

T H E B I B L E S P E A K S T O D A Y

The Message of Daniel

His Kingdom Cannot Fail

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Daniel 6:1-28

6. The night the lions were fasting

Daniel 6 *begins* with a miracle: a squeaky clean politician (3-4)! His colleagues and enemies (the terms overlap) had done a security check on Daniel and had scoured government files but came up with nothing. *They were unable to find any ground for complaint or bit of corruption because he was faithful; neither negligence or corruption was found in him* (4b). No disappointing omissions, no tainting commissions. He was what Paul (in 1 Tim. 3:2) would call 'without reproach' (Gk *anepilēmptos*), referring to a church leader whose reputation and conduct gave 'nothing for anyone to grab hold of'. That is Daniel. And his fellow bureaucrats hate him. His sterling character forces them to resort to 'Darius Appreciation Month' in order to eliminate him.

Daniel 6 is a literary parallel to Daniel 3.¹ Both are stories of God's deliverance. Chapter 6, however, is not repetitive but supplementary. Chapter 3 had shown how fidelity could be costly under Babylon. But Babylon has fallen (5:30-31) and now Persia runs the world. And so chapter 6 is saying, new circumstances do not always give you the relief you crave; you may face the same essential troubles. Bob Fyall nails it: 'It [chapter 6] is a necessary reminder that the life of faith must be lived to the very end and that earlier victories and rescues cannot be taken as guarantees of absence of future crises.'² Now, on to the lions.

1. The art of story-telling

Though we are primarily concerned with the teaching of the chapter, we should not neglect its technique; sometimes we can rush to the applications of a narrative and ignore its art. The primary mark of this narrative is its *economy*. The narrator is so stingy with details; there is such a restraint about the whole account.

¹ See discussion in Introduction on 'How is it packaged?', pp. 22-24. See also Lucas, p. 145.

² Fyall, p. 86.

For example, the narrator does not explicitly say why the other bureaucrats wanted to demote and eliminate Daniel. One can infer from verse 3 that they were envious of Daniel's success, but we don't know that they were privy to Darius' plan to place Daniel *over the whole kingdom*. Racial or 'anti-Semitic' motives may have played a part (13). But we don't clearly know, and the writer is content to let us guess. Perhaps one must assume that it doesn't really matter if we get to the bottom of that.

Note also how the narrator does not divulge the whole plan of Daniel's enemies in verse 5. He simply indicates that they realize that any successful trap will have to involve Daniel in an either-or faith decision (and they knew he wouldn't fudge about holding to Yahweh). Instead, our writer lets you hear their whole scheme only when they announce it to the king in verse 7-8. No need to inform readers ahead of time; they can pick it up when it's sprung on Darius. In this way the writer avoids unnecessary repetition.

In similar fashion the writer refuses to relieve tension after verse 17. He could have written, 'Now that night God sent an angel . . .', but he doesn't. He allows you to wait until, with Darius, you hear Daniel's own report in verses 21-22. Had he provided a 'reader's aside' after verse 17 he would have ruined the suspense he wanted to maintain. Once again, less detail is more telling.

Then there is the restraint we observe in Daniel's own words in verses 21-22. This is the first and only time Daniel actually talks in the story. And it is important to see that he doesn't say much. As far as his deliverance goes all we have is verse 22a: *My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me*. No details, no elaboration, no satisfying curiosity. Quite different from the apocryphal tale of 'Daniel, Bel and the Snake' (second/first century BC), where the prophet Habakkuk is transported from Judea to the lion pit with stew and bread for Daniel's pit fare. But the biblical writer won't 'go there', as we say. Verse 22 is enough for him - supernatural, to be sure, but not sensational. He discloses the essential but covers over the curious. One tends to trust a writer like that.

2. The testimony of the story

I simply want to break down the story into its main segments; the teaching of each segment can be summarized by a biblical citation.³ What then is the testimony of Daniel 6?

³ Both John Goldingay (p. 124) and David Dorsey (*The Literary Structure of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999], p. 261) sketch out respective 'chiastic' structures for Dan. 6; these are interesting, but I think a sequential treatment of the text better for purposes of exposition.

a. *The world hates you*⁴(1–9)

Darius the Mede apparently retained Daniel (cf. 5:29) in the higher echelons of his administration. Daniel was one of three *overseers* (ESV: *presidents*) to whom various satraps were to report, an arrangement designed so that the king *might suffer no loss* (v. 2b, ESV). One assumes this means primarily 'loss' of state revenue. Here at least is one constant, unchanging reality amid all the flux and upheaval of history: governments are huge repositories of waste, graft and corruption. That Daniel excelled the other overseers and the satraps may indicate he was especially effective in preventing the king from 'suffering loss'. Which may explain the hostility against Daniel – he was an unrelenting whistle-blower. Whatever the details, Daniel was impeccable (4b) and 'hate-able'. It is a tribute to Daniel's character that his enemies savvied that they could only send him up the river if they resorted to some religious ruse (5), and their scheme takes for granted Daniel's unbending fidelity – they simply know he will not turn aside from worshiping his God.

So they *came thronging in* (NJPS) to the king (6; also 11, 15) with their proposal.⁵ They pressed the king to authorize a statute *that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions* (7b). This is a bit tricky to understand: does no petition even to any *man* mean that a fellow couldn't ask to borrow his neighbour's garden hoe without going through the king? That would be both ludicrous and inefficient. Hence it makes more sense to confine the scope of the proposed law to 'religious' requests and to understand 'man' as alluding to 'the priests through whom petitions were mediated to the gods'.⁶ So for thirty days there was one representative of the gods and one mediator between gods and man, Darius the Mede.

All this was rather heady stuff. These men give Darius the impression that this is the darling idea of the whole civil service – overseers, prefects, satraps, counsellors and governors; there is such *unanimity* behind it. And not a little *flattery: except to you, O king*. There is something intoxicating about being the sole channel to the gods, a sort of surrogate deity, even if the term expires in thirty days.⁷

⁴ John 15:19.

⁵ The verb is *rēgaš*; its Hebrew cognate appears in Ps. 2:1 of nations 'raging'. It seems to carry a connotation of tumult, disturbance and conspiracy. For usage in Qumran materials, cf. DCH, 7:418.

⁶ Miller, p. 180.

⁷ Cf. Goldingay (p. 128): 'In Persia the king was not regarded as divine in the Egyptian sense, though in court ceremonial people did obeisance before him as one would to a god, and the general idea that the king is a manifestation or representative of deity and a key mediator with deity appears in Persian writings.'

Moreover, the king surely saw (and his lackeys may have stressed it) the *utility* of this proposed decree. It would prove excellent socio-political cement, especially at a transition-point of power from Babylon to Persia; it would 'make a statement' about the dominance of Persian power. Of course, Darius' visitors argue for the ultimate *authority* behind this decree; they want it published in writing *so that it cannot be altered – in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed* (8, NIV). This measure both underscores how seriously the government regards the law and also – for the conspirators – will cut away any 'wiggle room' for the king and will force him to abide by it.

Let us back away and look at verses 1–9 as a whole. This section carries a two-pronged message for Israel's exiles: see how gracious God is in giving you favour among your captors and even with kings, therefore, don't despair; and see how *costly* it may prove to remain faithful when you are favoured, therefore, don't make an idol out of human favour. One never knows when the Tuesday morning may come when one must let go of human favour to stay faithful to God. And this dilemma (if it is such) comes from the animosity that men have for God's servants. That was the case under Babylon (the furnace episode, ch. 3) and now in Persia. It matters not where you are – 'The world hates you'. There *is* an explanation for it (John 15:19) but when it occurs it may seem so inexplicable.

Charles Schulz's very first 'Peanuts' cartoon shows a boy and a girl sitting on some steps by a sidewalk. Another boy approaches them in the distance and boy says to girl, 'Well! Here comes ol' Charlie Brown!' Charlie passes in front of them and the same lad says, 'Good ol' Charlie Brown – Yes, sir!' After Charlie passes beyond earshot both boy and girl look after him, and boy says, 'Good ol' Charlie Brown . . . how I hate him!' So out of the blue. But a fact all the same. So Daniel 6 admonishes God's people: Don't think that Daniel's is an exceptional situation; it is rather an exemplary one; this is the way it is with God's servants in this world.

b. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem*⁸ (10–11)

In verse 9 Darius had walked right into the conspirators' trap, and in verse 10 Daniel placed his head in their noose. Things could hardly look better if you were among Daniel's would-be liquidators. But before we bring on the lions, let's camp out at verse 10 (ESV), where Daniel provides us with a superb tutorial on prayer.

⁸ Ps. 122:6.

First, we should notice *the focus of prayer: he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem.* Why toward Jerusalem? Daniel is simply praying as Scripture directed, in line with Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8:46–51.⁹ When Israel is captive in a foreign land, they are to pray toward their land, the city Yahweh had chosen, and the house Solomon had built for Yahweh's name. That is why Daniel's windows are open toward Jerusalem. This is not superstition or mere nostalgia. You can find a sample of the kind of prayer Daniel was praying in 9:3–19 (note the date – 9:1!). His concern was for the welfare of God's people and so the big burden of his prayers was for the repentance and sanctification and prosperity of the church. I am not saying that Daniel did not include on this occasion a petition to face the lion-threat with fortitude, but such matters were not the usual content of his Jerusalem-centred prayers.

Christians frequently can find themselves in a similar position. Sometimes we discover that our prayers are dominated not with our own concerns but with the troubles and traumas of God's people, perhaps those in our local fellowship. One can hardly be a breathing member of a local congregation without realizing there are folks there who have had to wade through ongoing trouble – and so you find yourself preoccupied in prayer, pleading that God would show them glimpses of his warm mercy in their thick darkness. The more we learn of the church worldwide and the suffering of Jesus' sheep in many lands at the hands of the Christ-haters of this age, we find ourselves pleading that the Lord would keep them steadfast and in his time place them in the safety for which they long (cf. Ps. 12:5). Bringing our own needs before the Father is perfectly right, but we are not long in the Christian life when we discover that (as in Daniel's practice) intercession is a huge component of our prayers.

Secondly, we see clearly *the defiance of prayer: When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he . . . prayed . . .* I wonder what Daniel's calculations would have been had he been a typical, pragmatic American: 'I have no choice; the law is the law; I am forced to cease prayer; otherwise . . .' Nor is it only Americans. I recall being overseas (where, the veil of charity refuses to reveal) and hearing from a married couple why they had not been in morning worship that day: their young daughter had been invited to the birthday party of one of her friends. So they were 'forced' to miss worship. Nothing about a courteous phone call, indicating

⁹ See the excellent comments of Duguid (pp. 96–97) in this connection. One might say that as Lev. 26 and Deut. 28 'control' Old Testament prophecy, so Solomon's prayer in 1 Kgs 8 controls Old Testament piety.

they would drop off a gift on Saturday but that as the party conflicted with their Sunday worship, their daughter would not be able to attend the party. But no; there was this 'have to' mode of thinking.

Actually, the premier moment in the whole story is right here, when Daniel prayed *anyway*. As Veldkamp says, 'The great miracle of grace in Daniel 6 is that Daniel, the man of prayer, was able to go on praying.' Let him explain:

This shows us that the dangers we don't see are generally much greater than the dangers we do see. When we watch Daniel being lowered into the lions' den, we hold our breath in fear and anticipation. Yet, by that point the danger has already been overcome and the great fight has been fought. It is indeed a wondrous miracle that God preserves one of His children in the lions' den, but it is no less a miracle that God's gracious hand saved Daniel when all of Babylon [sic] – goaded on by satan – attempted to pry apart those two aged hands tightly clasped in prayer.¹⁰

Daniel was able to see the actual issue. He knew he was not facing a minor religious inconvenience (just wait thirty days until the current prayer ban is lifted). It was actually a matter of whether he would keep the first commandment (Exod. 20:3; same issue as in ch.3). Daniel faces a king who is 'god-keeper for a month' and the politicians who pushed the provision through, and prays to Yahweh anyway. Prayer is the way he keeps the first commandment; by prayer he goes on worshiping the true God anyway, and so prayer is here an 'idol-busting' activity. And the most tempting idol was not Darius' quasi-divinity; it may likely have been Daniel's own security. Daniel had to answer the question: What matters most – the worship of God or my safety? His response shows that he so much as said, 'I must not make an idol of my own safety and so by prayer I destroy that idol.'

Third, Daniel's fidelity teaches us about *the consistency of prayer: He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks . . . as he had done previously.* Daniel's ongoing practice of prayer does not seem to have been a difficult decision for him (Veldkamp). We read of no inner turmoil or anguish. Indeed, his enemies didn't expect him to flinch at all about continuing his usual practice (5)! But that's just it, isn't it? It was his *usual* practice and sometimes that can grease the gears for a crisis.

¹⁰ Veldkamp, p. 122. Cf. similarly Olyott (p. 80): 'the real den of lions was Daniel's bedroom'; and Thomas (p. 108): 'The great battle took place there – not in the lions' den, but at the open window looking to God.'

Ronald Wallace makes a perceptive observation in this regard:

There is no doubt that what kept Daniel when his trial came was this rigid uninterrupted habit. He had disciplined himself to it day by day for years, and at the hour of crisis the very momentum of the custom itself would have been enough to keep him faithful to it, even if there had been at the moment no living inspirational incentive.¹¹

We may quibble on a detail or two, but Wallace's point stands. We find it easy to debunk habit – habit can degenerate into lifeless routine and can murder spontaneity. But, as Jay Adams (I think) once said, a train's habit is to be confined to its tracks and therein consists its usefulness and safety. So we see with Daniel: consistency assists courage, and discipline feeds faithfulness. In the crisis Daniel's habit set him free to be faithful.

Finally, Daniel exhibits *the posture of prayer*: *He got down on his knees*. Such posture is an outward sign of an attitude of submission and self-humbling. Admittedly, outward gestures can be empty, but we usually assume otherwise. Should someone stand in front of you with his/her tongue sticking out, thumbs in ears, wiggling fingers, you likely read it as blatant defiance rather than meaningless aerobics. In short, in this case, knees 'speak'.¹²

Of course, Bible people know that knees have a future. The day will come when 'every knee' will bow to Jesus Christ, the crucified Monarch (Phil. 2:10 in context, which Paul got from Yahweh's own sworn oath in Isa. 45:23), and, if that is the case, we should be getting into practice. Our knees then should have more of a work-out (providing we are physically able) in both private and public worship. Some will, however, nay-say this, holding that the heart attitude is what matters in worship. And they are both right and wrong. Allen and Borror dare us to try the attitude-only approach in marriage. Does a husband try to say that his love for his wife is given only by a heart attitude, that there is no need for physical expressions of his love?¹³ A fellow like that deserves a skillet to the brain to get him to think properly.

Kneeling in prayer is not a matter of indifference – it reminds you of your *true position*. It's as if you say, 'I am a servant. He is the King. I do not live in a democracy but under a monarchy. He is not my

¹¹ Wallace, p. 112.

¹² Not that kneeling is the only posture for prayer: it can be standing (1 Kgs 8:22), sitting (2 Sam. 7:18), or stretched prostrate on the ground (Mark 14:35).

¹³ Ronald Allen and Gordon Borror, *Worship: Rediscovering the Missing Jewel* (Portland: Multnomah, 1982), p. 131.

errand boy. I never present my demands. I am always a beggar at the throne of grace, and, though it is a throne of grace, I never forget it is a throne.'

c. *Put not your trust in princes*¹⁴ (12–18)

The conspirators 'have the goods' on Daniel (11) and now go to the king (12). They don't blurt out their case against Daniel immediately. Rather they allude to the edict: 'Wasn't there something about a thirty-day ban on prayer . . .' In this way they sucker Darius to re-assert the irrevocability of the recent ordinance (12b). Darius never saw it coming. Now they press their case, which is racially driven (at least in part), for they refer to Daniel as *one of the exiles from Judah*. He is a captive, a foreigner, one who doesn't really belong. Their case against him is that his offense is both hostile and habitual: hostile, because he *pays no attention to you, O king*, i.e., by his disobedience Daniel is personally defying the king himself and not merely trampling on a law;¹⁵ habitual, because Daniel prays *three times a day*, i.e., his offense is no momentary, forgetful lapse but a persistent and ongoing practice.¹⁶ Now it becomes clear that the king is pro-Daniel, but a day's efforts are futile (14) and Daniel's accusers hold Darius' feet to the legal fire.¹⁷ So Daniel goes to the lions (16a).

Note what happens at verses 16 and following. The writer fixes all our attention on the king. The whole focus in verses 16–20 is on the anguish of the king rather than the trauma of Daniel. The writer keeps us in suspense – along with Darius – about Daniel's fate until verse 21. It is a tad strange: Daniel is thrown to the lions and we only hear about the king and *his* agonizing night. Why is this the case? If we go back to verse 12 and work forward we can see how the writer depicts the king. He shows us the royal naïveté (12), compassion (14) and helplessness (14b, 16–20).¹⁸ I think that depiction is intentional: as if to say, rulers may not be personally hostile to you, but, even if they favour you, you dare not pin your hopes on them, for they can prove as helpless as anyone else. It's the writer's way of preaching Psalm 146:3–4. Oddly enough, Darius' words in verse 16b seem to underscore

¹⁴ Ps. 146:3.

¹⁵ They argue with a right principle even if they twist its application: defiance of a law is essentially defiance of the law-giver (see 2 Sam. 12:9–10).

¹⁶ Cf. Steinmann, p. 318.

¹⁷ 'Said' in v. 15 (English) is a participle: 'they kept saying to the king', i.e., keeping the pressure on; see Steinmann, p. 310.

¹⁸ See the fine observations in Lucas, pp. 149, 154; e.g., 'There is also an element of ridicule in the picture of the king that is presented here. The one who is put on a (semi-) divine pedestal is at the same time shown to be naïve and conceited, and therefore open to manipulation by his courtiers' (p. 149).

this very point – that Daniel's God is the only one who can – and will – deliver him. Many translations take Darius' statement as a sort of desperate prayer or wish (NASB, NKJV and NJPS are exceptions). But his words are not a wish but an affirmation: *Your God, whom you serve continually – he will deliver you*. In the Aramaic the emphatic pronoun and final verb are clearly a declaration. Most expositors apparently cannot bring themselves to think that Darius could or would actually express himself so vigorously, but his early trek to the lions' den in verse 19 supports his 'faith'; he would not have bothered if he were sure Daniel had been mauled.¹⁹

Our writer, then, is doing a little 'preventive theology' in this section. He seems to say to Israel: 'You may have rulers or others in high places who are well-disposed toward you; but don't rest in them as your trump card, for even they for all their apparent power can prove as helpless as Samson without hair.' He is trying to bash idols before they become idols.

*d. Salvation belongs to the Lord*²⁰ (19–28)

This section breaks down into three thematic segments:

Intervention (19–23)

Retribution (24)

Proclamation (25–28)

In the 'intervention' section we run into the irony that not only did the king fast (18) but so did the lions (22). Verses 21–22 deserve special attention because they contain the only words Daniel speaks in the whole narrative. This fact may give them particular weight. And his words are brief – only the barest expression of God's intervention and Daniel's innocence. No dwelling on lion behaviour or the smell of the pit or the emotional state of Daniel. *My God [emphatic subject] sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths* (22a). That's all anyone needs to know. The careful scrutiny given Daniel at his de-briefing (23b) confirmed the truth of his testimony.

Vindication for Daniel involves retribution for his enemies (24). 'The dark side to Daniel's deliverance is the judgment that falls on those who had sought to destroy the kingdom of God.'²¹ In Israel

¹⁹ Cf. Steinmann, p. 320; and Fyall, p. 89.

²⁰ Jon. 2:9.

²¹ Ferguson, p. 141. On this pattern, cf. Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), pp. 315, 333, and my *The Way of the Righteous in the Muck of Life* (Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2010), pp. 46–48, 87–91.

wives and children would have been spared the punishment of the head of the household (Deut. 24:16; unless, of course, they were accomplices, cf. Josh. 7:24–25). But this was Persia, and all of them were given to the lions.

Now comes the climax of the chapter: Darius' proclamation in praise of Daniel's God (25–27). Who knows? Darius may have directed Daniel to ghost-write the proclamation for him and simply initialled his approval. In any case, he declares he is the *living God* with the everlasting kingdom who does saving wonders in his world, especially in protecting his servant in a reeking Persian lion pit. *He delivers and rescues* (v. 27a, NASB, ESV) sums it all up.

Verses 25–27 re-establish a pattern in the Daniel narratives. We missed this kind of ending in chapter 5 – Belshazzar most likely lacked the inclination for it, even if given the time. But we recall the 'confessions' or proclamations of the Nebuchadnezzar chapters (2:47; 3:28–29; 4:34–37); now with Darius we meet one of these again (6:25–27). All these come at the end of their respective narratives and have a climactic air about them. Their recurrence and placement imply the weight they pack. They are narrative flashes of standard Old Testament doctrine. One finds the latter in texts like Psalm 102:15,

And nations will fear the name of Yahweh,
and all the kings of the earth (will fear) his glory,

or Psalm 138:4–5:

All kings of earth will praise you, Yahweh,
when they have heard the words of your mouth,
and they will sing of the ways of Yahweh,
for how great Yahweh's glory is!

The Psalm texts tell us how it will be, while the 'confessions' of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius in Daniel give us foretastes of that coming homage. And it is crucial not to belittle or despise the foretastes.

Stan Telchin and his wife Ethel were shocked one Sunday night when a daughter called from university to tell them she had believed in God and that the Bible was his word – and that 'Jesus is the Messiah'. The Telchins went into a tailspin. They were Jewish, and Stan, in his rage, threw himself into proving his daughter wrong. As if possessed he read and read. He too came to accept the Bible as God's word and to believe at least that the Hebrew Bible did contain many prophecies about the coming Messiah. He and his wife began

to attend a messianic Jewish congregation. He still was not a believer in Jesus. During this time he decided to attend a conference for messianic Jews held at a college in Pennsylvania. Here he met Lillian, an elderly disabled woman. Stan admitted to her that he was not a 'believer'. She had him read Exodus 20 to her and then point-blank asked him, 'Who is your god?' The following morning Stan went to breakfast and someone (not knowing he had never confessed Christ) asked him to give thanks for the food. He did so – and closed his prayer, 'in the name of Jesus, the Messiah'. Speaking with Lillian the day before he realized he had come to that conviction.²²

I suppose someone could say that those closing words to Stan's prayer were just a formula, a customary way of closing off a set petition. But it was nothing of the kind. True, it was only the conclusion of a prayer, only a mere seven words. But those words were indicative of far more, of a revolution of mind and soul. Those 'mere' words were pointers to a whole new submission to Jesus as king.

We could, of course, regard these 'confessions' of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius with a jaded attitude, as royal formalities lacking much significance. But we daren't do that. Even if they are not full-blown exclusive recognitions of Daniel's God, they are clear pointers to the homage that earth's politicians and even despots will offer at the last. When we wade into chapters 7 – 12 we may realize how much we need this assurance.

²² See Scot McKnight, with R. Boaz Johnson, 'From Tel Aviv to Nazareth: Why Jews Become Messianic Jews', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48/4 (December 2005), pp. 779–780.

Daniel 7:1–28

7. Is history all beastly?

Now we are walking into the 'apocalyptic' section of Daniel; it seems so baffling that some readers simply drop out. But (and some may accuse me of sexism) I would argue from my own experience that such a reaction is completely unreasonable. I speak of understanding those of the female gender. If before marriage you (I speak here of males) imagine you have begun to understand the female, you are incredibly naïve; if after marriage you think you can divine the female, you are clearly deluded; if after years of happily married life you dream that at last you can fathom the female persona, you are utterly hopeless. And yet . . . none of that kept you from marriage. Neither should the mysteries of Daniel 7 – 12 keep you from ploughing on through the book.

There's a little game that sometimes get played. Someone mentions 'apocalyptic', and you instinctively know that you should wrinkle your brow, narrow your eyes and nod somewhat knowingly as if you've some understanding of what the term means. But scholars have their own problems deciding what makes apocalyptic 'apocalyptic', i.e., what special marks a chunk of biblical literature has to have to be dubbed apocalyptic. Roughly, I would say that biblical apocalyptic is a sort of prophecy that seeks to enlighten and encourage a people despised and cast off by the world with a vision of the God who will come to impose his kingdom on the wreckage and rebellion of human history – and it communicates this message through the use of wild, scary, imaginative, bizarre and head-scratching imagery.¹

¹ See Duguid, p. 107 – the best summary of biblical apocalyptic I have seen; see also Elliott E. Johnson, *Expository Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), pp. 165–168; D. Brent Sandy and Martin G. Abegg, Jr, in D. Brent Sandy and Donald L. Giese, Jr (eds.), *Cracking Old Testament Codes* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), pp. 177–196.