

## FURTHER LITERARY STRUCTURES IN DANIEL 2-7: AN ANALYSIS OF DANIEL 5, AND THE BROADER RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN CHAPTERS 2-7

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In the previous study in this series, I analyzed the chiasmic structure of chap. 4 in the OT book of Daniel.<sup>1</sup> The fifth chapter in that book is juxtaposed with chap. 4 at the center of a broader chiasmic section covering the Aramaic portion of the book, from chap. 2 through chap. 7. This broader chiasm has been set forth by A. Lenglet, to whose work on this subject I also called attention in my previous article.<sup>2</sup>

In the present article, I shall examine the chiasmic structure in Dan 5 and then incorporate the results both of this and of my analysis of Dan 4 within that broader context of Dan 2 through 7. For purposes of easy reference, I repeat (on the next page) my concluding outline from my earlier study ("Outline 1"), which outline provides a "birds'-eye view" of the structure of Dan 4.

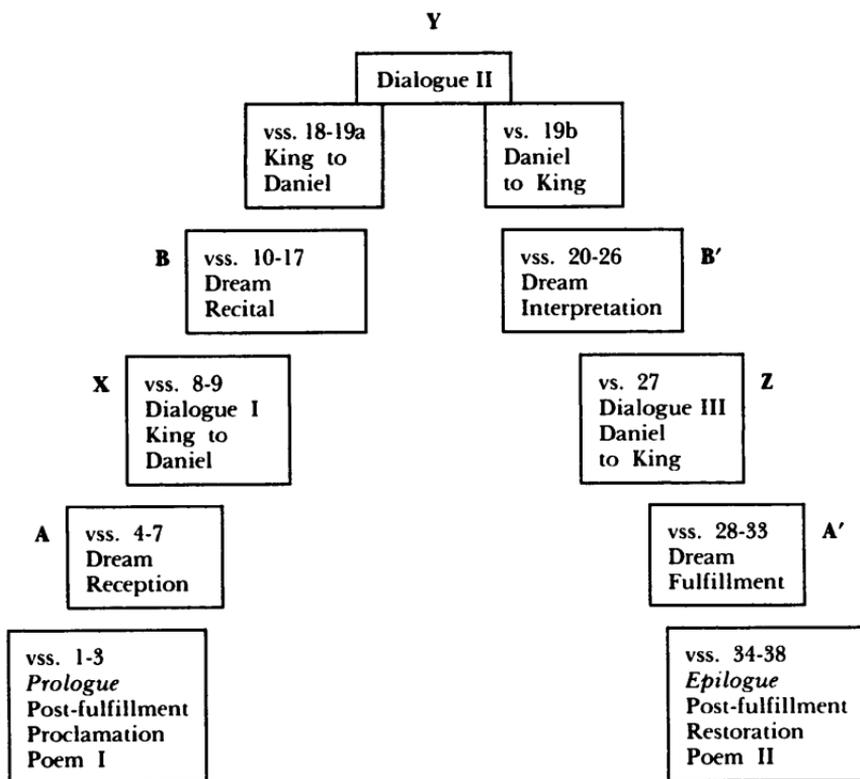
### 1. *Chiasmic Structure in Daniel 5*

Inasmuch as Dan 4 has been found to have a chiasmic pattern, it might readily be expected that Dan 5 would also have such a pattern, because these two chapters are paired at the center of a larger bloc of material from Dan 2 through 7. According to the analysis which follows, such does indeed appear to be the case; but the chiasm in Dan 5 differs in some significant ways from the type of chiasm found in Dan 4. These differences will be noted in due course toward the conclusion of our study of Dan 5. To begin that study, we will first look at the beginning and closing blocs of material, and then move to the intervening literary structures.

<sup>1</sup>William H. Shea, "Further Literary Structures in Daniel 2-7: An Analysis of Daniel 4," *AUSS* 23 (1985): 193-202.

<sup>2</sup>A. Lenglet, "La structure litteraire de Daniel 2-7," *Bib* 53 (1972): 169-190.

**OUTLINE I**  
**THE CHIASTIC LITERARY STRUCTURE OF DANIEL 4**



### *The Tripartite Introduction and Conclusion*

The body of the text of Dan 5 is not preceded by a prologue that could be compared with that which appears at the beginning of Dan 4. Rather, Dan 5 commences directly with the description of the first scene in the story which it presents—that of Belshazzar's feast and the handwriting on the wall. Thus, the narrative begins by referring to Belshazzar's toasting with wine in the festival banquet held in the palace.<sup>3</sup> An epilogue is attached to this narrative of Dan 5, but it is extremely brief. It consists only of the historical notice found in Dan 5:30-31, telling about the fall of the Babylonian kingdom, the death of Belshazzar, and the reception of the kingdom by Darius the Mede.<sup>4</sup>

In view of this absence of a prologue and in the presence of an epilogue with such minimal dimensions, our study can proceed directly into an examination of the first and last major building blocs from which the chiasm in the narrative is constructed. Three major elements are found linked together in both of these passages: (1) a description of the banquet (and its interpretation), (2) reference to the handwriting on the wall (and its interpretation), and (3) the offer of honors to the interpreter of the handwriting (and the award of these honors to Daniel).

Since these three elements follow the same order of A:B:C::A:B:C when the contents of the beginning and closing sections are compared, it can be seen that the contents of these two passages are related to each other along the lines of synonymous parallelism. In other words, although the blocs themselves are chiastically related in overall content, their three individual parts are not in chiastic order, but in both cases follow the same sequence.

The comparative parallelisms involved in these two blocs of narrative are set out below, in translation.<sup>5</sup> However, one minor

<sup>3</sup>On the historical background for those events, see W. H. Shea, "Nabonidus, Belshazzar, and the Book of Daniel: An Update," *AUSS* 20 (1982): 133-149.

<sup>4</sup>On the person of Darius the Mede, see W. H. Shea, "Darius the Mede: An Update," *AUSS* 20 (1982): 229-247.

<sup>5</sup>All verses mentioned in this article follow the versification of the English Bible. Translations throughout are from the RSV.

imbalance that occurs in the first of these two passages should be noted. It deals with the call and failure of the wise men of Babylon; and given in paired statements, it serves to bracket the threefold offer of honors by the king. In the second passage, a parallel is lacking, inasmuch as Daniel's ability to read the writing on the wall made such a second statement unnecessary.

*Bloc I: Dan 5:1-8*

*A. The Banquet, Vss. 1-4*

<sup>1</sup>King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in front of the thousand. <sup>2</sup>Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. <sup>3</sup>Then they brought in the golden and silver vessels which had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. <sup>4</sup>They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

*B. Handwriting on the Wall, Vs. 5*

<sup>5</sup>Immediately the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand; and the king saw the hand as it wrote.

*Bloc V: Dan 5:22-29*

*A'. Interpretation of the Banquet, Vss. 22-23*

<sup>22</sup>And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, <sup>23</sup>but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven; and the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.

*B'. Interpretation of the Handwriting on the Wall, Vss. 24-28*

<sup>24</sup>"Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. <sup>25</sup>And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN. <sup>26</sup>This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; <sup>27</sup>TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; <sup>28</sup>PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

**C. Offer of Honors for Interpreting the Handwriting, Vss. 7-8**

<sup>6</sup>Then the king's color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way and his knees knocked together. <sup>7</sup>The king cried aloud to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers. The king said to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and shows me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." <sup>8</sup>Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation.

**C'. Bestowal of Honors for Interpreting the Handwriting, Vs. 29**

<sup>29</sup>Then Belshazzar commanded, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put about his neck, and proclamation was made concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

The parallel phraseology between these passages is evident mainly in the first and third instances. Since no interpretation of the handwriting was given in the first passage, direct linguistic parallels between vs. 5 and vss. 24-28 are lacking. The thematic relation between them is, however, quite obvious, as the first poses the problem and the second answers it.

The parallels present here are especially evident between the first pair—those sections which deal with the general setting of the banquet and with its interpretation. The vessels from the temple in Jerusalem are mentioned in both cases. They are described as "brought" to the scene of the banquet in both cases. The same four parties are identified as drinking from them in both cases (namely, the king, his lords, his wives, and his concubines). The drinking of wine is connected with praising the gods in both cases. And the list of substances from which the gods were constructed is also the same in both cases. Thus, there is ample evidence for considering these two passages as parallel and related.

One of the parallel features between these two passages, however, shows an interesting alteration in the second instance. In the lengthy list of substances from which the gods were constructed, the first pair—gold and silver—has been inverted in the second passage. This difference is minor as far as the mere list of elements

themselves is concerned, but it holds a potential significance that transcends this rather mundane function. The lists can be compared as follows:

<i>List I, Vs. 4</i>	<i>List II, Vs. 23</i>
“they drank wine, and praised the gods of	“you . . . have drunk wine from them and praised the gods of
1) gold and silver,	1) silver and gold,
2) bronze,	2) bronze,
3) iron,	3) iron,
4) wood,	4) wood,
5) and stone.”	5) and stone, . . .”

The first aspect about this passage that might be noted here is its historical connections. Excavations at Babylon have amply confirmed the fact that there were in the city an abundance of temples, and thus also of gods resident in them; so there was no shortage of gods for Belshazzar and his friends to praise. At the time when Babylon fell to the Persians, however, such a statement was all the more appropriate, for a considerable number of gods had been added to those normally present in the city. In order to add to the power of the defenses of the city, Nabonidus went throughout Babylonia, gathering up the gods of a number of the other major cities in the land. These he brought to Babylon, so as to enlist them in the theological defenses of the capital. This activity did not endear him, of course, to the residents of the cities from which those gods were taken, for, theologically speaking, this left the cities undefended against the Persian attack. The Nabonidus Chronicle, in its entry for Nabonidus' 17th (and last) year describes the transfer of gods into the city of Babylon, as follows:

[Lugal-Marada and the other gods] of the town Marad, Zababa and the (other) gods of Kish, the goddess Ninlil [and the other gods of] Hursagkalama entered Babylon. Till the end of the month Ululu (all) the gods of Akkad . . . those from above the IM and (those from) below the IM, entered Babylon. The gods from Borsippa, Kutha, . . . and Sippar (however) did not enter.<sup>6</sup>

The same Chronicle also declares that one of the first acts carried out by Cyrus' government in Babylonia was to return these

<sup>6</sup>ANET, p. 306.

gods to their cities of origin: "From the month of Kislimu to the month of Addaru, the gods of Akkad which Nabonidus had made come down to Babylon . . . returned to their sacred cities."<sup>7</sup>

Daniel's listing of gods is comprehensive through its mention of the varied composition materials. It seems likely that he may have given such a comprehensive list of the gods praised during this banquet on the night Babylon fell, not just because there ordinarily were a great number of gods resident in Babylon, but also because their ranks had recently been swollen by the influx of gods transported into the city by Nabonidus.

The other point of interest deriving from this list given by Daniel—that pertaining to the reversal of order for gold and silver—is more literarily structural in nature. In all likelihood, this reversal was an intentional alteration. Ordinarily, in both poetic and prose texts, gold is the A-word and silver is the B-word, as one would naturally expect from their respective values. Since silver does not normally precede gold, there should be some explanation for this variation in the second list. The intentional nature of this difference is emphasized further by the *waw* conjunction connecting the two words in both cases. That conjunction is not written with any of the other elements in the list except with the last one, stone, as would be expected at the termination of a list. This fact sets apart the "gold-and-silver" pair and stresses the unusual nature of the reversal.

The question then is this: What is the significance of this intentional reversal? It could, of course, be part of the chiasmic construction of the narrative. If that were the case, however, emphasis would better have been placed upon this chiasm by reversing all of the elements in the entire list—which obviously has not been done. This alternation, therefore, is more subtle, with only gold and silver having been reversed. Why should this be?

The naming of metals carries us back to Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Dan 2, where gold and silver occur in descending order at the top of the metal image. There gold represents Nebuchadnezzar's Neo-Babylonian kingdom, and silver represents the Medo-Persian kingdom which followed it. That narrative in Dan 2 relates to a period at the height of Neo-Babylonian power. Here in Dan 5, however, we have a narrative in the setting of the events occurring

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

on the night that Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians. This was the very night when the silver kingdom subjugated and supplanted the golden kingdom of Babylon—a fact altogether appropriate to note in this list of metals in Dan 5. The transposition of metals is mentioned *just before* the interpretation of the handwriting on the wall announcing Babylon's fall, and *just before* the historical reference to the actual occurrence of that historical event.

An important theological point emerging from this passage is its presentation of Daniel's evaluation of the events of the night Babylon fell, as he speaks here for the Most High God. The gods which Belshazzar and his friends praised were actually functionless; they "do not see or hear or know." Beyond the impotence of Belshazzar's gods, however, there was also his own sacrilege and blasphemy against the true God of heaven. He had not honored this God, in whose hands were his ways and his breath; and in addition, he had failed to humble himself. The banquet scene which is described in the opening section of the chapter is, thus, interpreted, towards the end of that chapter, from this theological viewpoint by the prophet of God.

Since no interpretation of the handwriting is given at the beginning of the narrative, because of the failure of the Babylonian wise men, there is a lack of direct linguistic parallels between the second sections in each of these blocs. As has already been noted, however, these sections are, nevertheless, directly related to each other thematically. The initial passage provides the problem, and the latter passage provides the answer. The failure of the wise men in the first instance stands in contrast to the success of Daniel in the second.

The comparison between the third main element in these two blocs is quite direct. The king makes the offer to award the threefold honors in the first case; and Daniel, by virtue of having met the challenge and accomplished the task successfully, receives those honors in the second case. The phraseology for the three honors is quite similar in both instances.

Thus, in summarizing the total contents of the opening and closing main blocs of material in Dan 5, we may reiterate that the same three elements appear in the same order at the beginning and at the end of the chapter. From this conclusion, attention can next

be directed to the blocs which occupy the central location in the literary structure of Dan 5.

### *The Tripartite Center Section*

Three major passages of dialogue appear in that portion of the narrative which is bounded by the two blocs described and delimited above. The first of these is given by the queen (mother). In answer to the distress of Belshazzar over the undeciphered writing on the wall, she proposed that he call Daniel to solve that problem for him (vss. 9-12). She remembered Daniel especially from the days of Nebuchadnezzar, when Daniel had had such remarkable success in interpreting dreams for the king. On the basis of that excellent past (but now-neglected) reputation, she urged Belshazzar to call him to interpret the handwriting. An important theme in the speech by the queen emerges in her reference to the days of Nebuchadnezzar, for this same subject appears also in both of the next two speeches—those by Belshazzar and Daniel.

Following the arrival of Daniel in response to the royal summons, Belshazzar presents to him the problem of interpreting the handwriting on the wall (vss. 13-16). Belshazzar does this, with his own historical introduction that identifies Daniel as "one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father [Nebuchadnezzar] brought from Judah" (vs. 13). Next he poses the problem of interpreting the handwriting, doing so from the standpoint of the failure of the other wise men to have accomplished the task. Then he renews the offer of honors, this time directly and personally to Daniel.

The third major section at the center of this literary structure comes from the first half of Daniel's subsequent speech. (The second half of this speech has already been identified above as belonging to the final bloc of the chapter; being Daniel's interpretation of Belshazzar's feast that night, it balances the description of the feast at the beginning of the chapter.) Here, in vss. 18-21, we find Daniel's preliminary remarks, in which he introduces his interpretation of Belshazzar's actions with a description of the actions of Nebuchadnezzar. This speech presents more than just the description of the actions of an earlier king, however; it also provides a description of God's interaction with that king. Indeed,

Nebuchadnezzar had learned his lesson about humility and that he should honor the true God. Belshazzar knew of these developments in Nebuchadnezzar's career, but had chosen not to take the lesson to heart. Hence, the divine sentence now came down upon him, as is described in the next section of the text.

As far as the organization of the narrative is concerned, therefore, Daniel's remarks are divided into two parts. The first portion belongs with the central section of the narrative, since it deals with an experience in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. The last portion belongs to the concluding main bloc of text, inasmuch as it deals with the theological interpretation of the significance of the banquet initially described at the beginning of the chapter.

A major recurrent theme which binds these three passages in the central section together is that of experiences from the times of Nebuchadnezzar. First, the queen recalls that Daniel was able to interpret dreams and puzzles in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. Next, Belshazzar refers to Daniel's experience of exile under Nebuchadnezzar. And finally, Daniel recites the experience of Nebuchadnezzar in which Daniel himself had a part.

A related theme that also binds these three sections together is the thought that Daniel's ability to interpret dreams and mysteries in those earlier days argues well for his ability to interpret the handwriting on the wall in this present situation. First, this was the basis of the queen's proposal to call Daniel; next in the narrative comes Belshazzar's own reference to this ability of Daniel; and finally, Daniel's recitation about Nebuchadnezzar implies the presence of that same ability, inasmuch as Daniel played a part, too, in the story he recited.

Thus, there are two common themes which run throughout all three of the passages in the central section of this narrative: There is, first of all, reference to the time of Nebuchadnezzar; and then, connected with that in each instance is the idea that Daniel was a competent interpreter of mysteries during Nebuchadnezzar's reign and should also be able to function in a similar capacity at this present time.

### *Literary "Joins" Between Sections*

In my earlier study on the literary structure of Dan 4, it was noted that literary bridges or cement can be found at the "joins"

between the major blocs of text in that narrative. The same holds true for Dan 5. One such bridge occurs at the juncture between the queen's remarks to Belshazzar and Belshazzar's remarks to Daniel. There it is briefly stated, "Now let Daniel be called and he will show the interpretation" (vs. 12); and in response to this proposal, it is pointed out, "Then Daniel was brought in before the king" (vs. 13). The reciprocal nature of these actions thus involves a summons and the response to that summons.

Another literary link occurs at the juncture between the speech of Belshazzar and the speech of Daniel. Here, the end of Belshazzar's speech and the beginning of Daniel's speech balance, and they are given with their elements arranged in chiasmic order, as can be seen from the following outline:

**A, Vs. 16b** —[Belshazzar:] "Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation,

**B, Vs. 16c** —"You shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about your neck, and you shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

**B', Vs. 17a** —Then Daniel answered before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another;

**A', Vs. 17b** —"Nevertheless I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation."

The final two statements by the king come after he has described the historical status of Daniel from the past (as an exile from Judah in the days of Nebuchadnezzar) and his description of the present problem (the failure of the wise men to interpret the handwriting). The passage concludes with the "If . . . then" clauses outlined above. These present the problem and the potential rewards to Daniel for solving the problem.

Before Daniel launches into the first major section of his speech—that which deals with the experience of Nebuchadnezzar—he responds to both of the propositions posed to him in this final statement by the king. Taking the king's second clause first, he turns down the offer of honors; and then he addresses the problem in the first clause by stating to the king that he would interpret the handwriting.

There are some direct lexical relations between the statements found at these two junctures. These relations emphasize both the function of these statements and their parallel locations in the literary structure of the narrative. The initial statement in both of

these junctures is introduced with the same word, "Now" (Aramaic, *k<sup>c</sup>an*). The concluding statement at each of these junctures is introduced with the same word also, and that word this time is "Then" (Aramaic, *bē<sup>ḳ</sup>dayin*). The relations involved here can be outlined as follows:

**I. Literary Join No. 1, Vss. 12-13:**

**A, Vs. 12** — "Now [*k<sup>c</sup>an*] let Daniel be called . . ."

**B, Vs. 13** — "Then [*bē<sup>ḳ</sup>dayin*] Daniel was brought in . . ."

**II. Literary Join No. 2, Vss. 16-17:**

**A, Vs. 16** — "Now [*k<sup>c</sup>an*] if you can read the writing . . ."

**B, Vs. 17** — "Then [*bē<sup>ḳ</sup>dayin*] Daniel answered . . ."

Thus, the same introductory lexical pattern is followed at both of these junctures.

Another aspect of minor interest here involves the number of statements that go to make up these joins. In the first case, only one statement is made, and that is repeated once: "call Daniel," and "Daniel was brought." In the second case, two statements are made and are both repeated in the same terms: "give the interpretation" and "I will give the interpretation," along with "honors shall be given to you" and "keep your honors for yourself." It may be accidental that just one statement was used at the first join while two statements appear in the second join; but accidental or not, the pattern enhances the successive framing function of these linking statements.

With these details from the central section of this narrative elaborated, the passage can now be outlined structurally, in translation, as follows:

**B. Belshazzar to Daniel: Regarding  
Nebuchadnezzar's exiling of Daniel,  
Daniel's qualifications, Vss. 13b-16a**

<sup>13b</sup>The king said to Daniel, "You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. <sup>14</sup>I have heard of you that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you.

<sup>15</sup>Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation; but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. <sup>16</sup>But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems.

**X. *Literary Join I, Vss. 12b-13a***

<sup>12b</sup>Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation." <sup>13a</sup>Then Daniel was brought in before the king.

**A. *The Queen to Belshazzar: Regarding Nebuchadnezzar's time, qualifications of Daniel, Vss. 9-12a***

<sup>9</sup>Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, and his color changed; and his lords were perplexed. <sup>10</sup>The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banqueting hall; and the queen said, "O king, live for ever! Let not your thoughts alarm you or your color change. <sup>11</sup>There is in your kingdom a man in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers, <sup>12</sup>because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar.

**Z. *Literary Join II, Vss. 16-17***

<sup>16</sup>Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." <sup>17</sup>Then Daniel answered before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; nevertheless I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation.

**A'. *Daniel to Belshazzar: Regarding Nebuchadnezzar's experience (Daniel's qualifications implied), Vss. 18-21***

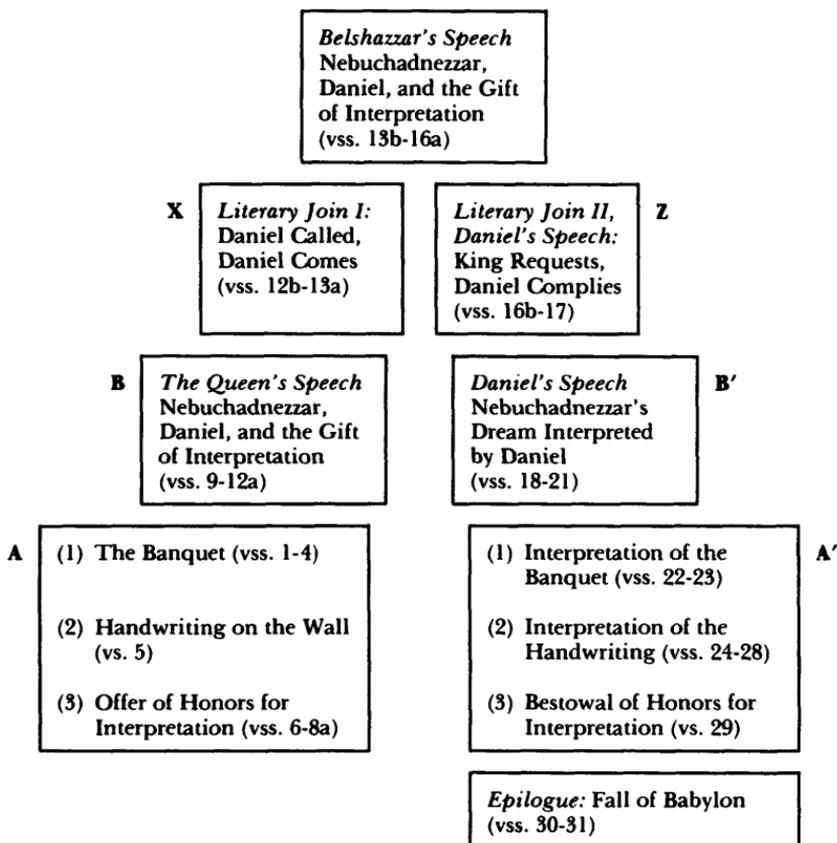
<sup>18</sup>O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty; <sup>19</sup>and because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him; whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; whom he would he raised up, and whom he would he put down. <sup>20</sup>But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him; <sup>21</sup>he was driven from among men, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild asses; he was fed grass like an ox; and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of men, and sets over it whom he will.

With the foregoing delineation for the central sections of Dan 5 completed, the entire chapter and its chiasm can now be summarized as follows, in Outline 2.

### OUTLINE 2

#### THE CHIASTIC LITERARY STRUCTURE OF DANIEL 5

C



## 2. *Daniel 4 and Daniel 5 Compared*

For the purposes of comparing Dan 5 with Dan 4 in regard to literary structure, Outline 2 on p. 290 and Outline 1 on p. 278 may be utilized. From the comparison, it can be seen that there are both similarities and differences between the chiasmic constructions found in these two chapters.

At the outset, it should be emphasized, however, that both of these chapters *do* appear to have been written in a chiasmic literary structure. This has been suggested from internal features, and it has been anticipated, in part, because these two narratives occur within the larger chiasm of Dan 2-7.

### *Prologue and Epilogue*

The first main element for comparison here involves the use or non-use of a prologue and an epilogue. Dan 4 makes use of both, and they comprise rather lengthy passages. Dan 5 differs in this regard. It has no prologue, and its epilogue is very brief.

### *The Major Blocs of Narrative*

Within the limits set by the boundaries just indicated, there is a general similarity between the type of contents found in the next pair of blocs of literary material. Both of these narratives begin with a passage that provides a description of the setting for their respective scenes of action. In Dan 4, that scene is set through Nebuchadnezzar's reception of his dream in his palace, his summoning of the wise men, and their failure to interpret the dream. The opening scene of Dan 5 is set in the palace banquet, and it poses the problem of the handwriting on the wall—also left unresolved by the Babylonian wise men. The main difference is that the latter narrative includes an offer of honors for interpreting the handwriting, while Nebuchadnezzar made no such offer in Dan 4.

The corresponding concluding blocs of text in Dan 4 and 5, however, differ to a considerable extent. In Dan 4, the closing bloc tells of the fulfillment of the dream prophecy when the judgment predicted fell upon Nebuchadnezzar. In Dan 5, the interpretation of the banquet is found in this position in the literary structure, with the fulfillment of that interpretation coming only with the historical notice given in the epilogue.

The more centrally located blocs in Dan 4 recite first the dream and then its interpretation. This is the type of subject already covered in the opening and closing blocs of Dan 5. There is, therefore, a general sense in which one can see an alternation of themes between these two chapters in terms of the way in which their materials are arranged. The dream and its interpretation are given in the second and third major blocs of Dan 4, while the handwriting and its interpretation are given in the first and fourth blocs in Dan 5.

The summons of Daniel and the reference to his competence as determined from the days of Nebuchadnezzar constitute the main topics taken up in the more centrally located passages of Dan 5. The competence references, as we have seen earlier, come first from the Queen, then from the King, and finally from Daniel himself. The part of Daniel's speech that deals with the times of Nebuchadnezzar involves himself and his qualifications only indirectly; these qualifications are not stated explicitly.

#### *A Direct Thematic Link Between Chapters 4 and 5*

It should be noted that what Daniel does state in this speech in chap. 5 relates specifically to the events of Dan 4 by content: He speaks of the time when God humbled Nebuchadnezzar, and he does so in terms that repeat much of the phraseology of Dan 4:15b-16, 25, and 33 (cf. Dan 5:20-21). Thus, that which is stated three times in Dan 4 is stated once again in Dan 5, this final repetition constituting a direct thematic link between these two chapters.

#### *The "Joins" in the Two Chapters*

Just as there are balancing "joins" between the major blocs of text in Dan 4, so we have found that there are also similar "join" statements in Dan 5. The difference in their distribution relates to the way in which they are related to the major blocs, and how those major blocs are distributed. In Dan 4, they join successively paired passages—and only paired passages. Thus, these statements appear in pairs too—between blocs A and B and between blocs B' and A' (X and Z in Outline 1). The other balancing pair in Dan 4 is interwoven in the dialogue of the king with Daniel that is located between blocs B and B' (Y in Outline 1).

The links in Dan 5 follow the same distribution in the first instance—between blocs B and C and between blocs C and B' (X and Z in Outline 2). In the place where Dan 4 has another literary link between B and B', however, there is no joining statement in the corresponding position in Dan 5. The reason for this is that there is only one bloc of text there (i.e., C alone), and this one bloc (in contrast to the two in Dan 4) has not been broken up to make room for another literary "join."

### *Methods of "Juncturing" Literary Chiasms*

There are two main ways in which a chiasmic literary structure can be written. In both cases, paired literary blocs are utilized until the center of the chiasm is reached. At that juncture, either one of two patterns may exist. The chiasm can be completed with a final pair of textual blocs, or there may be only one bloc in that final position. In the first instance, the pattern follows that of A:B:C::C:B:A. In the second case, the pattern is that of A:B::C::B:A.

An interesting feature is that in Dan 4 and Dan 5, we have two paired narratives, both of which were written in chiasmic form, but in which the chiasms take different routes in their way of constructing the central juncture. Dan 4 follows the first pattern mentioned above, while Dan 5 follows the second. Thus, while both of these narratives were put together along the lines of a chiasmic model, they do not necessarily follow the very same type of chiasmic model.

One might ask the question, especially with respect to Dan 5, as to why its particular model of chiasm—the A:B:C:B':A'—was employed here. Though a final answer to this question may not be possible as yet, at least a tentative suggestion as to its solution can be offered here. Belshazzar is the main figure found in the central bloc which caps the chiasmic literary pyramid of Dan 5—that is, "C: Belshazzar's Speech" (see Outline 2, at the close of the preceding section of this article). This is as it should be, since he is the main figure throughout that chapter, from its beginning (with his opening of the banquet scene) to its finish (with his death).

But also, the literary form in which Belshazzar appears may have been chosen so as to speak to his experience. He is the king of what had previously been the most powerful kingdom of earth, found here exalting himself before a thousand of his nobles and the

royal household. But there was to be a dramatic fall of both him and his kingdom. The placement of his key speech in Dan 5:13b-16a may be a forceful way to portray the pinnacle on which he had placed himself and to emphasize the dramatic manner in which he would fall from that pinnacle.

### 3. *Daniel 4 and 5 Within the Chiasm of Daniel 2-7*

The final task of this study is to relate the chiasmic narratives of Dan 4 and Dan 5 to the larger chiasmic structure in which they are found—that of Dan 2-7. Here it should be noted that each of these chapters stands as the capstone of its column of narrative in its section of the book—in Dan 2-4 and Dan 5-7, respectively. Thus, they stand together *side-by-side at the center* of this overall chiasm.

The configuration of the chiasms of Dan 4 and 5 within the broader chiasm of chaps. 2-7 is summarized in Outline 3, on the next page.

As far as literary characteristics of the book of Daniel are concerned, this study simply emphasizes the fact that a number of that book's literary structures are in a chiasmic pattern. The two further examples of this feature of the book that have been elucidated in this article and in my preceding one on Dan 4 give added evidence of the unity of Dan 2-7, since that section of the book can now be seen to consist of chiasms within a chiasm—a very deliberate and intentional structuring of the material in those chapters.

As a concluding observation, we should not neglect the aesthetic side of this feature of chiasmic structure. Various commentators have observed that the type of writing present in Dan 4 and 5 is very repetitious. The dullness of the repetitions to the modern eye recedes in importance, however, when it is realized that these transparently repetitious passages actually form an integral part of the larger literary design of these two chapters. Thus, instead of contributing to boredom, these repetitions should enhance one's appreciation for this work as a carefully crafted piece. The narratives of the two chapters do indeed relate history, but they do so in an aesthetically artistic fashion.

**Daniel 4**  
**Prophecy About Nebuchadnezzar**

**Daniel 5**  
**Prophecy About Belshazzar**

