be deduced from the text. In

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Soesilo: 442. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 142. Ford, 80-81. David Satran, "Daniel: Seer, Philosopher, Holy Man," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism*, ed. John J. Collins and George W. E. Nicklburg (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980), 34.

³⁰⁵ Smith-Christopher, *Daniel*, 42. Chia, 176-179.

³⁰⁶ Fewell, 39-40.

³⁰⁷ Gardner: 57.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 19.

³¹⁰ Satran, 34.

³¹¹ George F. Moore, "The Rise of Normative Judaism: I. To the Reorganization at Jamnia," *Harvard Theological Review* 17, no. 4 (1924).

³¹² Ginsberg: 256.

³¹³ See M. Uqsin 3.1, Maimonides Hilcot Tum'at Okhalin 1.1.

other words, Daniel does not specify that the seeds be dry.³¹⁴ It would not be correct to reject all of these rationales as not being a factor in the refusal of Daniel and his friends. Each of these may have a part in the rationale of their refusal.

The primary question set forth in this study is, why did Daniel and his three friends refuse the king's portions? While the review of these proposed rationales showed that there are many overlapping answers, some have attempted to provide a more novel answer.³¹⁵ Soesilo first reminds that the defilement can be divided into two major camps, ritual or moral defilement.³¹⁶ Ritual defilement may be defined as being related to defilement according to the Levitical prohibitions (Lev 11-15, Num 19).³¹⁷ Moral defilement can be defined as impurity resulting from immoral acts as defined by the Bible.³¹⁸ Neusner writes that concepts such as defilement and purity "are cultic matters" but that "they serve as metaphors for moral and religious behavior, primarily in regard to matters of sex, idolatry, and unethical action. Purity furthermore closely relates to

³¹⁴ Gardner: 57.

³¹⁵ Ibid. Soesilo. These two may be examples of attempts of a more novel proposal.

³¹⁶ Soesilo: 442-444. Wright divides these into two types, permitted and prohibited impurities. Permitted categorized into four types: (a) death related (human and animal), (b) sexual, (c) disease, (d) cultic. Prohibited impurities categorized into eight types: (a) delayed purification, (b) corpse contaminated Nazarite, (c) corpse contamination and Priests, (d) sins and the Day of Atonement, (e) sexual transgressions, (f) Impurities from idolatry, (g) homicide, (h) pollution of the sacred precinct. Wright, "Unclean and Clean," 729-735.

³¹⁷ It should be noted that the terms ritual and moral defilement do not appear in the texts and they are not "a category as such in the biblical or postbiblical Jewish literature." Klawans. May be caused from direct or indirect contact with natural processes like childbirth (Lev 12:1-8), rash (Lev 13:1-46; 14:1-32), fungal infection on clothes and house (Lev 13:47-59; 14:33-53), genital discharge (Lev 15:1-33), animal carcasses (Lev 11:1-47), corpses (Num 19:10-22). Defilement associated with sacrificial acts (Lev 16:28, Num 19:7-8). Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 53.

³¹⁸ Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 26. Examples include sexual sins (Lev 18:24-30), idolatry (Lev 19:31, 20:1-3), and bloodshed (Num 35:33-34) these confer moral impurity on the sinner (Lev 18:24), land of Israel (Lev 18:25; Eze 36:17) and Sanctuary (Lev 20:3; Eze 5:11). Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 55.

holiness.”³¹⁹ Traditional interpretations posit that Daniel and his friends rejected the king’s portion because they feared ritual defilement.³²⁰ However, some have seen in their refusal a resistance to moral defilement.³²¹ Others see a political defilement that was resisted.³²² Finally, others have seen a combination of all these; ritual, moral and political.³²³

Some authors suggest that the remedy to the question of their refusal lies in the evaluation of the king’s food itself. They suggest that a hint is seen not in what he refuses but in what Daniel requests. As will be noted in the discussion of verse 12, Daniel’s request of the seed-bearing food reaches back past the Levitical food laws of purity to food laws within creation.³²⁴ There are certain points that are clear. If certain points are taken as fact: 1) the text limits the information of the king’s food as the king’s portion and wine³²⁵ (Daniel 1:5, 8, 19, 13, 15, 16), 2) within the text itself, the food

³¹⁹ Neusner: 16. However, Klawans argues “that moral impurity cannot be simply understood as metaphor.” Jonathan Klawans, “Idolatry, Incest, and Impurity: Moral Defilement in Ancient Judaism,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period* 29, no. 4 (1998): 391.

³²⁰ Soesilo: 442. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 142. Ford, 80-81. Satran, 34.

³²¹ Seow, *Daniel*, 25. Towner, 24-26. Anderson, 6. Heaton, 119. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 19. Young, 44.

³²² “The refusal of the king’s food in ch. 1 was, we argued, a symbolic denial of the king’s implicit claim to be the sole provider.” Davies, 91. Baldwin, 83. Fewell, 40. Smith-Christopher, *Daniel*, 42.

³²³ Steinmann, 99. Miller, 66-68. Walvoord, 46-47; Andrew E. Hill, “Daniel,” in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Revised*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 52-54. Keil, 539-540. Leupold, 67. Wood, 37. Lucas, 54-55. Stefanovic, *Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise, Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 62-65.

³²⁴ Gardner: 60-61. Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile*, 19-21.

³²⁵ Most commentators have noted that wine is not forbidden in the Levitical laws, Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 142. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 18-19. Steinmann, 99. Baldwin, 83. Rabbinic tradition states that Daniel, “refused to partake of the bread, wine, and oil of the heathen, even though the enjoyment of them was not prohibited by the law.” Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, Complete ed. (Pantianos Classics, 1909), 478.

items of the king's portion are not clear,³²⁶ 3) the king's portion would also include the "seed-bearing foods" (Dan 1:12),³²⁷ 4) their means of preparation is not addressed. Then, if all the foodstuff originated from the king and the items of the food is not specified then the source could not be the source of defilement.³²⁸ Given these observations it would be reasonable to assert that the source of defilement has to revolve around the choice of the food itself. The rationale of the food choice will be discussed further in the next sections.

9 Now God gave³²⁹ Daniel favor and compassion³³⁰ before the chief of the officials. 10 The chief of the officials said to Daniel, I fear my lord the king who has appointed³³¹ your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking grim³³² in comparison from the other who are your age then you will endanger³³³ my head with the king. 11

³²⁶ It has been noted that the refusal of any meats (Lev 3:17; 11:1-47; Deut 12:23-25) or the method of preparation (Lev 17:10-14) may have been grounds for refusal based on Levitical laws, Fewell, 39.

³²⁷ Longman III, 52-53. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 18.

³²⁸ Levitical food laws whether the food could be considered clean or unclean, food offered to the gods of Mesopotamia, or whether accepting the food of the king's portion and wine showed loyalty to him all has its limits. Then perhaps a different question needs to be asked. Could it be the choice of the foods themselves?

³²⁹ וַיִּתֵּן see above on comments and footnote on verse 2. Verb + לִי "make persons an object of compassion before (in the eyes of), so" (BDB s.v. נָתַן, 3 b).

³³⁰ וְלִרְחֻמִּים לְחֶסֶד וְלִרְחֻמִּים "kindness (especially as extended to the lowly, needy and miserable), mercy" (BDB s.v. רָחַם) "compassion orig. brotherhood, brotherly feeling, of those born from same womb" (BDB s.v. רָחַם).

³³¹ מִנָּה "to send, appoint" (HALOT s.v. מָנָה, piel 2).

³³² וְזָעִים "looking poor, thin" (HALOT s.v. זָעַם II). וְאַשֶׁר לִמָּוֶה יִרְאֶה אֶת-פְּנֵינֶיךָ "Otherwise he will see you" Bruce Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), § 18.3c example 24.

³³³ וְחִיבָתָם "to make guilty," with רָשָׁע to endanger one's life, incriminate oneself before לִי (HALOT s.v. חִיבָה, piel).

Then Daniel said to the steward³³⁴ that the chief of the officials appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

Again, we are reminded that God gave.³³⁵ It should be noted that the chief of the officials seems to refuse the request of Daniel. Therefore, Daniel seems to redirect the request to the steward that the chief of the officials who seems to have been appointed over Daniel and his friends. It is not clear, at this point, if the chief of the officials or the steward understood what Daniel had in mind.³³⁶ The charge of the chief of the official now is clear, the goal is good health and success in their education in the language and literature of the Chaldeans. The goal is to have them fit physically, mentally and intellectually to stand before the king in order to serve him (Dan 1:15, 19-20).

³³⁴ מְלִצָּר Akkadian “*manṣāru* guard under the influence of *m^enaṣṣar*, “overseer”, an official under אֲשַׁפְנַז (HALOT s.v. מְלִצָּר “steward” is probably a loanword from Akkadian indicating a lower official than the chief of the officials in Dan 1:3, Steinmann, 96. *maṣṣāru* “guardian” from the root *nṣr* “to guard,” which is a cognate of the Hebrew נָצַר, Goldingay, *Daniel*, 6. Steinmann, 96. Baldwin, 84. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 144. Versions such as the KJV renders the term as a proper name, however Miller argues that with the definite article it makes it less likely a proper name. He sees this person as a subordinate of Ashpenaz from verse 3 and argues that they are not to be seen as one person. Miller, 69.

³³⁵ See notes on verse 1 and 2.

³³⁶ The text does not make it clear to what lengths Daniel was willing to go to resist defilement.

12 Please test³³⁷ your servants ten days. Let them give to us from seed-bearing foods³³⁸ to eat and water³³⁹ to drink. 13 Then observe our appearance³⁴⁰ and the appearance of the youth who have eaten the king's portion then according to what you observe, do with your servants.³⁴¹ 14 So he listened to them concerning this matter and tested them for ten days.

It seems that the response of Daniel's ten days test is a response to the ultimate goal of the 3 years of training, they were to be trained both physically and intellectually to stand before the king. Daniel's request had the purpose of satisfying the stated goal of the chief of the official of making sure they looked healthy (Dan 1:10). He must have been sure that this kind of diet would serve the goal of making sure they looked healthy (Dan 1:13). As stated previously, most commentators have focused on what they rejected. There has been little attention paid to the study of the actual choice of food and drink requested by Daniel. It has been noted by some that dry grains are not susceptible

³³⁷ נִסָּה "to put someone to the test" apocopated piel imperative (HALOT s.v. נִסָּה). "Test your servants ten days; let us be given vegetables and eat them." "The clause following the initial imperative specifies the contents of the proposition made at the beginning." Joüon and Muraoka, § 124l.

³³⁸ מִן-הַיִּזְרְעִים "some of vegetable," occurs only here "vegetable" (BDB s.v. זָרַע). זָרַע occurs 56 times in the OT, 46 times in the Qal, 6 times in the Niphal, and 3 times in the Hiphil, once in the Pual. The meaning is primarily of the realm of agriculture. The whole agricultural cycle from the act of sowing the seed to harvest of the fruit of the seed can be summed up by the word זָרַע. Kaiser, TWOT, s.v. "zāra'." The verb appears in the OT literally "to sow," in the niphal and pual "be sown," in the hiphil "yield seed." As a noun the literal meaning "seed" Preuss, 4: 144. "seed"; "tree" (Gen 1:11), "shrub" (Gen 1:29), "coriander" (Ex 16:31), (HALOT s.v. זָרַע).

³³⁹ וַיִּמְיֵם "water" (TLOT s.v. מֵיִם) water has several usages in the Bible; Literal, Covenantal, Ritual, Mythological, and Metaphorical usage. Grisanti, NIDOTTE, s.v. "mayim," probably literal usage here.

³⁴⁰ מַרְאֵהוּ "appearance" (HALOT s.v. מַרְאָה)

³⁴¹ וְכַאֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶה עֲמָם-עֲבָדֶיךָ "And treat your servants in accordance with what you see." Waltke and O'Connor, §34.4a example 2.

to uncleanness (Lev 11:37-38).³⁴² Ginsberg observes that, “the great merit of grain (Dan. i 12) is simply that it does not become unclean by contact with the unclean so long as it is kept dry (Lev. xi 37-38).”³⁴³ Moore suggests that, “the reason for the specification of ‘pulse,’ is perhaps that, being dry, it did not contract uncleanness from contact with unclean hands.”³⁴⁴ Although, this attempts to evaluate the requested food, it still is not satisfactory, as the flaw in this argument is that Daniel does not specify that the seeds be dry.³⁴⁵

The foods and drink Daniel requested is observed to be the food choice of a peasant, in the eyes of the overseers.³⁴⁶ Yet, Daniel seemed to understand that these food choices would lead to greater health, longer life and less disease (Dan 1:13). He may have simply believed that what God has ordained for human consumption (Gen 1:29)³⁴⁷ leads to the best health for all human beings. In modern times, this has been proven to be true in many cross sectional and longitudinal or prospective cohort studies.³⁴⁸ The text states clearly that Daniel asked for seed-bearing food. Technically, the seed-bearing food (זֶרַע) indicates food from agricultural source.³⁴⁹ This would include all foods that are

³⁴² Satran, 34.

³⁴³ Ginsberg: 256.

³⁴⁴ Moore: n. 176.

³⁴⁵ Gardner: 57.

³⁴⁶ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 19. Ford, 82.

³⁴⁷ See note below on a discussion of this verse.

³⁴⁸ See The China Study, Adventist Mortality Study, Adventist Health Study and Adventist Health Study 2 among others. Also, see Joan Sabaté, *Vegetarian Nutrition* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2001).

³⁴⁹ מִן-הַזֶּרַע “some of vegetable,” occurs only here “vegetable” (BDB s.v. זֶרַע). זֶרַע occurs 56 times in the OT, 46 times in the Qal, 6 times in the Niphal, and 3 times in the Hiphil, once in the Pual. The meaning is primarily of the realm of agriculture. The whole agricultural cycle from the act of sowing the seed to harvest of the fruit of the seed can be summed up by the word זֶרַע. Kaiser, TWOT, s.v. “zāra’.” The verb appears in the OT literally “to sow,” in the niphal and pual “be sown,” in the hiphil “yield seed.” As a

seed-bearing. The food that Daniel asked for could be from fruits, dry vegetables and herbs or, put in modern terms, a plant-based diet.³⁵⁰ Biblically, זֶרַע perhaps indicates two distinct usage. More frequently in the realm of human seed and less frequently from the agricultural realm.³⁵¹ Here, it clearly speaks of the agricultural realm. Noteworthy, one of the first usage occurs in a similar text dealing with food when God sets the instruction of what food is set aside for human consumption. In (Gen 1:29) it states, “Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed (זֶרַע זֶרַע) that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed (זֶרַע זֶרַע); it shall be food for you.” As this passage refers to different kinds of plants and fruit yielding seeds, it would rightfully indicate “seeds.” The plural form of the same “seeds” is seen in Dan 1:12, (זֶרַעִים/זֶרַעִים).³⁵² The use of the same root word, זֶרַע links these two passages.³⁵³ Some have seen this point.³⁵⁴ It is generally agreed and understood that God ordained that these foods be set aside for human consumption (Gen 1:29; 2:16).³⁵⁵ It was not until after the flood that God allowed the consumption of meat (Gen 9:2-3) but the blood was not

noun the literal meaning “seed” Preuss, 4: 144. “seed”; “tree” (Gen 1:11), “shrub” (Gen 1:29), “coriander” (Ex 16:31), (HALOT s.v. זֶרַע).

³⁵⁰ Heaton, 120.

³⁵¹ See fn 550

³⁵² Gardner: 60.

³⁵³ Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1944), 24-25.

³⁵⁴ Gardner: 60. Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile*, 19. Smith, 24-25.

³⁵⁵ Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, trans., John J. Scullion, A Continental Commentary (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 161-165. Hamilton, 140-141. Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, ed. Peter Ackroyd et al., Revised ed., Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 61. Carl Frederich Keil, *Pentateuch*, ed. Carl Frederich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, trans., James Martin, 10 vols., Commentary on the Old Testament, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 40-41. Cassuto, 58-59. Sarna, 21. Doukhan, *Genesis*, 65-66. Zlotowitz, 75-77. Charles B. Chavel, *Genesis*, Ramban Nachmanides Commentary on the Torah (Brooklyn, NY: Shilo, 1999), 56-58. Tractate Sanhedrin 59b.

allowed to be consumed (Gen 9:4). In Gen 1:28 and Gen 9:1 God blesses and commands humans to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Instead of ruling over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves over the earth, humans, with limitations, are now allowed to consume them for food (Gen 1:28-30; 9:1-3). It is only after the flood that the vineyard is established and wine is produced (Gen 9:20-21). As a result, Noah became drunk of the wine of the vineyard, the cursing of Canaan results because of his actions (Gen 9:21-27). The lessons of drinking wine are shown to lead to undesirable behavior and to the downfall of others.³⁵⁶ Wine was forbidden to the priest who ministered in the Sanctuary (Lev 10:9; Ezek 44:21), those who are under a Nazirite vow (Num 6:1-4; Judg 13:4, 7, 14) and the Rechabites committed to total abstinence as part of their counter-culture (Jer 35).³⁵⁷ Gardner argues that Daniel was indeed a priest which is the argument for his refusal of the wine.³⁵⁸ The implication of all this is that the ideal for humans were seed-bearing foods (grains, vegetables, and fruits) and water.³⁵⁹ The prophet Ezekiel also, had a diet intended to atone for the sons of Israel while in exile (Ezek 4). The prophet Ezekiel enacts a scene by symbolizing Israel of the exile (Ezek 4). He was instructed to lie on his left side for 390 days to, “bear the iniquity of the house of Israel” (Ezek 4:5) and on his right side for

³⁵⁶ Gardner: 61.

³⁵⁷ Barry L. Bandstra, *Wine*, ed. Geoffrey Bromiley, 4 vols., The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 1070.

³⁵⁸ Gardner: 60. Anne E. Gardner, "In the Hebrew Bible: Key to the Identity and Function of the Maskilim in Daniel

שִׁכְל," *Revue Biblique* 118, no. 4 (2011).

³⁵⁹ Gardner, "The Eating of “Seeds” and Drinking of Water by Daniel and Friends: An Intimation of Holiness ": 61.

40 days, “bear the iniquity of the house of Judah” (Ezek 4:6).³⁶⁰ He was told to make food for himself with “wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet and spelt, put them in one vessel and make them into bread” (Ezek 4:9). Water was to be drunk by him also (Ezek 4:11). The eating of these foods and water was to be consumed in atonement for the sins of Israel.³⁶¹ This reference specifically relates to the request of Daniel and his friend’s request to eat seed-bearing food and water. One may ask, why would consuming these types of food and water be considered atoning? From the first, the food that was ordained by God to be consumed was seed-bearing foods. As noted previously in Gen 1:29, God sets the ideal food for humans. The root word, זרע links the text of Dan 1:12 with Gen 1:29. It is generally agreed that the ideal food for man is a seed-bearing food or a plant based diet.³⁶² As noted previously, the exile was a time when the nation of Israel was in a state of defilement. Such a state meant “death, deportation, destruction, and devastation.”³⁶³ The loss of their land, king (Davidic Dynasty), and the temple³⁶⁴ was “tantamount to God’s abandonment”³⁶⁵ of Israel. For Daniel, atonement meant reaching back to creation. Creation is the pure and original state. If one is to look for a state of purity or cleanness then the state in creation is this ideal state. When the stakes are high then one should look to the ideal state. This is that ideal state. This is the state to which God is wanting His people to return too. Moskala posits a Creation motif based on the

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Sabaté. Campbell and Campbell. Vernon W. Foster, *Newstart* (Weimar, CA: Weimar Institute, 1990).

³⁶³ Klein, 2.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 3-8.

³⁶⁵ Beach: 34, 36.

Creation-Fall-New Creation model.³⁶⁶ Moskala is correct when he argues that, “life is closely linked to Creation and death to the Fall.”³⁶⁷ Klingbiel finds creation references in the writings of the prophets of the Eighth, Seventh, Sixth, and Fifth BCE.³⁶⁸ He divides intertextual creation markers into three main groups: (1) lexical, (2) literary, and (3) conceptual.³⁶⁹ In his study, he finds that “the prophets were constantly looking back to creation.”³⁷⁰ Others have seen allusions in Daniel to creation.³⁷¹ Most have focused on the prophetic sections,³⁷² however, some have seen allusions in the first chapter also.³⁷³ From a linguistic perspective, Doukhan concludes that, “Les allusions a la creation foisonnent tout au long du livre et sont attestees d'une maniere ou d'une autre dans chacun de ses chapitres.”³⁷⁴ Also Klingbiel states, “the apocalyptic themes of the transformation of history and the final return to an Edenic state that are so recurrent in the book of

³⁶⁶ Moskala, 345. Or as Cline argues for a “creation-uncreation-re-creation,” David J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 2 ed., Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, 10 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1997), 81.

³⁶⁷ Moskala, 364.

³⁶⁸ Martin G. Klingbiel, *Creation in the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament: An Intertextual Approach*, ed. Martin G. Klingbiel, The Genesis Creation Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2015), 264.

³⁶⁹ Ibid. He shows creation markers in the writings of the Eighth-century BCE prophets: Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah. Again, he finds creation markers in the writings of the Seventh-century BCE prophets: Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Joel, and Jeremiah. Finally, he finds creation markers in the Sixth and Fifth-century BCE writers of Ezekiel, Obadiah, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Ibid., 267-289.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 263.

³⁷¹ André Lacocque, “Allusions to Creation in Daniel 7,” in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (Boston: Brill, 2002), 114-131. Robert R. Wilson, *Creation and New Creation: The Role of Creation Imagery in the Book of Daniel* ed. William P. Brown and S. Dean Jr. McBride, *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 190-203. Doukhan, “Allusions à la Création dans le Livre de Daniel,” 285-292. Klingbiel, 257-289.

³⁷² Lacocque. Wilson.

³⁷³ Doukhan, “Allusions à la Création dans le Livre de Daniel,” 285-292.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 289.

Daniel are theologically grouped along a continuum from creation to de-creation and finally re-creation...³⁷⁵ Doukhan is probably correct when he says, “L’idée de commencement est conséquente avec celle de fin.”³⁷⁶

15 At the end of ten days they appeared healthier³⁷⁷ and fatter in flesh³⁷⁸ that all the youth who ate from the king’s portion. 16 So the steward took away³⁷⁹ their portion and the wine which was their drink and he gave³⁸⁰ them seed bearing-food.³⁸¹

Their training and development were to be both physical and mental (Dan 1:15, 18-19).³⁸² Following God’s ideal always result in greater benefits in tangible and observable ways. Nutritionist have advocated for consumption mostly fruits and vegetables or seed-bearing foods for optimal health.³⁸³ Biblical scholars see the same

³⁷⁵ Klingbiel, 284-285.

³⁷⁶ Doukhan, "Allusions à la Création dans le Livre de Daniel," 290.

³⁷⁷ מְרֵאָה מְרֵאָהּ characterizing the figure, the appearance, depends upon *ṭōb* point toward a more external evaluation (“pretty,”) Stoebe, TLOT, s.v. “*ṭōb*.”

³⁷⁸ וְבָרִיאִי בָשָׂר “fat fleshed boys” (HALOT s.v. בָּרִיא). Basic connotation meaning “fat” ... It can be used to describe a healthy human beings, McComiskey, TWOT, s.v. “*bārī*’.” “Fattened,” Way, NIDOTTE, s.v. “*bārī*’.” Language similar on Gen 41:2, 18 Goldingay, *Daniel*, 20. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 144.

³⁷⁹ נָשָׂא נָשָׂא “take away” (HALOT s.v. נָשָׂא, Qal, 18) “two participles (נָשָׂא ... נָשָׂא) forms two results clause with durative force ... permanently took away” Steinmann, 97. (BDB s.v. נָשָׂא, Qal, 3) Wood, 42.

³⁸⁰ נָתַן Qal Act participle “gave”

³⁸¹ זֵרַעִים only occurs here (BDB s.v. זֵרַעִים). “seeds, vegetables” (HALOT s.v. זֵרַעִים). “seeds of vegetables” Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature* (New York: Judaica Press, 2004), 414. “seeds, vegetables,” Hamilton, NIDOTTE, s.v. “*zr*’.”

³⁸² Fewell, 37.

³⁸³ Sabaté. Campbell and Campbell.

benefit revealing itself here.³⁸⁴ It is recognized that at the very least they maintained this diet for the duration of their three-year training.³⁸⁵ However, some aver that at a later time Daniel's diet included meat and wine (Dan 10:3).³⁸⁶ A closer examination of the text of Daniel 10:2-4 is needed:

*In those days, I, Daniel, I was mourning for three weeks of days.
I did not eat food that were delicacies or flesh and wine enter my mouth nor did I
anoint at all until three weeks of days were completed.
On the twenty-fourth day of the first month³⁸⁷ ... (Dan. 10:2-4)*

This time period would have included the Passover on the 14th day of the first month (Ex 12:1-6; Lev 23:5-8; Num 28:16)³⁸⁸ and the Feast of Unleavened Bread would have fallen on the 15th thru the 21st day (Ex 23:15-18; Lev 23:5-8; Num 28:17).³⁸⁹ Daniel was refusing to celebrate the deliverance of Israel with the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread while the temple is in ruins and the sacrifice on hold.³⁹⁰ Daniel seems to make a point of saying that he ate no meat or wine which was required on the ritual

³⁸⁴ Miller, 70. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 144. Walvoord, 49.

³⁸⁵ Wood, 42. Young, 47. Walvoord, 49.

³⁸⁶ Lucas, 55. Baldwin, 179. Longman III, 247. Stefanovic, *Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise, Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 66.

³⁸⁷ Arguments regarding the reference to the "first month" have been put forth. Is the writer using the spring to spring (Nisan to Nisan) or (fall to fall) Tishri to Tishri calendar? See William H. Shea, "Wrestling with the Prince of Persia: A Study on Daniel 10," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* Vol. 21, no. 3 (1983). Thiele, 43-60. Steinmann, 482-483. Goldwurm, 270-271.

³⁸⁸ Steinmann, 496-497. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 373. Miller, 279. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 290. Wood, 267. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 330.

³⁸⁹ See de Vaux, 190-193, 484-493.

³⁹⁰ Steinmann, 497. However, the Rabbis have found it difficult to believe that Daniel would not have observed the Passover. Some have tried to explain Daniel's seeming fast and refrain from observing the Passover, others have tried to explain an alternate time for this period mentioned in this text, see Goldwurm, 270-271; Rosenberg, 90-91; Slotki, 81; Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile*, 158-159.

meal of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex 12:1-6; Lev 23:5-8; Num 28:16-25).³⁹¹ Refusing anointing was a sign of mourning (2 Sam 14:2; Isa 61:3).³⁹² Daniel specifically mentions that he refused this meat and wine because he was mourning (Dan 10:2-3). Daniel's refusal to partake of the meat and wine also included prayer and study of God's Word including Jeremiah's writings (Dan 9:2-19). The timing of this event in "the third year of Cyrus king of Persia" (Dan 10:1)³⁹³ may be significant. The first year of Cyrus is clearly recognized among the Bible writers as the end of the Exile (Ezra 1:1-4; 2 Chr 36:22-23). Daniel is now in the third year of Cyrus the king. Could he be distressed that he is not seeing the restoration of Jerusalem and the exiles return?³⁹⁴ It could be argued that this is the reason for Daniel's action in Dan 10:3, not that it shows he regularly consumed meat or drank wine after the three years of training of Dan 1.³⁹⁵

³⁹¹ Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile*, 158.

³⁹² Steinmann, 497. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 373.

³⁹³ Historians see the first year of Cyrus reign beginning in the middle of October 539 BCE, Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, trans., Peter T. Daniels (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 42. Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 85-87. Possible chronology of the first years of the reign of the Persian kingdom as relates to Babylon. October 12, 539 BCE Gubaru entered Babylon without a Battle, October 29, 539 BCE Cyrus entered Babylon, Gubaru installs (sub-) governors in Babylon, November 6, 539 BCE Gubaru dies, See Babylonian Chronicles James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, Third Edition with Supplement ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 306.

³⁹⁴ The message of the rest of the book of Daniel would argue for a more cosmic struggle that not only has the Jews in mind but the salvation of the entire world. It could be argued that if one would take the whole book of Daniel in consideration then the message of the book encompasses the entire time until the final return of the exiles into the true promise land. However, this study has limited itself to the primary question set forth in Dan 1.

³⁹⁵ See fn 590.

17 Now as for these four youths,³⁹⁶ God gave³⁹⁷ to them knowledge³⁹⁸ and skillfulness³⁹⁹ in all literature and wisdom,⁴⁰⁰ as for Daniel, he had understanding⁴⁰¹ in all vision and dreams.

For the third time in this chapter we are told that God “gives” נתן something.⁴⁰² Ultimately, all blessings, abilities and good comes from God (Jas 1:17).⁴⁰³ Goldingay argues that the opening of verse 17 picks up from verse 6-7.⁴⁰⁴ He argues that it is not as a result of their faithfulness but as a gift from God.⁴⁰⁵ It should be pointed out that the immediate context shows that the reward is a result of their faithfulness and self-discipline.⁴⁰⁶ Commentators have pointed out that the four youth received gifts of intellectual abilities but that Daniel received a special gift of understanding of dreams and

³⁹⁶ תְּלָדִים הָאֵלֶּה אַרְבָּעָהם “these four young men (= Daniel and his three companions)” Joüon and Muraoka, § 142m.

³⁹⁷ נתן see notes on verse 2, 9, 17.

³⁹⁸ מַדָּע “understanding” (HALOT s.v. מַדָּע). “knowledge, thought” (BDB s.v. מַדָּע). “Knowledge,” Lewis, TWOT, s.v. “yāda’.”

³⁹⁹ וְהַשְׂכֵּל “insight, cleverness” (HALOT s.v. שָׂכַל I.2). “have insight, comprehension” (BDB s.v. שָׂכַל I, Hiphil, 3) וְהַשְׂכֵּל מַדָּע וְהַשְׂכֵּל “God gave them knowledge and understanding.” Waltke and O’Connor, § 35.3.3b example 12.

⁴⁰⁰ בְּכָל-סֵפֶר וְחִכְמָה in all literature and wisdom, literally means “scroll” Steinmann, 97.

⁴⁰¹ וּמִבִּינֵי מַדָּע Hiphil perfect corresponds to Hiphil participle of מַדָּע in verse 4 where the king sought those with “discerning knowledge” ibid. “to understand about (vision and dreams)” (HALOT s.v. בִּין § Hiphil 1d) may be a technical term, especially here in Daniel, for his understanding of visions and dreams, Schmid, TLOT, s.v. “bîn.” “give understanding, make understand, teach” (BDB s.v. בִּין § Hiphil 3).

⁴⁰² See on Dan 1:2, 1:9, 1:17. Steinmann, 101. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 50-51.

⁴⁰³ Miller, 70. Young, 48. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 144. Walvoord, 50. Steinmann, 101. Lucas, 55-56. Wood, 42.

⁴⁰⁴ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 20.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid. “Our author, however, is careful to note that the superior knowledge and wisdom of these men came, not as a direct result of their asceticism, but as a gift from God,” Hartman and Di Lella, 131.

⁴⁰⁶ Lucas, 55. Miller, 70.

visions.⁴⁰⁷ Daniel's gift was distinct and unique from the others.⁴⁰⁸ This gift is manifest in the very next chapter (Dan 2) and in subsequent chapters (Dan 7, 8, 9, 11, 12).

Montgomery asserts that Daniel's understanding of visions and dreams do "not belong to the highest category of revelation, that of prophecy; the Prophets had long since passed away, 1 Mac 4:46 ..."⁴⁰⁹ He states that "dreams and visions belonged to a lower and often deceptive form of revelation, cf. Jer 23, a fact recognized in Ecclus 34:1 ff."⁴¹⁰

Goldingay argues against this as the narrative does not see the visions and dreams as a lower gift compared to prophecies.⁴¹¹ Young takes this issue and argues that Montgomery fails to distinguish between true and pretended revelation. He argues that those who receive communications and revelations from God is true revelation and not deceptive.⁴¹² The Babylonians believed that the gods spoke through dreams.⁴¹³ Dream interpreters played an important part of Babylonian wisdom.⁴¹⁴ These points set the stage for the dreams and visions that comes in the following sections of the book of Daniel.⁴¹⁵

⁴⁰⁷ Wood, 43. Leupold, 73-74.

⁴⁰⁸ Miller, 70. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 51. Walvoord, 51. Slotki, 6.

⁴⁰⁹ Montgomery, 132.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 20.

⁴¹² Young, 49-50.

⁴¹³ Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 92-93. Miller, 70-71. Young, 50.

⁴¹⁴ Miller, 70-71. Ernest C. Lucas, *Daniel*, ed. John H. Walton, 5 vols., Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 531. A. Leo Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient near East*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society Vol. 46, 3 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956), 238-239.

⁴¹⁵ Baldwin, 84. Miller, 71. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 144.

18 At the end of the time, that the king had said to bring⁴¹⁶ them, the chief of the officials brought them before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 The king spoke with them, and among them all none was found⁴¹⁷ like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; so they stood⁴¹⁸ before the king. 20 In every matter of the art of reasoning⁴¹⁹ that the king sought from them, he found them ten times⁴²⁰ better than all the magicians⁴²¹ and enchanters⁴²² that were in all his kingdom.

The story tells us that the four “stood” before the king which indicates that they stood in the king’s service. The goal of the king, clearly, was to indoctrinate them with the culture and beliefs of the Babylonians but, as shown in this chapter, it is the God of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah who is in control. It is in the eyes of their God that they stood and for His service that they entered by being faithful and resisting defilement. The rest of the book of Daniel further illustrates this point to Nebuchadnezzar and the kingdom of Babylon and Medo-Persia. It should be noticed that

⁴¹⁶ לְהַבִּיאָם literally “to bring them.” “To introduce” (HALOT s.v. בִּיאָ § Hiphil 2) Hiphil infinitive construct 3 masculine plural. The fourth most frequent verb in the OT used 43 times in Daniel and the most frequent verb indicating movement, Jenni, TLOT, s.v. “bô’.”

⁴¹⁷ לֹא נִמְצָא Literally “no-one could be found like.” None “to be found” (BDB s.v. נִמְצָא § Niphal 1 i).

⁴¹⁸ וַיַּעֲמָדוּ literally “they stood”

⁴¹⁹ חֵכְמַת בִּינָה “particularly of the courtly skill of political advising (among the neighboring peoples)” חֵכְמַת is often supported by or can be interchanged with synonyms, esp. the “perception root” → בִּינָה: “insight,” Sæbø, TLOT, s.v. “hkm.”

⁴²⁰ עֲשָׂר יָדוֹת “ten times” Waltke and O’Connor, § 15.4b example 14. Also, Joüon and Muraoka, § 142q.

⁴²¹ הַחֲרָטִים “soothsayer-priests” (HALOT s.v. חָרַטָם). “magicians of Babylon” (BDB s.v. חָרַטָם § 2).

⁴²² הַאֲשָׁפִים “conjurer” (HALOT s.v. אָשַׁף). “Necromancer” (BDB s.v. אָשַׁף). “astrologer, enchanter, exorcist” its meaning must be determined solely by context, since the etymology is not apparent. It may be a Babylonian loan word and it may be related to the Assyrian *shiptu* (“conjunction”). As this word is only found in Daniel, this may be more likely. In Dan. 1:20 אֲשָׁפִים are parallel to חֲרָטִים (magicians), Alden, TWOT, s.v. “’ashshāp.”

Daniel continues to utilize the Hebrew or Jewish name (Dan 1:19) throughout the narrative instead of the Babylonian names that was set or given to them in verse 7.⁴²³ Perhaps, Daniel is showing resistance to assimilation by the Babylonians here? However, in subsequent chapters we see that he does refer to himself by his Chaldean name, Belteshazzar.⁴²⁴ The point is that Daniel cannot control the external circumstances but he can control or resolve to control his internal circumstances.⁴²⁵

The idea that they were found ten times⁴²⁶ better conveys the idea of completeness or perfection. This may be a means to convey the surpassing nature of their skills,⁴²⁷ or outstanding difference, or the sharp contrast against others,⁴²⁸ or they being far superior,⁴²⁹ or above, i.e. superior to,⁴³⁰ etc. The results are not minimal but clearly superior.

21 And it was⁴³¹ that Daniel remained until the first year of King Cyrus.⁴³²

⁴²³ Chia, 176.

⁴²⁴ Dan 1:7; 2:26; 4:19; 10:1.

⁴²⁵ Arnold, *Word Play and Characterization in Daniel 1*, 247-248.

⁴²⁶ Common idiom Gen 31:41; Num 14:22; Neh 4:12; Job 19:3. Charles argues that this account creates another inaccuracy in the book of Daniel, for if these four were ten times better or wiser, then they would have been consulted first regarding the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in Chap. 2, Charles, 12-13.. See discussion by Young, 52-53. See also Walvoord, 52-53.

⁴²⁷ Steinmann, 102.

⁴²⁸ Walvoord, 51-52.

⁴²⁹ Miller, 71.

⁴³⁰ Young, 51.

⁴³¹ נִהְיָ “to remain, live” (HALOT s.v. נִהְיָ § Qal 3b). “remained, continued,” Montgomery, 138-139.

⁴³² לְכֹרֶשׁ “Cyrus, Cyrus II ... king of Persia 559–29, king of Babylon after 539” (HALOT s.v. כֹרֶשׁ) “king of Persia, conqueror of Babylon restorer of Jews to Palestine Is 44:28, 45:1, Ezr 1:7; called פָּרֶס Ch 36:22, 36:22, 36:23, Ezr 1:1, 1:1, 1:2, also Ezr 1:8, 4:3, 4:5, Dn 10:1; simply הַמֶּלֶךְ Dn 1:21.”

The date presented here has significance in the fact that this is the year that ended the Babylonian captivity.⁴³³ It was the year of the deliverance of the Jews from the 70 years of captivity prophesied by Jeremiah, “the beginning of a new era, the year of their deliverance.”⁴³⁴

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying:

Thus, says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

‘Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem.

‘Every survivor, at whatever place he may live, let the men of that place support him with silver and gold, with goods and cattle, together with a freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.’” Ezra 1:1-4

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia — in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah — the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,

“Thus, says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!’” 2 Chr 36:22-23

(BDB s.v. בִּזְרֹתָא). Historians see the first year of Cyrus reign beginning in the middle of October 539 BCE, Briant, 42. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, 85-87. Possible chronology of the first years of the reign of the Persian kingdom as relates to Babylon. October 12, 539 BCE Gubaru entered Babylon without a Battle, October 29, 539 BCE Cyrus entered Babylon, Gubaru installs (sub-) governors in Babylon, November 6, 539 BCE Gubaru dies, See Babylonian Chronicles Pritchard, 306.

⁴³³ Ezra 1:1-4, Seow, *Daniel*, 30. Lacocque argues that this verse indicates that Daniel died in the first year of Cyrus and therefore it contradicts Dan 10:1 which states that Daniel was still alive in the third year of Cyrus, LaCocque, *The Book of Daniel*, 33. Porteous does not see this as necessarily meaning that Daniel died in the first year of Cyrus, Porteous, 33; Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 145.

⁴³⁴ Young, 51.

The 70-year prophecy was the fixed time of divine indignation (2 Chr 36:21; Zech 1:12).⁴³⁵ It is noted that various commenters have suggested varying dates for the start and end of this time period.⁴³⁶ Some have suggested that the 70 years prophecy is a round number or simply one that represents a “human lifetime” (Isa 23:15; Ps 90:10).⁴³⁷ Williamson commenting on the passage of Ezra 1:1 states,

The biblical writer, however, is concerned not merely with the external facts of history, which he may have derived from the heading or other note of identification on the copy of the decree itself, or, indeed, from the decree of 6:3; rather he is concerned with their divine ordering and purpose. Thus, he notes that to the eye of faith Cyrus’s move took place “in order that the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah might be fulfilled.” “The word” has been generally misunderstood by commentators as a reference to such passages as Jer 25:11–12 and 29:10 that look forward in a general way to the fall of Babylon and the end of the exile. This interpretation is far too generalized, however, and probably owes its origin to the comparable 2 Chr 36:21. (Note that there the reference to “seventy years” makes the link with the Jeremiah passages explicit.) What the present context clearly demands is a passage predicting that the Lord would stir up the spirit of Cyrus (הַעִיר אֶת־רוּחַ כְּרֶשׁ) in such a way that he would order the rebuilding of the temple and the return of the exiles.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁵ Baldwin, 164.

⁴³⁶ The beginning has been suggested with Judah’s submission in 605 BCE, or the second deportation in 597 BCE, or with the fall of Jerusalem and final deportation in 587 BCE. The end has been suggested as the fall of Babylon in 539 BCE, Cyrus’ decree allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem in 538-537 BCE or the rebuilding of the temple and completion in 520-517. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 539. Wood, 233-234. Walvoord, 250-254. Leupold, 378-379. Hartman and Di Lella, 246-247. “Some scholars are of the opinion that the seventy years were count from the demolishing of the temple in 586 B.C. to its completion in 516 B.C.” F. Charles Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, ed. R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 42.

⁴³⁷ Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 349. Lucas, *Daniel*, 235. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 290-291. Baldwin, 164. Miller, 241-242. Seow, *Daniel*, 137. Heaton, 204-205.

⁴³⁸ H.G.M. Williamson, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1985), 9.

Historians see the first year of Cyrus as 539-538 BCE (perhaps beginning in Nisan 538 BCE),⁴³⁹ and the third year would fall in 536-535 BCE.⁴⁴⁰ If, as argued in the commentary on the first verse of this chapter, the captivity began in 605 BCE and the third year of Cyrus is 536-535 BCE then the 70 years of captivity prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10) would fit within this timeframe.⁴⁴¹ Whitley has specified that the 70 years starts, “from the destruction of the first temple in 586 until the completion of the second in 516.”⁴⁴² Orr, reviving the argument of Duhm,⁴⁴³ states that the text which mentions the 70 years period which are (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10; Zech 1:12; 7:5; Dan 9:2; 2 Chr 36:21) does not attribute the term “the captivity of Judah.”⁴⁴⁴

This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, declares the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation. Jer 25:11-12.

For thus says the LORD, “When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.” Jer 29:10.

Then the angel of the LORD said, “O LORD of hosts, how long will You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant these seventy years?” Zech 1:12.

⁴³⁹ Lucas, *Daniel*, 531.

⁴⁴⁰ Steinmann, 103.

⁴⁴¹ Hartman and Di Lella, 277. These authors date these periods from 606 B.C. to 536 B.C.

⁴⁴² Charles F. Whitley, "The Term Seventy Years Captivity," *Vetus Testamentum* 4 no 1 Jan (1954): 72. Charles F. Whitley, "The Seventy Years Desolation-a Rejoinder," *Vetus Testamentum* 7 no 4 Oct (1957). Slotki, 111.

⁴⁴³ Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1901), 230.

⁴⁴⁴ Avigdor Orr, "Seventy Years of Babylon," *Vetus Testamentum* 6 no 3 Jul (1956): 305.

Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years, was it actually for Me that you fasted?

Zech 7:5.

in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. Dan 9:2.

to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.

2 Chr 36:21.

He attributes the 70 years to Babylon's rule and not to the Jews or their captivity.⁴⁴⁵ This argument supposes that the prophecy is speaking of the rule of Babylon over Judah as well as the nations around them.⁴⁴⁶ Historical record speaks of the Neo-Babylonian dominance of this area starting with the capture of the Assyrian capital, Nineveh in 612 BCE.⁴⁴⁷ When the last Assyrian stronghold of Haran fell to Nabopolassar in 610 BCE the road to the Levant was opened to him.⁴⁴⁸ In 609 BCE, Neco II (610-594) marched to Haran to assist Asshur-uballit against the Babylonians which failed.⁴⁴⁹ It was in this setting that Josiah went out to stop Neco and his Egyptian army from marching through

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Jer 25:11 speaks of these nations who will be subservient to the king of Babylon. The nations (גוֹיִם) in Biblical terms refers to the people or nations Judah and Israel as well as the surrounding nations, (TLOT s.v. גוֹיִם see § 3.d-e). Jer 1:5 speaks of Jeremiah having been "appointed ... a prophet to the nations." Later in the same chapter as the symbolic act of drinking the "cup of the wine of the wrath" is given, a list of "all the nations" are given. It includes Jerusalem, Judah, Egypt, Philistines, and all the kings of the north near and far (Jer 25:15-26).

⁴⁴⁷ Beaulieu, *King Nabonidus and the Neo-Babylonian Empire*, 972.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ Bright, 324-325.

Judah, which failed and ultimately cost him his life (2 Kgs 23:29; 2 Chr 35:20-24).⁴⁵⁰ It could be said that the subjugation of Judah began here with Neco, who at the same time lost the battle of Haran to the Babylonians in the same year. The implication is that Babylon is now the dominant power in this land.

Jeremiah recognized that the death of Josiah was the first step in the process that would end with destruction. With the death of Josiah, the greatest spiritual protection against the destruction was removed. The kingdom of Judah fell under foreign domination and began to unravel... the slide to exile had begun.⁴⁵¹

For Israel, it may be argued that the reign of Babylon began at this time.⁴⁵² This would mark the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy from 609 to 539 BCE (2 Chr 36:20-23; Ezra 1:1).

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to study the refusal of Daniel and his friends' to eat the king's food and wine in the first chapter of the book of Daniel. Even to the casual reader of the Bible, the story is well known. Many scholars of Daniel have debated almost every aspects of the book. Such issues as the date, composition, author, social

⁴⁵⁰ Arnold, *Who Were the Babylonians?*, 92.

⁴⁵¹ Scherman, 419.

⁴⁵² Jer 25:11 speaks of, "these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years." Historians aver different times as the defining time of the start of the Babylonian empire. However, the general consensus would attribute the start of the Neo-Babylonian empire with Nabopolassar from 626-605 BCE. Nebuchadnezzar being attributed as the king who brought the empire to its zenith. Arnold, *Who Were the Babylonians?*, 91. Van de Mieroop, 276. Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East C. 3000-330 Bc*, 589-590. Beaulieu, *King Nabonidus and the Neo-Babylonian Empire*, 969-972. Hallo and Simpson, 143. Nebuchadnezzar, the crown prince, was already mentioned as commanding his own forces operating independently from the king's forces in 607 BCE, Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, 20. Jewish sources and commentators argues that the 70 years does not necessarily require that the Jews exclusively be under the sovereignty of the Babylonian kings, Rabinowitz, 61-62.

setting, genre, intention, interpretation, canonicity, apparent discrepancies, authenticity and theme among others have been argued among scholars. This study has taken the position that the evidence from within the book as well as archaeological data points to the book being written in the 6th-5th century BCE. This narrative is set in the 6th century BCE as Josiah's reform and death sets the stage for the exile of the Jews into Babylon. The author, Daniel, relates a first-person account of the exile, setting the author as an embodiment of the exile. Will they return to the God of their covenant and remain faithful? They respond in their actions that they will be faithful and continue to cling to God. His experience and actions embody the external pressures endured and the desired response of the exiles. The lessons of this chapter show that ultimate victory and restoration is found in those who remain faithful to God.

The historical background has been shown to be significant as it sets the stage for the experience of Daniel and his friends. The divine act of the exile in the history of God's redemptive acts has been argued to be significant, also. From the beginning, Abraham was called to the covenant of God (Gen 12:1-3). At Mt Sinai, God entered into a covenant relationship with the nation of Israel (Ex 19:1-8; 24:3-8; Deut 7:6-14). Within this covenant relationship, the holiness code was set by God. The dietary code is one of these holiness codes. The story of Daniel and his friends' response in the face of exile, gives an example to the faithful people of God. In their choices, they exercise their will to follow God's commands in the most difficult of situations. It is this exercise of their will to follow God's commands that allow them to see the return from exile as seen in the last verse of this chapter.¹ When the covenant was broken by Israel (Jer 31:32; Heb 8:8-

¹ See discussion on Dan 1:21.

12) God's judgment was "manifested toward His chosen people" which was the result of the "failure(s) which had so marked Israel's history." Yet, God promised a renewing of the covenant (Jer 31:31-34). Daniel shows that a renewing of the covenant was achieved by the resisting of defilement that the exile created.

This study has shown that the first chapter sets the stage for the theme of the entire book of Daniel. Studies of the chiasmic structure show how the chapter apexes around the 8th verse of the first chapter. Defilement and the resistance of defilement was shown as the ultimate theme of the first chapter and ultimately the entire book of Daniel. This study has argued that the creation account is the rationale behind the resistance to defilement. The verbal link between Daniel 1:12 and Genesis 1:29 was argued as a key to the rationale for the refusal of the king's food and wine. It was argued that Daniel reaches back past the Levitical food laws, which themselves reach back to the creation account,² to the earliest food laws that came from the creator. Sarna rightly states that in Gen 1, "just as in Creation ... the human race is here assumed to have been originally vegetarian. Unrestricted freedom does not exist. Man is called upon by God to exercise restraint and self-discipline in the gratification of his appetite. This prohibition is the paradigm for the future Torah legislation relating to the dietary laws."³ The defilement Daniel resisted shows his desire for atonement, in parallel with Ezekiel's actions of a plant-based diet, which are specifically described as to make atonement (Ezek 4:9-17).

² Geoffrey G. Harper, "Time for a New Diet? Allusions to Genesis 1-3 as Rhetorical Device in Leviticus 11," *Southeastern Theological Review* 4 no. 2 Winter (2013). Milgrom states, "Lev 11 is rooted in Gen 1," Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 47; Moskala.

³ Sarna, 21. Some have seen this point within Judaism see, Louis A. Berman, *Vegetarian and the Jewish Tradition* (New York: Ktav, 1982); Richard H. Schwartz, *Judaism and Vegetarianism* (New York: Lantern Books, 2001); Roberta Kalechofsky, *Vegetarian Judaism* (Marblehead, MA: Micah, 1998).

Daniel understood that anything that lessens physical strength or health enfeebles the mind and makes it less capable of discriminating between right and wrong. Our habits should be brought under the control of a mind that is itself under the control of God. It could be argued that hunger is the most primitive and the most powerful of human instincts.⁴ As such, it can also become a dangerous motivator of a person's behavior. The Bible shows that it is not the destruction of these impulse that is the goal but its control and sanctification.⁵

In the Bible, a clean state or ritual purity was necessary for man to have union with their God. Holiness is not innate. The source of holiness is from God alone. Holiness is an extension of His nature and will for man (Exo 19:5-6).⁶ Holiness is not only a separation from this world but a separation to the God of Israel.⁷ In the Bible, relatively few laws are connected with holiness: the Priesthood (Exo 19:6), Idolatry (Lev 20:6-7, Deut 7:4-6, Deut 14:1-2), and the Dietary laws (Exo 22:31, Lev 11:44-47, Lev 20:22-26, Deut 14:4-21).⁸ What should be pointed out is that the act of differentiating between the clean and the unclean and the allowed and the forbidden is the differentiating mark of the clean and the unclean or the pure and the defiled individual. Again, Lev 10:10 states, "make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the

⁴ Dayan I. Grunfeld, "The Dietary Laws: A Threefold Explanation," *Tradition* 4 no 2 Spring, no. (1962).

⁵ Ibid., 243.

⁶ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 730.

⁷ Ibid., 731; Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Distinction between Clean and Unclean Animals in Lev 11: Is It Still Relevant," *Journal Of The Adventist Theological Society* Fall, no. 2/2 (1991): 116.

⁸ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 730.

clean.” It is in the act of distinguishing between what is declared clean and unclean by God, that God declares to be holiness. Lev 11:44-47 states,

For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy... For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus, you shall be holy, for I am holy...to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the edible creature and the creature which is not to be eaten.

We read again in Lev 20:22-26,

You are therefore to keep all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them, so that the land to which I am bringing you to live will not spew you out. Moreover, you shall not follow the customs of the nation which I will drive out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I have abhorred them. Hence, I have said to you, You are to possess their land, and I Myself will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am the Lord your God, who has separated you from the peoples. You are therefore to make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and you shall not make yourselves detestable by animal or by bird or by anything that creeps on the ground, which I have separated for you as unclean. Thus, you are to be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.

Again, before distinguishing the clean and the unclean animals, God says in Deut 14:2,

“For you are a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.”

Many have proposed various rationales for the distinguishing or separating of the clean and unclean animals.⁹ However, it seems that the main point is for God’s people to act by distinguishing between the clean and the unclean. We may not find one rationale nor

⁹ Moskala, 15-107.

an inherent rationale within the animals themselves.¹⁰ The rationale should be that God declares their distinction.

The rationale for these food regulations is closely tied with the fact that God is the Creator, Holy One, Redeemer, (Savior), and Judge (Law-giver). The rationale for the Mosaic dietary laws reflects the basic values and main principles of Creation such as life, order, boundaries, separation, movement, and holiness. To say it in one sentence, the leitmotif for the Pentateuchal dietary laws of the clean and unclean animals/food is respect for the Creator (not only for the created order).¹¹

Just as noted previously, the distinction between the allowed and the forbidden tree had no clear inherent difference except in the pronouncement by God (Compare Gen 2:9 and Gen 3:6). When one submits to the declarations made by God, they are in that act, declaring His authority and submitting themselves to that authority. In our example, the act of distinguishing between the clean and the unclean confers holiness from God (Exo 22:31, Lev 11:44-47, Lev 20:22-26, Deut 14:4-21). As Hasel rightly points out, “holiness manifests itself in holy conduct.”¹² This rationale may be similar to the Sabbath law. For no other inherent reason than following God’s example, *imitatio dei*, and that He commands it, He expects His people to follow it. In other words, within the day itself, no other differentiating marker or uniqueness can be attributed to the day. The value and uniqueness are in the act of the declaration by God, just as He clearly does with the clean and unclean animals and the allowed or forbidden foods in Lev 11, Deut 14 and in Gen 1-3. Again, in the creation story, we see God for the first time, distinguishing the food that is allowed and the food that is forbidden (Gen 1:29-30, 2:16-17, Gen 3:2-3). God called

¹⁰ Ibid., 364.

¹¹ Ibid., 344.

¹² Hasel, "The Distinction between Clean and Unclean Animals in Lev 11: Is It Still Relevant," 118.

for man to distinguish between these two (Gen 2:16-17). As noted previously, in the biblical text, no clear reference is made as to what differentiates between the allowed and the forbidden fruits. Both the allowed fruits of the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of the good and evil came from the same ground (Gen 2:9). No difference in the two fruits of the two trees can be deduced from the text itself, except for God's pronouncement. It is pointed out that both the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil came from the same ground, were good for food, pleasing to the sight or delight to the eyes and the knowledge of good and evil was mistaken for wisdom (compare Gen 2:9 and Gen 3:6). What the woman sees in Gen 3:6 is the reaction that is occurring in the mind of the woman and not in the fruit itself.¹³ It is clear that it was this lack of distinguishing of what was allowed and what was forbidden that led to the separation from their maker (Gen 3:11). Perhaps, said in another way, this led to their impurity or defilement, which is equal to death (Gen 3:17-19).¹⁴ What should receive focus is that what defiles are not the clean and unclean animals but the act of refusing to differentiate or to distinguish between what God declares holy or separate (Mark 7:14-23, Acts 15:29). This is what Daniel chose to do which made him and his friends acceptable by God. We see him "set in his heart/mind" by distinguishing between the pure and that which defiles in Daniel 1 and again in Daniel 10. In Daniel 1, we see him making a distinction between food that is impure and from food that is declared separate by God in Genesis 1 and 2. In Daniel 10, he seems to make a distinction again, with what he allows

¹³ The text seems to see no inherent distinction. The reaction in the mind of the woman at the suggestion of the serpent is what is being alluded to in Gen 3:6. The text indicates that both the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil came from the same ground, was good for food, pleasing to the sight or delight to the eyes and the knowledge of good and evil was mistaken for wisdom.

¹⁴ Moskala, 364-365.

himself to eat and come in contact with. This is an important point that is missed when one does not focus on his act of making such distinctions. God continues to call on His people to make a distinction between the pure and the impure and the sacred and profane (Lev 10:10). As his people are called to make a distinction between the pure and the impure, so we see God making a distinction in Judgment (Dan 7). God is holy in making His distinctions. Daniel and his friends show that there is health, wisdom, favor and victory in holiness. Goldingay rightly points out that “they proved that holiness was the source of health, and that God was the source of wisdom and the power behind history.”¹⁵ We must remember that there is holiness in making distinctions as commanded by God (Lev 11:44-47).

In making a distinction between what is pure and what is impure, Daniel was looking back to creation and to the original intent for man by God.¹⁶ As he points back to the original intention at creation, he points us to “the time of the end.” Daniel was looking back and by doing so he was looking forward. In pointing back to the original, Daniel understood the state he must be in to be victorious in the land of exile. In chapter 1, Daniel and his friends sets the stage for the entire exile by resisting defilement or staying pure, holy and separate to their God. This allows for their victory in chapter 2 when God reveals to Daniel about the king’s dream. He is then able to tell the dream and its interpretation to the king.¹⁷ In chapter 3, the three friends experience victory over the power of the king, when God in the form of “a son of the gods” (Dan 3:25) walk among the three in the fiery furnace. In chapter 6, Daniel experiences victory over his enemies

¹⁵ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 14.

¹⁶ Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile*, 19-21.

¹⁷ This in reference to his skill given by God Dan 1:17.

when he is unharmed in the lion's den. His message for those who will find themselves in the time of the end is that they must also strive for the same pure state to be victorious.

For God's people "in the last days," one of the key verses in the book of Daniel is found in 12:4, "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time." This infers that the entire book has an application for God's people "in the last days".¹⁸ I suggest that the historical sections also have a special application for God's people at the end of time. Thus, the message of Dan 1 also becomes a prophetic message for God's people at the end of time. That message is that God's people will need to resolve, like Daniel, that they "would not defile" themselves. Thus, this chapter concerning God's diet, has application for God's people at the time of the end. This message is encapsulated in a story that is part of a prophetic book that is sealed up, which is to have a special application at the time of the end. Inevitably, some would argue that such matters are insignificant in a Christian's life, however, we are reminded that the first sin in the garden was, also, over a seemingly insignificant matter. This message of the Bible appears to reinforce the saying that even "great doors often swing on little hinges."¹⁹

¹⁸ Some have rightfully seen this verse referring to the entire book of Daniel, Montgomery, 473; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 309; Hartman and Di Lella, 311; Young, 257; Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 365; Miller, 321; Slotki, 102; Lucas, *Daniel*, 296; Keil, 818.

¹⁹ Ford, 81.

APPENDIX A

This is the food list for the goddess *Ishtar* of Uruk: salt, dates, barley, emmer, flour, sesame, sweets and cakes, fruit (pomegranates), milk, fish, meat (oxen, sheep, lambs, turtledoves, ducks, and geese), varia (unknown commodities). Other nonfood items: Tiara, crown, breast ornaments, jewelry, garments and decorated garments.

To the god *Nanaya*: salt, dates, barley, emmer, flour, beer, sweets and cakes, fish, meat (oxen, sheep, lambs, ducks, turtledoves, and geese), varia (unknown commodities). Other nonfood items: Tiara, crown, breast ornaments, jewelry, garments and decorated garments.

To the god *Beltu-sa-res*: salt, dates, barley, emmer, flour, sweets and cakes, meat (oxen, sheep, lambs, turtledoves, ducks, and geese), varia (unknown commodities). Other nonfood items: breast ornaments, jewelry, garments and decorated garments.

To the god *Usur-amassu*: salt, dates, barley, emmer, beer, sesame, sweets and cakes, meat (oxen, sheep, lambs, turtledoves, ducks, and geese), varia (unknown commodities). Other nonfood items: Tiara, crown, breast ornaments, jewelry and clothing.

To the god *Urkayitu*: salt, dates, barley, emmer, beer, sesame, sweets and cakes, meat (oxen, sheep, lambs, turtledoves, ducks, and geese), varia (unknown commodities). Other nonfood items: Tiara, crown, breast ornaments, jewelry and clothing.

To the god *Marduk*: salt, dates, barley, meat (calves, sheep, lambs, turtledoves, ducks, and geese), varia. To the god *Sin*: salt, dates, barley, emmer, beer, sesame, meat, varia (unknown commodities).

To the god *Sin*: salt, dates, barley, emmer, beer, sesame, meat (ewes), and varia (unknown commodities).

To the god *Gula*: salt, dates, barley, beer, sweets and cakes, meat (oxen, sheep, lambs, turtledoves, ducks, and geese), varia (unknown commodities). Other nonfood items: Breast ornaments and clothing.

To the god *IGI.DU (Nergal)*: salt, dates, barley, sesame oil, sweets and cakes and meat (oxen, sheep, lambs, turtledoves, ducks, and geese), and varia (unknown commodities). Other nonfood items: clothing.

To the god *Belet-Eanna* and *IGI.DU* of Udannu: barley, beer and meat (sheep, lambs, turtledoves and probably ducks). Other nonfood items: jewelry and clothing.

To the gods *Nergal* and *Ereskigal*: salt, barley, flour, meat (sheep, lambs, turtledoves, ducks, and geese), and varia (unknown commodities).

To the god *Ninurta*: salt, dates, barley, emmer, sesame, sweets and cakes, meat (sheep, lambs, turtledoves, ducks, and geese), and varia (unknown commodities).

To the god *Nusku*: salt, dates, barley, flour, sesame, sweets and cakes, meat (sheep, lambs, turtledoves, ducks, and geese), and varia (unknown commodities).¹

¹ Beaulieu, *The Pantheon of Uruk During the Neo-Babylonian Period*, 159-307.

In the Eanna temple at Uruk, 9 lambs were sacrificed every day at a minimum. On festivals and special occasions as many as 90 lambs were added in a single day.² It is estimated that every year an estimated 3,500 to 4,000 animals were sacrificed.³ There were more than 120 herdsman overseeing tens of thousands of sheep and goats under their care in the Eanna temple at Uruk.⁴ Even the kings regularly gave into the temple offerings.⁵

One list from the Old Babylonian Period concerning the goddess *Ishtar* in a temple in a town called Lagaba shows:

- 2 finger-rings of gold,
- 1 vulva of gold,
- 19 fruit (-shaped beads) of gold,
- 2 rods of gold,
- 2 breast-ornaments of gold,
- 2 earrings of silver,
- 1 pea (?) of carnelian,
- 4 (beads of) lapis lazuli,
- 6 cylinder seals,
- 2 stamp-seals (?),
- 1 cord of yellow metal-alloy,

² Michael G. Kozuh, *The Sacrificial Economy: On the Management of Sacrificial Sheep and Goats at the Neo-Babylonian-Achaemenid Eanna Temple of Uruk (C.625-520 Bc)* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 2006), 1.

³ Ibid., 260.

⁴ Ibid., 1.

⁵ Ibid., 263, 265.

6 breast-ornaments of ivory,
1 great ring of carnelian,
2 kaunakes,
3 (large) coats of linen,
6 woolen ribbons,
4 ribbons of flax (linen),
5 beautiful gowns (?),
1 tilt (?)⁶

Some of the daily sacrifices to the gods of the city of Uruk are listed in F. Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels Accadiens*.⁷ Four meals were served daily: the main morning meal (*naptanu*), a second morning meal, the main evening meal (*tardennu*) and a second evening meal. The gods that were served were: *Anu*, *Antu*, *Ishtar*, *Nana*, other deities dwelling in the city of Uruk, as well as the seven planets on the *topmost stage* of the Esharra temple-tower of the god *Anu*. The temples involved were the Resh Temple, Irigal Temple, Esharra Temple and the other temples of the city of Uruk.⁸ These were the lists of offerings made:

For the god *Anu*: 18 vessels of 3 barley-beer, 4 mixed beer on the right and 3 barley-beer, 1 mixed beer, 1 *nasu*-beer, 1 *zarbabu*-beer, and 1 alabaster *sappu*-vessel for milk on the left. 4 gold *sappu*-vessels for “pressed” wine. Similar preparations were to be made for the second morning meal, main evening meal and the second evening meal.⁹

⁶ Bottéro and Fagan, 132.

⁷ F. Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels Accadiens* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1921).

⁸ Pritchard, 343-344.

⁹ Ibid., 343.

For the goddess *Antu*: 14 gold *sappu*-vessels of prime beer exactly the same as Anu.

For the goddess *Ishtar*: 12 gold *sappu*-vessels of prime beer.

For the goddess *Nana*: 10 gold *sappu*-vessels of prime beer. These do not include the gold *sappu*-vessels used throughout the year for the other deities dwelling in the city of Uruk. There were also gold *sappu*-vessels with food for the god's trip or the 2 *tigidu*-vessels...¹⁰

Every day of the year a *baru*-vessel with 3 *gur*-measures and 3 *pan*-measures of barley and emmer, or 48 *sat*-measures or a total of 108 *sat*-measures was given by the millers to the chefs of the kitchen. Out of the 108 *sat*-measures, 81 *sat*-measures would be of barley and 27 *sat*-measures of emmer flour. The chefs made 243 *sibtu*-loaves out of these flour. From these loaves 30 (8 *sibtu*-loaves for the main morning, 8 *sibtu*-loaves for the second morning meal, 7 for the main evening and 7 for the second evening meal) was to go to the god *Anu*. They were to set before the goddess *Antu*, 30 *sibtu*-loaves, to the goddess *Ishtar*, 30 *sibtu*-loaves, and to the goddess *Nana*, 30 *sibtu*-loaves. They were also to have 12 *sibtu*-loaves before the seat of the god *Anu*, and the household god of the sanctuary of the goddess *Antu*, 4 *sibtu*-loaves before the 2 tiaras of the god *Anu*, 16 loaves before the temple tower and the household gods of the temple tower and 16 loaves before the other gods of the sanctuary. All this would total 168 *sibtu*-loaves for the 4 meals. There were an additional 75 *sibtu*-loaves that were offered to the other gods of the city of Uruk. There was a *rabbu* and date cakes prepared for the god's trip, for the *guqqanu*-sacrifice, for the *essesu*-festivals, for the ceremonies of the Opening of the Gate, for the

¹⁰ Ibid.

Clothing ceremony, for the *egubbu*-vessel ceremonies (?), for the overnight ceremonies, for the brazier ceremonies (?), for the ritual of the divine marriage, for the “blessers,” for the sacrifices of the king,...¹¹

An offering of 1200...oil and filtered oil was offered upon the *kalakku* of the gods. *Mashatu*-flour in storage baskets were supplied to the *eribbiti*-priest every day.¹²

Every day of the year for the 4 meals, 48 *sat*-measures and 108 *sat*-measures of ordinary dates, dates from the land of *Tilmun*, raisins and figs were offered to the gods.¹³

For the main meal in the morning, they offered to the gods *Anu*, *Antu*, *Ishtar*, *Nana*, and the other gods: 7 clean rams that were barley fed for 2 years, 1 fat milk fed *kalu*-ram, 1 large bull, 1 milk fed-bullock, and 10 rams that were not barley fed.

For the second meal of the morning, they offered to the gods *Anu*, *Antu*, the household gods of the Resh Temple, and the Irigal Temple: 6 clean and fat rams that were barley fed for 2 years, 1 fat, milk fed ram, 5 fat rams which were not barley fed, 1 large bull, 8 lambs, 5 ducks that were grain fed, 2 ducks not fed grain, 3 cranes that were flour fed, 4 wild boars, 30 *marratu*-birds, 20 birds, 3 ostrich eggs and 3 duck eggs.

For the main evening meal to the gods were offered: 4 fat and clean rams which were barley fed for 2 years, 1 fat milk fed *kalu*-ram, 5 other rams that were not fed barley and 10 birds.

For the second evening meal to the gods were offered: 4 fat and clean rams which were barley fed for 2 years, 1 fat milk fed *kalu*-ram and 5 other rams which were not barley fed. The total for the 4 meals each day were: 21 fat and clean rams which were

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 344.

barley fed for 2 years, 2 large bulls, 1 milk fed bullock, 8 lambs, 30 *marratu*-birds, 30 birds, 3 cranes grain fed, 5 ducks flour fed, 2 other ducks not flour fed, 4 wild boars, 3 ostrich eggs and 3 duck eggs.

For each day of the year to the gods *Anu*, *Antu*, to the planets Jupiter, Venus, Mercury, Saturn, Mars, to the sunrise, and to the appearance of the moon were offered: 10 fat and clean rams whose horns and hooves were whole. On the 16th day of the each month were offered boiled: 10 fat and clean rams whose horns and hooves were whole. In addition, rams and bulls were offered during the year on: *guqqanu*-sacrifice, for the *essesu*-festivals, for the ceremonies of the Opening of the Gate, for the Clothing ceremony, for the *egubbu*-vessel ceremonies (?), for the brazier ceremonies (?), for the ritual of the divine marriage, for the “blessers,” for the sacrifices of the kings.¹⁴

In the *State Archives of Assyria* from Nineveh, the offerings made in the *Assur* temple are listed. The gods were offered various items:

Meats: oxen (the stomachs, livers, kidneys, and hearts, scrotums, bellies, thighs, shoulder cuts,) *Saplishu*, sheep (head, breast), *kimru*-sheep, goose, duck, and turtledoves. Of the various kinds of fruits and vegetations: *hinhinu*- seeds, chick-peas, sesame, mixed kernels, onions, quinces, olives, mixed fruit, dates, and *harsu* fruit. Various kinds of bread: loaves, spiced bread, *midru* bread, and bread with raisins. Stews of various kinds: tureen of bouillon, and tureen of soup. Different forms of beverages: milk, *mezu*-wine, *hammurtu*- beer, *amumu* beer, bittersweet beer, beer of bruised grain, *Izalla* (wine),

¹⁴ Ibid.

Helbon (wine), fig beer, and *la'u*- wine. Various kinds of desserts: *bude*- confection (Carchemish and Assyrian). Different kinds of Yogurts, and *marmena*-yogurt.¹⁵

In the *State Archives of Assyria* from Nineveh, the miscellaneous offerings that were made are listed. These are the list of miscellaneous offerings discovered in the records not listed above:

Cakes, Leeks, garlic, shallots, spices, red onions, pomegranates, grapes, honey, almonds. *Tarmazilu*-birds, *usametu*-birds, *kupitu*-bird of *Balatka-amurri*. Copper cooking pot, iron tongs, iron knives, and copper. Bowl of scented oil, Gowns, wool, clothes, garments, a towel, *kandirsu*-garment, tuft of red wool.¹⁶ Aromatics: cedar, cypress, *dapranu*-juniper, myrtle, boxwood, *nikiptu*-gum, *kurdinnu*-aromatics, *turmeric*, *terebinth*-like-plant, thyme, *styrax*, sweet cane, *burasu*-juniper, fumigants, salves.¹⁷ Various commodities: dishes, crabs, small cooking pots, Assyrian sweets,¹⁸ flutes, and blankets. Precious metals: rock crystal, gold, *asgiku*-stones, *saggilmud*-stone, *igizaggu*-stone, *subu*-stone, *girimhilibe*-stone, baltu-stone, *multashiptu*-stones, cowrie shells, red sandstone, carnelian, lapis lazuli, obsidian, agate, serpentine, coral, “love”-stone, jasper, chalcedony, *zalaqu*-stone, *pindu*-stone,¹⁹ silver, silver bowls, gold rings, silver rings, jewelry of various kinds, earrings, drinking-cups of silver, ornaments of various kinds, ivory, prayer

¹⁵ Frederick Mario Fales and J. N. Postgate, *Imperial Administrative Records, Part 1: Palace and Temple Administration*, State Archives of Assyria, vol. 7 (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1992), 182-203.

¹⁶ Ibid., 166-179.

¹⁷ Ibid., 151.

¹⁸ Ibid., 150-151.

¹⁹ Ibid., 128-136.

bowl, statues, jasper, necklaces, bracelets, breast piece, armbands, alabaster, *papparminu*-stone, asallu- vessels of copper, wooden furnitures of various kinds.²⁰

Textiles: house gowns, lower garments, cloaks, overcoat, *urnutu*-garment, bedspread, blankets, veil, wraps embroidered, shawls, miters, scarves, leggings, towels, caps, red wool, black wool, flax.²¹

In the *Ur Excavation, Texts*, translations of texts from the Ningal-Temple at Ur lists some offerings made to various gods, major and minor.²² In particular, H. H. Figulla's study of 57 tablets that were discovered at the Ningal-Temple at Ur, reveals a particular pattern of offering made to the gods.²³ These tablets are from only one office, which is the probable reason there is a limited range of materials in these records.²⁴ In these texts, the main materials listed are dairy products such as:

Butter, cheese (and milk), also dates and oil, and then, in smaller, irregular and additional quantities, white beans (*gu babbar*), lentils (*u-ezinu*), coriander (*se-lu*), cassia (*gazi*), pine nuts (*li*), ...also honey (*lal*), and an unknown kind of grain which is usually written *se-zi-bi-ib* but also as *se-zi-bi*, and once as *se-zi-ib-bi*.²⁵

The gods to which the offerings were made were:

²⁰ Ibid., 72-105.

²¹ Ibid., 108-125.

²² H. H. Figulla, "Accounts Concerning Allocation of Provisions for Offerings in the Ningal-Temple at Ur," *Iraq* 15, no. 1 (1953): 88.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 89.

²⁵ Ibid.

E-mah

Nannar

Gula

Ninsubar

*Šamaš*²⁶

Ningal-a-anda

Nannar-a-tah

Nin-e-gal

Nin-subur

Nin-gis-zi-da

Inanna

Nana

Ba-ba(6)

*La*²⁷

There were offerings to four minor gods belonging to the household of

Ningal:

Ningal-a-anda

Nin-ki-urra

Ada-mu-sahar-ra

*En-me-gal-an-na*²⁸

²⁶ Ibid., 89-90.

²⁷ H. H. Figulla, "Accounts Concerning Allocations of Provisions for Offerings in the Ningal-Temple at Ur (Continued)," *Iraq* 15, no. 2 (1953): 180.

²⁸ Figulla, "Accounts Concerning Allocation of Provisions for Offerings in the Ningal-Temple at Ur," 103-112.

The offerings to these gods on these tablets list only butter, cheese, and dates. For the four minor gods, the quantities of the offerings are the same and constant between $4 \frac{5}{6}$ and 5 *qa* for butter and cheese and between 3 *sutu* $3 \frac{5}{6}$ *qa* and 3 *sutu* 5 *qa* for dates.²⁹

What can be summarized from the lists of offerings to the various gods? We can see that the quantities of butter, cheese, and dates for all the gods are given at a fixed ratio throughout the time span of 100 years.³⁰ The figures of the offerings are astonishingly constant throughout these texts that span those 100 years.³¹ The offerings to the minor gods seem to vary alternately by months (29 versus 30 days), which seems to explain why there are minor variations at all. It has been shown that these variations can be explained by calculating the fractional difference between 29 and 30 day months.³² The ordering of the gods that are listed does not seem to show any preference or importance as the gods are listed in various orders from one tablet to the next.³³

Rationale for Offerings in Mesopotamia

Humans not only provided meals, clothes and jewelry, they also kept the house of the gods clean and orderly.³⁴ Scribes and accountants kept detailed accounts of all affairs

²⁹ Ibid., 103.

³⁰ Ibid., 89.

³¹ Figulla, "Accounts Concerning Allocations of Provisions for Offerings in the Ningal-Temple at Ur (Continued)," 186.

³² Figulla, "Accounts Concerning Allocation of Provisions for Offerings in the Ningal-Temple at Ur," 103.

³³ Ibid., 88, 103.

³⁴ Figulla, "Accounts Concerning Allocations of Provisions for Offerings in the Ningal-Temple at Ur (Continued)," 187-188.

as it related to the temple service.³⁵ There are possible allusions to the idea that the gods were ritually and periodically “washed.” Baths were given to the gods as a gesture and concern for cleanliness and good health for the gods.³⁶ Also, it may be point out that the list of the impressive quantities of food, drink and material gifts to the gods point to their relative importance and dignity that they showed towards their gods.³⁷

It has been proposed that four purposes or rationales can be stated as to what lies behind the ritual acts of offering and sacrifice in primitive religions:

- (1) to provide food for the god...
- (2) to assimilate the life force of the sacrificial animal...
- (3) to effect union with the deity...
- (4) to induce the aid of the deity by means of a gift...³⁸

Although, it can be said that the fourth reason or rationale is the only one “that manifests validity in all sacrificial system,”³⁹ the Mesopotamian cultic offerings manifested all four aspects. The Mesopotamians saw as their *raison d’etre* to work and serve their gods their food or meals.⁴⁰ Their myths of creation of man and other myths, such as Atrahasis Epic, Enuma Elish, and Gilgamesh Epic, reinforces this belief system.⁴¹ Again, it is stated emphatically by Bottero that the Mesopotamians considered their offering or “sacrifice”

³⁵ Jacobsen, 81.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Bottéro and Fagan, 132.

³⁸ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 440.

³⁹ Ibid., 441.

⁴⁰ Lambert, "Donations of Food and Drink to the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 198.

⁴¹ Dalley, 1-38, 39-153, 228-277.

purely and simply as the gods' "meals."⁴² Clearly, it can be said that the Mesopotamians saw as a rationale that they were offering food or meals to their gods when they were making their offerings to the gods. Lambert has said that one who looks over these lists of food items in particular would have difficulty finding any ideological preferences guiding the actual choice of foods.⁴³ A common idea, however, can be placed on the food items, and that is of sanctity or the act of consecration. In Latin the word "sacrifice" means "to make sacred." Hubert states, "...in every sacrifice, an object passes from the common to the religious domain; it is consecrated."⁴⁴ We can state that the Mesopotamians clearly had this in mind as they made their offerings to their gods. This is evident in how they handled the offerings and in the ritual chants that went along with the offerings.⁴⁵ Milgrom asserts that, "the quintessential sacrificial act, then, is the transference of property from the profane to the sacred realm, thus making a gift to the deity."⁴⁶ As the gods of Mesopotamia could not interact with those who are impure, all things must be purified prior to the offerings being made.⁴⁷ As the priest performing this service declares at the end of his ritual process of cleansing prior to officiating the ritual declares, "(Now) I am clean; I approach the assembly of the gods for judgment."⁴⁸ Before food offerings are made to the gods, these items had to be made sacred also. The

⁴² Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods*, 225.

⁴³ Lambert, "Donations of Food and Drink to the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 198-199.

⁴⁴ Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *Sacrifice: It's Nature and Function*, trans., W. D. Halls (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964), 9.

⁴⁵ Pritchard, 343-344.

⁴⁶ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 441.

⁴⁷ Bottéro and Fagan, 126.

⁴⁸ Judith R. Paul, "Mesopotamia Ritual Texts and the Concept of the Sacred in Mesopotamia." PhD Dissertation, (University of California, Los Angeles, 1992), 124.

food offerings to the gods were offered ritually to consecrate them as sacred. First, the one who officiated the ritual had to be pure,⁴⁹ as noted above. All that was associated with the ritual, was purified with fumigation, and with everything else, with sweeping and sprinkling with water.⁵⁰ It has been said that the meals in style, quality and manner were those of serving the king.⁵¹ Since the food offered was considered blessed by being offered to the gods, the food was then presented to the king for his consumption.⁵² Even the water that was touched by the divine image within the ritual was considered blessed. A custom of sprinkling the king with this consecrated water represents this conception of sanctity of all things associated with the temple rituals.⁵³

The Mesopotamians believed in the assimilation of the life force of the sacrificed animal with the offerer. To the ancient Mesopotamians, the gods were anthropomorphic, with rare exceptions like *Nirah*, who had the form of a snake.⁵⁴ The imagery of part bull part man, a scorpion-man, a scorpion woman, the lion-man, the fish-man, the fish-woman, and a winged man with bird like features represented some of the gods to the Mesopotamians.⁵⁵ Some the largest representations of mixed beings can be seen in the *Lamassu*, which was represented with a human head with features of a bull and wings, these guarded the Assyrian royal palaces. The Mesopotamians believed that the, “living

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Linssen, 147.

⁵¹ Ibid., 147-154.

⁵² Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, 188.

⁵³ Ibid., 189.

⁵⁴ Jo Ann Scurlock, "Animals in Ancient Mesopotamian Religion," in *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient near East*, ed. Billie Jean Collins (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2002), 362.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 363.

animals served as conduits of communication between men and gods.”⁵⁶ It was also believed that, “like people, gods used animals, and, like people, they ate them.”⁵⁷ There was a belief that certain wild animals were arisen from the death of some of the gods.

The wild ass is the ghost of Illil; the wolf is the ghost of Anu. B[el] made him roam the plain. The gazelles, his daughters, Bel made to roam the plain. The dromedary is the ghost of Tiamat. Bel cut off her horns, clove her [fee]t and docked her tail. Bel vanquished her and displayed her to mankind, lest she be forgotten.⁵⁸

As such, in the minds of the Mesopotamians, animal offerings acted as “absorbing pads for evil.”⁵⁹ The slaughtered animal was good for absorbing the anger of the gods.⁶⁰ The transfer of disease and evil can be carried out with a ritual of offering the specific parts of the animals like the heart of a chicken or goose on behalf of the person.⁶¹ In other words, the animals became one with the offerer so that the animal offering could be a substitute or replacement for the person making the offering.⁶² In other rituals, there was the explicit idea not only of a transfer but also an exchange between the animal offering and the offerer. What was to be the lot of the offerer was now transferred to the animal offering. An example can be seen in the offering to the god Gula (goddess of healing) for an infertile woman. An infertile woman was to crawl under a suspended pregnant ewe

⁵⁶ Ibid., 361.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Alasdair Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea* (Helsinki: Helsinki University, 1989), 101.

⁵⁹ Scurlock, "Animals in Ancient Mesopotamian Religion," 371.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 372.

⁶¹ Ibid., 376.

⁶² Ibid., 383.

and recite into the ears of the pregnant ewe, “Pregnant ewe of *Sakkan* and *Dumuzi*, take my pregnancy away and bring me your equivalent. Take away (my) inability to give birth right away and give me your ability to give birth right away.”⁶³ After reciting this three times into the ears of the ewe she comes out from below the ewe. When this was performed for the seventh time, the offerer spits into the mouth of the ewe and leaves it behind.⁶⁴ The ewe was probably then put into the prebend system.

The desire for union with the gods can be seen as the rationale of using a social drink like alcohol. Therefore, among other items, alcohol was served to the gods for this distinct purpose. As stated previously, it was believed that the gods consumed the alcoholic beverage that was offered to them. There is an obvious social function of alcohol when one studies the use of it in the culture of the Mesopotamians.⁶⁵ Many forms of alcoholic beverage were made in Mesopotamia. Wines of various forms are known to have been produced. Of the various forms of alcohol that was made in Mesopotamia, beer in particular, was very popular and was enjoyed in ancient Mesopotamian culture.⁶⁶ An old Sumerian proverb says, “He who does not know beer, does not know what is good.”⁶⁷ By the time of the Babylonians, there were some 70 varieties of beer produced.⁶⁸ Beer played an important role in rituals, as well as in

⁶³ Ibid., 385.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Piotr Michalowski, "The Drinking Gods: Alcohol in Mesopotamian Ritual and Mythology," in *Drinking in Ancient Societies*, ed. Lucio Milano (Padua, Italy: Sargon, 1994), 29.

⁶⁶ Hans Neumann, "Beer as a Means of Compensation for Work in Mesopotamia During the Ur Iii Period," in *Drinking in Ancient Societies*, ed. Lucio Milano (Padua, Italy: Sargon, 1994), 324.

⁶⁷ Stephen Bertman, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (New York: Facts On File, 2003), 292.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

banquets, in Mesopotamia.⁶⁹ Alcohol had the obvious effect of bringing those partaking of the alcohol together as one. Such understanding and practice are still seen in various cultures, like the Oriental culture, where men who drink together are now friends or have become one. In texts and in artistic representations drinking of alcohol is not depicted as a solitary activity but a social event or put another way, "...drinking was marked for social activity."⁷⁰ From drawings and reliefs of drinking from a beer vat, we see depicted several individuals sitting around drinking out of long straws from one vat. This imagery serves as symbolic indication of the social interaction of drinking alcohol in the minds of Mesopotamians.⁷¹ From the Early Dynastic Hymn to the Sun God, the Anunnaki gods take part in a banquet in which one of the main features was the drinking of alcoholic beverage. In it Shulgi states:

I celebrated the *ecce* festival in both Nibru and Urim on the same day! I drank beer in the palace founded by An with my brother and companion, the hero Utu. My singers praised me with songs accompanied by seven *tigi* drums. My spouse, the maiden Inana, the lady, the joy of heaven and earth, sat with me at the banquet.⁷²

As Michalowski states, "here the two worlds meet, as they do in ritual, and the banquet unites the bond between god and the divine king."⁷³ The offering of the alcoholic beverage served this intent of bringing union with the gods.

⁶⁹ Neumann, 325-326.

⁷⁰ Michalowski, 29.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² J.A. Black and others, "The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature ([Http://Www-etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk/](http://www-etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk/))", Oxford.

⁷³ Michalowski, 32.

Offerings were clearly seen as a way to induce the gods to aid or bring good fortune to the offerer. A rationale of a *quid pro quo* or the concept of *do ut des* (I give so that you will give) was in place in the thinking of the Mesopotamian religion. In a non-salvation religion, like the Mesopotamian religion, the offerer fulfills his side of the contract, which puts the gods under obligation to reciprocate in kind.⁷⁴ It was customary to recite prayers, after and not before, the actual sacrifice. The implication was that this was not a vow, which would generally be performed before the sacrifice.⁷⁵ This, again, reinforces the belief that a *quid pro quo* or of the *do ut des* principle was in force in the mind of the offerer. The Mesopotamians saw man as weak and unable to have success nor achieve anything without divine assistance.⁷⁶ Therefore, they would offer their service to the gods in performing the task of maintaining the home of the gods (the temples), providing food, clothing, jewelry, music, and even baths. This service would obligate the gods to act kindly to them and bring prosperity.

There were some restrictions on the kinds of food offering to some deities. Birds were prohibited to the chthonic goddess. Mutton was not to be served to Sakkan, no fowl to Beletseri, no fowl or beef to Ereskigal, and no beef was to be served to Ningublaga,⁷⁷ no bull's meat was to be offered to Harru.⁷⁸ A clear rationale can be made that as some of these gods have the features or attributes of these animals, it can amount to

⁷⁴ Scurlock, "The Techniques of the Sacrifice of Animals in Ancient Israel and Ancient Mesopotamia: New Insights through Comparison. Part 2," 241.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 244.

⁷⁶ Jacobsen, 81.

⁷⁷ Lambert, "Donations of Food and Drink to the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 199.

⁷⁸ Pritchard, 344.

cannibalism. Ningublaga had features and attributes of cattle and Sakkan is a god of quadrupeds.⁷⁹ From this, one rationale for the restrictions of the choice of foods to the gods, was to place a taboo on certain foods to prevent the gods from being served things like that which belonged to themselves. Yet, the sex of the animal used for sacrifice in the Mesopotamian cult was usually the same as that of the deity who was to receive the offering.⁸⁰ Although meats were in many ways the main food offering, it was possible to make a vegetarian offering to the gods. Some gods as exalted as Marduk and Shamash was occasionally offered vegetarian meals.⁸¹

A person going near the temple was told not have leeks, garlic, onions, beef, pork, or *sahlu* on his breath.⁸² On a number of ritual days, there were warnings against eating garlic, leeks, fish and *sahlu*, which may have been so because it was required for the ritual of the day.⁸³ Fish was not to be consumed on the first three days of *Nisannu*, probably because of the celebration of Tiamat being defeated by Marduk.⁸⁴ This may be seen as a rationale in that the myth speaks about how Marduk “defeated [her]. He [sm]ote her, established her destiny and split her into two parts like the fish of the drying place.”⁸⁵

⁷⁹ Lambert, "Donations of Food and Drink to the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 199.

⁸⁰ Jo Ann Scurlock, "The Techniques of the Sacrifice of Animals in Ancient Israel and Ancient Mesopotamia: New Insights through Comparison. Part 1," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 44, no. 1 (2006): 48.

⁸¹ Scurlock, "Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Mesopotamian Religion," 396.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 393.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 394.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 393.

⁸⁵ Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea*, 101.

The offering of the foods to the gods were no different than what were given to man in every way.⁸⁶ If this is so, then the attitudes toward food in general by the Mesopotamians were their general guiding principles of what was offered to the gods.

... the Mesopotamian gods had no special foods which were the privilege of divinity... The gods lived on the sacrifice of sheep, fish, cereals and oil which mankind was obliged to offer them regularly: the same foods as were consumed by man himself.⁸⁷

Exactly the same foods and drinks were offered to the gods as were consumed by humans, with perhaps more emphasis on the luxury items: frequent fresh meat, fish, cream, honey, cakes and the best sorts of beer. Incense and aromatics woods were burned before them, as they might be at a human banquet... Clothing was also offered... those which were "useful" to the gods- beds, chairs, boats, cups, and vessels, weapons dedicated from war booty, and jewelry- were all absorbed into the temple treasury as part of the "property" of the god.⁸⁸

In other words, their understanding of their gods was that they were not so different from themselves. What was perceived as good for man or what was considered healthy was offered to the gods, since the gods shared human tastes in food.⁸⁹ For example, since the people of ancient Mesopotamia did not generally eat draft animals, they were not offered to the gods in their cultic offering.⁹⁰ For this reason, horses and donkeys were not offered as food to the gods.⁹¹ Some animals, although generally eaten by the common people, were rarely offered to the gods, the pig being a prime example.⁹² Pigs were

⁸⁶ Lambert, "Donations of Food and Drink to the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 194.

⁸⁷ Black and Green, "Food and Drink of the Gods," 85.

⁸⁸ Black and Green, "Sacrifice and Offering," 158.

⁸⁹ Scurlock, "Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Mesopotamian Religion," 392.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., 393.

considered unclean animals and unfit in a temple and the Mesopotamians' had a typical revulsion for the pig.

The pig is unholy [...] bespattering his backside,
Making the street smell. polluting the houses.
The pig is not fit for a temple, lacks sense, is not allowed to tread on
pavements,
An abomination to all the gods, an abhorrence [to (his) god,] accursed by
Šamaš.⁹³

Therefore, if one is able to understand the diet of the Mesopotamians, a better understanding of the choice of offering made to the gods can be deduced. Their goal appears to be to provide what they themselves viewed as the best or luxurious diet. As stated previously, they believed that their gods needed food and enjoyed the luxuries of life. Therefore, such things as food, alcohol, clothes, spices, jewelry, music, housing and baths were offered to the gods. So what was the average diet of the Mesopotamians?

A good diet and healthful practices were well attested to Mesopotamia.

The general level of health in a society is less influenced by the quality of its medical care than it is by the quality of its nutrition, public and personal hygiene, and the techniques used to prevent and control contagious diseases. Using these measures, ancient Mesopotamians deserve high marks.

Although information about the quality of the diet of ancient Mesopotamians is incomplete, it was certainly better than that of the average nineteenth-century European peasant.⁹⁴

⁹³ Wilfred G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 215 iii 13-16.

⁹⁴ Jo Ann Scurlock and Burton R. Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine: Ancient Sources, Translations, and Modern Medical Analyses* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 13.

The probable diet of an average Mesopotamian included barley, bread, wheat, chick peas, lentils, peas, fava beans, apricots, dates, figs, grapes, olives, almonds, pistachio nuts, walnuts, acorns, crab apples, capers, hackberry, pomegranate, hazelnuts, peas and beans of many families, onions, garlic, cucumbers, melons, various greens, root vegetables, spices, like cumin, coriander, fenugreek.⁹⁵ The average individual probably did not eat a lot of beef or mutton but generally, less expensive meats were available to them.⁹⁶ Such meats included poultry, ducks, geese, pigs, wild boar, deer, gazelles, birds, bandicoot rats, locusts, fish, and shellfish of many varieties.⁹⁷ A finger food made of locust that was skewer roasted was known.⁹⁸ There were vegetable oils like sesame, olive oils, goose egg, hen eggs, honey, and various kinds of milk products (cheese, yogurt, butter).⁹⁹ The Mesopotamians were known to have about 18 to 20 different kinds of cheese, over a hundred kinds of soups and over 300 kinds of bread.¹⁰⁰ They were skilled in food storage, preservation and fermentation of food as they had knowledge of lactic fermentation.¹⁰¹ They drank “barley beer” which meant it was not flavored with hops, dark beer, fresh brewed beer, well-aged beer, sweet beer, bitter beer and wine which was imported from the north and west of Mesopotamia.¹⁰² They probably made

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 14.

¹⁰⁰ Jean Bottéro, "The Cuisine of Ancient Mesopotamia," *Biblical Archaeologist* 48, no. 1 (1985): 38.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 38-39.

¹⁰² Henri Limet, "The Cuisine of Ancient Sumer," *Biblical Archaeologist* 50, no. 3 (1987): 135-136.

sausages, ate turtles, and pickled grasshoppers, which were considered a delicacy.¹⁰³ If all this is eaten in the right proportions and in a right balance, it can lead to an excellent diet.¹⁰⁴ Culinary expertise was well attested too.¹⁰⁵

However, no specific text has been found that lists the foods that were available to promote good health, nor is there advice about proper exercise.¹⁰⁶ It is estimated based on foodstuff listed that a diet in Mesopotamia probably was made up of about 3000 calories.¹⁰⁷ It can be said that with only a few exceptions, gods enjoyed what man enjoys. The gods ate and partook of what man partook of. The concept of well-being, the idea of leisure and a luxurious life was what was in the mind of the offerer as they presented items and service to their gods. All items and service were offered with the intent of temporal pleasures.

Some Differences Against the Israelite System

There are clear differences between the Mesopotamian and the Israelite system of food offerings revealed here. The story of Cain and Abel in the Hebrew Bible, Genesis 4, is illustrative. Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground (Gen 4:3). Abel brings an offering of the firstling of his flock and the fat portion of it (Gen 4:4). God accepts

¹⁰³ Bottéro, "The Cuisine of Ancient Mesopotamia," 37.

¹⁰⁴ Scurlock and Andersen, 13-14.

¹⁰⁵ Jean Bottéro, "The Culinary Tablets at Yale," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107, no. 1 (1987): 17.

¹⁰⁶ Markham J. Geller, "Diet and Regimen in the Babylonian Talmud," in *Food and Identity in the Ancient World*, ed. Cristiano Grottanelli and Lucio Milano (Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N. Editrice e Libreria, 2004), 219.

¹⁰⁷ Jack M. Sasson, "The King's Table: Food and Fealty in Old Babylonian Mari " in *Food and Identity in the Ancient World*, ed. Cristiano Grottanelli and Lucio Milano (Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N. Editrice e Libreria, 2004), 184.

Abel and his offering but not of Cain and his offering (Gen 4:4-5). It may seem justified to ask, how was Cain able to know that his form of offering was going to be rejected?¹⁰⁸ It should be pointed out that the LORD responded to the anger and fallen countenance of Cain (Gen 4:6). The response is the warnings in verse 7 that is realized in verse 8. In Lev 5:11-13, a sinner who could not afford a blood sacrifice could bring a bloodless grain offering as a sin offering.¹⁰⁹ Gane, commenting on these verse, states that the grain offering, "...provides expiation (*kipper*) so that a sinner who cannot afford a blood sacrifice can receive forgiveness (5:13; cf. 5:11)."¹¹⁰ Genesis 2:7 speaks of man being formed out of the ground, verse 9 speaks of food being caused to grow and come out of

¹⁰⁸ It is recognized that various reasons have been put forth for the refusal of Cain's offering. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, ed. David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Colombia: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 104. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 1-17*, 224. Bruce K. Waltke, "Cain and His Offering," *Westminster Theological Journal* 48 (1986): 363-372. Saul Levin, "The More Savory Offering: A Key to the Problem of Gen 4: 3-5," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98/1 (1979): 85. Mayer I. Gruber, "The Tragedy of Cain and Abel: A Case of Depression," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 69, no. 2, Oct. (1978): 89-97. Von Rad, 103-105. Cassuto, 205-216. Westermann, 279-303. Joaquim Azevedo, "At the Door of Paradise: A Contextual Interpretation of Gen 4:7," *Biblische Notizen* 100 (1999): 45-59. Davidson posits a novel perspective on the reading of Gen 4:4 in particular with the reading of the *gam-hu'* which means "also" in one of two ways: one is "likewise or in the same way" and the other may be "moreover or in addition to." When *gam-hu'* immediately follows the subject, it means "likewise." However, here "the phrase *gam-hu'* does not immediately follow the subject but rather comes after the predicate (verb) and seems to clearly mean "moreover, in addition to" and not "likewise." He therefore concludes that both brothers brought a non-animal sacrifice but it was only Abel that "in addition, *gam-hu'*, brought a blood-sacrifice," Richard M. Davidson, *Shame and Honor in the Beginning: A Study of Genesis 4*, ed. Bruce L. Bauer, Shame and Honor: Presenting Biblical Themes in Shame & Honor Contexts (Berrien Springs: Department of World Mission, 2014), 49-54. Doukhan argues for a similar reading here, Doukhan, *Genesis*, 117. Within this understanding, it is agreed that non-animal offering were permitted and accepted. What is agreed that Cain's offering lacked what Abel's offering contained. I am not arguing for or against a particular rationale. I offer here a potential rationale for the refusal of Cain's offering.

¹⁰⁹ Roy E. Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 78-79. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 195-202. If "bloodless" offerings were offered and accepted as is clear in Lev, then a rationale for the refusal of Cain's offering must be put forth

¹¹⁰ Gane, 79. "Since both the burnt offering and the purification offering were obligatory in certain situations, not optional like the peace offering, the law provided for the poor by allowing them to present a cheaper offering if they could not afford a lamb or goat," Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 1-17*, 100. The NT puts it in Heb 9:22, "Indeed, under the law *almost* (emphasis added) everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (ESV)"

the ground, and verse 19 speaks of all animals being formed out of the ground. When Adam sins and his judgment was pronounced in Gen 3:17, God pronounced that the very ground from which life came from and where life was to be sustained was now cursed. Adam's punishment was now going to be meted out by his eating of the food out of the ground that was now cursed. We see in verses 17-19, three times repeated a command to "eat." What was to sustain Adam and cause him to live forever (Gen 3:22) was now going to cause him to return to the dust from where he was taken, or cause his death.¹¹¹ Therefore, one possible answer to why Cain's offering was rejected was that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground (Gen 4:3) that was cursed by God in Gen 3:17, "...Cursed is the ground because of you..."¹¹²

The Bible uses these two contrasting offerings of Cain and Abel as a symbol and an opportunity to educate its believers about God's plan.¹¹³ The Mesopotamians saw in food their true sustenance for life. But, one can see that the "food" that comes from the ground leads to this limited life only and not life eternal.¹¹⁴ The Hebrew offering system

¹¹¹ God declares in Gen 8:21 "I will never again curse the ground on account of man..." Therefore, Lev 2 speaks clearly of Grain offerings to the Lord. The structural, linguistical and thematic links between Gen 2-3 and 4 have been studied, Alan J. Hauser, "Linguistic and Thematic Links between Genesis 4:1-16 and Genesis 2-3," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 23/4, December (1980): 302. Many key words reappear in Gen 4 with Gen 3 such as: ידע "know," שמר "guard," ארור "cursed," אדמה "land," גרש "drive." Various echoes can be seen in Gen 4 with chapter 3 (Gen 4:7 with Gen 3:16; 4:9 with 3:9; Gen 4:10 with 3:13 among others), Doukhan, *Genesis*, 119-122. I focus here on just one link between these two chapters. From the flood onwards an offering of the fruit of the ground was permitted.

¹¹² Gary A. Herion, *Why God Rejected Cain's Offering: The Obvious Answer*, ed. Astrid B. Beck et al., *Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995). Cassuto, 207. Doukhan, *Genesis*, 118. A Haggadic passage seems to see this argument also, "Abel selected the best of his flock for his sacrifice, but Cain ate his meal first, and after he had satisfied his appetite, he offered unto God what was left over, a few grains of flax seed. As though his offense had not been great enough in offering unto God fruit of the ground which had been cursed by God! What wonder that his sacrifice was not received with favor!" Ginzberg, 38.

¹¹³ Doukhan, *Genesis*, 118.

¹¹⁴ The spiritual lesson is expounded in John 6:26-33.

was trying to show God's plan for providing eternal life in Him. This is what Cain got wrong and Abel got right in their respective offerings. The Bible's system of offering showed the need for expiatory sacrifice, which was to teach man to look to God for everlasting life, represented by Abel's offering. The Bible teaches people to look for hope in salvation from outside, namely in Jesus Christ. The Mesopotamian offering system knows of no more benefit than being blessed with this limited life's blessing. Cain's offering represents this by showing the blessings of this life and not of the hope of eternal life that God is wanting for all His creation. It came from the ground that God pronounced as cursed (Gen 3:17). This curse is death.

Differences in the meaning of the offerings made in contrast to these two systems are also apparent. At least some of the sacrifices is burned in the Hebrew cult (Gen 8:20; Lev 1:13; 1:17; 6:23; 8:21), thus transforming it from this worldly realm to heavenly realm in that the smoke was sent to the heavenly realm, symbolically.¹¹⁵ In the Mesopotamian cult, the smoke or scent was used more as fumigation which acted as means to purify the atmosphere in the "room"¹¹⁶, to attract and to delight the gods to the ritual feast,¹¹⁷ (we even see a depiction in the Epic of Gilgamesh, of "the gods like flies gathered over the sacrifice")¹¹⁸ or even to rid the smell created by the food offerings.¹¹⁹ Another big difference between the two kinds of sacrificial rituals is the sanctity of life

¹¹⁵ Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, 192.

¹¹⁶ Linssen, 145.

¹¹⁷ de Vaux, 433.

¹¹⁸ Dalley, 114.

¹¹⁹ Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, 189.

and “blood consciousness”.¹²⁰ The Mesopotamian system was not an expiatory sacrifice,¹²¹ but a role man has in feeding the gods who needs sustenance like him.¹²²

The Hebrews were taught clearly,

Lev. 17:11 ‘For the **life** of the flesh is in the **blood**, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the **blood** by reason of the **life** that makes atonement.’

Lev. 17:14 “For *as for the life* of all flesh, its **blood** is *identified* with its **life**. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, ‘You are not to eat the **blood** of any flesh, for the **life** of all flesh is its **blood**; whoever eats it shall be cut off.’ (NASB)

The blood prohibition was declared for all mankind. However, it is clear from Gen 1:29 that the original diet intended for human was a vegetarian diet.¹²³ Only, after the flood, is man permitted to eat the flesh of animals but is prohibited from eating the blood (Gen 9:4). This is in clear distinction to the Mesopotamian system, as blood plays no role in their cult, except perhaps in the Akitu festival.¹²⁴ No other culture, nor ritual system, sees the ritual equating of blood with life and there are no prohibition against eating it.¹²⁵ This is a major difference between the two systems in how the food offered was perceived. As stated previously, in the Mesopotamian belief system, the food

¹²⁰ Ibid., 192.

¹²¹ de Vaux, 434.

¹²² Lambert, "Donations of Food and Drink to the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 194.

¹²³ Sarna, 21.

¹²⁴ Thureau-Dangin, 127-154. A. Sachs, *Akkadian Rituals*, ed. James B. Pritchard, *Ancient near Eastern Texts* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 331-334. Mark E. Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient near East* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 1993), 441-447.

¹²⁵ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 706.

offering was for the gods' sustenance, while in the Hebrew system it was primarily a sacrifice.¹²⁶

Conclusion

An overarching theme of the offerings to the gods of Mesopotamia can be summarized in the concept of the concern for the well-being of the recipient of the gifts. The gods were to be treated to "an opulent and agreeable life entirely devoted to the government of the universe."¹²⁷ It has been shown previously regarding the beliefs in the religion of the Mesopotamians religious system, that the purpose of the creation of man by the gods was so that man can work instead of the gods.¹²⁸ Since the gods need to eat, drink and find joy in the material things of life, man offers them to their gods.¹²⁹ With man's offerings, the purpose of man's existence comes to completeness. The range of offerings points to the belief that the offerer was attempting to provide all the necessary aspect for an opulent and pleasant life. These items were to bring comfort and allow for the gods to have much material splendor. From meats to fruits, vegetables, spices, clothing material, crowns, and jewelry all point to the intent and wish of the offerer for a life of luxury and leisure for the gods.

It has been shown that there were various rationales in the offerings made that went beyond just offering food to the gods. Four rationales were presented as

¹²⁶ However, cf. Num 28:2, where the regular burnt offerings were the "food" (*lehem*) of God. Cf. Lev 21, referring to the food of God several times. Furthermore, a sacrifice is an offering. So the difference was not as sharp perhaps.

¹²⁷ Bottéro and Fagan, 126.

¹²⁸ Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods*, 225.

¹²⁹ Lambert, "Donations of Food and Drink to the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 198.

to the mindset of the Mesopotamian offerer. The rationales set forth are: (1) to provide food for the gods, (2) to assimilate the life force of the sacrificial animal, (3) to effect union with the deity and (4) to induce the aid of the deity by means of a gift. It can be stated fairly that the primary goal of the offerings was to feed the gods. However, it has been shown above that there were other rationales involved in the offerings. The rationales may not have been present in every offerer's mind as the offerings were presented, but clearly the offerings had other intent for the giver.

In the Israelite religion, the belief was that God wishes for His people to be like Him. God's wish is for communion and intimacy, unlike in the Mesopotamian religion, which sees the gods using man for hard labor that they don't want to perform themselves. The Mesopotamian religion does not share this concern or ideal for each member of its community. The gods were gods and man was man and not able to be like the gods. There is only concern for the king and Priest and their state of purity. The commoner's purity is not of concern.¹³⁰ In all religions and in their belief systems, a state of purity is what allows a commoner to have communion with the deity. Unfortunately for the commoner, this does not seem to be a concern or a focus of the Mesopotamian system. Sadly, this would imply that a commoner's role in life was limited to this world and only what this life has to offer. As a consequence, Mesopotamian had no hope of salvation and eternal life like the gods.

How did they view death itself?... As long as they had blood in their veins and breath in their nostrils, alternatively inhaled and exhaled, they were alive, by themselves: as was taught in *Atrahasis*, they were truly "men," *awilu*. At

¹³⁰ Paul, 128.

the moment when, emptied of their blood or after having exhaled one last time, breath ceased to return into them (*napistu*), then condition changed into that of a “phantom,” *etemmu*; they were dead!¹³¹

In the Israelite system, the goal is for all, from the top to the bottom of the social strata, to be holy and pure. This is what allows them to have communion with their God. Also, this communion comes with a promise for eternal life and not death. Deut. 30:19 says, “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you **life** and death, the blessing and the curse. So **choose life** in order that you may live, you and your descendants.” Roy Gane sums it up well when he concludes,

Ancient Near Eastern peoples offered animals to their deities as food, performed rituals to purify persons or to remedy offenses against their gods, used blood for purification, and annually purged sacred precincts or objects in connection with occasions of divine judgment. Remarkably, Israelite purification offerings combined all of these features in a single kind of animal sacrifice that provided for faulty human beings a unified way to come into harmony with God.¹³²

The Israelite system ultimately pointed forward to a unifying Savior that brought all the rituals and symbols into one. A great hope was offered within the Israelite system that is not found in the Mesopotamian system.

¹³¹ Bottéro and Fagan, 106.

¹³² Roy E. Gane, "The Unifying Logic of Israelite Purification Offerings within Their Ancient near Eastern Context," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 21, no. 1-2 (2010): 98.

APPENDIX B

Recently, an analysis of the significance of purity in various religions was study and reported by Mary Douglas.¹³³

The 19th century saw in primitive religions two peculiarities which separated them as a block from the great religions of the world. One was that they were inspired by fear, the other that they were inextricably confused with defilement and hygiene... And as fear inhibits reason it can be held accountable for other peculiarities in primitive thought, notably the idea of defilement.¹³⁴

Douglas equates impurity with dirt or uncleanness, which for her is "dirt as matter out of place."¹³⁵ "... If uncleanness is matter out of place we must approach it through order. Uncleanness or dirt is that which must not be included if a pattern is to be maintained."¹³⁶ What is found in the Bible would correspond "dirt as matter out of place" with defilement or impurity. The opposite for the Bible is clean, holy or pure. Douglas points out, "we shall see... how ritual, by using symbols of anomaly, can incorporate evil and death along with life and goodness, into a single, grand, unifying pattern".¹³⁷ In the Bible defilement and impurity are opposite states of holiness and purity. As God is the essence of holiness

¹³³ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo*, Routledge Classics (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹³⁴ Ibid., 1.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 44.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 50.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 49-50.

and purity, the Bible speaks about God's people separating from defilement and impurity. Only when God's people are separated from defilement and impurity can He be one with them.

When we review the list of those that defile and create impurity by contact with: death, sexual, disease-related, and cultic, it appears this list is arbitrary. Rather, they seem to represent something else, i.e. symbolism. This list does not focus on transmittable disease or any particular bodily abnormality or functions. Why would a menstruant or a parturient be impure or defiled for a set time? Why are only skin diseases tied to impurity or defilement? If communicability is the primary focus, why not include fever, emesis, diarrhea, cough, rhinorrhea, etc. Thus Milgrom concludes that these impurities that cause defilements have no intrinsic meaning in themselves.¹³⁸ What then is the meaning of these impurities that leads to defilement? It has been suggested that God is teaching us to seek after life and separate from death.¹³⁹

When we look at the bodily impurities, we see four main themes: death, blood, genital emissions, and skin disorders. Their common denominator, for the Hebrew mind, is death. Contact with the dead is an obvious symbolism with death. Blood is life according to the Bible (Leviticus 17:11). Genital emissions could represent the beginning of life and the emission or loss could symbolize death. Skin disorders called leprosy in the Bible was thought to symbolize the wasting of the body or death. Aaron pleads with Moses for Miriam when her skin becomes leprous. Aaron begs, “do not let her be like the one dead”. (Num 12:9–12)¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Milgrom, *Numbers: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, 345.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 346.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 346.

Bible teaching is also clear that the absence of defilement or impurity does not equal a state of purity or holiness. One must keep from impurity and defilement by actively keeping God's laws and regulations. "You shall keep My laws and My rules, by the pursuit of which man shall live: I am the LORD." (Leviticus 18:5 JPS) "Two important ideas about purity and impurity come down from ancient Israel: first, purity and impurity are cultic matters; second, they may serve as metaphors for moral and religious behavior, primarily in regard to matters of sex, idolatry, and unethical action. Purity furthermore closely relates to holiness."¹⁴¹

Holiness is also the rationale for the dietary laws in Lev 11 and making distinctions was the injunction from God (Lev 10:10).

For I the LORD am your God: you shall sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not make yourselves unclean through any swarming thing that moves upon the earth. For I the LORD am He who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God: you shall be holy, for I am holy... for distinguishing between the unclean and the clean, between the living things that may be eaten and the living things that may not be eaten. (Lev 11:44-47 JPS)

In the other sections of the Torah regarding dietary restrictions, holiness is again the given as the rationale for these laws. (Exod 22:30, Lev 20:22-26, Deut 14:4-21)¹⁴²

For some Christians, the OT food laws are no longer considered binding. As Wenham observes, "The food laws were an assertion of Israel's distinctiveness; to remove them was to put into question her special status."¹⁴³ Along the same line of reasoning, Milgrom claims that the purpose of abolishing the distinction between clean and unclean

¹⁴¹ Neusner: 16.

¹⁴² Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 729.

¹⁴³ Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 182.

meat is to tear down the distinction between Jew and Gentile.¹⁴⁴ Jesus said, "...then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled? (Thus he declared all foods clean.)." (Mark 7:18-19 ESV) Yet, recent NT scholarship has argued for a reassessment of this thought.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 182.

¹⁴⁵ Critical reassessments has been made by New Testament scholars that it is "historically unimaginable" that Jesus taught against the Old Testament dietary laws, David J. Rudolph, "Jesus and the Food Laws: A Reassessment of Mark 7:19b," *Evangelical Quarterly* 74, no. 4 (2002): 293; E. P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2016), 37-38; Jiří Moskala, "The Validity of the Levitical Food Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals: A Case Study of Biblical Hermeneutics," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 22/2, no. (2011). Eike Mueller, "Cleansing the Common: A Narrative-Intertextual Study of Mark 7:1-23" (Andrews University, 2015).

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