Daniel's Reactions to Crises: Theological Lessons from the Life and Thought of Jesus's Eschatological Prophet

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Abstract: The book of Daniel is characterized, among other things, by eschatological concerns, a cosmic conflict worldview, and a positive view of God as the final judge. In addition, the book portrays Daniel's successful engagement with several challenges throughout his career. Considering the book's internal context within the canonical frame, how does Daniel successfully react to crises? And what can believers with a similar outlook learn from his experience? This article surveys five situations in the life of Daniel searching for answers to these questions.

Keywords: *Eschaton*; Eschatology; Worldview; Cosmic conflict; Spiritual warfare; Judgment; Crises; Prayer; Faith.

As Reações de Daniel às Crises: Lições Teológicas da Vida e do Pensamento do Profeta Escatológico de Jesus

Resumo: O livro de Daniel é caracterizado, entre outras coisas, por preocupações escatológicas, uma cosmovisão de conflito cósmico e uma visão positiva de Deus como o juiz final. Além disso, o livro retrata o envolvimento bem-sucedido de Daniel com diversos desafios ao longo de sua carreira. Considerando o contexto interno do livro dentro do quadro canônico, como Daniel reage com sucesso às crises? E o que os crentes com uma perspectiva semelhante podem aprender com sua experiência? Este artigo estuda brevemente cinco situações na vida de Daniel em busca de respostas para essas questões.

Palavras-chave: *Escathon*; Escatologia; Visão de mundo; Grande conflito; Guerra espiritual; Julgamento; Crises; Oração; Fé

Editor Científico: **Eduardo Cavalcante Oliveira Santos**
Organização Comitê Científico
Double Blind Review pelo SEER/OJS
Received: 09/05/2022
Approved: 01/08/2022

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How to cite: PRESTES III, F. As Reações de Daniel às Crises: Lições Teológicas da Vida e do Pensamento do Profeta Escatológico de Jesus. **Kerygma**, Engenheiro Coelho (SP), v. 17, n. 1, p. e01591, 2022. DOI: https://10.19141/1809-2454.kerygma.v17.n1.pe01591

Introduction

The book of Daniel refers to the "end" (*qets*, *sof*, *suf*/קֵץ, סוף) more than any other book in the Hebrew Bible (DOUKHAN, 1987, p. 2).[2] It also abounds with eschatological expressions such as "time of the end"[3] (*et qets*/עֶת־קֵץ; 8:17; cf. 11:35, 40; 12:4, 6), "appointed time of the end" (*moed qets*/מוֹעֵד קֵץ; 8:19), "the end is yet to be at the time appointed" (*od qets lamoed*/עוֹד קֵץ לַמּוֹעֵד; 11:27), "in the latter days" (*beakharit hayyamim*/בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים; 10:14; cf. 2:28),[4] and "the end of the days" (*qets hayyamin*/ קֵץ הַיָּמִין; 12:13), among others. Such orientation to the end is also confirmed within biblical tradition. When asked about the end of the age, Jesus pointed his disciples to the message of Daniel (Matt 24:3, 13–15), thus establishing a connection between the prophetic book and the Eschaton. Therefore, it is reasonable to affirm that the end is a major focus[5] of the book of Daniel both internally and also when looked at within its canonical environment.[6]

[2] Out of "the 67 examples of the noun . . . distributed throughout the entire OT" (WAGNER, 1997, v. 3, p. 1154), *qets*/קֵץ ("end") appears in Daniel fifteen times (8:17, 19; 9:26 [2x]; 11:6, 13, 27, 35, 40, 45; 12:4, 6, 9, 13 [2x])—the highest concentration of the word in the Hebrew Bible (HB). In addition, the book of Daniel contains seven occurrences of the Aramaic root *sof*/*suf*/סוף ("end") (2:44; 4:11 [8], 22 [19], 33 [30]; 6:26 [27]; 7:26, 28). The combination of *qets* and *sof*/*suf* in Daniel adds up to a total of twenty-two times.

[3] Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible translations and references in this article are to the English Standard Version (ESV).

[4] In 2:28 we have the Aramaic equivalent, namely, *beakharit yomayya*/בְּאַחֲרִית יוֹמַיָּא.

[5] I.e., the focus on the end is *one* of the major emphases of the book of Daniel, among others, such as the sovereignty of God, judgment, and so forth.

[6] Even though the nature, extent, and interpretation of Daniel's eschatology have been much debated and disputed (especially since the 19th century) in scholarship, some have noted the presence of textual markers throughout the book of Daniel indicating such emphasis. For instance, "[t]here is only one book in the OT where the 'definite occasion' of the *'eth* ["time"] is employed together with the concept of an absolute end of the world's course of historical events, and that is Daniel's apocalypse" (WILCH, 1969, p. 111). "It is in the late book of Daniel that we consistently find the use of קץ ["end"] in connection with time" (BRIN, 2001, p. 264). "The formula in question ["at that time"] appears here [Dan 12:1] twice, and it is clear from the context and contents of the verse that one is speaking of the Eschaton, and certainly not of the past" (*Ibid.*, p. 45). "The use of this idiom [אחרית הימים; present in Dan 10:14] in the prophetic literature has the effect of a far more distant future, and refers in practice to an eschatological future." Such expression "is paralleled by the idiom קץ הימין ("the end of days"; Dan 12:13), which also portrays a far distant, even eschatological time" (*Ibid.*, p. 149). "The term קץ ["end"] relates to the end time . . . 13x [out of 15x] in Dan." See Wagner (1997, v. 3, p. 1154). See also Pfandl (1992). Besides these lexical markers pointing to the end, the literary frame and structure of the book of Daniel also indicate such orientation. As Doukhan puts it,

Daniel is also in itself, whether it deals with actual history or prophecy, essentially concerned with the end. It is significant that the book of Daniel is literally framed with references to the end. The book opens with a

Another apparent feature of the book of Daniel is its warfare backdrop. This characteristic appears from the beginning of the narrative with the description of Judah's military defeat to Babylon (1:1–2) to the end with the final deliverance of the righteous by Michael (12:1–2, 13), a war figure (cf. Jude 9; Rev 12:7). Throughout the text, the reader is reminded of the warfare theme with the constant occurrence of military terms, such as "war" (*qerav*/קְרָב; 7:21), "host" or "conflict" (*tsava*/צָבָא; lit. army or war/warfare; 8:10–13; 10:1), "push," "attack" (*nagakh*/נָגַח; lit. gore; 8:4; 11:40), "war," "battle," (*milkhamah*/מִלְחָמָה; 9:26; 11:20, 25), "wage war" (*garah*/גָּרָה; 11:10, 25), "army" (*khayil*/חַיִל; Aram. 3:20, 4:35 [MT 4:32]; Heb. 11:7, 10, 13, 25, 26), "safety, protection" (BROWN; DRIVER; BRIGGS, 2001, p. 731; 11:1), "fortress[es]" (*maoz*/מָעוֹז; 11:7, 10, 19, 31, 38, 39), "guard" (NIV; *meltsar*/מֶלְצָר; 1:11, 16), "guard" (*tabbakh*/טַבָּח; 2:14), and "the mighty men of his army" (*guverin gibbare-khayil*/גְּבֶרִין גִּבָּרֵי־חַיִל; 3:20). The trait is intensified by the fact that Daniel, the book's main character, along with his Hebrew friends, is identified as a captive of war (1:1–6). Another important element is that at times the warfare motif is presented as earthly (e.g., 1:1–2), while in other instances it is portrayed as heavenly or spiritual in nature with earthly consequences (e.g., 2:44). Thus, in the book of Daniel, both realms—the heavenly and the earthly—are interrelated to each other[7] and reveal an all-encompassing cosmic conflict.[8]

Third, and much connected with the two prior characteristics, is the extensive presence of the divine judgment theme. The very title of the book and the name of its main character point to judgment.[9] The whole text, from the first to the last chapter, contains

catastrophe, the exile of Israel, the end of a nation (Daniel 1:1); it closes with the personal end of Daniel himself in relation to the absolute end of the world (Daniel 12:13). … The device is pedagogical. It tells us that the end of universal history and the end of this particular history are connected, thereby suggesting that they belong to the same line; both are of the same "historico-eschatological" vein (DOUKHAN, 1997, p. 2). For further elaboration on the structure of the book of Daniel and how it hints an eschatological orientation, see Doukhan (1997, p. 3–7).

[7] Scholars have noted this literary feature in different portions of the book of Daniel. For instance, the "identification of the celestial with the terrestrial [in Dan 7] conveys in a powerful way heaven's involvement with earth" (SEOW, 2003, p. 17). "The main theological points expressed here [Dan 10:13 and 10:20–11:1] are that history has a transcendent dimension, and that there is synergy between events in heaven and on earth." (LUCAS, 2005, p. 158).

[8] For contemporary approaches to the cosmic conflict theme in Scripture, see esp. Boyd (1997; 2001) and Peckham (2018).

[9] The name of Daniel has been variously translated as "El is my judge" (BROWN; DRIVER; BRIGGS, 2001, p. 193), "'God (or El) has judged,' or 'My judge is God'" (HARTMAN; DI LELLA, 1978, p. 7), "'God is my Judge,'

allusions or direct references to divine judgment (1:1, 2; 2:34–35, 44–45; 3:22–27; 4:33, 37; 5:22–28; 6:23–24; 7:9–28; 8:25; 9:7, 11, 16, 24–27; 11:45, 12:1–13), (MOSKALA, 2010, p. 30) and climaxes[10] with "the best heavenly judgment scene ever recorded in the Scriptures (Dan 7)." (MOSKALA, 2004, p. 139). Also noteworthy is the bifid character of judgment in the book of Daniel. Its positive aspect has to do with God's acting "in favor of the saints" (Dan 7:22 NKJV), while its negative aspect refers to God's punishing his enemies (cf. Dan 7:26).[11] While the former gives God's covenantal people hope of a better future, the latter reminds all human beings of their accountability before their Maker. These complementary facets of the universal pre-advent judgment reveal its redemptive nature—God's very means of readmitting human beings into the heavenly family (MOSKALA, 2010, p. 152). Therefore, in the book of Daniel, the final judgment is perceived as very good news, "the fulfillment of humanity's hopes and yearnings," (DOUKHAN, 2000, p. 112) which announce "a new world, a new order, a city of peace and justice" (DOUKHAN, 2000, p. 116). (cf. Dan 12:1–2; Heb 11:16; Rev 21:1–4).

In light of these characteristics—concern with eschatology, interconnectedness of earthly and heavenly realities within a pervasive warfare background (cosmic conflict), and a hopeful expectation of judgment—Daniel's notable religious experience raises some questions of interest for likeminded believers[12]: What can one learn from his reactions to crises? How does Daniel face supernatural opposition? What lessons can be drawn from his attitude toward God and humans in the moments his faith is tested?

In order to answer these questions, this article will survey the book of Daniel for the challenges the protagonist experiences as well as for his reactions to such difficulties. The focus of this investigation will be on passages which contain the most significant clues to the cosmic conflict theme. Since this is a topical study, it will not concentrate on a particular point of the text, but instead, observe patterns within a macro view of the

or, if the י is the *Yod compaginis*, 'God is judging,' [or] 'God will judge'" (K&D 9:485), "Judgment of God" (DOUKHAN, 2000, p. 112). In any case, the concept of God's judgment is implied.

[10] Assuming chapter 7 at the center of the book's chiastic structure. See "concentric parallelism" in Doukhan, (1987, p. 3–7). Cf. Steinmann (2008, p. 21–25); Tanner (2003, p. 277). In addition, the judgment scene in Dan 7 itself seems to be framed at the center of a chiastic structure within that chapter (DOUKHAN, 2000, p. 119).

[11] For a fuller discussion on the positive and negative aspects of divine judgments in Scripture, see Moskala (2010, p. 139–140).

[12] That is, believers who interpret reality through cosmic conflict lenses and look forward to God's eschatological deliverance (judgment).

book.[13] This approach does not exclude, however, occasional in-depth explorations of the Hebrew and Aramaic texts. This study will also be sensitive for intertextual connections—either linguistic, thematic, or typological—with other portions of Scripture. When such a correspondence is found and considered relevant, it will be noted. Finally, practical principles that can contribute to successful dealing with crises will be mentioned.

A preliminary review of Daniel's religious experience reveals five main challenges. The first one is Daniel's reaction to a change of identity in chapter one. The second is the death threat in chapter two. The third is the danger of worldly attractions in chapter five. The fourth is the prohibition against prayer in chapter six. And the final one is the lack of understanding recorded in chapters nine and ten. These situations as well as Daniel's responses to them will be examined in the following sections.

Daniel's Reaction to Identity Change

In chapter one, Daniel is challenged with a series of changes. He is given a new place to live, a new language, a new culture, a new occupation, a new diet, and also a new name. It seems that through these changes the Babylonians intended to reshape his identity and thus shift his allegiance (LONGMAN, 1999, p.51; cf. LUCAS, 2002, p. 53). Surprisingly, Daniel appears to accept most attempts to assimilate him to the Babylonian ways. He *does* resist to religious acculturation, though. But his opposition is non-confrontational, subtle, and limited to what he seems to consider the most important matters (STEINMANN, 2008, p. 93).

There are two apparent reactions recorded in chapter one. The first has to do with Daniel's response to the change of his Hebrew name. Daniel seems to have deliberately corrupted[14] the Babylonian name "Belshazzar" (בֵּלְשַׁאצַּר),[15] which contains a pagan

[13] By "macro view" I mean the study of the book in its totality, i.e., the big picture. Thus, I do *not* mean the study of the hermeneutical presuppositions used in the composition of the text.

[14] "[T]he difficulty seems to reflect deliberate corruption to heighten the gross paganism of foreign theophoric names which replaced the Israelite theophoric ones" (GOLDINGAY, 1996, p. 5). For a deliberate corruption, see also Stefanovic (2007, p. 56).

[15] The term is spelled irregularly in the book of Daniel. In the first five occurences, the *aleph* follows the *shin* (בֵּלְשַׁאצַּר; 5:1, 2, 9, 22, 29), but in the latter three, these two letters are inverted with the *aleph* preceding the *shin* (בֵּלְאשַׁצַּר; 5:30; 7:1; 8:1). According to A. Leo Oppenheim (1962, v. 1, p. 379–380), the word "Belshazzar" may be derived from the Akkadian "*Bēl-šar-uṣur*" which means "*Bel* protect the king!"

theophoric element, to "Bel*te*shazzar" (בֵּלְטְשַׁאצַּר),[16] a corruption also observed in his friend's name "Abed-Nego" (עֲבֵד נְגוֹ).[17] Zdravko Stefanovic suggests that Daniel altered his name from "Belshazzar" to "Belteshazzar" to "express his disagreement with the religious teaching" (STEFANOVIC, 2007, p. 57) advanced by the Babylonian name.[18] William H. Shea similarly affirms that the change was made because "the use of a Babylonian god's name for a Hebrew worshipper of Yahweh appears to have been unacceptable" (SHEA, 1988, p. 75); but he adds that it was because the king's (the one in chapter 5) and Daniel's Babylonian names were the same, namely, "Belshazzar" (בֵּלְשַׁאצַּר).[19] If Shea's hypothesis is correct, the change may also have served as a literary device to help readers not mix the identity of Daniel with that of the king. While it is difficult to determine the actual reason for the name "Bel*te*shazzar," Stefanovic's and Shea's suggestions offer possible explanations for the case of a deliberate corruption.

The second and most striking reaction of the narrative, though, appears in verse 8, "But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank." Of all potential threats to his identity, it was at the issue of diet that Daniel resolved to resist,[20] and by implication, remain faithful to God. The text indicates that

[16] בֵּלְטְשַׁאצַּר seems to be derived from the Akkadian "*balaṭsu-uṣur*" which means "May he protect his life" (NEWMAN, 1962, v. 1, p. 380). The expression "pressuposes a divine name, presumably Bel" (GOLDINGAY, 1996, p. 5). Cf. Dan 4:8. Thus, the name could mean "May Bel protect his life," which is still problematic.

[17] עֲבֵד נְגוֹ is likely "a corruption of *abed-nabu*, servant of Nabu" (GOLDINGAY, 1996, p. 5).

[18] For further nuance, see Stefanovic (2007, p. 56–57).

[19] Shea points to two primary source cuneiform documents contemporary to the time of Daniel to support his hypothesis: a tablet from the reign of Amel-Marduk, who succeeded Nebuchadnezzar (Archaeological Museum of Florence, no. 135, published by K. Oberhuber in 1960), and a tablet from the accession year of Neriglissar, who succeeded Amel-Marduk (Yale Babylonian Collection 3765, published by R. P. Dougherty in 1929). Both tablets mention a Belshazzar as the "chief officer of the king." (SHEA, 1988, p. 76–78). Shea shows how unlikely it would have been for such Belshazzar to be the son of Nabonidus (the monarch in Dan 5). He suggests that Daniel is a fitting candidate to be the chief officer of the king in the two reigns which immediately followed Nebuchadnezzar's and thus be identified as the Belshazzar of those two tablets (SHEA, 1988, p. 78–80). Shea further explains that "the author of the book was free" to edit the name "Belshazzar" when he wrote his own literary composition [the book of Daniel]," but as Daniel "participated in the public life of Babylon as a civil servant, however, it was necessary that his original and unmodified Babylonian name [Belshazzar] be used in the cuneiform records written about his activities" (SHEA, 1988, p. 80–81). Two additional arguments may support Shea's hypothesis: (1) "Belshazzar himself never takes Daniel's Babylonian name upon his lips" (ibid., 73) and (2) in the LXX, Daniel's Babylonian name is spelled exactly like king Belshazzar's, i.e., *Baltasar* (STEFANOVIC, 2007, p. 57).

[20] The idea of religious resistance is underscored here by both word choice and word play. The most usual expression for giving names—קָרָא ("call") and שֵׁם ("name")—was not used in the previous verse (Dan 1:7). Instead, the less common combination—שִׂים ("set") and שֵׁם ("name")—was preferred (STEINMANN, 2008, p. 92–93). Steinmann further notes that such association (שִׂים and שֵׁם) is more common when God is naming; cf. Num 6:27 (citing ARNOLD, 2000, p. 237–238). Thus, the renaming of the Hebrews by the

Daniel's position reflects his "determination to avoid defilement." (GOLDINGAY, 1996, p. 12). Scholars have given different reasons for this concern. But suggestions have gravitated around three main areas: "dietary, political, and religious" (STEFANOVIC, 2007, p. 57) motivations. The first has to do with the distinction between clean and unclean meats (Lev 11)[21] as well as the prescription not to eat flesh with its blood (Deut 12:16, 23)—dietary laws through which the Hebrews "emulat[ed] the Lord's holiness."[22] The second refers to a cultural concern—in the Bible, eating is commonly associated with making alliances.[23] And the third has to do with the Hebrew belief that "only the God in heaven should be given credit for one's success in life," (STEFANOVIC, 2007, p. 58) which made it difficult for an Israelite to partake in a pagan meal.[24] All these as well as other reasons may be applied to the situation of Daniel 1:8 in a "complementary … rather than mutually exclusive" (STEFANOVIC, 2007, p. 62) way, especially when we have in mind that "the Hebrew concept of life and spirituality was wholistic." (STEFANOVIC, 2007, p. 62) Moreover, a precise determination of what such defilement meant in this context, even if attainable, is beyond the purpose of this study. At this point, it suffices to say that

Babylonian official might have been perceived as a usurpation of God's position. In addition, Dan 1:8 uses the same word (וַיְשָׂם from the root שׂים) to say Daniel "resolved" in his heart not to defile himself with the Babylonian food and drink. In Hebrew, the wordplay of 1:8 with 1:7 is evident: "And the chief of the eunuchs gave [וַיָּשֶׂם] them names: Daniel he called [וַיָּשֶׂם] Belteshazzar" (1:7) … "But Daniel resolved [וַיָּשֶׂם] that he would not defile himself" (1:8). The disjunctive particle ("but") at the beginning of verse 8 followed by the identical expression used in the renaming of the Hebrews (וַיָּשֶׂם) shows Daniel's strong resolve to oppose the attempt to change his identity. See more in Steinmann, *Daniel*, 92–93.

[21] Roy Gane explains the rationale for the laws in Leviticus 11–15 as follows, "By learning and observing differences between the sacred and profane/common, and the pure and impure categories, the Israelites could *properly relate to the holy, immortal, and omnipotent deity residing in their midst*." See Gane (2004, p. 203); emphasis added.

[22] The quotation refers specifically to Leviticus 11:43–45. Original wording follows, "Observing the Lord's dietary regulations has the purpose of *emulating the Lord's holiness*, which is antithetical to impurity. If God's people make themselves odious by what they eat, they misrepresent him. So living according to the dietary distinctions outlined in chapter 11 [Leviticus] is vital for maintaining the health of the divine-human relationship" (GANE, 2004, p. 206; emphasis added).

[23] As Stefanovic notes, "In the ancient world, eating at the same table with someone meant establishing a strong bond with that person," or marked "one's readiness to make a covenant with that person or a pledge of such complete loyalty as to become one with that person." (cf. Gen 31:43–46; Exod 24:7–11; 34:15; Dan 11:26; Matt 26:26–28; Luke 15:1, 2; 1 Cor 8:7; 10:14–22; Rev 3:20). See Stefanovic (2007, p. 57, 63).

[24] An issue underscored by the fact that in ancient times nearly all animal slaughtering was religious (PÉTER-CONTESSE; ELLINGTON, 1993, p. 18 *apud* STEFANOVIC, 2007, p. 64). In such meals, food had generally been sacrificed or offered to pagan deities. Partaking in those meals implied acknowledgement of those deities as the source of the blessing. Furthermore, from the religious standpoint there was also the challenge of the usual invocations or thanksgiving prayers to pagan deities. Ibid.

Daniel *did* resist the issue of diet and that he perceived it as crucial to maintaining purity and faithfulness to his beliefs.

Further information is provided in verse twelve, where Daniel requests, "let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink." Scholars have struggled to understand this thought. As John E. Goldingay expresses it, "What gave Daniel the idea and what he expected to emerge from it we are not told" (GOLDINGAY, 1996, p. 26). Gleason L. Archer Jr. seems surprised with what he perceives as a "reversal of the laws of nutrition" (ARCHER, 1985, p. 36). A few others, however, have noted clues within chapter one that point to a plausible meaning within a canonical frame. Jacques B. Doukhan, for instance, points out that when the king determined the youth's food and drink (Dan 1:5), the Hebrew word that was used for it was *wayeman*/וַיְמַן ("And [the king] appointed" NKJV), which "only has God the Creator as its subject" (DOUKHAN, 1987, p. 74) elsewhere in Scripture (cf. Jonah 2:1, 4:6–8).[25] Therefore, the use of *wayeman*/וַיְמַן in verse five can be suggestive of Nebuchadnezzar's illegitimate appropriation of God's role. This insight is important to understand Daniel's reaction in verse twelve. When the young Jewish man requested a different diet, he made use of three words: *weyittenu*/וְיִתְּנוּ, *zeroim*/זֵרֹעִים, and *nokhlah*/נאׇכְלָה—derivations of *natan*/נָתַן, *ziroia*/זְרֹעַ, and *akhal*/אָכַל—which mean "give," "vegetables," and "eat" respectively—and only reappear together in Scripture in the Creation narrative (cf. Gen 1:29) (DOUKHAN, 1987, p. 74). Thus, in his request for "vegetables"[26] and water, Daniel went beyond the Mosaic laws of Leviticus and Deuteronomy to the Creation account.[27] By echoing Genesis 1, Daniel negated the king's right to "appoint" his food and thus sustain his life, something he seemed to consider an unalienable prerogative of God. Clinging to this most basic feature of his humanness, Daniel affirmed his faith and allegiance to the Creator God, not to the king (DOUKHAN, 2000, p. 19).

[25] Jonah 2:1 states "וַיְמַן יְהוָה דָּג גָּדוֹל" ("And the LORD *appointed* a great fish"); Jonah 4:6 states, "וַיְמַן יְהוָה־אֱלֹהִים קִיקָיוֹן" ("Now the LORD God *appointed* a plant"); Jonah 4:7 states, "תּוֹלַעַת וַיְמַן הָאֱלֹהִים" ("God *appointed* a worm"); and Jonah 4:8 states, "וַיְמַן אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ" ("And God *appointed* a scorching east wind"); emphasis added.
[26] Even though "vegetables" is a helpful rendering of זֵרֹעִים (literally "seeds"), the Hebrew semantic range of the term is much broader (See Steinmann, 2008, p. 96) and can encompass fruits, nuts, legumes, tubers, grains, and vegetables (cf. Gen 1:11–12, 29); i.e., זֵרֹעִים here refers to a plant-based diet.
[27] Though here Daniel goes beyond the specific stipulations of the Levitical laws in regard to diet, the rationale expressed earlier by Gane (notes 30 and 31)—emulate God's holiness—not only remains applicable but seems also to be amplified in the context of Creation.

Thus, from Daniel's selective reaction in the first chapter one learns that it is possible to remain faithful to God and maintain one's identity as a believer in the Creator even in highly hostile environments, provided that battles are chosen wisely (STEINMANN, 2008, p. 94). Also, the fact that "Daniel did not make a public display of rejecting all the king's food" (LONGMAN, 1999, p. 52–53) shows that he adroitly pursued his objective in a discreet and non-defiant way. These principles can serve as valuable "strategies for cultural engagement" (LONGMAN, 1999, p. 64) to twenty-first century believers who live in polytheistic as well as in secular societies.[28] Furthermore, an investigation of the dynamics of the cosmic conflict theme in this chapter reveals that as Daniel determined to be faithful to God (1:8) and followed through with his intent (1:16), God gave him favor with his captors. This is indicated by the expressions "And God gave" (וַיִּתֵּן הָאֱלֹהִים) and "God gave them" (נָתַן לָהֶם הָאֱלֹהִים) in the immediately following verses (1:9 and 1:17 respectively).[29] The pattern suggests that God was able to intervene positively beyond his "normal" protection in proportion to Daniel's faithfulness. In other words, God gave Daniel a "reward that corresponded" (GANE, 2004, p. 209) his obedience. Since this model seems consistent in both Old and New Testaments throughout different periods of history,[30] it may be suggestive that similar dynamics are applicable at present.

Thirdly, Daniel's resorting to the Creation narrative as an essential aspect of his faith and life calls likeminded believers to attribute more importance to God as the Creator and to his original plan. The text shows that Daniel's choice of food, instead of being a "reversal of the laws of nutrition" (ARCHER, 1985, p. 36) proved to be the highest expression of such laws (cf. Dan 1:17–20) for it was the diet which was ideally designed for human beings (Gen 1:29).[31] Today, people may also benefit from that regimen which the Bible labels "very good" (Gen 1:31); and thus, better identify themselves with the Creator. New Testament believers can especially perceive such principles in action from

[28] Given the agnostic or atheistic outlook on life in general, secular societies also operate under dynamics that can be challenging or even antagonistic to faith in the Creator.
[29] Dan 1:9 reads "*And God gave* [emphasis added] Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs" (ESV), and Dan 1:17 states, "… *God gave them* [emphasis added] knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom" (NKJV).
[30] Cf. 1 Sam 2:30, "those who honor me I will honor"; Jas 4:7–8a, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."
[31] While Daniel seems to have the Creation model as his ideal for diet, it should be noted that he did not always live on a plant-based diet (cf. Dan 10:2–3).

the vantage point of the example of Jesus,[32] who also identified himself with the Creator and taught the primacy of the creation plan over later revelation (cf. Matt 19:3–8).[33]

Finally, the concern with food, especially in the first chapter of the book of Daniel may be especially important to end-time believers in light of at least two thematic/typological correspondences. The first is related to Christ's teachings on eschatology. When Jesus gave his lengthy discourse on the subject in Matthew 24, he mentioned Daniel by name and encouraged his disciples to read and understand the contents written by the prophet (cf. Matt 24:15). Is it possible that such a hint placed in the context of the final preaching of the gospel and Christ's Second Coming could also subtly point to the example of Daniel as an eschatological forerunner of the end-time covenantal people of God? If so, Daniel's concern with the Edenic model could be informative to those believers who live out their faith during the closing scenes of the plan of redemption.[34]

The second correspondence refers to the experience of the ancient Israelites in their desert sojourn from Egypt to the Promised Land. In those days, as the Hebrews prepared to enter Canaan, God changed their diet, giving them a heavenly-designed food, the Manna. Taking into account that the New Testament describes such Old Testament experiences as examples (types) for those believers who live at the end (cf. 1 Cor 10:6, 11), (DAVIDSON, 1981, p. 250–297) could it be that a similar pattern would occur again with end-time believers? If so, Daniel's example would be an encouragement for God's

[32] Jesus, likewise, while privileging the Creation model as ideal, also ate (see Luke 24:42–43) and served meat (e.g., Matt 14:17–21) in a few occasions.

[33] When the Pharisees came to Christ testing him on the subject of divorce, Jesus pointed them to Genesis 1:27 ("Have you not read that He who made them *at the beginning* 'made them male and female'" [Matt 19:4 NKJV; emphasis added]) and to Genesis 2:24 ("For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." Matt 19:5 NKJV). Both texts are references to the Edenic order before the entrance of sin into the world. But the Pharisees challenged Christ's interpretation of Scripture based on what Moses had written in Deuteronomy 24:1–4 saying, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" (Matt 19:7). Thus, they confronted two apparently opposed doctrines of Scripture. Christ's response was clarifying; he said, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, *but from the beginning it was not so*." (Matt 19:8; emphasis added). Thus, Christ established the original plan of Creation as God's ideal standard, implying that subsequent changes to that plan were mere concessions in God's dealings with fallen humanity.

[34] As to the concept of Daniel's being a "forerunner" of future believers, Arthur J. Ferch stated in a similar fashion that "the experience of Daniel and his contemporaries foreshadows the experience of the saints mentioned later in the book." See Ferch (1986, p. 60).

people to reconsider how they nourish their bodies—expressing holiness in diet (GANE, 2004, p. 209)—as Daniel did.

Daniel's Response to the First Death Decree

In chapter two, Daniel and his friends were challenged with a death decree, the first in a series of three they would face throughout the book.[35] This first capital punishment was commanded after the Babylonian wise men failed to declare to Nebuchadnezzar his dream and corresponding interpretation. Infuriated, the king ordered the killing of all wise men, which included the four Hebrew friends (2:13).

While the average person would be expected to react in shock, confusion, fear, or despair to such a crisis, the biblical account states that Daniel replied to his executioner with "prudence" (*eta*/עֵטָא)[36] and "understanding" (KOEHLER, L.; BAUMGARTNER, W., 1994-2000, v. 5, p. 1885) or "wisdom" (NKJV) (*teem*/טְעֵם) (2:14) saying, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent?" (2:15). Instead of defying the monarch's request and bringing him to anger[37] as the other advisors had done (cf. 2:7, 10, 11), Daniel showed prudence by not challenging Nebuchadnezzar's demand (STEINMANN, 2008, p. 123). The Hebrew only wanted to learn the full extent of the situation. Once informed of the insurmountable mystery, Daniel surprised again and met with Nebuchadnezzar to request an extension. This action in itself revealed the Hebrew's implicit trust that God could perform an "unprecedented miracle" (ARCHER, 1985, p. 42) and deliver him. The youth's bold faith, together with his non-provocative proposition, granted him what the other wise men had been denied—more time.

Next, the narrative unveils the substance of what Daniel's mode of operation amidst crises is. The text states that he let his friends know the situation so that "they might seek mercies from the God of heaven" about the secret, so that they would not perish (2:18 NKJV). Several insights arise from this passage. First, the predicament

[35] The first death decree appears in Daniel 2. The second death decree was experienced only by Daniel's friends in chapter 3; thus, it will not be examined in this paper for its focus is solely on Daniel's own experiences and reactions. The third death decree is found in Daniel 6, addressed below.
[36] Or "counsel." Brown; Driver; Briggs (2001, p. 1096).
[37] Cf. Shea (2005, p. 96).

allowed for "only one recourse, prayer" (LONGMAN, 1999, p. 78). Second, Daniel knew that petitions to God could be more efficacious "when believers unite in common supplication" (ARCHER, 1985, p. 43) (cf. Esth 4:16–17; Acts 4:23–31). Hence, he led his friends to intercessory prayer. Third, the text does not disclose how the prayer was worded (see 2:18); thus, suggesting that form was not an essential element. Fourth, the crucial element was to whom the prayer was addressed, the "God of heaven" (2:18). Fifth, the main focus of the plea was to seek "mercies,"[38] i.e., the Hebrews had "no right to demand anything from … [God]," (STEINMANN, 2008, p. 124) but only to request unmerited favor. Sixth, the passage implies they trusted that God is merciful, powerful, active, and intervening. Seventh, contrary to Babylonian thought (cf. 2:11), the four young men perceived God as accessible (DOUKHAN, 2000, p. 27). Eighth, Daniel's prayer was not an "exercise of piety;" (DOUKHAN, 2000, p. 26) rather, it was an actual request that "expect[ed] an answer," (DOUKHAN, 2000, p. 26) from a "real Person" *(*DOUKHAN, 2000, p. 26). And finally, there was a positive expectation of deliverance.[39]

In the next segment, readers learn that God revealed the mystery to Daniel in a night vision (2:19). His reaction is informative. Assuming that "the knowledge he had received was accurate" (ARCHER, 1985, p. 43) prior to his telling it to the king, Daniel thanked God in advance (*Ibid.*). Instead of "rushing off to the court" (LONGMAN, 1999, p. 79) to solve his problem, Daniel used time first to praise God (2:20–23). Moreover, even though the knowledge he received entailed the saving of his life, Daniel did not say anything about his own safety. Rather, he was concerned with the wellbeing of others (2:24). Finally, Daniel faithfully interpreted the enigmatic dream to the king, thus revealing the existence of God (2:28) and the future establishment of God's kingdom over all humankind (2:44–45) at the time of the end.

From Daniel's response to the death threat, some principles for successful handling of crises emerge. The peaceful, non-belligerent, and self-controlled manner in which

[38] The position of *rahamin/*רַחֲמִין (mercies) opening the sentence indicates emphasis. Thus, "mercies" is *the* focus of their petition.

[39] The expectation of deliverance in this episode is not only expressed in the immediate context, but also by who Daniel is. His name means "God is my judge" (for additional nuance, see note 7 above). Since judges in the Bible were saviors and deliverers (cf. Judg 2:16, 18; 3:9, 15; 6:14), Daniel's very identity is a proclamation of his trust in the "God of heaven" as his personal savior and deliverer. See Stefanovic (2007, p. 56).

Daniel spoke during the perilous moment of the death threat indicates a deep-seated conviction that he was precious in the sight of God and that God took care of him. This allowed him to remain calm and maintain a positive relationship with both God and men during the time of distress. Daniel approached divinity with confidence, manifesting unwavering trust. At the same time, his petitioning was humble, not demanding deliverance, but relying on God's mercy. In his prayer, form was not underscored, just his great need. The reality of his need, coupled with meek faith, was answered. Daniel also exercised leadership to influence his associates to godliness. Just as he had inspired his friends in the issue of diet previously, in chapter two Daniel invited his peers into intercessory prayer. Further, when delivered, his first reaction was not to free himself, but to praise God. Then, he moved on to deliver others. As Tremper Longman III points out, "Daniel's actions here and elsewhere in the book incarnate a love for enemies." (STEFANOVIC, 2007, p. 56). As a result, Daniel was granted special insights from the divine realm (see GANE, 2004, p. 209), which gave him the opportunity to reveal the Creator in a polytheistic and idolatrous society; and he succeeded.

Daniel's Reaction to Worldly Attractions

In chapter five, the narrative describes another situation which challenges the main character. This time, the Babylonian dignitary on the scene is Belshazzar (5:1). The royal coregent felt threatened by a supernatural hand which inscribed a message on the wall of his banquet room (5:5). After his wise men had failed to read the inscription (5:8), the queen-mother reminded Belshazzar that Daniel could decipher the enigma (5:11–12). Belshazzar, then, summoned Daniel to his presence and flattered the now aged Hebrew with gifts and rewards if he could unveil the meaning of the inscription, as recorded on verse sixteen, "And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom" (NKJV). Daniel replied, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation" (5:17).

The first observation that can be drawn from Daniel's encounter with Belshazzar is the absence of the traditional salutation "O king, live forever!" (STEINMANN, 2008, p. 282) (cf. Dan 2:4; 3:9; 5:10; 6:6, 21) anticipating the severity of what would soon take place. Also, Daniel's reply portrays one who is fearless and "not intimidated by his audience." (PHILLIPS; VINES, 1990, p. 81). In rejecting the royal gifts, Daniel stated his independence and avoided pressure to alter the message. (GOLDINGAY, 1996, p. 110). Through that course of action, "Daniel could not be accused of tailoring his interpretation merely to gain a reward" (LONGMAN, 1999, p. 283). A similar pattern is observed in the lives of other prophets, such as Abraham (cf. Gen 14:21–24) (STEFANOVIC, 2007, p. 190) and Elisha (cf. 2 Kgs 5: 15–16). All of them seem to have refused worldly gains when God's participation could have been eclipsed by personal profit. Their refusal acted as a statement that God was the true sovereign in charge of their situations.[40] They seemed not to wish to give opportunity for spectators to view God otherwise. Some interpreters, however, are puzzled by the fact that Daniel received the gifts later (5:29) and challenge the reading expounded above. Ernest C. Lucas explains the situation as follows,

> Having shown by the unwelcome message he [Daniel] conveys, that he is not swayed, either by the pressure from the king or by the desire for personal reward, to modify the message to resemble what the king might want to hear, he can accept the rewards as a public vindication of all that the queen had said about him and, by implication, as a recognition of the superiority of his God (LUCAS, 2002, p. 132).

Lucas' view of a "public vindication" and "recognition of the superiority of his God" seems fitting in light of both the context of Daniel chapter five[41] and the larger picture of Scripture.[42]

[40] This is evidenced by both Abraham's words to the king of Sodom ("I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that *I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say,'I have made Abram rich,'*" Gen 14:22–23 NKJV; emphasis added) and Elisha's words to Naaman ("'As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, *I will receive nothing.'* And he urged him to take it, but he refused." 2 Kgs 5:16 NKJV; emphasis added).

[41] *Belshazzar* had repeatedly announced in public that the one who could decipher the inscription would "be clothed in purple," "have a chain of gold around his neck," and "be the third ruler in the kingdom" (5:7; 5:16). If Daniel had not received such prizes after his interpretation, the audience would infer that Belshazzar did not acknowledge Daniel's words as true. Hence, in this context, the public reception of the gifts contributed to validate the interpretation and message.

[42] Daniel's later public reception of gifts finds correspondence in other characters in Scripture, such as Joseph in Egypt ("Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. You shall be over my house. … Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put

Then, Daniel addressed Belshazzar by reviewing the life of his ancestor Nebuchadnezzar (5:18–21). The aged Hebrew pointed how God had humbled the king's pride and rebellion at the time; and also how Nebuchadnezzar was restored to sanity and to the throne when he acknowledged the sovereignty of God over his own life. After that historical introduction, (PHILLIPS; VINES, 1990, p. 81) Daniel rebuked the monarch, "But you his successor, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this" (Dan 5:22 HCSB). Thus, the prophet underscored the importance of history as God's teaching tool. The implication is that people are accountable to God on the knowledge they have of history. By failing to have acted in harmony with the knowledge he possessed, Belshazzar manifested his rebellion against God, whom Daniel identified as "the Lord of heaven" (*mare-shemayya/*מָרֵא־שְׁמַיָּא; 5:23). Daniel also accused the Babylonian king of practicing idolatry ("you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know") instead of worshiping the living God ("but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored." 5:23).[43] The account closes with the interpretation of the mysterious inscription; Belshazzar's downfall, and Daniel's exaltation (5:24–31).

The book of Daniel shows a number of reversals. In chapter one, Babylon overthrew Judah, subjugated its nobility, and attempted to impose new religious values. The latter characteristic is especially evidenced by the change in the protagonist's name from Daniel to Belteshazzar (or Belshazzar),[44] a clear attempt to detach his identity from the God of Israel and attach it to Babylonian deities. But in chapter five, king Belshazzar, Daniel's Babylonian namesake,[45] was subjugated and overthrown, together with the religious claims attached to his name. After all, Bel ("Marduk") (GRAY, 1962, v. 1, p. 376)

it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck." Gen 41:39–42) and Mordecai in Persia ("Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown and a robe of fine linen and purple, and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced. … And many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews, for fear of the Jews had fallen on them." Esth 8:15–17).

[43] Doukhan notes *that* "the association of the 'hand' and the 'breath' clearly alludes to the creation of the first man, when God formed him with His hand (Ps 119:73; Isa 41:20) and breathed life into his nostrils (Gen 2:7)." See Doukhan (2000, p. 81).

[44] For the full treatment of Daniel's Hebrew and Babylonian names see footnotes 6, 17–18, 21–23. Note 27 above especially explains the possibility of Daniel's original Babylonian name being "Belshazzar," the same as the king's in chapter five.

[45] See discussion in note 27.

could not protect the king. Daniel, on the other hand, outlived the Neo-Babylonian Empire and thrived under the Persian regime, which affirmed the religious claim behind his Hebrew name, "God is my judge."[46] The episode can also function as a miniature typological model of the reversal to be experienced by the end-time people of God as portrayed in the New Testament Apocalypse, which describes the negative judgment and fall of spiritual Babylon (cf. Rev 18) while the faithful remnant of God (cf. Rev 14:12) is positively judged, exalted, and restored (cf. Rev 19–22). Besides displaying Daniel's usual confidence,[47] the segment also highlights a number of other relevant principles. Having the glory of God above personal gain is one. The importance of acknowledging God's sovereignty and one's proper relation to him is another. In fact, failure to worship the Creator will ultimately lead one to idolatry (DOUKHAN, 2000, p. 81). And finally, if Daniel can be considered a typological forerunner of end-time believers, God's covenantal people can also expect reversals which glorify God at the close of this era's history (cf. and contrast Rev 14:8–11; 18:1–24 with Rev 7:9–17; 14:1–5; 19:1–9).

Daniel's Response to the Prohibition against Prayer

In chapter six, Daniel faced a direct attack against his connection with God. Unable to find fault in Daniel's character and conduct, his enemies articulated something to halt the Jew from practicing his religion (6:5).[48] They devised a law which prohibited anyone to petition or pray to any god or person, other than the king, for a thirty-day period. The decree was irrevocable (6:8) and non-compliance meant capital punishment by incarceration with wild beasts (6:7). What was Daniel's response to such a crisis? "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that

[46] The *positive* imagery portrayed by judges in the Bible (deliverers, redeemers, saviors, and avengers) was conveyed by Daniel's name. Thus, his name was a proclamation of a high view of God as his personal protector and benefactor.
[47] Or "great courage" (MILLER, 1994, p. 164).
[48] Doukhan comments that the "behavior of the satraps is very similar to that of the Chaldeans toward the three Hebrews (chapter 3)." He identifies such attitude as "anti-Semitism," calling it "hatred of the difference," something "essentially religious." See Doukhan (1998/1999, p. 22).

day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days" (6:10 NKJV).

Though it was possible to conceive many ways to deal with the new legislation, such as rationalizing (STEINMANN, 2008, p. 317) and compromising, protesting, or even praying in secret, Daniel did none of these. Instead, he ignored the prohibition (cf. Acts 5:29) and went about his life as usual ("he went home . . . and prayed . . . as was his custom.") He did not "express fear or alarm." (PACE, 2008, p. 204). The aged Daniel displayed the same calm dignity he had manifested in his youth. His attitude revealed a sense of inner peace that was sharply contrasted with the busyness and evil plotting of his opponents.

Furthermore, Daniel's reaction was balanced. He did not fight; nor did he hide. Either extreme would have given a false impression of his religion. Daniel's life was marked by authenticity. He was the same in public and in private as well as in prosperity or in adversity. The passage also reveals that his prayer life was intense ("three times a day" 6:10, 13; cf. Ps 55:17 [MT 55:18]), reverential ("He got down on his knees" 6:10), attached to the worship of the true God ("toward Jerusalem") (cf. John 4:22), habitual, and deeply rooted in his identity ("as was his custom since early days" 6:10 NKJV). It prepared Daniel to maintain his position from the moment he was spotted and accused (6:11–13) to the time the sentence was carried out (6:16–17) and beyond as he had to spend the night in the lions' den (6:18–20). Throughout his ordeal, Daniel's trust in God remained steadfast. The biblical account's rationale for his deliverance is clear, "Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, *because he had trusted in his God*" (6:23; emphasis added).

Though Daniel was morally blameless, he experienced persecution under both regimes: the Babylonian and the Persian. This undue hatred to such a good and faithful servant makes sense in light of the cosmic conflict theme (cf. Eph 6:12). As long as the unseen evil "ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) is alive and active, good people may suffer oppression (cf. Job 1; John 16:33). The story of Daniel also illustrates the dynamics of this spiritual warfare. It seems that the more faithful to God believers are, the greater wrath the Devil will manifest against them (cf. Rev 12:17). Scripture states that this pattern of antagonism was initiated on earth at the Fall (cf. Gen 3:15) and is expected to continue to the final establishment of God's kingdom on earth (cf. Dan 2:44).

Another important feature of the cosmic conflict theme highlighted in chapter six is the importance of prayer. In an environment that is hostile to holiness, prayer seems to be even more essential for one to maintain connection with God (cf. 1 Pet 5:6–8). It is through prayer that one lays hold of God's special protection. Prayer sustained Daniel's life and fed his faith. The book of Daniel shows that fervent prayer defeats Satan. For this reason, the evil one used spiritual and human instrumentalities to make it difficult or nearly impossible for the Jew to pray. The enemy of God may apply similar strategies against God's people at present. But Daniel's commitment to prayer is clarifying and inspires hope.

Finally, the chapter teaches that faith inspires faith. Observing Daniel's trust in God, king Darius was able to exclaim at the Lion's den, "Daniel Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you" (6:16 NKJV). The episode indicates that people are not only saved by faith, they also reach others for God through it (6:25–27). The pattern is consistent throughout Scripture (cf. Josh 24:15–25; Acts 3:1–8; 16:13–15) showing that faith is the means by which God's benevolent rule expands in this rebellious world.

Daniel's Response to Lack of Understanding

In chapters eight through ten Daniel received revelations from God, which he could not initially understand (e.g., Dan 8:27). The present segment of this article focuses on how Daniel reacted to such lack of understanding.

The first clue the narrative provides is found in chapter nine verse two, "I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem" (NKJV).[49] The text indicates that Daniel's primary initiative to counter the crisis was to look for answers in Scripture. The following verses confirm Daniel's awareness that it was neglect and rebellion against the word of God that had led him and

[49] Probably a reference to Jeremiah 25:11–12 ("'And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon *seventy years*. Then it will come to pass, when *seventy years* are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation.'") and 29:10 ("For thus says the LORD: After *seventy years* are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place." NKJV; emphasis added).

his people to exile, "We have not listened to your servants the prophets" (9:6) and "[we] have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God" (9:10). Thus, in order to acquire understanding Daniel had necessarily to perform a reverse movement back to Scripture. In doing so, he was able to say "I … understood" (9:2 NKJV), a statement which is also significant to clarify the process through which he gained understanding. The original word for "I … understood" (*binoti*/בִּינֹתִי) in verse two is a verbal expression from *bin*/בִּין ("discern," "understand") (BROWN; DRIVER; BRIGGS, 2001, p. 106),[50] the same root as *binah*/בִּינָה ("intelligence"). (DOUKHAN, 1993, p. 194). Doukhan's comments on Hebrew thought expand the significance of Daniel's word choice,

> Hebrew intelligence … is in essence the ability to receive. … The Hebrew seat of intelligence lies in the ears. … Intelligence is the ability to listen, to be open to the experience which comes first. … Intelligence has been understood in the Bible not as a mere intellectual ability but as a gift to be received from the outside, thus belonging to the category of Revelation. … Only if we have heard, if we have received, are we able to behave as an intelligent person (DOUKHAN, 1993, p. 194).

Hence, verse two indicates that it was the searching of Scripture to receive God's revelation which made Daniel intelligent, wise, and knowledgeable to solve his conundrum.

The reference to Jeremiah provides another hint at Daniel's response. The letters Jeremiah sent the exiles in Babylon (see Jer 29:1) not only contained God's promise of deliverance, but also God's call for his people to search for him earnestly ("You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart" Jer 29:13).[51] This may help explain why Daniel approached God with such a wholistic response that included deep confession of sin (9:5–16); fasting (9:3); repentance (9:3)[52]; plea for God's commitment to his covenant (9:4); confession of God's justice, mercy, and forgiveness (9:7–9); as well as reliance on God's mercy (9:4, 18), and request of his pardon (9:16–19).

[50] Brown; Driver; Briggs (2001, p. 106).
[51] Cf. Maxwell (1981, p. 197).
[52] The expression "sackcloth and ashes" is associated with deep repentance in Scripture (cf. Isa 58:5; Jonah 3:6, Matt 11:21; Luke 10:13).

In chapter ten, understanding came to Daniel only after a three-week struggle, through which he was "mourning"[53] (10:2). The text goes on to say the prophet "ate no pleasant food" and that "no meat or wine came into … [his] mouth"[54] and he did not "anoint" himself[55] either (10:3 NKJV). Interestingly, in both situations—in chapters nine and ten—Daniel's prayers are explicitly answered; and in the two cases Daniel learns his prayers had been heard from the beginning of his supplications (9:22–23; 10:12). However, in chapter ten there is an explanation for the twenty-one days of delay (10:13, 20, 21). The text suggests that "some sort of angelic battle … took place behind the scenes of physical reality" (BOYD, 1997, p. 10) before the answer could reach the prophet.

Two major principles transpire from these texts. The first is the way Daniel understands life. He interprets reality through the lenses of Scripture—a hermeneutical pattern also observed in the life of Jesus Christ. For instance, throughout the three temptations he was subjected to (cf. Matt 4:3–11), Jesus came out victorious in every instance because he did not judge or decide his course of action solely based on sensorial perceptions, i.e., what he saw, heard, felt, or smelled. Had he pursued any of those avenues he could have been defeated. Rather, Jesus based his decisions on his knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; thus, assuming that such teachings described true reality, in spite of sensorial impressions to the contrary.[56] The same approach to the visible world is seen in the life of Daniel, for in dealing with conflict he assumes that there is more to reality than meets the eyes and takes refuge in the certainty of the revealed word of God.

The second is Daniel's perseverance when answer to prayer is apparently delayed, an important characteristic Christ expects from his followers as illustrated in "The Parable of the Persistent Widow"[57] ("Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that

[53] "Mourning," *aval*/אָבַל in Hebrew, is associated with deep sorrow or affliction, such as when one mourns the death of a loved one (cf. Gen 27:41; 37:35).
[54] Doukhan notes that "Daniel's prayer and fast takes place . . . during the time of Passover" (See *Secrets of Daniel*, 158). Thus, Daniel's mentioning that he ate no meat nor drank wine in a time he was expected to eat lamb and drink wine may serve to fully express the intensity of his affliction.
[55] Not anointing oneself is a "traditional sign of morning . . . cf. 2 Sam 14:2," and "resumption of anointing marks the end of mourning," cf. 2 Sam 12:20. See Collins (1993, p. 373).
[56] This is noticed in Christ's reactions in Matthew 4 as he engaged in conversation with the Devil. The context implies that the latter did not present himself immediately as the fallen Lucifer. Rather, he seems to have approached Christ as an angel from Heaven (cf. 2 Cor 11:14). Christ, on the other hand, discerned the falsehood of his interlocutor's identity by assessing reality through Scripture (cf. Deut 8:3; 6:16; 6:13). Thus, Christ was able to "see" the unseen reality before him, unmask the deception, and remain loyal to the Father.
[57] Heading in a 1984 NIV Zondervan Bible.

they should always pray and not give up." Luke 18:1 NIV). Both traits—a biblical interpretation of life and perseverance in prayer—are needed for successful reactions to spiritual crises/conflicts.

Conclusion

In surveying the book of Daniel for the protagonist's reactions to crises, relevant principles and patterns for successful engagement in spiritual conflict emerged. While such insights and dynamics may be helpful throughout history, they can be especially valuable to end-time believers in light of the thematic and typological correspondences between Daniel and other apocalyptic texts in the Bible.

From a macro perspective of the book, Daniel's impressive traits of character and adroit dealing with problems seem to suggest a special mindset. On the one hand, his identity and character are anchored in Creation, the basis for the understanding of who he is, and also of who God is. On the other hand, they also firmly lie on the hope of restoration—firstly that of Judah and ultimately that of the world. By framing reality between Creation and the Eschaton, Daniel is able to understand the fallen condition of the world and perceive the unseen cosmic conflict behind his experience. Armed with such awareness and strengthened by a positive view of his heavenly Judge, Daniel determines to trust God unconditionally, be faithful to him, and not allow anything to sever the connection between them. As a result, God is able to manifest himself through the life of this Jewish prince. His life is an inspiration to all those who desire to be faithful to God during the closing scenes of the cosmic conflict.

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