

# Chapter Five

## Distinctively Daniel

### among the Apocalypses

#### Comparison and contrast of Daniel with Apocalypses

#### Common Scholarly Appraisal of Daniel

A comparison of Daniel with all other Old Testament writings will show that Daniel is quite unique. While nothing strongly corresponds to Daniel in the Old Testament, a majority of scholars claim that Daniel corresponds very closely to certain Jewish apocalyptic writings composed in the period from c. 250 BC to c.150 AD. In grouping Daniel with such writings most scholars either presuppose or argue that Daniel was written after 167 BC when Antiochus IV Epiphanes so outraged the Jews. To accept this position necessarily involves believing that Daniel is pseudonymous. Here the reasoning tends to be somewhat circular, it being pointed out that the inter-testamental Jewish apocalypses are also typically pseudonymous. When Daniel is viewed in this way we can expect, as they do, that scholars will especially accent those lines of correspondence they see between Daniel and such writings and that they will also accordingly de-emphasise discontinuities (even if not neglected) between these writings and also connections with prior biblical revelation.

This problem is aggravated by the fact that there are 'conservative' biblical scholars who believe that 'non-deceitful' pseudonymity was simply an acceptable literary convention of the time and does not in and of itself stand at odds with a high view of the inspiration and authority of the Bible. Some conservatives, swayed by scholarly handling of Daniel, are prepared to accept that the ascription of the book of Daniel to a man called Daniel is simply an acceptable literary device, and that the book was in fact composed after 167 BC. All of these concessions are made by such conservatives while still holding to the belief that Daniel belongs to the canon of inspired Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

My own position can be summarised in the following points:

1. While, as we shall discover, there are grounds for calling Daniel an apocalypse (or, at least, for recognising the presence of an apocalyptic genre in these chapters), *the grouping of Daniel with Jewish apocalypses of the inter-testamental period is misguided*, and fails to appreciate the considerable degree to which the form, structure and contents of Daniel combine to set it poles apart from such Jewish apocalypses. If it is legitimate to place Daniel, or part thereof, within the genre class of apocalyptic then it is also necessary to add an adjective which will sharply discriminate Daniel from other apocalypses and not simplistically treat it as but another variation on the same theme.

2. *There is no genre of literature which is capable of tidily assimilating the book of Daniel.* As we study Daniel we will discover that as a total work it constitutes a unique literary production both in the Old Testament and in the ancient world.

## Two Genres in Daniel?

When scholars call Daniel an *apocalypse* they are referring customarily to chapters 7-12. Chapters 1-6 are said to consist of a genre that might be described as *court tales*. This literary designation is unfortunate, because, as I have previously explained, the word *tale* implies that the literary unit concerned has already been adjudged to be unhistorical. Conservatives have sometimes accepted the term as a mere literary label involving no presupposition as to the historicity or otherwise of the literary unit concerned. Personally I prefer to avoid unnecessary connotations and to use a designation such as court narratives.

The above approach to the genre classification of Daniel is problematic. It conveys the false impression that the book of Daniel involves the 'splicing' together of two discrete literary types. This is not to deny the fact that a total work may involve the 'mixing' of different literary forms. For example, scholars have identified a genre they call *Gospel* (although even here debate still continues as to whether the Gospels are ancient, in distinction to modern, biographies). Within the Gospels we find narrative, parables, proverbs, didactic material, prophecy, and portions that many call apocalyptic. I am not therefore denying the possibility of finding in Daniel material that might reasonably be described as apocalyptic.

In actual fact there is much in Daniel 2, 4 and 5 which might also be called 'apocalyptic', on many definitions of this term, though there is as yet no accepted definition. Further there is a considerable amount of material in chapters 7-12 which is of a non-apocalyptic character (at least as defined by Collins [see below re GP definition]). Indeed the book of Daniel draws on many Old Testament traditions and the result is a variety of literary forms. It smacks of artificiality to treat Daniel 7-12 as distinctively apocalyptic.

Yet, the presupposition that chapters 7-12 can be treated as a unit of apocalyptic, profoundly influences many scholarly approaches to Daniel. For example, Fewell limits herself to the 'narrative material' of Daniel 1-6 on the 'form-critical grounds' that chapters 7-12 belong to the genre of apocalyptic.<sup>ii</sup>

Gane reasons, "Granted that a genre is an inherently coherent system unified by a dominant literary characteristic, it should also be recognised that a literary work itself is a different kind of system, unified by the purpose of an author or group of authors working together."<sup>iii</sup> Therefore, even if it is valid to discriminate Daniel 7-12 from 1-6 on genre grounds - a debatable matter - we must still take seriously the unified literary work that is the book of Daniel.

Further this division of the book according to literary types does not mesh well with its linguistic composition. The book begins and ends in Hebrew (1:1-2:4a; 8:1-12:13) and the central portion is in Aramaic (2:4b-7:28). But this central portion incorporates all of Daniel 7. As Dumbrell correctly points out, to simply divide the book into two halves (1-6; 7-12) is to ignore

the major exegetical problem of the book, namely, the use of two languages...No analysis of the book is satisfactory which does not come to terms with the peculiarity of the two languages and the probability that the Hebrew interprets the content of the Aramaic [Dan 1 is introductory, and Dan 8-12 depends upon chap. 7].<sup>iv</sup>

## The Genre Idea

We must be careful not to make a decision about the genre of a book prior to an investigation of the contents of the book concerned.<sup>v</sup> Actually, this is implicit in the concept of genre. Wellek and Warren state:

Genre should be conceived, we think, as a grouping of literary works based, theoretically, upon both outer form (specific meter or structure) and also upon inner form (attitude, tone, purpose - more crudely, subject and audience).<sup>vi</sup>

Osborne develops this definition in explaining how to determine the genre of a particular book or passage:

there are external and internal considerations. The external aspects concern the overall structural pattern, the form (meter, rhythm, narration), style, interrelationships and content. Internal factors include the cohesive plot, action, narrative voice, setting and language.<sup>vii</sup>

Clearly we will be acting hastily if we facilely accept the genre decisions of scholars respecting Daniel until we have studied the book for ourselves. We will therefore suspend judgment on this question for the time being.

## The Relationship of Genre Decisions and Hermeneutics

Genre decisions are important because they influence the interpretation of the writing in question. Osborne remarks:

the genre or type of literature in which a passage is found provides the 'rules of the language game' (Wittgenstein), that is, the hermeneutical principles by which one understands it. Obviously, we do not interpret fiction the same way as we understand poetry. Nor will a person look for the same scheme in biblical wisdom as in the prophetic portions.<sup>viii</sup>

Osborne recognizes that an appreciable intermixing of genres occurs in the Bible. For example, note the epistolary material in the book of Revelation (often considered apocalyptic), and the presence of apocalyptic material in the Gospels (e.g., Mk 13) and in the midst of an epistle (2 Thess 2). Osborne claims that the ability to identify such genres when they do occur in mixed settings means that genres can be used as hermeneutical tools.

It is certainly helpful to understand ancient epistolary customs when interpreting the epistles. However, it is an exegetical fallacy to think that genre can always be determined *prior* to exegesis.

It is just as well, though identification of genre aids interpretation, that hermeneutics is not scuttled by an inability to predetermine the particular genre of any given writing. If this were so then we have a real problem on our hands when it comes to interpreting Daniel. For not only is it incapable of being grouped with Jewish intertestamental apocalypses, but it also constitutes a unique literary type in the Old Testament. In actuality, while it is essential in hermeneutics to distinguish between such things as narrative and poetic forms (e.g., to prevent metaphorical language being taken literalistically), it is not usually necessary to precisely define genre before engaging in hermeneutics.

Hartman and Di Lella come close to what I am advocating when they reason:

Since Dan 2:13-45 and chs. 7-12 are the only portions of the Old Testament that can be described as apocalyptic in the strict sense, it is methodologically more sound to derive a definition of the genre used by the authors of the book from a careful study of the work itself, rather than *a priori* to accept a definition of apocalyptic and then try to understand how Daniel fits into that genre. In this way we can avoid the confusion often accompanying a discussion of Daniel as an apocalyptic work.

The only deficiency in this statement is that their depictions of Daniel 2:13-45 and chapters 7-12 already presuppose a concept of apocalyptic. Unfortunately Hartman and Di Lella, in my judgment, because of their liberal presuppositions concerning such things in Daniel as non-historicity, pseudonymity, the presence of pseudo-predictions, are inevitably drawn to presuppose prior experience of the atrocities wrought by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and thus to presuppose a purpose for the book which is in keeping with this conclusion concerning the *Sitz im Leben* of the book.<sup>ix</sup>

Here then we have an example of an ultimate conclusion concerning the genre of Daniel being predicated upon what I believe to be erroneous premises concerning historical background and purpose. It is especially to be noted that Hartman and Di Lella fail to follow their own advice. In practice they fail to base their judgment as to the genre of Daniel on the basis of 'a careful study of the work itself' because of their inability to trust its historical claims. Thus their decision as to the genre of Daniel involves a rejection of the historicity of Daniel and also, therefore, a resorting to presuppositions concerning setting and purpose which contradict the internal evidence of the writing itself.

## **The Purpose Behind Genre Decisions**

In the case of Daniel to start by defining the book, or a portion of it, as an apocalypse, is to allow the tail to wag the dog! Definitions of the genre kind are rarely merely descriptive (we will see it is extremely difficult to describe 'apocalyptic' writing) but almost always are substantially expressions of an underlying purpose: to use inter-comparisons with 'similar' writings as the basis of interpretation.

## **Historical Presuppositions Underlying Genre Decisions**

We need to carefully guard against naiveté as we approach the question of the genre of any particular biblical literary unit. It is all too possible in accepting prevailing scholarly opinion as to the genre of a writing, to gloss over the fact that decisions regarding literary types are usually rooted in presuppositions concerning historical development. This is certainly the case when it comes to defining the genre of apocalypse.

A prime example of this, of course, is the Documentary Hypothesis, which is fundamentally a theory that treats the different 'documents' as being virtually different literary types. But since these alleged documents are not delineated in Scripture itself, scholars such as Wellhausen and Noth can only identify them on the basis of a presupposition that Jewish religion evolved in a certain step-by-step manner. Once this is recognised it becomes clear that these scholars are not fundamentally describing what they find in the biblical writings. No! Such scholars are consciously and deliberately studying the biblical writings with a definite predetermined purpose - to 'test' their hypothesis in the supposedly 'best' tradition of

the scientific method. Of course, if the underlying premise is misconceived - as is the case with the facile and now largely disavowed conception of historical evolution that is inextricably fused to the Documentary Hypothesis - then the resulting purpose is misdirected and the definitions of literary type which are ultimately arrived at have limited value for hermeneutics.

The situation with respect to the definition of apocalyptic writings is essentially the same. So Hartman and Di Lella (64-5) classify Daniel as apocalyptic because they believe it to have been written as a response to Antiochus IV Epiphanes' despotic attempts to impose Hellenism on the Jewish people, during the same inter-testamental period when other apocalypses were being composed. For such scholars to define Daniel as an apocalypse is to presuppose that it belongs to the same inter-testamental period as the so-called Jewish apocalypses and that it can therefore be regarded as 'one of the family' and as sharing in the family characteristics. Understanding the family, it is believed, will help the reader to interpret the 'behaviour' of one of its members. Ah, but this is the question: is it right to see Daniel as a part of the family? Is it not more accurate to think of the book of Daniel as more akin to a great pioneering leader, now deceased, whose influence is still remembered and whom others, many generations later still seek to emulate in a limited manner?

In his elaboration of Wellek and Warren's definition of genre, Osborne<sup>x</sup> remarks,  
The characteristics of works that show similarities are studied both synchronically (within the same period) and diachronically (the development of forms). Only when we understand the historical patterns can we avoid the oft-repeated tendency to draw generic parallels from the wrong period.

He acutely perceives:  
we would have been spared Bultmann's use of Mandaean literature to interpret John if he had realized that gnostic literature came from a much later period and could not parallel John.

It is precisely this latter point that pertains to the matter of the genre of Daniel. To say that Daniel 7-12 exemplifies the apocalyptic genre is to presuppose an understanding of an apocalypse that has already been gained through the study of other apocalypses, in particular inter-testamental apocalypses. If (as we would insist, against prevailing scholarly opinion) Daniel must be dated in the sixth century BC, then it is anachronistic to label it as having substantially the same genre type as these other writings that were mainly composed after 250 BC. There is little difference between this type of comparison and Bultmann's illegitimate eisegesis of John through the imposition of Mandaean categories. It is yet another instance of 'drawing genetic parallels from the wrong period.'

But when we take into account historical background to determine genre it is not sufficient just to note that certain writings within a certain historical period share some common features. In settling upon the genre of apocalypse the majority of scholars have assumed that the so-called apocalypses "go back to a common sociological starting point", that they "have a comparable *Sitz im Leben*."<sup>xi</sup> But when scholars are asked to describe this shared life-situation "the secondary literature shows an unsurpassed jumble of opinions."<sup>xii</sup> As Koch notes during the inter-testamental period:

Israel had an appearance of anything but unity, whether in Palestine or in the Diaspora...The classification of a group of writings which contains no express information about its sociological setting forces the observer into conjecture.

S.B. Reid points out that mantic activity (ability to discern - or appear to discern - future events) occurs in many so-called primitive cultures where it serves a variety of functions. Mantic activity fits many institutional categories as illustrated in OT studies by the compartmentalisation of mantic activity into such institutional categories as prophecy, priestly activity and some types of wisdom. Reid thus highlights the difficulty of ascribing specific institutional settings as the background of particular mantic activity. Therefore, to seek to find a *Sitz im Leben* for apocalypses in mantic activity will necessarily lack sociological precision because of the multifunctional nature of such activity. Reid assumes that apocalypses "reflect a type of mantic activity, which entails the use of omens, dreams, auditions, and the like to predict or to appear to predict the future." He accordingly, dates historical apocalypses (the focus of his own study) in the early second century BC.<sup>xiii</sup>

The scholarly consensus can be described as the "conventicle approach" popularised especially by Plöger and Hanson which sees these writings as a native Palestinian development written within small religious communities that met secretly due to their fear of those in authority.<sup>xiv</sup> This is in accord with the causal theory of deprivation which believes that apocalyptic groups in non-Israelite societies arise among marginalised, alienated or deprived people.<sup>xv</sup> This theory has been bolstered by some through an unbalanced appeal to the theory of cognitive dissonance. Festinger had proffered this as an explanation why millennial groups continue despite the psychological conflict which arises when their beliefs and perceptions of the world fail to be confirmed.<sup>xvi</sup> Anyway, according to this way of thinking the emphasis on the transcendent in apocalypses, together with an expectation of salvation based on otherworldly revelation, is explained by the inability of alienated groups to find meaning in the world.<sup>xvii</sup>

More particularly, proposals concerning the source of these writings include the antiestablishment *Hasidim* (Plöger: anti-"theocracy"; Hanson: anti-"hierocracy")<sup>xviii</sup>, the priests of the Maccabean period, the Essene movement (Hilgenfeld), for example, the Qumran sect, the Zealots. Indeed as Koch wryly remarks, "Every one of the groupings of the late Israelite period for which we have any evidence at all has been suggested as the *Sitz im Leben* of the apocalyptic writings."<sup>xix</sup>

Not surprisingly then the Pharisees have also been proposed as the primary authors (Charles). Others opine that the roots of apocalyptic are to be found in wisdom (Hölscher; von Rad). Some regard the authors as a small class of highly learned sages conversant with contemporary Gentile culture and on the basis of the wisdom concepts and vocabulary in Daniel 1-6, and following Robert R. Wilson, Cook (11-12) believes Daniel "was more likely produced by wisdom circles than by prophetic circles." Typically those who argue for wisdom origins believe apocalyptic thought and literature is essentially syncretistic. It is commonly assumed that syncretism indicates reduced religious authority.

Yet again, Bousset believed the authors of apocalyptic were an obscure and simple people who were isolated from the Jerusalem hierarchy and its theology. Some appeal to Aramaic and Babylonian material in Daniel as suggesting the proper milieu is

provided by the Babylonian Diaspora or Persia (Mowinckel, Rowley, Russell). Rowley believed apocalyptic especially developed from prophetic eschatology. Cook (2) argues that the so-called proto-apocalyptic texts of the Hebrew Bible are not the products of alienated, marginalised or even relatively deprived groups but rather “stem from groups allied with or identical to the priests at the centre of restoration society.”

Very often the scholar concerned is strongly influenced by a sociological model in the light of which he or she attempts to reach both biblical and extra-biblical texts. So, for example, Plöger, partially presupposing Tönnies' 19th century distinction between “community” (*Gemeinschaft*) and “society” (*Gesellschaft*)<sup>xx</sup>, argued that apocalyptic literature was the product of a *Gemeinschaft* which was alienated from the postexilic priestly establishment namely, the antiestablishment Hasidim who organised themselves into conventicles and were responsible for producing Daniel. He further argued that proto-Hasidic groups produced Isaiah 24-27, Zechariah 12-14 and Joel - texts which Plöger considered to represent the origins of apocalypticism.<sup>xxi</sup>

Hanson's sociological grid was shaped by Mannheim, Weber and Troeltsch and led him to conclude “that powerful officials ruling over the religious or political structures of a society do not dream apocalyptic visions of the revolutionary overthrow of the existing order of things.”<sup>xxii</sup> While he concluded from this that “Temple priests are not likely candidates for apocalyptic seers” it is highly ironic that insofar as Daniel can be said to have ‘dreamed apocalyptic visions’ it is as one who is portrayed as a powerful official ruling over political structures of the greatest superpowers of his day. Hanson's conclusions regarding the group responsible for originating apocalyptic are in fact derived from Troeltsch's analysis of the rise of medieval millennialism causing Hanson to believe that those responsible for apocalyptic eschatology were postexilic groups oppressed by the priests who controlled society.<sup>xxiii</sup> Indeed such “deprivation theories”, to use Cook's term, are common constructs for explaining the rise of apocalyptic.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Cook (14ff) challenges the validity of the deprivation theory approach to understanding millennial and apocalyptic movements and also points out that dissonance can occur even when groups are not at all deprived or frustrated, as is evident when the high social status and prestige of some early Christians is recalled. But he has his own sociological model through which he wants to read the biblical text, maintaining:

because the beliefs expressed by biblical and ancient biblically related apocalyptic literature bear such a strong family resemblance to those of groups sociologists refer to as ‘millennial,’ we may safely assume that this literature presupposes a parallel millennial *Weltanschauung*. Further, we can begin to flesh out the type of worldview behind biblical apocalyptic texts by outlining the resemblances among the sociological family of millennial groups.<sup>xxv</sup>

Cook even goes on to draw conclusions about the social phenomenon of apocalypticism on the basis of his survey of millennial groups and his thesis that Ezekiel 38-39, Zechariah and Joel all are products of Zadokite millennial groups.<sup>xxvi</sup> There may well be a great deal of affinity between the general movement of apocalypticism and millennialism - though this remains to be seen - but, given the uniqueness and distinctiveness of Daniel as a writing, to the extent it can be described as an apocalypse it is a precarious assumption that it involves the same kind of worldview as millennial groups such as the Smohalla cult and Melanesian cargo-cults.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Koch's earlier question is still fully valid:

But perhaps the attempt to find out to which of the religious parties the apocalyptists belonged is a fruitless one; perhaps they were to be found among all parties at the time (Russell)? Our survey indicates how completely obscure the sociological basis of the apocalyptic writings still is.<sup>xviii</sup>

Russell's thesis - that apocalyptists belonged to all parties - is convenient. It sidesteps the problem of determining which groups were responsible for such writings. But available evidence makes it a most unlikely theory. The fact is, as Koch notes, that there

are numerous books of similar date which pursue quite different interests. It is at least difficult to discover any close relationship to apocalyptic either in I and II Maccabees or in III and IV Maccabees! And there are no apocalyptic traces at all in Philo's voluminous works.<sup>xix</sup>

In order to simplify the determination of the historical background lying behind the apocalypse genre, Koch limits his initial interest to those writings that were composed in Hebrew or Aramaic, or in which at least the Hebrew or Aramaic spirit is dominant. To this group belong first and foremost the book of Daniel, I Enoch, II Baruch, IV Ezra, the Apocalypse of Abraham and the book of Revelation, with its Semitic tendencies.<sup>xxx</sup> Secondly Koch (23), conceding defeat regarding the possibility of adequately determining the historical background, is forced to base his definition of apocalyptic writings on shared characteristics, which are identified through form criticism, and literary and linguistic history.

Koch's honesty in recognising the difficulties involved in defining this genre highlight how arbitrary it is to classify any writing as an apocalypse, and this in turn serves to prevent us from making generalised conclusions concerning the genre of major consequence in approaching the interpretation of any particular writing in the group. For example, it seems to be a fair generality that apocalypses were pseudonymous, but it is precarious to impose this generalised conclusion on Daniel, for this presupposes a unity between Daniel and other apocalypses which is simply not demonstrable.

The above has amply demonstrated the problems in using social setting or social function as a basis for genre classification. Lucas comments,

The problem with this is that the argument can get dangerously circular. The social setting has to be deduced from the text, and is then read back into it.<sup>xxxi</sup>

## Genre Decisions and the Authority of Scripture

The genre issue also raises a theological/philosophical problem. The definition of genres is a 'scientific' enterprise. If the definition of genre is as foundational to hermeneutics as many would claim then this implies that ordinary Christians who are unacquainted with this 'science', are *dependent on* the scholars of this discipline as they approach the biblical text. The inescapable implication of this position is that acceptance of the authority of such scholarship must precede and indeed transcend any acceptance of biblical authority! As Blocher points out in his study of the opening chapters of Genesis,

In order the better to dig out the message and teaching of the texts, we cannot have too much help from lexicographers, grammarians, experts in semantics, stylistics,

history and historical background, even the human sciences in so far as they are sciences and not, by their ideology, *too* human.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Blocher (19-20) continues by considering the genre of the early chapters of Genesis and states,

Everyone will agree that the biblical writers liked figures of speech, metaphors, symbols, transpositions more than the modern unpoetic West... But the debate on Genesis is far from over, clouded at times by fears and passions. A considerable amount is at stake. You mistreat the text in equal proportions by veering too far to the right in excessive literalism and by veering too far to the left in taking as symbolic what is not. At this preparatory stage it is too early to decide the issue; such a crucial question can be resolved only in the study of the text, which we hope to carry out with philological rigour and according to the analogy of faith.

Blocher provides us with a fine model here as to how we should approach the book of Daniel. The study and interpretation of the text must precede the decision as to genre. This is the reverse of the position adopted by many scholars.

Blocher (25-6) also addresses the particular theological-philosophical problem we have raised above. He asks:

what is the proper place of the sciences *in interpretation*? This question can obviously not wait until the work of interpretation is completed. It concerns the procedure to follow and must be treated first...

Current positions always affect our reading of the Bible, whether by persuading or by causing reaction. But this *fact* is not a *necessity*. We can expect by striving for clarity of thought to make this influence negligible. *Ought we?* That is the question. Or is it right to take account of scientific conclusions, as far as they appear certain, in the interpretation of Scripture? Must we forget what the scientists have given us, when we read Genesis, in order to avoid all interference as we listen to the pure signal? Or must we on the contrary illuminate the text by 'natural' light, since that too comes from God, the ultimate author of facts?

The Bible must not be placed under any other authority! On that point we cannot compromise. If the Bible is the Word of God, no authority, even one at the apex of the scientific world, may impose his authority on the Bible in order to dictate how it is to be understood, even with the best of intentions...

Instead of an authority, however, a *ministerial*, servant-role appears possible. In fact, no interpretation can develop in a vacuum; all interpretation appeals to the services of prior knowledge...

The nub of the problem is this: how can we prevent the servant from surreptitiously turning into an authority? Abuse is easy. Under the pretext of making use of our prior knowledge of reality, we can impose it on the text to act as a silencer. This is how we would reason: we know very well that...therefore God did not mean...and that is subjecting the text, his Word, to our supposed knowledge.

This is what happens in Daniel when scholars effectively reason: we know very well that the abuses perpetrated by Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 BC was one of the primary (if not the primary) stimuli of the movement of apocalypticism in which the authors of the apocalypses were also caught up, and therefore, we can see that Daniel 11 presupposes the prior occurrence of this event.

Blocher (26) provides us with a useful rule of thumb to help us ensure the retention of a servant-role by extra-biblical 'knowledge' together with the supremacy of the authority of Scripture:

we have the right to bring our prior knowledge of reality to bear only as far as we can presuppose it in the human author of the biblical text.

Is there clear evidence that Daniel was conscious of being a part of the movement of apocalypticism and of writing as one caught up in this movement? I think not. Therefore I take it that we do not have to presuppose the classification of Daniel as an apocalypse in our interpretation of Daniel.

## The Canonical Distinctiveness of Daniel

Koch (20) points out: "Not a single apocalyptic book known to us, with the exception of the Book of Daniel, is quoted by a rabbinic writer." But, as I hope to show, quite apart from this striking fact, Daniel must be sharply distinguished from all other writings that are classified as being apocalypses.

## Apocalyptic Literature

The apocalypses form by far the most important part of Jewish pseudepigrapha - those writings that appeared between 250 BC and AD 150, but were excluded from the OT Canon and are absent from the Apocrypha.

There are a number of apocalypses known by name for which we have no surviving text. Dating is often problematic since apocalypses that are extant may have been preserved (by Christians) in translations using numerous languages other than the original Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek in which they were composed.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

## Types of Apocalypses

Collins has observed:

...it would seem that there are two strands of tradition in the Jewish apocalypses, one of which is characterised by visions, with an interest in the development of history, while the other is marked by other-worldly journeys with a stronger interest in cosmological speculation.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Collins divides apocalypses into two broad groupings<sup>xxxv</sup>:

<i>Otherworldly</i>	<i>Historical</i>
1 Enoch 1-36	1 Enoch 83-90 (the Animal Apocalypse/the Book of Dream Visions)
1 Enoch 37-71 (The Similitudes)	1 Enoch 93 & 91:12-17 (the Apocalypse of Weeks/Ten Week Apocalypse)
1 Enoch 72-82 (The Heavenly Luminaries)	Jubilees 23
Testament of Levi 2-5	4 Ezra
Testament of Abraham 10-15	2 Apocalypse of Baruch (2 Baruch)
Apocalypse of Abraham	Daniel 7-12
3 Apocalypse of Baruch (3 Baruch)	
Apocalypse of Zephaniah	
2 Enoch	

The basic distinction between otherworldly and historical is sound since Collins only identifies one instance of an historical apocalypse which also involves an otherworldly journey - the *Sefer Helakot* (3 Enoch).

These groupings can be refined further:

<i>Type of eschatology</i>	<i>Otherworldly Journey</i>		<i>No Otherworldly Journey</i>	
	<i>Historical Review</i>	<i>No Historical Review</i>	<i>Historical Review</i>	<i>No Historical Review</i>
Cosmic	A		B	
Political			C	
Cosmic and political			D	
Personal		E		

A: Apocalypse of Abraham 15-32; Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37-71; limited historical review concerning Noah legends)

B: Animal Apocalypse (1 Enoch 83-90); Apocalypse of Weeks (1 Enoch 93:1-10; 91:12-17)

C: Jubilees

D: Assumption of Moses; Apocalypse of Baruch (historical review implicit in the 12 Precipitations); Apocalypse of Ezra; Daniel 7-12?

E: Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 1-36; the emphasis is on personal eschatology rather than cosmic transformation, however this apocalypse does include a vision of future judgment); Heavenly Luminaries (1 Enoch 72-82); Testament of Levi; 3 Baruch; 2 Enoch

### 1. OTHERWORLDLY: those that recount an otherworldly journey, a translation into heaven

Otherworldly apocalypses typically involve the visionary ascending through a numbered series of heavens. There are seven such heavens in mainstream tradition, though variants are also to be found. For example, the Testament of Levi has three, and 3 Baruch has five. These apocalypses are more mystical than the historical apocalypses and often involve a vision of God's throne. Consistent with this mystical, single figure orientation, the eschatology of such apocalypses is concerned more with personal afterlife than with cosmic transformation, though a prediction of general judgment may be incorporated.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

These apocalypses, with the exception of the Apocalypse of Abraham (which being from the second century AD, is not an early apocalypse), are not historically oriented. The earliest example of this type of apocalypse is the 'Book of the Watchers' in 1 Enoch, which is dated back to the third century BC. Enoch ascends into the presence of God. He is then given a guided tour by angels showing him the whole earth and taking him to the ends of the universe.

3 Baruch is typical of later Jewish and early Christian apocalypses in which the hero undertakes a heavenly trip and sees the secrets that are hidden from others. In this particular apocalypse, Baruch, the disciple of the prophet Jeremiah, visits the universe and sees its secrets and the places of the souls and of the angels. This book was written in Greek though scholars surmise that it was a Jewish work from the 1st century AD which was later rewritten by a Christian. In the Greek text the number of heavens visited by Baruch is five, but it is possible that originally he was said to have seen seven heavens.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

In 2 Enoch the hero who visits the heavens is the biblical Enoch, the son of Jared.

### Example

*And behold I saw the clouds: And they were calling me in a vision; and the fogs were calling me; and the course of the stars and the lightnings were rushing me and causing me to desire; and in the vision, the winds were causing me to fly and rushing me high up into heaven. And I kept coming (into heaven) until I approached a wall which was built of white marble and surrounded by tongues of fire; and it began to frighten me...*" (1 Enoch 14:8-9). So similarly 17:1ff.

## 2. HISTORICAL: those which are historically oriented

Typically, the revelation is received in the form of an allegorical vision interpreted by an angel. An historical crisis is often central to this kind of apocalyptic vision which is often set in the form of an extended prophecy. They are also characterized by a review of history involving the division of history into distinct periods.<sup>xxxviii</sup> The conclusion of this history may involve the restoration of Israel (national or political), though the primary focus is on the displacement of the present world order by a radically new one.

Some of these apocalypses are characterized by an extreme eschatological vision of the end of the world. So, for example, in *4 Ezra 7*, history ends with the creation being returned to silence for seven days.<sup>xxxix</sup> Collins believes Daniel, along with some sections of 1 Enoch were written in response to the Maccabean revolt. He notes also that 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch "were written in the aftermath of the war against Rome and the destruction of Jerusalem."

Daniel 7-12 is understood to be an example of this kind of apocalypse. It is hard to imagine any otherworldly journey-type apocalypse being recognised within the OT canon. The OT view of man is not sympathetic to ascent visions, which presuppose the possibility of a fundamental distinction between body and spirit or else treat the soul as the essential part of man.<sup>xi</sup>

This singling out of Daniel 7-12, as I have previously indicated, presupposes that the book of Daniel is composed of two basic genres: (1) court narrative (Chs.1-6); (2) apocalypse (Chs. 7-12). But the problem with this assumption is that the resulting division of Daniel does not correspond to the usage of Hebrew and Aramaic in the book: (1) 1:1-2:4a = Hebrew; (2) 2:4b-7:28 = Aramaic; (3) 8:1-12:13 = Hebrew. This poses a major problem for those who, like Montgomery, think that Chapters 1-6 were written in Babylon at an earlier time (Montgomery proposed the third century), while Chapters 7-12 were written in the second century.<sup>xii</sup>

Nor does the use of two languages necessitate the conclusion that more than one author was involved in the composition of the book. Baldwin (39) notes "the literary device of enclosing the central portion of a work in a framework of different style was commonly employed in the Ancient Near East and is illustrated by the Law Code of Hammurabi as early as the seventeenth century BC." The unity of the book is further indicated by the fact that in Daniel 2 we find there is an overlap of court narrative with "apocalyptic".<sup>xiii</sup>

The apocalypses also vary considerably in their treatment of eschatology. Allison (18A) cautions us: "it is wrong to imagine that all of them are primarily concerned with eschatological matters". The phrase *Apocalyptic Eschatology* becomes unduly

circumscribed if merely used to refer to eschatological teachings found typically in Jewish apocalypses. The fact is that in apocalypses such as 2 Enoch eschatology is conspicuous for its absence. Consequently, Allison (18B) argues that it is better to use "apocalyptic eschatology" to denote "that cluster of themes and expectations which developed, often in association with belief in a near end, in the altered circumstances of the post-exilic period." Allison identifies such characteristic features as an emphasis on eschatological signs; expectation of a cosmic cataclysm; belief in a temporally near, other-worldly kingdom; concern for universal human history; and interest in heavenly redeemer figures, such as Melchizedek in the Dead Sea Scrolls or the hidden Son of man in *1 Enoch*.

In Daniel 7-12 Heaton finds a number of characteristic features conspicuous for their absence: cosmic imagery, great battle scenes, lurid descriptions of the fate of the wicked Gentiles, and highly colored pictures of a final kingdom, a golden age of peace, righteousness, and prosperity centered around a strong Messianic leader. He remarks:

What we find in the present work [Daniel]...is not a formal apocalyptic tradition but, rather, a miscellaneous body of prophetic teaching and imagery about the coming kingdom of God.<sup>xliii</sup>

## Comparison and Contrast of Daniel with Other Apocalypses

Beckwith observes,

Daniel is today commonly held to be of similar origin and character to 1 Enoch, having been composed pseudonymously at the time of the Maccabean revolt, to encourage Judas Maccabaeus and his associates with stories of earlier deliverances and with *vaticinia post eventum* pointing to their own day.<sup>xliv</sup>

Does a comparison of Daniel with 1 Enoch and other apocalypses encourage or discourage us from closely associating Daniel with them? Below I will draw attention to some of the striking features of 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch, Jubilees, the Assumption of Moses and the Second Temple Apocalypses. As we embark on this exercise it will soon be apparent that many scholars have approached this issue in a highly unbalanced fashion, stressing the commonalities but downplaying the many and often blatantly clashing points of divergence.

### 1 ENOCH (*The Book of Enoch/ Ethiopic Enoch*)

This is the major Jewish pseudopigraphical apocalypse. There is a consensus that 1 Enoch splices together different compositions that were written at different times during the last two centuries BC.<sup>xlv</sup> The final compilation of the book is believed to have taken place in the first century AD. Certain Aramaic portions of 1 Enoch found in the Dead Sea Scrolls appear to be as early as 250 BC. It has been surmised that the portrait of Enoch as visionary was influenced by the Babylonian tradition of the 7th antediluvian king, Enmenduranna, who was linked to the sun god and received divine revelations. It has been marginal and heretical Christian groups, such as the Manichaeans, who have ensured the survival of 1 Enoch. The syncretistic nature of this book - blending Iranian, Greek, Chaldean and Egyptian elements - appealed to such groups.<sup>xlvi</sup>

1 Enoch 1: 9	Jude 14-15
<i>Behold, he will arrive with ten million of the holy ones in order to execute judgment upon all. He will destroy the wicked ones and censure all flesh on account of everything that they have done, that which the sinners and the wicked ones committed against him.</i>	<i>Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.</i>

This citation of 1 Enoch in Jude is the only one from this book in the New Testament. There is debate as to whether Jude hereby indicates acceptance of the authority of 1 Enoch as prophetic literature or whether the quotation is of the same kind as say Paul's citations from Epimenides and Aratus in Acts 17. Since Jude is an extremely brief writing and he does not clearly indicate how he regarded 1 Enoch it follows that conclusions about how New Testament apostles and writers thought about 1 Enoch must be restrained. The plain fact of the matter is that 1 Enoch does not belong to the Old Testament canon and, since the New Testament presupposes an Old Testament canon, it is apparent that New Testament authors do not place 1 Enoch in the same class as Daniel which is accepted as canonical Scripture in the New Testament.

There are five main sections in 1 Enoch<sup>xlvii</sup>:

Section One. 1 Enoch 1-36: *Book of the Watchers*: the oldest Jewish ascent vision. Here Enoch receives a vision of future judgment, especially concerning fallen angels. These angels are described as having rebelled before the Flood. This section also describes Enoch's celestial journeys, in which divine secrets were revealed to him. According to Stone (94), this section "assumes a particular mythological map of the world, over which Enoch travels, particularly in the second of his two journeys. This map of the world is most closely related to Mesopotamian geographic conceptions."

*(For the remainder of this treatment download Volume 1 of Daniel)*

<sup>i</sup> Meade exemplifies this. His belief in the pseudonymity of *Daniel* is inseparable from his inability to distinguish *Daniel* from other apocalypses, his acceptance of a second century date for the book, and his concession to treating *Daniel 10-12* as prophecy after the event. Fundamental to Meade's thesis is his extension of the legitimate practice of *Vergegenwärtigung*, the "freedom of reinterpretation or actualization of the prophetic tradition", to the issue of authorship. Meade never demonstrates that any OT book was openly recognised as being pseudonymous and yet, nevertheless, was accepted as authoritative Scripture (for example, the name *Isaiah* is never used in "Second" and "Third" Isaiah and his treatments of Proverbs, Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes are inconclusive and only marginally relevant to the issue at hand. Appeals to non-canonical works such as Wisdom of Solomon and Psalms of Solomon are actually arguments against his thesis). There is indeed solid evidence that biblical literature is not merely the transmission of a static tradition. In the process of transmission there has evidently been a degree of reinterpretation, perhaps to update the prophetic message with respect to later historical developments. However, with respect to *Daniel*, Meade goes too far when he sees the principle of *Vergegenwärtigung*, as fused to a presupposition of prophecy after the event, enabling *Daniel* to simultaneously function as a pseudonymous and yet authoritative canonical book. Meade never takes seriously the fact that right through to the twentieth century it has always been believed that the book of Daniel was in fact written by the man Daniel described in the book. David G. Meade, *Pseudonymity & Canon. An Investigation into the Relationship of Authorship and Authority in Jewish and Earliest Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1987) 85-91.

<sup>ii</sup> *Circle of Sovereignty*, 9.

- 
- iii "Genre Awareness", 138.
- iv *Faith of Israel*, 258.
- v See Lucas, *Daniel*, 23-4.
- vi G.R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1991) 149.
- vii op.cit., 149.
- viii *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 8.
- ix *Daniel*, 64-67.
- x *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 150-151.
- xi Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (London: SCM Press, 1972) 21.
- xii Koch, 21.
- xiii *Enoch and Daniel*, 4-5.
- xiv See Stephen L. Cook, *Prophecy & Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995) 1.
- xv Cook, 2.
- xvi Cook, 14-15.
- xvii J.J. Collins (ed.) *Apocalyptic: The Morphology of a Genre* (Semeia 14; Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1979) 9.
- xviii So also Raymond Hammer, *The Book of Daniel* (Cambridge Bible Commentary on the NEB; eds. P.R. Ackroyd, A.R.C. Leaney & J.W. Packer; Cambridge University Press, 1976) 15.
- xix For more discussion on these and other hypotheses see Albertz, "Social Setting", 173-5.
- xx For Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936) the *Gemeinschaft* was a type of pre-industrial society dominated by family life and unified by reliance on personal ties of kinship, neighbourliness and friendship, that is, the community dominates the individual. By contrast, the *Gesellschaft* (roughly "association") describes an industrial type of society based on impersonal, contractual relations. See Brian Furze and Paul Healy, "Understanding society and change" in *Society and Change: A Sociological Introduction to Contemporary Australia* (ed. Christine Stafford & Brian Furze; South Yarra: MacMillan Education Pty Ltd, 1994) 19.
- xxi Cook, 6-7.
- xxii Cited by Cook, 9. See too pp12-13.
- xxiii See Cook, 9.
- xxiv Cook notes the contributions of various scholars to this theory: Philleo Nash (1937), Ralph Linton (1943), Fred W. Voget, Raymond W. Firth, Anthony F.C. Wallace, Leon Festinger, Wayne A. Meeks, David F. Aberle, Vittorio Lanternari, Norman Cohn and I.M. Lewis.
- xxv *Prophecy & Apocalypticism*, 26.
- xxvi *Prophecy & Apocalypticism*, 29, 211ff.
- xxvii So Cook, 26-27.
- xxviii *Rediscovery*, 21-22.
- xxix *Rediscovery*, 34.
- xxx Koch, 23.
- xxxi *Daniel*, 24.
- xxxii Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis* (trans. D.G.Preston; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984).
- xxxiii D.C. Allison, Jr., "Apocalyptic" in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (eds. J.B. Green, S. McKnight & I.H. Marshall; Illinois/Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1992) 18A.
- xxxiv Cited by Allison, 18A.
- xxxv Prior to this Willi-Plein had distinguished between event apocalyptic (to which Daniel was deemed to belong) and description apocalyptic. See Redditt, *Daniel*, 13-14.
- xxxvi Collins, "Apocalypse: An Overview" in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (ed. M. Eliade; New York: MacMillan, 1987) 334.
- xxxvii D. Flusser, "Biblical Literature: Intertestamental Literature" in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (15th ed.) 14:958:1b. David Flusser is Professor of the History of Religions of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- xxxviii Allison, 18A.
- xxxix Collins, "Apocalypse: An Overview", 334.
- xl M.E. Stone, "New Light on the Third Century" in *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses* (Issues in Religion and Theology 2; ed. P.D. Hanson; Philadelphia: Fortress Press/London: SPCK; 1983) 89.
- xli Baldwin, 38.
- xlii Dillard & Longman, 341.
- xliiii Summarised by Patterson, 247.
- xliiv R. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and its Background in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1985) 355.

---

<sup>xlv</sup> Guthrie, "Pseudipigrapha" in *The New Bible Dictionary* (eds. J.D. Douglas & c., London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968) 1060B; see too S.B. Reid, 36-37. Dating considerations include apparent references to *The Book of the Watchers* in *Jubilees* 10:13; 21:10; lack of mention of Antiochus Epiphanes; the use of material from *The Heavenly Luminaries* in Eupolemos' *History of the Jews*; apparent allusions to the Maccabean historical period; and expressions of conflict between Jewish communities (in the fifth section).

<sup>xlvi</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica* 4:506:1b.

<sup>xlvii</sup> For a detailed outline of the structure see S.B. Reid, 40-42.