

**THE BOOK OF DANIEL:  
Its Genre, Structure, Dispensational Handling  
and Relationship with the Apocalypse of John**

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**Overview: Daniel and Revelation**

In my ministry, I have found many people responding to literatures such as Daniel and Revelation. Two responses I have encountered are: 1) I do not understand them and cannot gain any clue of their contents; 2) These two books are the blueprints of the future, so we have to find the right key to unlock them. Furthermore, there are also various responses among theologians themselves. Mickelsen observes that, on one hand, many theologians and seminary students have studied this matter in a very serious way; on the other hand, many of them ignore this subject matter because of its "dogmatism of some strange interpreters and bizarre approaches,"<sup>1</sup> though they undeniably acknowledge the beauty of its various literary forms.

I think it is theologically wrong to remain withdrawn from any book of the Bible. Scripture as a whole is the word of God to human beings and is meant to be read and understood. All the books of the Bible are "holy and canonical, for the regulating, founding, and establishing of our faith."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it is our responsibility as Christians, though we may not understand all, to study and to try to understand God's will in our lives through the Bible. With this zeal, I think one should pursue studies of all the books of the

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<sup>1</sup>A. Berkley Mickelsen, *Daniel and Revelation* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), ix.

<sup>2</sup>"Belgic Confession Art. 5" in *Ecumenical Creed and Reformed Confession* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publication, 1987).

Bible. One must read and reread, study and restudy them with the conviction that God, through his servants, wrote the books in order that all who read them can understand the contemporary meaning of the ancient texts.

We all need to read Daniel and Revelation without trying to fit the inspired contents into some structures we have already established in our minds or some that have been handed to us. We have to be open to some possibilities of interpretation and to be consistent with our hermeneutic. Absolutism of such structures and schemes tend to separate us from each other instead of building unity in the body of Christ.

Mickelsen says that Daniel and Revelation are worth the effort of serious study because their message centers on God, sin, and redemption.<sup>3</sup> They encompass important issues in our lives, he further says, such simple principles of "how we live, how we act, and how we die."<sup>4</sup> The two books, again, are not meant to pull back the curtains of history to give contemporary readers a preview of only what may soon occur. They are more than that. They are to give people comfort that only in the presence of God and perseverance in him, we find a way out.

In Daniel and Revelation, I think we learn who God is, why he has communicated with people, and some of what God has communicated. Since sin casts a cloud over all of human existence, in Daniel and Revelation, we learn what moral evil (sin) is and what God's response to it. Redemption is revealed to be a change from sinful living to upright living, belonging to God's redeemed people who share God's life and live the way he wants them to live. Thus Daniel and Revelation make clear who God's people are, what they should be doing, and the part God and His people will play in the climax of history. Furthermore, Daniel was written during the period of exile where miracles were abundant.<sup>5</sup> Daniel, through the use of dreams and visions, teaches that God rules among the kings of the earth, and determines the outcome of history. It is the same case when Revelation was written, God's people faced similar difficulties; the appeal to these sources to illustrate

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<sup>3</sup>Mickelsen, *Daniel and Revelation*, ix.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Farrell Jenkins, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation* (Marion: Cogdill Foundation Publications, 1972), 51.

the overthrow of the evil powers and the complete vindication of God's cause is easily justified.

There are similarities between Daniel and Revelation<sup>6</sup>: 1) The authors were both in exile: John on Patmos and Daniel in Babylon; 2) The people of God were oppressed by an ungodly force in both cases: the Israelites by Babylon and the Christians by Rome; 3) Each writer spoke of the overthrow of the evil power and of the continuing rule of God. Amid of these similarities, one important difference should be noted by the readers that Israel was in captivity because of apostasy, but the Christians were being persecuted because of their faithfulness.<sup>7</sup>

One should have no doubt that these two books are filled with visions of the authors' imaginations. They are definitely to affirm God's greatness and His plans revealed in these two books. The plan of God is described as his secret or mystery (Rev. 10:7). However big the mysterious plans of God are, they still fit in our short lives on earth. Only with the sense of reverence and humility can we approach these two books and realize "How Great Thou Art."

### Significance of Daniel for Understanding Revelation

Jenkins, in his research, concludes that the book of Revelation makes use of allusions from 24 Old Testament books, but that the majority of the allusions are from six or seven of the books. Out of 348 Old Testament quotations and allusions in the book, 282 are to be found in the following seven books: Exodus, 22; Psalms, 43; Isaiah, 79; Jeremiah, 22; Ezekiel, 43; Daniel, 53; Zechariah, 15.<sup>8</sup> From these statistics, we see that it is undeniably true that the study of Daniel gives a significant help in order to understand the last book of the Bible, the Apocalypse of John. Considering the fact that there are only 12 chapters in the prophecy of Daniel and the 53

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<sup>6</sup>These comparisons are taken directly from Jenkins, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation* p. 54.

<sup>7</sup>Jenkins asserts that Daniel described the period of exile as a time of "indignation" (Dan. 8:19). The Christians congregations mentioned in Revelation, on the other hand, have been faithful (Rev. 1:9; 6:9).

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 49.

times the book is used by John demonstrates its prominent place in the study of Revelation.

The book of Revelation fits within the category of apocalyptic literature. It is the most thoroughly Jewish in its language and imagery of any New Testament book. With the exception of the little apocalypse of the Gospels, the literary form of the book of Revelation is unique in the New Testament Scriptures, but it shares a common classification with sections of three canonical books of the Old Testament: Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah;<sup>9</sup> and with the most common type of literature written during the inter-testamental period.<sup>10</sup> Although the non-canonical books are not considered as inspired, they are all of some benefits in aiding one in coming to an understanding of the book of Revelation which shares of the same general characteristics.

E. J. Young in his commentary on Daniel presents the facts that during the period of Egyptian oppression "God wrought many mighty miracles for the purpose of breaking the pride of Pharaoh and showing forth His omnipotence..."<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, in the time of exile,

However, the Lord sought to destroy the delusion of the nations that the God of Israel was just another god, a local, limited, tribal deity. It was necessary to show that the God of Israel was the true and living God, who possessed objective metaphysical existence, before whom the gods of the heathen were vain, empty delusions, not having objective realities.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, Jenkins concludes that in the period before the new era of the people of God was established, in the period of the Old Testament and the inter-testament, dreams, visions, and revelations were used in order to demonstrate the omniscience and reality of God.

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<sup>9</sup>Jenkins, *The Old Testament and the Book of Revelation*, 34.

<sup>10</sup>The book of Enoch, the Assumption of Moses, the Apocalypse of Baruch, and Fourth Ezra are apocalyptic literature that, with other books, form that group of non-canonical writings commonly referred to as the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament. All books in this group are apocalyptic in their nature.

<sup>11</sup>Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 17.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

The Apocalypse of John makes use of the same categories. Like the books written during the periods of exodus and the exile, Revelation deals with the sovereignty of God and the overthrow of opposing forces. In Exodus we read of God's judgment upon Egypt and of his care for his own people. Daniel, through the use of dreams and visions, teaches that God rules among the kings of earth and determines the outcome of history. These facts strengthen the theory that in Revelation, God uses his power to judge his enemies and also to comfort his people in the midst of persecution. God demonstrates that he is the one who knows the end of the history of humankind.

Within the book of Revelation, there are many symbols and idioms drawn from other canonical apocalyptic literature, particularly from the book of Daniel. From Daniel's ministry before a heathen court, there are many references and similarities John borrows in his Apocalypse. One of many examples is when John uses the term "Babylon" to describe the great evil city which ruled the world in his day. John makes it reasonable that he would be employing the language of Daniel. The prominent visions in Daniel provide much of the imagery used by John in the Apocalypse. Other examples are shown in the table below:

Verses in Revelation	Correspondence in Daniel
Rev. 1 (The Description of the Son of Man)	Dan. 7:9 ff., Dan. 10:5-6
Rev. 1:9-3:22 (epiphany of one like a son of man)	Dan. 10:2-12:4
Rev. 3:21	Dan. 7:9-10
Rev. 10 (The Angel's sworn testimony)	Dan. 12:7
Rev. 12 (The Angel Michael)	Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1
Rev. 13 (The Beast out of the sea)	Dan. 2:31; 7:3
Rev. 14 (The white cloud, the one like the son of Man)	Dan. 7:13; 10:16
Rev. 17-19 (The fall of Babylon)	Dan. 2, 7
Rev. 20 (The books of judgment)	Dan. 7:10

The prophets, John and Daniel, had been permitted to see the glory of the Lord and the history of nations before they had come to pass and so shared common ground. Thus, it was fitting that both of them use similar language. It is clear that Daniel teaches similar lessons to those taught in

Revelation. Therefore, there are at least two reasons, I think to put the significance of Daniel in order to understand Revelation. First, the book of Revelation shares in the images and terms common to apocalyptic literature, such as Daniel, and to literature written under similar circumstances. Secondly, the terminology for many visions in Revelation is often drawn from the visions in the book of Daniel.

### Daniel and The Apocalyptic Genre

Most theologians consider Daniel an apocalypse. This is true because of the fact that the book of Daniel contains the only full-blown example of apocalyptic literature in Hebrew Bible. And Collins states that, because of the fact, "it has received far more attention than any other Jewish apocalypse, but its special status has not always been beneficial."<sup>13</sup> What does this designation mean? Is it an appropriate label for Daniel? Collins himself acknowledges that the word "apocalyptic" often addresses fanatical millenarian expectation, and indeed the canonical apocalypses of Daniel and especially John have very often been used by millenarian groups in viewing the future.<sup>14</sup> But, does an apocalypse always contain apocalyptic eschatology? Probably not, therefore, the question becomes, what is apocalyptic genre?

Both Ferch and Collins agree that the beginning of the study of this genre is quite recent. It began as an independent investigation in 1832 when Lucke proposed to examine the book of Revelation (*Apokalypsis*) in the context of compositions referred to as apocalyptic literature. Though it became less interested in the second half of the nineteenth century, the revival was again flamed after the World War II. The subject unfortunately was very difficult that it has left many questions unanswered. Though this precise relation within the apocalyptic works has been inevitable scholarly debate, there has been general agreement on the corpus of literature that is relevant to the discussion and can be called

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<sup>13</sup>John J. Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 85.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.

"apocalyptic."

The original meaning of the term comes from the Greek word ἀποκαλυψις~ which means "disclosure" or "revelation." According to Ferch, the earliest presently known use of the word to designate a literary composition is found in Revelation 1:1. Because the last book of the Bible is called Apocalypse, it has become customary to designate apocalypses to other literary forms that are similar to the book of Revelation. Ferch further says that most theologians generally agree that substantial portions of the book of Daniel, to a lesser degree sections of Isaiah (chap 24-27), Ezekiel (chap 40-48), Joel (chap 3), Zechariah (chap 9-14), the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 17 and 21), and of the Pauline Letters (e.g. 2 Thessalonians 2) are apocalyptic in nature.<sup>15</sup> There are also materials outside of canonical Scripture that are included in the apocalyptic genre.<sup>16</sup> These extra-biblical works are 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, Apocalypse of Abraham, 3 Baruch, 2 Enoch, Testament of Levi 2-5, the fragmentary Apocalypse of Zephaniah, and with some qualification to Jubilees and the Testament of Abraham. However, the list grows more and more and now it includes writings of not only Jewish and Christians writers but also Gnostic, Greek, Roman, and Persian.

Ferch warns that the apocalyptic genre has been applied as a metaphor for our twentieth-century human condition with its crises and agonies. This trend can be seen in articles, books, and films that deal with our chaotic and anxious age. However, we must be careful not to read modern concerns and ideas into the works of antiquity. Ferch thinks this is so important because most contemporary so-called apocalyptic writings are Godless and see little hope of a new beginning or any possibility of salvation.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Arthur J. Ferch, *Daniel on Solid Ground* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1988), 68.

<sup>16</sup>Collins thinks that one should not attempt to dismiss the noncanonical apocalypses as Daniel's "second-rate imitators" (*A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 85).

<sup>17</sup>Ferch, *Daniel on Solid Ground*, 69-70.

<sup>18</sup>Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 85.

However, Collins thinks that we should put under considerations those extra-biblical works.<sup>19</sup> Above all, I think a Christian should consider these extra-biblical materials as far as "they agree with the canonical books."<sup>20</sup> Moreover, I think it is wrong to impose the modern phenomenon and try to match them with the apocalyptic visions. There is a need of hermeneutical rules to read the apocalyptic writings in general.

J. J. Collins once introduced the definition of apocalypse 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."<sup>21</sup> The form of apocalypses involves a narrative framework that describes the manner of revelation. The main means of revelation are visions and otherworldly journeys, supplemented by discourse or dialogue and occasionally by a heavenly book. The constant element is the presence of an angel who interprets the vision or serves as a guide on the otherworldly journey. The human recipient is a venerable figure from the distant past, whose name is used pseudonymously. This device adds to the remoteness and mystery of the revelation. The content involves both a temporal and a spatial dimension. The emphasis is distributed differently. Collins picks the book of Daniel as an example that it contains an elaborate review of history, presented in the form of prophecy and culminating in a time of crisis and eschatological upheaval.

However, there are many debates among scholars themselves as to this definition. Ferch argues that for scholars in order to analyze the works and define their characteristics, all the works comprising this type of literature need to be collected. Unfortunately, he laments, scholars are far from unanimous as to which compositions should be included under the rubric of apocalyptic. The other factors which add to the problem are questions over literary form and theological content. Ferch furthermore argues that the confusion comes especially when scholars offer definitions based primarily

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<sup>19</sup>"Belgic Confession Art. 6" in *Ecumenical Creed and Reformed Confessions*.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 4-5.



on form or on content rather than on both. In addition, writers tend to concentrate on that which is distinct and predominant in this type of literature, namely, the dream and vision sections.<sup>21</sup>

Ferch also reminds us that the authors of the works we now designate as apocalyptic did not consider their writings to belong to a clear definition of this literary category.<sup>22</sup> The writers of such compositions did not employ a single literary stereotype to express their thoughts. The authors of both Revelation and Daniel communicated their messages by utilizing several literary types or genres. Even the visions and dreams use a number of literary forms. Ferch points out that literary genre in Revelation 2 and 3 is different from Revelation 12 and 13. Daniel 3-6 varies from Daniel 7-12. In solving this problem, scholars have proposed that apocalyptic literature should be seen as a complex of literary forms with several sub-forms.<sup>23</sup>

Both Ferch and Collins<sup>24</sup> have agreed that there are two camps of scholars who have suggested broad and narrow, inclusive and exclusive definitions of apocalyptic. The inclusive approach sacrifices the distinctiveness of apocalyptic against other types of revelatory material as may be found in the prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea, and others. The exclusive approach tends to exclude from the apocalyptic corpus works that do not contain previews of history and cosmic transformation. They classify only those with these characteristics under the rubric apocalyptic. Given these complexities the definitions of apocalyptic literatures have to remain flexible. However, there are still basic agreements among theologians about certain literary and theological features that characterize apocalyptic.

There are some features to the genre of apocalyptic.<sup>25</sup> First, from the definition, such discourse contains disclosures of the future and revelations of the heavenly realities. In these works the curtain that hides

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<sup>21</sup> Ferch, *Daniel on Solid Ground*, 70-71.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-73.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-77.

the heavenly world from our view is drawn aside, and we are given a glimpse of the divine world and its involvement in the affairs of the world. Secondly, as mentioned above, the message is usually transmitted to the seer from God by an otherworldly being. The apocalyptic compositions record messages that have been mediated by a third party. Angelic beings are prominent in the book of Revelation (Rev. 5:2; 7:1; 8:2; 10:1, etc.). Thirdly, many apocalypses seem to arise in settings of crisis, despair, and persecution. The message John received in Patmos was to provide instruction, encouragement, and assurance of God's presence to his people. Fourthly, some striking contrasts usually dominate the apocalyptic works. Sometimes these contrasts between good and evil, the present and the future are very dominant in apocalyptic thought. Fifthly, the apocalyptic writing is usually full of imagery. Sometimes, the symbolism in apocalyptic compositions is often heightened and composite. Sixthly, the visions and dreams of the apocalypses reveal not only the invisible world but also God's long-range plans for human history. And finally, generally in apocalyptic writings, the unfolding of events is inevitable.

Therefore, from these qualifications, we may ask, "Is Daniel an Apocalypse?" Ferch asserts that in the book of Daniel, "the dreams, visions, and auditions take the form of revelations concerning future events."<sup>29</sup> He mentions three examples: 1) In Dan. 2:28, Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, "There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come;" 2) The angel informed Daniel that the vision recorded in chapter 8 "concerns the appointed time of the end... Seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future" (Dan. 8:19, 26); 3) A heavenly being says in chapter 10, "Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come." Furthermore, in chapter 4 and 5, it also narrates dreams and interpretations about the immediate future of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar.

Ferch also agrees that many times in Daniel, supernatural beings

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<sup>29</sup>Ferch, *Daniel on Solid Ground*, 77.

mediate and interpret the messages Daniel receives. Daniel even asks them what the visions mean (Dan. 7:16). The seer is once more enlightened by one who stood before him and looked like a man (Dan. 8:15-26). Gabriel also illumined Daniel in Dan. 9:22-27, and another heavenly being instructs the prophet in chapters 10-12.<sup>27</sup> These heavenly beings do not only function as mediators to Daniel but also as protectors in the lions' den (Dan. 6:22) and in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:28).

Like John in the Apocalypse, Daniel received his messages while in involuntary exile. Jerusalem and the Temple lay in ruins and most of people of Judah were in Babylon. This was a time of crisis and oppression. At this hard time, God gave Daniel visions that assured him and his exiled people that Yahweh was in control. The power of God will overcome his enemy who seemed to be triumphant. During this time, God's messages give encouragement and comfort to his people.

However, Collins observes that the visions of Daniel are not only reflections of the historical crisis.<sup>28</sup> They are highly imaginative constructions of it, shaped by mythic paradigms as by the actual events. The events in Daniel are guided by higher powers, expressed through the mythological symbolism (e.g. symbolism of the beasts and the rider in chap. 7 and as angelic princes in chap. 10). To the readers, there is an assurance that the course of history is predetermined by God. The destiny of the wise lies beyond this life in a resurrection and pertains to the world of angels. With this imaginative construction, the book tries to encourage the persecuted Jews, "first, by bringing its enormity to expression so that it can be clearly recognized, second, by providing assurance that the forces of evil will inevitably be overcome by a higher power, and ultimately by providing a framework for action since it furnishes an explanation of the world that supports those who have to lay their lives down if they remain faithful to their religion."<sup>29</sup>

This hope is expressed in imaginative symbolism which dominates the book of Daniel. There is a human image, a winged lion and leopard, a beast

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<sup>27</sup>Ferch, *Daniel on Solid Ground*, 78.

<sup>28</sup>Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 114.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 114-115.

with iron teeth and claws of bronze, a little horn with eyes and a mouth, a ram, a he-goat and finally a man-like being. The vivid imagery is a characteristic of apocalyptic literature.

The book of Daniel also contrasts the kingdom of this world with the kingdom of God, the power of evil and the divine power. The seer envisions events occurring in heaven that simultaneously correspond with events on earth (Dan. 7:8-14). The present realities will be replaced by future glory (Dan. 12:8-13).

Ferch makes an interesting point which is unique for Daniel compared to the other prophetic writings.<sup>30</sup> From chapters 2, 7, 8, and 11, we see that God preordained the course of events. Other powers would succeed until finally an indestructible and triumphant kingdom of God would totally supersede all human authorities. It is quite right when Ferch asserts that for Daniel, that which "has been determined must take place" (Dan. 11:36). This represents a cosmic sweep and unfolding of history characteristics of apocalyptic genre which distinguish Daniel from other prophets.

From these features in the book of Daniel, it is clear that it mirrors the characteristics of biblical apocalyptic. It meets the other characteristics presented in the apocalyptic writings such as the book of Revelation, though for some reasons it still can be debatable. One still has to acknowledge that though it is apocalyptic in nature, the book itself includes a variety of literary forms and theological emphases.

### Structure of Daniel

Interestingly, the book of Daniel is found among the Writings in the Hebrew Bible but it is more associated with the prophets in the modern Christian editions of Scripture. In a nutshell, the first half (chaps. 1-6) of the book narrates the exile account of Daniel and his companions, deported to Babylon and rising to prominence in the Babylonian court. The second half of the book deals with the revelations given to Daniel with reference to a later time. Collins acknowledges that the Roman Catholic church includes

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<sup>30</sup>Ferch, *Daniel on Solid Ground*, 80.

the two long prayers in Daniel chapter 3 and the stories of Susanna and Bel and the Serpent in their canon.<sup>31</sup>

The assumption has been that the book is written by Daniel in his Babylonian Exile.<sup>32</sup> Both the church and the synagogue have taught that the book of Daniel came from the hands of the sixth century BC statesman-seer known as Daniel.<sup>33</sup> However, in the first half (chaps. 1-6), the narrative contains a series of third person stories about Daniel and the last half of the book (chaps. 7-12), the author wrote the first-person account of the revelations he received.<sup>34</sup>

In seventeenth century, Spinoza and Newton began to research the authenticity of the authorship.<sup>35</sup> Then they both agreed that the second part of the book came from the hand of the historical Daniel, but professed they had no idea as to the identity of the writer of the first half. Not until 1919, triggered by an essay by Gustav Holscher, the debate about the unity of Daniel became a serious theological discussion. In addition, Harold Rowley presented his theory in 1950 that the entire book of Daniel was written by an unknown author of the second century BC. Most scholars, says Ferch, now abandon Rowley's theory and agree that the sixth century BC, statesman-prophet mentioned in the book was not the author. Most scholars (initiated by Holscher and continued by Noth, Dalman, Torrey, Montgomery, Delcor, and Lacocque<sup>36</sup>) now believe that several writers contributed to the book with a long and "drawn-out" formation which began in the sixth century BC and terminated in the mid-second century BC. This method has been labeled the "developmental theory."

Collins thinks that this developmental theory arose because of at

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<sup>31</sup>Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 1.

<sup>32</sup>This claim is not found in the book.

<sup>33</sup>Ferch, *Daniel on Solid Ground*, 18.

<sup>34</sup>Collins observes that only chapters 8-12 are presented directly in the first person; even chapter 7 has an introductory sentence in the third person before it switches to direct speech (*A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 24).

<sup>35</sup>Ferch, *Daniel on Solid Ground*, 18-19.

<sup>36</sup>Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 28.

least of three factors.<sup>37</sup> First is the problem of two languages. The book of Daniel is bilingual, being partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic.<sup>38</sup> This considerations that link chap. 7 more closely with chaps. 8-12 than with 2-6. Secondly, there is a contrast of genre between the court tales (chaps. 1-6) and the revelations (chaps. 7-12). For example, in the earlier chapters, the dreams function as elements within larger stories, whereas in chap. 7, as in 8-12, the revelation is the sole focus of attention. While Daniel interprets the dream of others in chapters 2 and 4, in chapter 7, he himself is the dreamer. There are other genre differences that contribute to the developmental theory: the chronological setting of chap. 2 is incompatible with the data of chap. 1 and the sequence of chapters are out of chronological order. Thirdly, there are problems of historical reference in the book. Collins spells out that there are on the one hand, "explicit but erroneous allusions to the exilic period," while on the other hand, "veiled but accurate allusions to the Hellenistic age and the persecution of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes."<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, most theologians and scholars now believe that Daniel 7-12 was written under the religious persecution of the Jews by the "Seleucid tyrant Antiochus IV Epiphanes."<sup>40</sup> This chunk of material was written much later than chapters 1-6. The author incorporates this part into his or their oral traditions or written materials (consisting substantially chapters 2-6).

Amid the proofs of disunity in Daniel, there are also others who think that there are also convincing evidences of the unity in Daniel. There are some convincing indications of unity, I think, which Ferch acquired from Rowley.<sup>41</sup> First, there is the natural flow from one chapter to the next. It is undoubtedly true that the second chapter presupposes the knowledge of the first chapter where Daniel, his Hebrews friends, and

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<sup>37</sup>Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 29.

<sup>38</sup>Some even say that Persian influence also can be seen in Daniel.

<sup>39</sup>Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 29.

<sup>40</sup>Ferch, *Daniel on Solid Ground*, 19.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 23-26.

Nebuchadnezzar were introduced. Similarly, the golden image of Daniel 3, erected in honor of the king, is related to the statue of chapter 2, of which the golden head represents Nebuchadnezzar. The final events of Belshazzar's last night recorded in Daniel 5 presuppose the story of Nebuchadnezzar's madness in chapter 4. Furthermore, the reign of Darius depicted in Daniel 6 takes for granted the fall of Babylon mentioned in Daniel 5. This sequence of narratives do prepare the readers in order to jump to the revelations dominated by Daniel's visions.

Secondly, there are several common themes to the stories and visions. God's sovereignty is repeatedly emphasized throughout Daniel. Passivism is enjoined upon God's people in both stories and visions. The fall of the enemy of God is caused by pride (in chaps. 4 and 5) and by arrogance (chaps. 7-12). The fulfillments of the predictions of chapters 4 and 5 inspire confidence in the future fulfillments of the dreams and interpretations outlined in the visions.

Thirdly, Daniel 7 is particularly significant because it joins the narratives with the prophecies by virtue of its language, symmetry, sequence, literary form and content. The structure of Daniel 7-12 repeats the cycle of dates recorded in chapters 1-6, beginning with Babylon and ending with Medo-Persia. And interestingly, the structure of Daniel 7 is an inverted parallelism. The literary form and content of Daniel 7 resembles chapters 8-12 more closely, yet its language and symmetry approximate the first half of the book, chaps. 1-6.

Fourth, Ferch also mentions peculiar stylistic features that are found throughout the book. For examples, the book speaks of several classes of wise men (Dan. 2:2, 10, 27; 4:7; 5:7, 11), the royal officers (Dan. 3:2, 3; 6:7) and lists of Nebuchadnezzar's orchestra (Dan. 3:5, 7, 10, and 15). Furthermore, there is also a characteristic phrase of "people, nations, and languages" which bridges chapters 3-7.

Fifthly, there is a parallel of visions in the book and interestingly, they progress in complexity toward the end of the chapter. Therefore the vision in chapter 2 is the simplest whereas the chapters 7, 8-9, 10-12 increase in complexity and detail.

Lastly, Ferch identifies a particular literary form, the chiasmus, which

characterizes much of Daniel. Within the Aramaic part of Daniel, chapter 2-7, we find a chiasmus:<sup>42</sup>

- A Vision of world history (chapter 2)
- B Deliverance from the fiery furnace (chapter 3)
- C Judgment upon a Gentile King (chapter 4)
- C' Judgment upon a Gentile King (chapter 5)
- B' Deliverance from the lions' den (chapter 6)
- A' Vision of the world history (chapter 7)

Similarly, there is also chiasmus order in the vision of Daniel in chapter 7:<sup>43</sup>

- A First three beasts (vv. 4-6)
- B Fourth beast (v. 7)
- C Description of the little horn speaking great thing (v. 8)
- D The Judgment (vv. 9-10, supplemented by the second half in vv. 13-14)
- C' (Fate of) little horn speaking great things (v. 11, first part)
- B' Fate of the fourth beast (v. 11, last part)
- A' Fate of the first three beasts (v. 12)

Ferch also finds several other examples of chiastic structures within the book of Daniel (8:9-12; 9:24-27). The sequence of languages written in Daniel, beginning with Hebrew, then Aramaic, and ends in Hebrew, also signifies the same phenomenon.

Following J. J. Collins in his commentary on Daniel, I find the structure of the book he presents convincing:

- I. Introduction: Exiles at the Royal Court (1:1-21)
  - a. General Introduction (1:1-2)
  - b. Introduction of the Jewish Protagonists (1:3-7)
  - c. The Trial by Diet (1:8-16)
  - d. The Conclusion (1:17-21)

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<sup>42</sup>Ferch is indebted to Lenglet for this structure in *Daniel on the Solid Ground*, 26-27.

<sup>43</sup>I am indebted to the analysis of Ferch in *Daniel on the Solid Ground*, 27.



- II. The Destinies of the Nations (2:1-7:28)
  - 1. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (2:1-49)
    - a. Introduction (2:1)
    - b. The Dialogue of the King and the Wise Men (2:2-12)
    - c. Daniel's Intervention (2:13-16)
    - d. The Revelation to Daniel (2:17-24)
    - e. The Dialogue of Daniel with the King (2:25-45) (Excursus: The Four Kingdoms).
    - f. Conclusion (2:46-49)
  - 2. The Fiery Furnace (3:1-30)
    - a. Introduction (3:1-7)
    - b. The Accusation (3:8-12)
    - c. The Interrogation (3:13-18)
    - d. The Condemnation (3:19-23)
    - e. The King's Astonishment (3:24-25)
    - f. The Deliverance (3:26-27)
    - g. Proclamation of Nebuchadnezzar (3:28-30)

The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men  
(acknowledged by Roman Catholic church)
  - 3. Nebuchadnezzar's Madness (3:31-4:34)
    - a. Introduction (3:31-33)
    - b. The Opening Narrative (4:1-5)
    - c. The Dream Report (4:6-15)
    - d. The Interpretation (4:16-24)
    - e. The Fulfillment (4:25-30)
    - f. Concluding Proclamation (4:31-34)
  - 4. Belshazzar's Feast (5:1-6:1)
    - a. Introduction (5:1-6)
    - b. Attempts to Find a Solution (5:7-12)
    - c. Daniel before the King (5:13-28)
    - d. Conclusion (5:29-6:1)

5. The Lions' Den (6:2-29)
    - a. Introduction (6:2-4)
    - b. The Conspiracy (6:5:10)
    - c. The Condemnation (6:11-18)
    - d. The Deliverance (6:19-25)
    - e. The Proclamation (6:26-28)
    - f. Conclusion (6:29)
  6. The Beasts from the Sea, the Ancient of Days, and the "One Like a Human Being" (7:1-28)
    - a. Introduction (7:1-2a)
    - b. The Vision Report (7:2b-14) (Excursus: One Like a Human Being)
    - c. Interpretation (7:15-18) (Excursus: Holy Ones)
    - d. The Fourth Beast (7:19-27)
    - e. Conclusion (7:28)
- III. The Destiny of Israel (8:1-12:13)
1. The Ram and the He-Goat (8:1-27)
    - a. Introduction (8:1-2)
    - b. The Vision (8:3-14)
    - c. The Interpretation (8:15-26)
    - d. Conclusion (8:27)
  2. Seventy Weeks of Years (9:1-27)
    - a. Introduction (9:1-2)
    - b. Daniel's Prayer (9:3-19)
    - c. The Revelation (9:20-27)
  3. The Final Revelation (10:1-12:13)
    - a. The Vision by the River (ch. 10)
    - b. Hellenistic History (ch. 11)
    - c. The Resurrection (ch. 12)
      1. Introduction (10:1)
      2. The Epiphany (10:2-9)
      3. Dialogue with the Angel (10:10-11:1)
      4. The Angelic Discourse (11:2-12:4) (Excursus: On

Resurrection)

5. Epilogue (12:5-13)

Bel and the Serpent (Dragon) and Susanna (acknowledged by the Roman Catholic church)

### Dispensational Handling of Daniel and a Critical Evaluation

Walvoord once says, "The earth has become a global community with events of a world-transforming nature rapidly takes place. In these circumstances it is important to ask if the prophecies of the Bible cast any light on present world events and if they chart a course for the future."<sup>44</sup> Therefore the study of biblical prophecy will enlighten the significance of world events. In fact, he thinks that the Bible offers an outline of world history that has already had dramatic fulfillment and clearly implies that dramatic events "may soon fulfill prophecies" as yet unfulfilled. Then he concludes that the prophecies of the Bible will help one understand what is happening in the world.

The book of Daniel has been treated as the key to understanding the book of Revelation by dispensationalists.<sup>45</sup> For them, events of the end time were predicted accurately and precisely by Daniel in the sixth century BC. Scofield has treated Daniel as the book embodying prophecies of the sequence of kingdoms in "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24; Rev. 16:19) and portraying the end of this period.<sup>46</sup> In dispensationalism, the predictive element in prophecy is of the greatest consequence since many events foretold by Daniel have already happened or soon will. For them, in 1948, God's time clock, which apparently stopped when Jerusalem fell to the Romans, was restarted by the beginning of the state of Israel, and the

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<sup>44</sup>John F. Walvoord, *Major Bible Prophecies* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 125.

<sup>45</sup>C. Scofield, *Scofield Reference Bible*, 896.

<sup>46</sup>Scofield, however, makes exception of this generalization in Daniel 9:24-27, which is the time of Christ's first advent, instead the second one (*Scofield Reference Bible*, 896).

seventieth week of Daniel 9 will soon unfold. Then we may expect soon the rapture, the great tribulation, the millenium, and Christ's second coming.

Daniel 9 sets the dates, but other chapters such as 2, 7, and 11 give the details of coming political events<sup>47</sup> involving the European Common Market Countries (as successor of the Roman Empire), Russia, China, and Egypt. Everything, however, center around Israel, a modern nation whose history since 1948 was predetermined by God over 2500 years ago. The greatest project for them is rebuilding the Jerusalem temple and the return to sacrificial worship there. The Jews are expanding through war at the end times. What really matters for dispensationalists is that Christians, who are prepared for Christ's coming for them, will escape the most horrible events in history that take place during the great tribulation. This will last 7 or 3.5 years (the last week of half-week of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Dan. 9).

It is impossible to discuss the whole detailed dispensationalists interpretation of Daniel in this paper. However, I will give an example of a dispensationalists' interpretation on Daniel 9:24-27.<sup>48</sup> Hopefully, from this example we can see a comprehensive view of a dispensationalist interpretation of Daniel. Then a critical evaluation is followed from the perspective of Reformed theology on how the dispensationalists handle Daniel and prophecy in general.

Dispensationalists agree that the key to interpreting prophecy is Israel.<sup>49</sup> In the study of prophecy, Israel becomes the center of biblical prophecy and that to understand prophecy as a whole one must understand God's purpose for Israel. Walvoord claims that the neglecting of biblical revelation about Israel and many attempts to twist prophecies about Israel as referring to the church result in "inattention to Israel until revived

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<sup>47</sup>Wendell W. Frerichs, "How Many Weeks until the End?", *Word and World* 15 (Spring 1995): 171.

<sup>48</sup>This interpretation is represented by Kenneth L. Barker in "Premilleannism in the Book of Daniel", in *The Master Seminary Journal* 4:1 (Spring 1993) acquired from the internet. I am indebted to him for this example.

<sup>49</sup>We assume that Walvoord is one of the representative of dispensationalism. I assume that the term Israel in his discourse is the physical Israel in the land of Palestine.

interest in prophecy in the twentieth century directed attention once again to Israel's prophesied future."<sup>50</sup> Daniel 9:24-27 represents one of the keys to unlock the secret of the future for dispensationalists. Barker claims that this passage pertains to a promised future kingdom, one of the texts which are "most relevant" to premillennialism.<sup>51</sup> The vision in Daniel 9:24-27 occurred when Daniel was praying and confessing his sin and the sin of his people. He sums up in v. 24 the good status to which God will restore Israel in a prophecy that corresponds to the precise concerns of the prayer: "Your people," "your holy city," and the "temple," "the most holy place." Suddenly, Gabriel whom he had seen earlier, gave the vision about the seventy "sevens." This vision is concerning the 490, 70 times 7, years. This number is divided into three units. First, seven "sevens"<sup>52</sup>, then a second period of sixty-two "sevens," and a final period of one "seven." How does a dispensationalist interpret this passage?

According to Barker, the outline of Israel's history after the Babylonian exile is traced in the prophecy of the 70 "weeks." This prophecy demonstrates the distinct place of Israel in God's purposes, delineating her relationship to Gentile powers and the cutting off of her Messiah. God's present purpose in calling out a people from every nation to form the church is not specifically in view. Instead, the church age must fit between the sixty-ninth and seventieth "weeks." Barker furthermore lays out his presuppositions or what he calls "the principal ingredients of the prophecy" in this passage. The entire prophecy, he asserts, relates to Daniel's people and Daniel's city, i.e., the covenant nation Israel and the city of Jerusalem (v. 24). Two rulers mentioned are not to be confused: the Messiah (v. 25) and the ruler who will come (v. 26). Furthermore the reckoning of time begins with "the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" (v. 25). Then the appearance of the Anointed One as ruler of Israel marks the

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<sup>50</sup>Walvoord, *Major Bible Prophecies*, 165.

<sup>51</sup>Kenneth L. Barker, "Premillennialism in the Book of Daniel."

<sup>52</sup>This is the literal meaning of the Hebrew word, however, it can be referred to "days," "weeks," "months," or even "years." KJV chooses to use "weeks" but NIV uses "years." Dispensationalists agree that it might be closer refer to "years."

end of the first 69 "weeks" (v. 25). After the 69 "weeks," the Messianic ruler will be cut off, Jerusalem will again be destroyed by the people of another ruler who is yet to come, and war and desolations will continue until the decreed end (v. 26). The establishment of a firm covenant or treaty between the coming ruler and Israel for one "week" signals the beginning of the seventieth "week" (v. 27). In the middle of seventieth "week," the coming ruler will break his covenant with Israel, will forcibly put an end to Jewish sacrifice, and will initiate against the Jews a time of unprecedented persecution and desolation that will last to the end of the "week" (v. 27). Then this coming ruler will be disposed. After the completion of the entire period of the 70 "weeks," a time of unparalleled blessing will begin for the people of Israel (v. 24).<sup>53</sup>

Barker then implements these presuppositions to his interpretation of the whole "sevens." The issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (v. 25) signals the beginning of the 70 sevens. According to Barker, it is most natural to identify this decree as that of Artaxerxes, king of Persia in 445/444 BC (cf. Neh. 2:1-7). The first division of the 69 sevens was 7 sevens (49 years) to the rebuilding and full restoration of Jerusalem with the streets and a trench (v. 25). Then 62 more sevens (434 years) represented the second division. This division extended to the coming of the Messianic ruler (v. 25). The accuracy of Daniel's prophecy finds further confirmation in the statement "after the 62 sevens, the Anointed One will be cut off" (v. 26). The anointed one is Jesus Christ, who is cut off by His death on the cross.

Then there is the gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth sevens. This gap exists because first, the seventieth seven could not have been fulfilled because the results of the Messiah's work outlined in v. 24 have not yet been realized. Secondly, all the remaining unfulfilled prophecies become unintelligible unless the present church age is regarded as a distinct period

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<sup>53</sup>There are six purpose-blessings in v. 24 pertain primarily to Christ's first advent, His sacrificial death and the redemption provided thereby and the last three to His second advent His crown, His sovereignty and His reign (Barker, "Premillennialism in the Book of Daniel").

of time of unknown duration in God's prophetic program (Israel's great unconditional covenants). Verse 26 requires a gap which consists of cutting off of the Messiah (AD 30/33), the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem (AD 70) and the war until the decreed end.<sup>54</sup> Then, the most natural interpretation of v. 27 is that the seventieth seven is yet unfulfilled and future.

Now we start with the beginning of the seventieth seven (v. 27). First of all, he in the first word of v. 27, according to Barker, is not the Messianic ruler of v. 25, but the coming ruler of v. 26. This figure is to be identified with the little horn of Daniel 7, the willful king of Dan. 11:36, the man of lawlessness of 2 Thessalonians 2, and the beast of Rev. 13:1-10. This seven year period described in Dan. 9:27 begins then with the making of a covenant or treaty between Israel and the future Antichrist, who will be the leader of a confederation of states within the territory of the Roman Empire.

Then Barker outlines the blueprint of the fulfillment of the seventieth seven which will happen in "the future." The seventieth seven is a period of seven years that, according to this writer's opinion, lies between Christ's future return for the church (i.e., the rapture) and his glorious revelation at his second coming to earth. It also provides the chronological framework for the great events of Revelation 6:18, a section describing the tribulation period. It furthermore commences with the effecting of a treaty between the coming ruler (the Antichrist) and the Jewish people (the many in v. 27). In the middle of the seventieth seven, the Antichrist will reverse his friendly policy toward Israel, will break the treaty, and will "put an end to sacrifice and offering," presumably in a rebuilt Jewish temple. The covenant between Israel and the Antichrist will unleash a period of unprecedented desolations, persecutions, and great distress or tribulation for the Jewish people (cf. Rev. 3:10; 7:14; and Rev. 6:18). Finally, the end of the final seven year period will bring to completion the entire series of the 70

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<sup>54</sup>Barker also claims that Jesus himself anticipated a gap when he placed the seventieth seven, with its reference to "the abomination that causes desolation" (Matt. 24:15-30).

sevens, will mark the termination of the period of human government, will see the destruction for the desolator (cf. Rev. 19:20), and will usher in the great blessings promised to Israel in Dan. 9:24.

Therefore, it is clear, according to Barker, that the most natural interpretation of Dan. 9:24-27 leads to the conclusion that the seventieth seven (period of tribulation) is future. It will be terminated by Christ's return to the earth and will be followed by the millennial aspect of the Messiah's reign, which will include a kingdom of "everlasting righteousness." Then Barker concludes that this theory definitely strengthens the position of premillennialism, which is the most consistent position with the teaching of Scripture.

How does Reformed-Evangelical Theology analyze this passage? Among scholars in this school there have been recent treatments of Daniel, however, they are sometimes caught up in the number game of the dispensationalists. There still seems to be too much attention to prophecy as prediction, as though faith could be compelled by someone who accurately foretold a coming event. It is a bit much to hear over and over again, that the Pope is the predecessor of the Antichrist. In the following, there are several critics established by this group against the dispensationalists<sup>55</sup>.

First of all, as mentioned by Walvoord, the issue concerns Israel. Dispensationalists broke with the Biblical idea of the church and rejected the unity of the covenants. It divided redemptive history into dispensations.<sup>56</sup> In each dispensation we see God working with humanity in a different way. Each dispensation fails before the shift to the next one is made. In each dispensation God makes different demands on mankind. For example, the demand in our age is acceptance of the Gospel through faith. Then in the future, believers will be taken up to heaven when Christ return the first time (without being seen). That return will bring the dispensation of the church to an end. Then the OT dispensation will be restored.

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<sup>55</sup>This does not necessarily narrow down specifically to understanding Daniel.

<sup>56</sup>As does Daniel 9 where periods of sevens are different dispensations.



The response from Reformed theology is that the OT covenant and the NT covenant really two parts of one and the same covenant of grace. There are indeed different dispensations, but there is only one covenant, and it always has the same structure. In any dispensation, the covenant remains one in structure, for the God of promise, command and threat remains the same. The Reformers maintain that Jesus' renewal of the covenant did not lead to a covenant with an entirely different structure.<sup>57</sup> Jesus is the New Israel, a true and faithful one. He is the model of the people of God who have existed since God poured his blessings to Abraham. The current dispensation of the covenant is basically no different with the OT dispensation and it is determinative for the future.

Secondly, because of the complicated languages of the Bible, one has to be very careful in interpreting the visions. We should note that prophecy may simply be defined as the content of the special revelations which specifically called men to receive and by which they explained the past, elucidated the present, and disclosed the future. In Daniel 9, this specially called seer was brought into the inner council of God by means of visions and symbolic numbers. Furthermore, given so many different authors writing over so many years, as in the case of Daniel 9, one would expect prophecy to be little more than a collection of "apohoristic" predictions and "sagacious" sayings.<sup>58</sup> However, it was organically woven into its *Sitz im Leben*. The prophet more keenly sensed his participation in an ongoing dialogue in the revelation. The language and the thinking of the prophet had his own particular perspective. And often times, all these factors can lead to two possibilities: unexplained symbols, as in Daniel 9:24-27, or explained symbols (e.g. head of gold represents Nebuchadnezzar in Dan. 2:37-38; two-horned ram represents Medo-Persian kings in Dan. 8:20).<sup>59</sup>

I think the Reformed-Evangelical position takes the vision of

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<sup>57</sup>John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 2.10.2.

<sup>58</sup>Walter C. Kaiser, *Back Toward the Future* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 42.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 44-46. \*

Gabriel seriously. Jerusalem and Israel are precious to God and have not been abandoned. God is faithful to the many promises made over many centuries. First of all, following directly from Daniel 9:24, is God's final dealing with human rebellion and perversity. According to Frerichs, the inter-testamental community was the most serious about this and fastidiously observed the Day of Atonement and daily sacrifices for sin. There is no doubt, therefore, that the desecration of the sanctuary by Antiochus was a monstrous act. But rededicating the temple at Antiochus' death did not solve the problem for long. In 70 AD, the Romans totally destroyed it. Therefore the Jews had to observe "Yom Kippur" and deal with sin in ways other than through animal sacrifice.<sup>60</sup>

Frerichs thinks that whether Dan. 9:24 is a messianic verse or not, we cannot interpret it except in the light of what we know to be its fulfillment. This is what the NT did when its authors looked at these same verses. The NT is a reinterpretation of Daniel, just as Daniel was of Jeremiah (see Matt. 24). The vision and the prophet have been sealed. They are confirmed by God's subsequent acts in history and affirmed over and over again in the experience of the people of God. We see that God's enemies have been destroyed. God is faithful to us and sends his son and makes the death of our Lord become the atoning death for our sins. The boastful enemies of God never stay in power and it is finally God who decides when they will end. It may be wrong to prepare a time chart that we expect God to follow. God's time chart will prevail and the Lord will return.

Thirdly, according to Vanderwaal, not all the Biblical prophets were making predictions and foretelling the future.<sup>61</sup> The prophets speak the Word of God and therefore they function within a covenant in context. As their message touches on the future, they do point to events down the road. But the prophets never make predictions as such. Their message is conditional and tied in with God's promises and His threats. Their prophecy was possible only within the covenant context, to remind the rebellious people to turn their

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<sup>60</sup>Frerichs, "How Many Weeks Until the End?", 173.

<sup>61</sup>C. Vanderwaal, *Hal Lindsey and Biblical Prophecy* (St. Catherines: Paidea Press, 1978), 51.

face to God for repentance. They were not concerned with authenticating their prophecies by presenting predictions that came true. Dispensationalists miss the covenant context of the prophecy and fail to realize that the words of the prophets were meant as an appeal to God's people to change their ways. Instead, they make foretelling the future basic to prophecy and therefore lose sight of the central message.

I totally agree with Vanderwall who is concerned about Christians and turn the Bible "into a book of puzzles" that we can only find the answer if we have the clue.<sup>62</sup> This group of Christians turns the gospel into a secret teaching to be understood only by a few initiates or insiders. "God's Word becomes a book of riddles that may unlock the secret of the future – if we're clever enough to read the lines on the palm of world history."<sup>63</sup> The Gospel is the good news to the people about Christ who forgives our sin, not about the prediction of the future end of humankind.

### The Relationship Between Daniel and Revelation

The key to understand this proper relationship is to unlock the purpose of Daniel quotations or allusions<sup>64</sup> in the book of Revelation. Revelation was the first book in the Jewish and Christian tradition that was explicitly presented as an Apocalypse. First of all, one has to get this straight: OT quotations, or specifically Daniel's, are not to indicate a fulfillment of prophecy, for the formulae found in the Gospels do not exist in the book of Revelation.<sup>65</sup> These allusions furthermore were understood by the early church as an embellishment in the book, instead of conferring future predictions. Apocalyptic literature, such as the book of Revelation, demands certain figures to express its meaning. Therefore when one studies the Apocalypse,

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<sup>62</sup>C. Vanderwaal, *Hal Lindsey and Biblical Prophecy*, 55.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Collins confirms that the book of Revelation never explicitly quotes Scripture (*A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 102).

<sup>65</sup>Jenkins claims that the formula "it is written..." (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10); "that the Scripture may be fulfilled," (Jn. 13:18) or "to fulfill what the Lord has spoken by the prophet," (Matt. 1:22) are not found in Revelation (*The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*, 27).

he should understand that John knew his source material well and that the symbols and images of the OT simply flowed into his writing with ease because they fit the circumstances about which he wrote.

Furthermore, Jenkins also states that we have to realize that in the ancient time, when one wrote a discourse, he does not write down comments in footnotes.<sup>66</sup> This is apparent in the writer of Revelation. He does not supply the reader with massive footnote references. With nearly 400 allusions to the OT in a book of 404 verses, we can hardly imagine the maze of quotations marks that would be necessary.

The next fact is that it is possible that John may have frequently paraphrased the quotations he used. He may have made free translations of the Hebrew or a slight modification in the wording so that it would fit his purpose. And sometimes the quotations may not come from a passage, but from a more general teaching. Some verses from different books of different prophets may blend together as an allusion in Revelation.

When Collins compares the apocalyptic books, he puts Daniel as the earliest example of the apocalyptic genre. Accordingly, its relationship to the genre is rather different than that of later works. Its relationship with Daniel, as Collins suggests should not be exaggerated. However, Revelation is one of the apocalyptic books which depends on Daniel and has been directly influenced by it.<sup>67</sup>

It should also be noted that John's own prophetic revelation of the divine purpose, was revealed to him by Jesus Christ who received it from God.<sup>68</sup> Jesus is the vocal point around which John is able to draw together a rich variety of images and expectations from the whole prophetic tradition before his time. The whole process is about how to interpret Jesus Christ in the light of the OT and vice versa. And this is definitely how the relationship between Revelation and Daniel. Schussler Fiorenza

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<sup>66</sup>Farrell Jenkins, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*, 29.

<sup>67</sup>Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 272-273.

<sup>68</sup>Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 145.

gives the best example on this theory.<sup>69</sup> There is a comparison between the figure in Daniel 10 with that of Christ in Revelation 1. It indicates that John works in an "associative-anthological" literary fashion insofar as he closely follows the text of Dan. 10 but differs from it in several instances. This points to the emphasis in which Revelation operates. The text in Revelation stresses Christ's royal/priestly character. This emphasis is not found in Daniel.

We should "permit" Scripture to interpret Scripture. Hendriksen laments that some Christians interpret Daniel 7:2-8 where there is a composite beast of the Apocalypse indicated in the light of contemporaneous background of present situation.<sup>70</sup> They do not take seriously the account of the OT basis of the Apocalypse. We should do justice to the immediate context in which a passage occurs and then examine parallel passages.

### Conclusion

After all, some questions remain in the heart of Christians:<sup>71</sup> Do we have to believe and be accurate in an understanding of the prediction of Daniel, or otherwise Christ will leave us behind? Do we still need faith when the political events of our time are to be used as confirmations and fulfillments of the Bible's prophecies? Is it not enough that we confess our sins and rely totally upon God's grace for our salvation? Must we defend the right hermeneutics for interpreting Daniel? Is it not enough to leave the future up to God in faith and to rely on the Father who alone knows the hour and the time?

Our society has both expressed hesitance and curiosity concerning prophecy and apocalyptic writings. At any rate, we are obliged to study the Bible because it is the Word of our Lord. Though many modernistic interpretations of the book of Daniel and Revelation are in the forefront of our

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<sup>69</sup>Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Vision of a Just World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 29.

<sup>70</sup>William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 46-47.

<sup>71</sup>Frerichs, "How Many Weeks until the End?", 172.

Christian bookstores shelves nowadays, I think, as a Christian, we still need to be very careful in picking one up. Many interpreters are more concerned about the future than the main business as Christians, to be the true people of God. They fail to understand the Bible as an intelligible work of God through human culture and society. Furthermore, they also fail to put themselves into the context of the one covenant of God. This effects the interpretation of the Word of God, particularly Daniel and Revelation in our context.

The book of Daniel has formed one among other significant keys to understand more clearly the book of Revelation. They both have been treated as the keys to unlock the future by some believers. However, these two books concern more than just the future. A closer look at Daniel, the apocalyptic genre, and the structure cleanses our sight of the book of Revelation. They are not only about the future. They are given to us to prove God's promise and faithfulness to his people. They are to give testimony that our God lives and reigns forever, not only in the future age.

A mishandling of the book of Daniel and Revelation may result in creating the Bible as a puzzle work. It gives a special status to those who have the key to straighten out the puzzle. However, the Gospel is more than just a puzzle. It gives a clear message to fallen humanity to come back to God and repent. This is not presupposed by detailed understanding of the future. This fact can be achieved by only believing in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.