Daniel 9 as part of an apocalyptic book?

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Daniel 9 relates how Daniel studies the Hebrew Holy Scriptures and finds the prophecy of Jeremiah that Jerusalem will lie desolate for seventy years. He reacts by devoting himself to prayer and fasting in order to remind God of this promise of restoring his people. The better part of the chapter is dedicated to the contents of his prayer. During the prayer, the man, Gabriel, appears with the intent to give Daniel an understanding of the meaning of the seventy years, which is the measure of the punishment of Israel's transgression and sin and which will end with eternal righteousness, when the Holy of Holies will be anointed. The Book of Daniel consists of two sections: the tales of the first six chapters and the visions of the last six chapters. This article asked the question: what role does Daniel 9 play as a part of the apocalyptic section of the book? Is Daniel's prayer and Gabriel's revelation apocalyptically conditioned? Why did the author or compiler include it in the book and, especially, in the second, apocalyptic section of the book? The conclusion of this article was that Daniel 9 was placed intentionally by the compiler in the latter half of the book because of the revelation about the seventy weeks, which is in line with the last three chapters' indication of the end times and Israel's elevation to become the ruler of the earth. Several arguments were formulated to support this conclusion.

Introduction

In the first two apocalyptic visions of the second part of the Book of Daniel, in Daniel 7 and 8, the history of the time before Antiochus IV Epiphanes' arrival on the scene is described with the purpose of demonstrating that Israel's God is in control of history (Lucas 2002:223). In this way, the author wants to encourage the listeners to be courageous during the religious and political persecution of the Jews as a result of their obstinacy against Antiochus' measures to Hellenise the Jewish population (Alobaidi 2006:559). God also rules over heathen kings, a good reason for Jews to stay faithful to God even when facing Antiochus' cruel and inhuman treatment of Jews.

In chapter 9, Daniel studies the scriptures in order to find out how long before the desolation of Jerusalem comes to an end. The reference is the Babylonian captivity of the Judah and Benjamin tribes (598–597 or 587–586 BCE to 538 BCE). The clue is given in Daniel 9:2, in which Daniel was reading (a version of) the book Jeremiah, that the period of exile would last seventy years. Jeremiah 25:11 indicates that the Jewish people will serve the king of Babylon for seventy years and Jeremiah 29:10 says that when the seventy years are over, YHWH will take note of his people and fulfil his promise of favour to bring them back to Jerusalem and the desolate temple (Brueggemann 1998:222–223, 258). A prophetic statement is used to authorise the interpretation that Daniel is to receive (Rowland 2001:457). Daniel responds to Jeremiah's prophecy by begging, praying, pleading and fasting with sackcloth and ashes in order to confess Israel's sins that caused the exile and atone for their restoration. The prayer that follows has many biblical reminiscences. It also has affinities with that of Azariah in Daniel 3:24–25 (apocryphal rendering) and *Baruch* 1 and 2 are modelled on it (Wansbrough 1985:1487).

Gabriel interprets this prophecy for Daniel in order to tell the history of Israel purposefully that YHWH does not only set boundaries to the period of exile but also to the destruction and devastation that Antiochus IV can cause to Jews, their temple and capital (Knibb 2002:22). In terms of the purpose of the book for the first readers, it is in the affirmation of God's sovereign rule that Jewish listeners find encouragement and comfort (Valeta 2008:191).

The discovery of *pesharim* literature at Qumran made it clear that Daniel 9 is following *pesher* procedures to interpret Jeremiah's prophecy to make it relevant for a new day and situation (Dimant 1993:58; Walfish 2004:1883). The purpose of the *pesher* is to bridge the gap between the original prophetic word of encouragement and the present reality, to actualise and contextualise the message for different circumstances (Elman 2004:1853). In this way, each year of the Jeremiah

prophecy is interpreted as a week of years, as a Sabbath year of seven years, in the sense used by 2 Chronicles 36:21 of the land laying fallow for seventy Sabbaths for the jubilee-years that Israel did not keep. In this way, Jeremiah 25:11 and 29:10 are interpreted in terms of the injunction of Leviticus 26:31–35 and, especially, verse 34:

> Then shall the land make up for its Sabbath years throughout the time that it is desolate and you are in the land of your enemies; then shall the land rest and make up for its Sabbath years. Throughout the time that it is desolate, it shall observe the rest that it did not observe in your Sabbath years while you were dwelling upon it. (Weanzana 2006:530)[1]

The prayer is contained in verses 4–19 and is written in better Hebrew than the rest of the chapter, as well as the other Hebrew parts of the Book of Daniel (Wills 2004:1659). This is because of the many quotations from the rest of the Old Testament, whilst the numerous Greek, Aramean and Persian expressions that characterise the rest of the book are also found lacking (Le Roux 1995:109; Porteous 1979:137). For the same reason, the covenant name of Israel's God, YHWH, is used for the first time in this book in the prayer (already in Dn 9:2 – 'as revealed by YHWH to the prophet Jeremiah'). Wallace (1979:154) also suggests that the prayer is in a better quality of Hebrew because it is based on the language found in the liturgical parts of Hebrew scriptures, even though most researchers agree that the prayer forms a supplement that was not originally part of the narrative (Kirkpatrick 2005:117).

The prayer and Gabriel's revelation creates the impression that the future is seen as predetermined by YHWH; although, in actual fact, this is not the case, because the 'future' is described in terms of the history that has already passed and the only reference to 'future' is found in the last few verses where a prediction is made, as is also done in the following chapters (where a correction is also needed when the prediction is not realised) (Lucas 2002:224). History is moulded in the form of prophecy so that it seems to be predetermined with the purpose to give readers and listeners the idea that the description of the narrator can be trusted, also in terms of the prediction of the future (Helberg 1994:93). 'End times' refers to the end of Jewish exile, interpreted here in terms of the end of Antiochan suppression and persecution.

This article is concerned with the placing of Daniel 9. In the first six chapters, tales about Daniel and his three friends are told to show their faithfulness to the Jewish God whilst serving at a heathen court. The first tale relates how Daniel and his friends receive permission to stay faithful to their God's food regulations and how God rewards them for this faithfulness. The second relates a dream that King Nebuchadnezzar has and how Daniel is the only wise man serving at the court who is able to relate and interpret the dream correctly because 'there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries' (Dn 2:28). In the third tale, the faithfulness of the three Jews is tested when King Nebuchadnezzar sets up a golden statue and commands everybody to serve the statue as an image of himself and when the three friends refuse

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1.Tanakh Translation, Jewish Publication Society is used for all quotations.

they are thrown into a furnace where an angel meets them. Daniel 4 relates the hubris of King Nebuchadnezzar and God's punishment when the king becomes mad, but in his repentance his majesty is instantly restored. King Belshazzar gives a banquet for his noblemen according to Daniel 5 and when he is drunk he mocks the Jewish God, only to hear from the God in whose hands are his breath and fortunes (Dn 5:23) that his days are numbered. And in Daniel 6, the wise man lands in the lion's den as a result of his faithfulness to keep praying in the direction of Jerusalem, in spite of King Darius' prohibition of praying to any other god than himself.

The timbre and tonality of the Book of Daniel changes in Daniel 7 with a dream Daniel has of four great beasts emerging from the sea and in Daniel 8 of a vision he has of a ram conquering the whole world until a he-goat from the west charges at it with the full force of its fury and breaks its horns (Dn 8:5–7).

Daniel 9 seems not to belong here, but it is out of place? Should the author or compiler have placed it amongst the tales in the first part? Or does Daniel 9 earn its place because of its utilisation of the way of interpreting history that marks Daniel 7–8 as well as 10–12, namely the apocalyptic mode? In order to answer these questions it is necessary to make some exegetical remarks about Daniel 9.

Some exegetical observations of Daniel 9

Daniel 9 starts with a 'historical' reference to 'Darius son of Ahasuerus, a Mede by race who assumed the throne of Chaldaea' (Dn 9:1), referring to an unknown historical figure. Darius was a famous Persian king who ruled from 522 to 486 BCE and he was responsible for organising his empire into provinces headed by governors called satraps (Wills 2004:1653). Herodotus (*Histories* 3.89) relates that Darius established twenty satrapies, a figure exaggerated by Esther 1:1. Ahasueres is probably Xerxes, like Darius a Persian and not a Mede, although he was the son and not the father of Darius (Herrmann 1973:300). The many historical inconsistencies found throughout the book continues in Daniel 9 and is one of the important arguments for dating the book much later than the Babylonian exile in the sixth century BCE, where most historical information relating to the second century BCE is accurate (Lucas 2002:213). The reference to angels in the Book of Daniel is also an argument for a later date (Wallace 1979:160). That verse 1 emphasises that Darius is of Median descent is probably an effort to harmonise the fact that Ahasueres and Darius were Persians with the information in Daniel 6:1 that Darius was a Mede (Helberg 1994:94).

The vision transpires in the first year that the Persians came to power, an event that gave hope to the Jewish exiles that they might perhaps be freed after their captors fell in 539 BCE (Péter-Contesse & Ellington 1993:230). And their hope was realised when the Persians gave Jews permission in 538 to return to their own country, even compensating them for the losses (Rowland 2001:463).

The author studies the prophetic announcement of Jeremiah that the exile will be seventy years long, which is the length of a human's life on earth (Burden 1993:1240), although it does not accord with historical reality (with the exile lasting from 597–596 or 587–586 BCE to 538 BCE, although the time designation could also be interpreted as from the carrying off in 587 BCE to 520 or 518 BCE, when the temple was rededicated). This is one of a few explicit references within a biblical book to another biblical book, but it does not necessarily reflect the canonisation of the *Ketubim* as a second section next to the *Torah*; although, it indicates the extent of post-exilic study of the prophets and not only the *Torah*. 'The books' in verse 2 is the first and only time when the technical term for the Hebrew Bible is used in the Old Testament; although, Anderson (1984:105) argues correctly that it refers only to the books contained in the *Nebi'im*.

Fasting, sackcloth and ashes along with prayer were some of the aspects of ritual mourning in the Bible, but were also signs of penitence, as well as preparation for fervent prayer and the seeking of visions, as indicated in *4 Ezra* (2 Esdras) 5:13 and 9:24 (Helberg 1994:107; Porteous 1979:187). The description of Daniel's prayer in response to a certain historical circumstance reflects a personal, penitential religious life that characterises second-century Judaism (Wills 2004:1659). It was later taken up by the sectarians living at Qumran, as well as by Pharisees and Christians and, later still, by the rabbinical tradition (*b. Ta'an.* 11b–12a); although, the Talmud (*b. Ta'an.* 11a; *b. B. Bat.* 60b) reins in excessive penitential practices.

Verses 5–6 contain several phrases to indicate the gravity of Judah's sins in the eyes of YHWH and it is meaningful that Daniel prays in the first person plural, 'We did not smooth the frown from your face by our prayers, offerings, fastings and feasts, and no smile could spread over your face' (v. 13). The motif for Daniel's request to show favour to his people is 'for the Lord's sake' in verse 17, because God's name is attached to Jerusalem and its temple (v. 18) and people (v. 19), 'Not because of any merit of ours do we lay our plea before You but because of your abundant mercies' (v. 18). By bringing his people back to the Promised Land, God would indicate that he accepts his people again (Baldwin 1978:164). The climax of the text is in verse 19, which consists of the Masoretic text of only seven words, probably signifying a symbolic figure.

Verse 14 states that YHWH has watched (*shoqed*) for the right moment to bring disaster on his people since he is just in all his dealings, reminding the Hebrew reader of Jeremiah 1:11–12 (cf. 31:28; 44:27), of the symbol of the almond tree (*sheqed*) that introduces the prophecy that God watches for the moment to make his word come true, whether for good or evil (Wansbrough 1985:1487).

Collins (1987:225) emphasises that the arrogance of heathen rulers summoned God's wrath on them and that this caused the salvation of the Jewish people from exile, rather than any

merit on the Jews' side (v. 27). Joubert (1979:167) is thus not correct when he states, 'The Deuteronomistic view of prayer, i.e. that the sin of Israel led to their problem, is foreign to the audition.' In his opinion, the answer to the prayer indicates the spontaneous relationship of God with the Jews (see also Le Roux 1995:117). God's answer consists only of the interpretation of the prophecy that Daniel reflects upon, rather than God doing something new about his people's predicament (Davies 1985:60).

As in Daniel 8, Gabriel is God's angel or messenger and he reveals the meaning of the prophecy through a vision. This vision consists only of words (Koch 1972:24), without anything visual. The role of angels as interpreters of visions and dreams is exclusive to apocalyptic literature and is one of the important indicators that readers have to interpret a text in apocalyptic terms.

The penitential prayer with its confession of sins reflects and expresses Deuteronomistic theology, that God consequently punishes sins, but retracts his punishment when his people respond with repentance and confession (DiTomasso 2005:212; Zenger 1998:93). God will always return his favour to his people when they turn back to him, although their sins would eventually lead to their rejection by their country and their God (Lucas 2002:253). Gabriel's reply is a powerful rejection of the prayer's Deuteronomistic theology of history in favour of what DiTomasso (2005:212–213) calls a Danielic theology of history, that is, a broadly deterministic theology of history found throughout the visions in the Book of Daniel (Dn 7–12) and which stands alongside the idea of individual responsibility, as well as characterising apocalyptic thinking in general.

The 'seventy weeks' in verse 24 refers to 490 years, the true prediction of Jeremiah according to the revelation given by Gabriel to Daniel. The interpretation is based on reading a single word in Jeremiah 25:11–12 in two different ways, as *shav'uim* [weeks] or *shiv'im* [seventy] (Achtemeier 1987:79). This close attention to textual study and revocalisation of Hebrew words characterises later rabbinic interpretation, especially *pesher* interpretation (Brueggemann 2006:115). It also occurs in especially Jewish apocalyptic literature, probably under rabbinical influence (DiTomasso 2005:212).

The Hebrew Bible does not contain a theory or consideration of time. The most terms used for 'time' in the Hebrew Bible are found in the Book of Daniel and the usage of some of these terms agrees more with documents found at Qumran and in rabbinical writings than with the rest of the Old Testament (Verhoef 1993:224, 232). Any attempt to interpret the 'seventy' in Daniel in terms of ordinary time is checked by the eschatological-apocalyptic context that requires one to read it in a symbolical rather than realistic sense (Verhoef 1993:226). The plural of 'time' may look like a rhetorical hyperbole but Jews did not reflect in abstract terms about time and so the plural refers to a plurality of events, circumstances and experiences (Verhoef 1993:227). Baldwin

(1978:173) states that the figures used in the Book of Daniel do not have any meaning as such, but are used to clothe the thoughts of the author. Daniel 9's view of time accords with that found in apocalyptic thinking.

The seventy weeks 'have been decreed' for the Jewish people and their holy city, indicating the involvement of YHWH in the history of his people. The purpose of determining the period of punishment is to fulfil the measure of sin and iniquity in order to expiate it by letting the land lie fallow for the years it was abused by Israel (Lucas 2002:235). Then the 'Holy of Holies' would be 'anointed', which happened when Judas Maccabee freed Jerusalem from Syrian rule, established an independent rule for Jews and re-established the temple service. 'Anointed' comes from *mashiaĥ*, leading Christians to claim that it refers to their Messiah. In the historical context of the narrative of the sixth and fifth centuries, the 'anointed leader' probably refers to either Zerubbabel or the high priest Joshua (Ezr 3:2; Hg 1; Zch 6:9–15), whilst 'anointed one' within the context of the second century refers to the high priest Onias III killed by Antiochus IV in 171 BCE (2 Macc. 4:30–34). As already argued, the deterministic sense of the interpretation accords with apocalyptic thinking.

In the second century, Jews wrestled with the question of why God allowed Antiochus IV to suppress the Jewish religion (Anderson 1984:111). Where do the prophets proclaim the reign of peace? Instead, the Jews who are 'near' (v. 7), living in Judah and Samaria, as well as the Jews who are 'far', found in all the known countries of the world, knew mostly poverty, oppression and humiliation. And the climax came in the reign of Antiochus IV, in the prohibition of Jews from worshipping their God, owning his scriptures, circumcising their children or offering to YHWH. Antiochus dishonoured the temple by presenting pagan sacrifices on the main altar and gave orders that an image of his god, Zeus Olympos, be erected in the Jerusalem temple, with Zeus resembling the king's features on the coins minted by Antiochus IV, but he dies before the image could be erected (Albertz 2002:182).

The vision brought by the angel states that the history of Israel shows that God has always taken care of his people and he will do it again, through the new kingdom that would be established in the near future. In seven short and balanced statements in verse 24, God states that the measure of transgression will be filled, sin will be complete, iniquity expiated, eternal righteousness ushered in, prophetic vision ratified and the Holy of Holies anointed. A twofold emphasis is seen, that Israel's rebellion will come to an end *and* that Antiochan reign will end. The vision gives the hope of a new future, a new time (Spangenberg 1985:278). The 'new' is defined in typical apocalyptic terms, as a future totally unrelated to the known of the past, characterising the totally new beginning God would make with his people as the rulers of the earth over all nations.

The time designation of verse 27, 'half a week', is the three and a half years of the Maccabean revolution that had transpired

at the time when the vision is written down, as in Daniel 7:25; 8:14 and 12:7 (Lucas 2002:244–245). The 'appalling abomination' may refer to the altar stones upon which pagan sacrifices were offered (1 Macc 1:54; 2 Macc 6:5). 'Appalling abomination' is a word play on 'God of the heavens' that was also used for the Canaanite god, *Ba'al Shamem* (Lucas 2002:245; Porteous 1979:143). The terminology of Daniel 9:27 concurs with that of Daniel 10–12 and forms a direct link between the interpretation of the angel to Daniel in chapter 9 and the interpretation of the vision in Daniel 10–12.

The three periods comprise seven-year weeks, or 49 years, beginning with the order that Jerusalem be repaired until an anointed leader comes who has been chosen by God, a second period of 434 years when Jerusalem will stay built, and which ends with the death of an anointed, and the third period of seven years which will be a time of oppression when the temple service will be disrupted and sacrifices halted, and which will end with the death of the oppressor (Nel 1997:64).

Interpretation of the three periods led to many views and opinions (Nel 1997:65) and Porteous' (1979:133) warning is timely that the author's original intention was not 'to provide any such calculations of distant events, but merely to reinforce his own conviction that in the immediate future God's transcendent power would manifest itself on his people's behalf'. Indeed, 'perhaps the whole prophecy is meant deliberately to be vague and enigmatic. It is not for us to know exact dates too confidently' (Wallace 1979:170). The first period is probably intended to refer to the period between the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE and the fall of Babylon in 539 BCE. Zerubbabel returned in 538 BCE and the temple service re-established under the direction of Jeshua, the high priest, with the 'prince' and 'anointed one' referring to them, respectively. In post-exilic times the high priest was anointed and became known as 'anointed one' (Spangenberg 1985:278).

The second period sees Jerusalem as a rebuilt city with 'squares', referring to spaces within city gates serving as forum, market and justice court, as well as 'moats', referring to the defence system (v. 25; Péter-Contesse & Ellington 1993:255 – this is the only time in the Old Testament that the term for 'moats', from the verb 'to cut' is found). It ends with the death of the innocent Onias III in 171 BCE instigated by the new high priest, Menelaos, who worshipped Zeus and imported Hellenism into Jerusalem. He paid Antiochus IV with temple treasures to become the new high priest, according to rumours circulating amongst the Jews (Lucas 2002:254). The destruction of the city and temple refers to Appolonius' siege against Jerusalem in 167 BCE at the order of Antiochus IV. Anderson (1984:116) emphasises that it 'was not the purpose of the author of the book of Daniel to present his readers with a textbook of history'; rather, it was:

> to show how, with the aid of a selected prophecy, this flow of events might still be seen to fall within the control of a God who had not left his people without hope. (p. 116)

The third period starts with Antiochus IV halting the temple service after the siege of Jerusalem by his general Apollonius in 167 BCE. It ends when the Jews under Judas Maccabeus chased the Syrians and Greeks from Jerusalem, rededicated the temple, and re-established an independent political reign. The time designation does not tally with historical events but the author was probably not interested primarily in giving a calendar of events. He does not intend giving his readers a timetable of events leading to the 'end times', but rather wants to assure his people that God accepts their repentance and re-establishes his covenant (Le Roux 1993:6).

The emphasis is clearly on the third period, divided into two sections. The first section starts with the dethronement of Onias III as part of Antiochus' Hellenisation policy in order to suppress Jewish rebelliousness, and which pleased many influential Jews. Antiochus made a covenant (*beri't*) with the apostate Jews who supported him, probably from the aristocratic class. Porteous (1979:143) is, however, of the opinion that the majority of Jews initially supported Antiochus' policies. This period is described symbolically as a time of distress, destruction, flood and desolation (vv. 25–26). In the second period, Zeus was worshipped in the temple and the Jewish worship service suppressed. Some Hellenising Jews connected Zeus Olympos with the God of heavens.

The climax of the message is reached when the ruler is reciprocated for his humiliation of God's people by punishment in 164 BCE when Antiochus IV died, far from his home and people. The Hebrew text of verses 26–27 is uncertain and obscure in many places and it is difficult to make a sensible translation (Péter-Contesse & Ellington 1993:255). This was most probably done on purpose to obscure the meaning in a politically dangerous time when many Jews were accused of treason (Le Roux 1995:32). This is also a characteristic of apocalyptic texts, where obscurity and secrecy play an important role to conceal the radical political message it contains: that the Jewish nation would become the new power ruling over the whole earth.

Daniel 9 as part of the second, apocalyptic section of the book of Daniel

The Book of Daniel poses several challenges, amongst others the use of two languages – Hebrew in Daniel 1:1–2:4a and Daniel 7–12 and Aramean in the rest (Lucas 2002:212) – and the use of tales in Daniel 1, 3–6 (and 9?) in a book of apocalyptic visions found in Daniel 2,[2] 7–8, 10–12 (Nel 2000:218–219). The fact that Daniel 9 is in Hebrew, alongside Daniel 7–8 and 10–12, is an indication that the author was of the opinion that it belongs to the apocalyptic section of the book.

2.Not all researchers agree that Daniel 2 is part of the apocalyptic visions, although the reference to the fifth kingdom concurs with the visions found in the second part of the book.

Balzer (1991) warns of the danger when one reads a text in terms of certain expectations without taking the text at face value:

> In exegetical *praxis,* eschatology is normally used as a key ... this hermeneutical approach can have an intrinsic danger of becoming an *a priori* principle in biblical exegesis, the interpreter's *condition sine qua non*, instead of the reverse. Therefore, exegesis usually radically adapts or eliminates contextual elements that do not fit into the general pattern ... (Balzer 1991:408)

Should the narrative and prayer in Daniel 9 be read in terms of its place between apocalyptic visions, or should it be read in terms of the tales found in the first part?

The compilation of the book in two parts is perhaps not intended to carry that much weight, as the author had the narratives at hand, reinterpreted them in terms of the new situation and added own compositions to further elucidate the crisis caused by Antiochus' menace to Jewish identity. To confirm the argument, the placement of the vision in Daniel 2 amongst the tales and Daniel 9 amongst the visions can be cited.

A question of definition

If the Book of Daniel represents apocalyptic literature, what is the essence of apocalyptic literature and apocalypticism? '"Apocalyptic" and "apocalypticism" are notoriously slippery words' (Davies 1985:66). It is not known who created or read or heard this *genre*, or what the influence of apocalyptic literature on the Jewish community was, and modern researchers also find it difficult to describe the characteristics of apocalyptic texts because of the differences between the few extant texts. Apocalypticism may be described in terms of the following characteristics:

- It consists of revelations by otherworldly mediators speaking about salvation from the wretchedness of this world.
- It contains an eschatological dualism with a clear differentiation between the present and future aeons.
- The future is predetermined.
- It is pseudonymous as the authors need to earn credibility ('author-ity').
- It is secret.
- It is characterised by eschatological impatience.
- It contains careful calculations of the dates of future events and numbers have symbolical significance.
- It contains phantasies.
- Angels play a prominent part.
- An expectation of life after death is expressed (Davies 1985:20; Hanson 1979:9–12; LaCocque 1988:88; Verhoef 1993:83; Von Rad 1965:301–302; Vorster 1986:158–159).

Hanson (1979:6) warns that the value of such a list is limited because each apocalyptic work has unique features. This implies that the historical and social matrix of apocalypse cannot be explained in this way. Apocalypticism is a crisis phenomenon illustrating in what way the values and structures of a minority group has become meaningless and requires to be replaced by a new meaning system that

displaces and alienates the minority group further from the majority group. For this group, the only meaning in life consists in the revelation of a new world when God will judge the majority group and punish them with eternal death. 'The fundamental theological problem confronting the apocalypticist is theodicy. The struggle between good and evil experienced in human life is a microcosmic manifestation of a macrocosmic phenomenon' (Larue 1968:3). Antiochus IV's oppression of Jews becomes the catalyst for apocalyptic thought patterns, whilst the roots of the thinking lie in Israel's sacral history. Antiochus' persecution led to:

> a failure of nerve, a despair of man's ability to effect the kingdom of God through his own efforts and a conviction that the situation could only get worse until God himself broke in to terminate the present evil age and inaugurate the ideal. (Larue 1968:3)

The new expected to be realised is incomparable with the known because 'apocalyptic eschatology is the mode assumed by the prophetic tradition once it had been transferred to a new and radically altered setting in the post-exilic community' (Hanson 1995:10).

The research into apocalypticism produced a useful distinction between a literary genre (apocalypse), a social ideology (apocalypticism) and literary ideas and motifs (apocalyptic eschatology). Apocalypse refers to a specific text, whilst an apocalyptic perspective refers to a point of view from which reality is experienced. An apocalyptic movement is a grouping within society, whilst apocalypticism refers to a phenomenon or ideology (cf. Vorster 1986:158). The distinction does not solve all related problems; thus Martínez (1987:230) shows that the restriction of *apocalypticism* to a literary genre is too reductionist to give justice to the term's associations. Instead of trying to define the terms, it is better to describe the phenomenon and to do it in terms of a specific document. In the end, the different descriptions can be compared in order to keep one from reading a text with *a priori* perceptions.

Not all researchers even agree that it is possible to speak of a 'genre' of apocalypticism.[3] Fiorenza (1983:295) reminds his readers that Kurt Koch in the 1970s confessed that he is *ratlos vor der Apokalyptik.* The correct question that needs to be asked, but which does not have an answer, is did the first readers or listeners notice a distinctive 'genre' when they listened to the book? If the answer is negative, as is probably the case, they would have read it against the context of similar literature that they knew, which would be the prophecies and dreams found in the rest of the Old Testament, political pseudo-prophecies, interpretation of dreams known from Babylon of the second century and the tales found in the first part of the Book of Daniel (Knibb 2002:19).

The Book of Daniel should be seen as a unique and distinctive piece of literature with a clearly defined witness of its own (Porteous 1979:16), even though it borrows from the wisdom and prophetic traditions as well as psalms found in the Hebrew Bible. Collins (1984:4; as part of the *Semeia* team) describes the macro genre of apocalypse as a, (1) way of writing (e.g. narrative), (2) textual type (e.g. revelation writing), (3) genre (e.g. apocalypse) and (4) subgenre (e.g. apocalypse with an otherworldly journey). Apocalypse is defined as a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world (Collins 1984:4). Wills (1990:193) discusses the different definitions and remarks that '*genre* classification lies in the eye of the beholder', but the definition of Collins above is applicable to the visions found in Daniel 2, as well as in 7–12.

The two main types of apocalypse are an apocalypse with and an apocalypse without an otherworldly journey. A characteristic of apocalypse without an otherworldly journey, such as the visions of Daniel, is that it always contains an overview of the history in one form or another, in the form of *ex eventu* prophecy of history. For this reason is can also be named historical apocalypse. Both subgenres also contain a worthy figure from ancient times as the receiver of the revelation, as part of the pseudonimity of the literature type and part of the narrative relates how the revelation was received. In the case of Daniel 9 the narrative satisfies all these requirements.

The advantage of the definition of SBL's *Semeia* is that it is wide enough to enclose all documents described as apocalypses, although Rowland (1982:11) argues that the expectation of salvation is not exclusive to apocalypses but forms an integral part of Judaism of the intertestamental period. Hellholm (1986:26–27) sees the shortcoming of *Semeia*'s definition in that it does not state what the function of apocalypses is and he proposes that the function is 'intended for a group in crisis with the purpose of exhortation and/or consolation by means of divine authority' (Hellholm 1986:27). The problem is that no concrete evidence exists to endorse this derivation. Grabbe (1989:27–47) states the opposite, in that apocalypses are not intended to encourage marginalised groups in crisis but are rather the product of visionary groups functioning in the same sense as modern millenarian movements.

Where did apocalypticism originate?

The question is: was apocalypticism an unfortunate turn off from the prophetic tradition, or a linear and legitimate progression and development from prophecy? Is it a necessary or applicable development of the prophetic tradition? What is the distinction between prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology?

The distinguishing factor between prophecy and apocalypticism lies in the way the vision of the future is integrated with the events of daily life in prophecy, whilst the vision of the future needs a radical break with ordinary history in apocalypticism (Hanson 1976:32). Prophecy is like an aeroplane departing from the runway of history and flying

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3.There is also a confusion of terms, with the German *Gattung* referring to smaller literary units, which is sometimes called *Form* as well. The English 'genre' refers to complete works like the gospels, a compilation of oracles or epic works, whilst the English 'form' is used to refer to smaller textual units.

into an eschatological future, whilst apocalypticism is like an aeroplane appearing in the clouds of the eschatological reality to land on the runway of the present (Verhoef 1993:83). Whilst the historical situation is important for prophecy, apocalypticism comes from God's distance to land in the situation he created.

Von Rad (1965:303) is of the opinion that, to a certain degree, there is no connection between prophecy and apocalypticism, except in the fact that both are oriented towards the future. The irreconcilability between prophecy and apocalypticism he finds in the different views of history, with prophecy finding its roots in Israel's salvation history and the tradition of election, whilst apocalypticism never refers to the patriarchal, exodus, Zion or David traditions. Only in Daniel 9 is a reference to the *Torah* of Moses and the exodus to be found, but some researchers see this prayer as a secondary interpolation. The root from which apocalypticism grew was the wisdom tradition (Von Rad 1965:303–305), as can be seen in the title of the alleged author as 'wise man' and not 'prophet', Daniel's predictions flowing not from a prophetic impulse but the interpretation of dreams and the intention of the book not to partake in social and political conflicts but to describe history in a deterministic tonality (Soggin 1984:291–292). Koch (1987:240) is, however, correct when he states that wisdom literature does not show any form of critical agreement or parallels with the Book of Daniel and wisdom literature of the second century does not show any interest in eschatological themes (cf. *Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach* for one example of this). A relation between wisdom tradition and apocalypticism can be shown, but apocalypticism finds its other parent in prophecy (Baldwin 1978:50).

It is my tentative judgment that wisdom was wedded to the tradition of apocalyptic eschatology as part of efforts being made by visionary circles to establish their credentials in the third and second century BCE, at a time when prophetic figures were being regarded with a great deal of skepticism and even animosity by many religious leaders (Hanson 1979:9).

View of history

As already argued in the section about the exegesis of Daniel 9, apocalypticism originated in a radical break with how the present and past is viewed, in order to reinterpret it in the light of a totally new future (Vorster 1986:160). It is characterised by radical pessimism, where all human intervention is liquidated and the expectation is exclusively focused on the utopia with its new symbolic coherence. World history is in the process of being ended as a result of the nature of humankind and the kingdoms established by them. There is no expectation of salvation in the present; salvation will be eschatological and in the future (Von Rad 1965:303). Apocalyptic literature treats good and evil as timeless factors and the only interest lies with the last generation of Israel who will experience the end of times. Daniel paints history in a deterministic sense in the service of his view of the future and human beings are seen as the victim of decisions taken

long ago without having any say in it. Allegorical codes are utilised to summarise the whole historical process under a few denominators and objectify it conceptually and history is schematised and unified by reducing it to a few primary powers that are determining it. Humans are only in a limited sense agents in the events with limited power of choice.

Second-century apocalyptic literature

During the second century, Hellenism stimulated the rise of an apocalyptic movement amongst Jews in the crisis caused by Antiochus' policies that threatened the soul of the religion and identity of the Jewish people. The Book of Daniel is supplemented by the tales of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Azariah, Tobit and the Letter of Jeremiah (Knibb 2002:24). These literature types display a clear polemical character as an instrument to propagandise for resistance against the Hellenisation policies of the Greek-Syrian tyrants with its cultural and religious syncretism, but also against the Jewish party that was willing to compromise their faith by supporting Antiochan efforts. Daniel strives to establish a pure Yahwism, a struggle that was already expressed by the priest-prophet Elijah (LaCocque 1988:124).

Conclusion

In this article, the following question was asked: does Daniel 9 form an integral part of the apocalyptic section found in the Book of Daniel, or is it misplaced and should it perhaps rather have been part of the tales (Dn 1–6)? The conclusion, after discussing Daniel 9's exegesis, is that there are many arguments for its correct placement amongst the visions, because of its view of time, determinism, the role an angel plays in the interpretation of the obscure, the *pesher* type of interpretation of previously revealed texts, the role of the 'anointed' in creating a new future, the definition of the new future in terms of a radical break with the known, the direct connection between the terminology and interpretation found in Daniel 9:24–27 and Daniel 10–12, the obscurity of the symbols and language which also characterise other apocalyptic texts in order to veil direct historical references that could lead to persecution by oppressors, the fact that Daniel 9 is written alongside Daniel 7–8 and 10–12 in Hebrew *contra* Daniel 2:4b–6:29, as well as the important motive of theodicy in Daniel 9. Daniel 9 can be described as apocalyptic in essence, a text of revelatory literature with a narrative in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being and disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world. A description of apocalypticism also showed the relatedness of the narrative of Gabriel's revelation of the meaning of Jeremiah's time designation in Daniel 9 to characteristics ascribed to apocalypticism. Thus, the emphasis in the narrative is on the dénouement of the enigma of Jeremiah's time designation in Gabriel's revelations which have all the elements in common with the description of an apocalypse and apocalyptic ideology and therefore the inference is made that Daniel 9 forms an integral part of the visions of the second part of the Book of Daniel.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

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