The ways of Providence are mysterious, and for this reason I have difficulty explaining how I first came to study the book of Daniel. Nonetheless, for over a decade I have found myself returning repeatedly to this fascinating book and finding within it issues that continue to seize my attention. I believe that the study of the Bible, especially the book of Daniel, mandates reference to all the various branches of modern biblical scholarship, in the spirit of the search for “new contextual interpretations that emerge daily.”¹ This scholarship, however, poses a formidable challenge to a reader connected to the world of traditional Jewish exegesis.

I shall begin with a survey of several central themes in the study of the book of Daniel where the religious approach is in conflict with the conclusions of biblical criticism. I will then present the ways in which I have chosen to utilize this encounter and what I ultimately gleaned from it.

A. The Conclusions of Biblical Scholarship on the Book of Daniel

Chronology and Literary Framework of the Book

Let us begin with the premise, accepted in biblical scholarship, that the work at hand is not one book, but two: the “Book of Tales” (chap. 1–6) and the “Book of Visions” (chap. 7–12),² the former of which predates the latter. The literary differences between these two books have given rise to the widespread assumption that several authors of different periods contributed to the formation of this work.³ The chapters of the “Book of Tales,” which bear a literary similarity
to the literature of the early Second Temple period, are believed to predate the “Book of Visions.” Scholars are divided as to when the texts were written, who combined them, and for what purpose.

The documents discovered in the Judean Desert, which include passages from the book of Daniel as well as additional texts with similar content, such as Tefillat Nabunaid (The Prayer of Nabunaid) (4Q242) and Sefer ha-Anakim (The Book of Giants) (4Q530), as well as scholarship on postbiblical literature such as 1 Enoch, pose challenges of their own to the traditional perception of the book. The pronounced mix of parallels and contrasts between these texts has brought scholars to regard them collectively as “Daniel literature” from which the canonical work ultimately emerged.

Studies of postbiblical literature led to a deeper understanding of the apocalyptic genre, a collection of works authored beginning in the third century BCE to which the book of Daniel typically is assigned. This categorization reinforces the conclusion that the book is far removed from the Babylonian period that is its setting.

Many scholars have applied linguistic evidence in efforts to date the book, which is written in Hebrew and Aramaic with an assortment of Persian and Greek loanwords. However, scholars who have attempted such an approach have reached differing conclusions. There are those who have concluded from the study of the Aramaic passages that the language used is an early form of Aramaic, while others have concluded that it is a later dialect. Studies of the Persian and Greek loanwords have similarly led to disparate conclusions.

The general scholarly consensus is that the book of Daniel was written before the Hasmonean revolt and completed no later than 164 BCE. There is evidence from the 1 Maccabees that the content of the book—including the Hebrew names of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (chap. 1), the story of their salvation from the fiery furnace (chap. 3), and the story of the salvation of Daniel from the lions’ den (chap. 6)—was well-known to the authors.

Notwithstanding, scholars differ concerning the number of years by which the book of Daniel predates the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. Many scholars have concluded that the book was redacted in its entirety just before the outbreak of the Hasmonean revolt against Antiochus. Among these is J. J. Collins, one of the greatest contemporary scholars of the book, who has voiced unalloyed confidence in this conclusion, writing that “as we have noted, there is no doubt that Daniel 7 is describing the persecution of the
Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes.”

This view is based on the historical information that emerges from the “Book of Visions,” and especially from chapter 11, from which scholars have inferred that the “Book of Visions” was written against the background of Antiochus’s persecution of the Jews. By the same token, scholars view the historical information evinced by the “Book of Tales” as indicative that its authors were far removed from the Babylonian period, as we shall see below.

The book of Daniel poses a relatively large number of chronological difficulties, some of which arise from a comparison to other biblical writings while others are suggested by a comparison of factual information emerging from the book and extrabiblical historical evidence. The most significant problem regarding the historical knowledge of the author of the book is his reference to Darius the Mede. He appears once in the “Book of Tales,” immediately following the murder of King Belshazzar of Babylon, as well as twice in the “Book of Visions.” Once at the beginning of chapter 9, where he is presented as the son of Ahasuerus and the newly appointed king of Babylon: “In the first year of Darius son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans” (Dan. 9:1). That year is regarded as the seventieth year of “Jerusalem’s desolation” (9:2). He is mentioned for the second time at the opening of the final vision of the book, at the beginning of chapter 11.

As early as 1935, H. H., Rowley, in Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel, argued that the book contained historical inaccuracies. The most significant of these is that Cyrus conquered the Median kingdom in 550 BCE, and when he conquered Babylon eleven years later, in 539 BCE, Media no longer existed. In 538 BCE, Cyrus published his edicts allowing the rebuilding of temples. Rowley, and many other scholars who followed in his footsteps, argued that the fact that the author of the book wrote that Darius the Mede reigned after the death of Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, indicates that the author of the book was very far removed from the time of the events he depicted and made errors as a result.

Also in question is the place of the book of Daniel in the Hebrew Bible. It is well known that in the Septuagint and Vulgate, Daniel appears among the books of the Prophets. Recently the argument has been raised that this was the case in the Hebrew Bible as well until the sages of the Babylonian Talmud, because of the defeat of the Bar Kokhba revolt, decided to move it to the Writings and declared that Daniel had not been a prophet, in contradiction of early Palestinian postbiblical traditions that viewed Daniel as a prophet.
Theological Questions

The Book of Daniel also poses a range of complex theological difficulties. Jerome recommended reading the book because “no other prophet spoke of Jesus with as much clarity as Daniel.” Over the course of time, and especially in the Middle Ages, the meaning of the book stood at the center of Jewish-Christian polemics, with a frequent focus on the vision of the “one like a human being” (Dan. 7:3–14).

During the last century, numerous scholars have deepened our understanding of the theological roots of the visions of Daniel and many of them have made connections between them and Canaanite myths. Daniel Boyarin made an important contribution when he argued that the editor of the material in chapter 7 had been well aware of its mythical significance and purposely edited its content to suppress this meaning and adapt it to the monotheistic outlook of the Bible.

The final topic I would like to consider in this essay is the ongoing scholarly deliberation over the visions of the four kingdoms, in chapters 2 and 7. In the first vision, in chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar, in the second year of his reign, dreams of a statue comprised of four types of metal. In the second vision, set in the first year of the reign of Belshazzar, Daniel dreams of four predatory animals rising from the sea. Modern scholarship has demonstrated the existence of foreign, extrabiblical traditions common to many civilizations (such as Persia, Greece, and Rome) in which the concept of four kingdoms or epochs forms the basis for the description of the structure of history. The dating of the book to the late Hellenistic period has given rise to the conclusion that its authors used these traditions, which they presented as true prophecy.

Scholarly Conclusions and the Religious Approach to Bible Study

The examples cited above, which are part of a larger and more pervasive system of dilemmas that confront religious students of the book of Daniel today, are accompanied by other weighty questions that the book raises even when not read with a modern perspective. Together, these challenges compel us to ask how the contemporary religious reader can cope with such polarized approaches to the study of this book.

Yet both the content of the book and the lessons derived from it by the sages are so important to the spiritual world of the man of faith that it would be difficult to accede to the book’s relegation, even if temporary, to obscurity. Suffice to say that it contains the only example in biblical narrative of Jews who are prepared to sacrifice their lives to spurn idol-worship, as reflected in a
rabbinic homily in the Babylonian Talmud about the self-sacrifice of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: “The holy One, Blessed be He, wanted to turn the entire world to blood, but when He beheld Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, His temper cooled, as it is written: ‘standing among the myrtles in the Deep’” (Zech. 1:8).  

According to this midrash, the continued existence of our world is owed to an event reported in the book of Daniel! Is it conceivable for a modern man of faith to repudiate a book that offers so existential an insight?

Between Religious and Academic Study

Both the questions raised in modern biblical scholarship and the conclusions reached penetrate the very core of our being as religious students of the Bible. I shall illustrate this reality with two examples.

First, in approaching the composition and editing of Scripture, the religious reader adheres to the belief that it is of divine origin and considers it a holy text. Meanwhile, according to the modern perspective, the Bible emerged in the same way as many other literary works, developing out of traditions that coalesced over time. Modern scholars attempt to arrive at conclusions regarding the genesis of the book by examining the literary and intellectual context of the period when it came about, asking: Who contributed to its composition and editing? When did these developments take place?

The religious approach, in contrast, ties the sanctity of the Bible to the phenomenon of prophecy, making it difficult to stretch the time of a biblical book’s composition beyond the age of prophecy as described in rabbinic literature. The second-century Seder Olam, the first rabbinical work of chronography, indicates that in the view of the Rabbis, prophecy ended with the beginning of the Hellenistic era: “Alexander the Great reigned twelve years and died. Until this point there were prophets who prophesied under divine inspiration. From here onward, ‘Incline your ear and listen to the words of the sages’” (Prov. 22:17). In any case, the creation of the books of the Bible came to an end in this period.

The second subject to which I would point is the historical veracity of Scripture. It is uncommon for religious exegesis to cast doubt on the historical veracity of the biblical text. Modern biblical scholarship, meanwhile, sees the text as literature based on a kernel of historical truth at the most.

It follows that the encounter of religious study based on traditional Jewish commentary with the products of modern biblical scholarship obligates the religious student both to thoroughly examine his basic assumptions and to
search for means of resolving the tension between these different points of view. In the following pages, I shall present several methods that I have discovered for resolving the contradictions between religious beliefs and modern scholars’ assumptions and conclusions regarding the book of Daniel. These tools, I would argue, also enable us to draw conclusions concerning the overarching conflict between these approaches to the Bible.

B. Confronting Questions Relating to the Composition and Editing of the Text

The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Daniel

On examination of texts from the classical rabbinic literature and beyond, it becomes evident that the discrepancy between these approaches is not particularly great as it concerns the book of Daniel. The sages also traced the book to several authors, some of whom lived in the Persian period and perhaps even the beginning of the Hellenistic era, far later than the Babylonian period. In the words of the sages, “the men of the Great Assembly wrote Ezekiel and the Twelve Minor Prophets, Daniel, and Esther.” Though modern scholars extend the period of composition to the middle of the Hellenistic period, the point of conflict between the religious and scholarly perspectives is relatively small.

In his commentary to chapter 7, Malbim (Rabbi Meir Leibush Wisser) similarly opines that the book underwent editing:

“In the first year of King Belshazzar of Babylon”—The end of the days of Belshazzar and the kingdom of Darius having been described, here begins the second section of this book. The first section told of the life of Daniel, and from here begins the telling of his prophecies, and his words (aside from the first verse, which was written by the men of the Great Assembly, who wrote the book of Daniel, as the sages said) are expressed in the first person, for he himself wrote everything in its present state.

Malbim thus distinguishes between what later scholarship would identify as the “Book of Tales” and the “Book of Visions,” and distinguishes between the words of Daniel and the words of the editors, the men of the Great Assembly.

The fact is that Jewish commentators throughout the ages discussed the editing of the text of other biblical books as well by the men of the Great
Assembly, especially the Prophets and Writings. Two examples are the comments of Rashi regarding the first prophecy in the book of Ezekiel\(^{31}\) and those of Rashbam (Rabbi Samuel ben Meir) on the editing of the opening and closing of Ecclesiastes.\(^{32}\) Also relevant to the present discussion are several lines from the commentary of Elijah of Vilna (known as the Vilna Ga’on) to Proverbs 24:23:\(^{33}\)

The men of the Great Assembly redacted the Prophets and Writings. In Psalms—as it is written: “and David established with divine inspiration”—they also arranged words of praise and thanksgiving to God, may He be blessed, that had been written with divine inspiration by others, and at the beginning of these materials they added the name of the author, as in “A psalm of Asaph,” “A prayer of Moses,” etc.

In my assessment, traditional Jewish commentators considered the process of editing to be not an exclusively human endeavor, but an activity dependent upon revelation, as explained by Rashi:

“In the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, when I was in the community of exiles by the Chebar Canal, the heavens opened and I saw visions of God” (Ezek. 1:1)—The prophet wrote elliptically, neither revealing his name or identity nor explaining from what point he reckoned [the years]. The divine spirit therefore interrupted his words with the two verses immediately following this one to explain who the prophet is and from what point he reckoned, as it is said: “On the fifth day of the month—it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin” (1:2).\(^{34}\)

Although Rashi does not refer specifically to the men of the Great Assembly, he does make a clear reference to editing, positing that the actual words of the prophet are interrupted by the insertion of two explanatory verses (2–3) between the first verse of the book and the continuation of the prophecy in verse 4.\(^{35}\)

We thus see that the religious approach to the composition of the Bible is more complex than generally thought. The Bible is the product of divine revelations to the prophets, but it does not follow that its text did not undergo redaction and adaptation after the time of a given prophet.
The Original Place of Daniel in the Hebrew Bible

We saw above that several scholars have questioned the authenticity of the conventional placement of Daniel among the Writings, arguing that its rightful place is preserved in the Septuagint, where the book is included among the books of the Prophets. This position is based on evidence from Jewish and Christian postbiblical literature of the first and second centuries: Qumran literature, Josephus Flavius in *Judean Antiquities* and *Against Apion*, and the New Testament, in all of which Daniel is considered a prophet. Attestations of Daniel’s status as a prophet also exists in classical rabbinical literature beginning with *Seder Olam* and continuing throughout the works of the Palestinian sages through late midrashic literature. We thus find Daniel identified as a prophet in *Bereshit Rabbah*, *Va-yikra Rabbah*, *Midrash Tanhuma*, and *Aggadat Bereshit*, proving that Daniel was long considered a prophet by Jews and Christians alike. The first indication that the book of Daniel is included in the Writings and that Daniel was not a prophet appears in the Babylonian Talmud.

I have discovered several ways to respond to the question of the place of the book of Daniel in the Bible. First, there appear to be several indirect indications within classical rabbinic literature and postbiblical literature that the book was included among the Writings as early as the consolidation of the canon and throughout the mishnaic period.

According to the Mishnah, the book of Daniel figured in a list of the Writings even before the destruction of the Second Temple and the revolts. In describing how the High Priest kept himself awake on the night of Yom Kippur, the Mishnah states: “If he is learned, he studies, and if he is not learned, sages study with him; if he is used to reading, he reads, and if not, others read to him. What do they read him? Job, Ezra, and Chronicles. Zechariah b. Kvutal said: I often read to him from the book of Daniel.” These stories seem to have captured the interest of the high priest and kept him awake. The first three books listed—Job, Ezra, and Chronicles—are without doubt among the Writings in the Hebrew Bible, and in my opinion, the reference to Daniel in this list implies, at least indirectly, its inclusion among the books of the Writings as early as the time of the Second Temple.

There also is evidence from the second generation of Palestinian amora that Daniel was placed among the Writings. This is reflected in the words of Samuel b. Naḥman in *Bereshit Rabbah*: “‘Laban named it Yegar-sahadutha’ (Gen. 31:47)—Rabbi Shemuel bar Naḥman said: Do not disparage the Sursi [i.e., Aramaic] language, because the Holy One, blessed be He, gave it honor
in the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. In the Torah, *Yegar-sahadutha*; in the Prophets, *kidnah te’merun lehom* (Jer. 10:11); and in the Writings, it is written, “The Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic” (Dan. 2:4).47

A critical literary analysis of the following passage in the Babylonian Talmud similarly suggests that its redactors assumed Daniel to be part of the Writings:

“I, Daniel, alone saw the vision; the men who were with me did not see the vision, yet they were seized with a great terror and fled into hiding” (Dan. 10:7)—Who were these men? Rabbi Jeremiah (some say Rabbi Ḥiyya b. Abba) said: “They were Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.” They are superior to him and he is superior to them. They are superior to him because they are prophets and he is not a prophet. He is superior to them because he saw and they did not see.48

This passage is comprised of two parts. The first is written in a combination of Hebrew and Aramaic, and the second, only in Aramaic. The first section quotes a verse in Daniel that explains that the apparition of the angel clothed in linen described in the previous verses (5–6) was seen only by Daniel, and identifies the men who were with Daniel but did not see the angel, whom Rabbi Jeremiah (according to another tradition, Rabbi Ḥiyya b. Abba) identifies as the Second Temple era prophets: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Daniel may thus be inferred to have seen visions too sublime for the others to perceive.

The Aramaic section of the Talmudic passage compares Daniel to the three prophets of the Second Temple period, positing that although Daniel is superior to them, as intimated by the Hebrew section of the passage, they nonetheless are superior to him because he is not considered to be a prophet.

One need not conclude from this passage that the book was moved from the Prophets to the Writings. On the contrary, the change in attitude toward Daniel may have come about precisely because the book was among the Writings. The assumption that the sages were influenced by the fact that Daniel was included in the Writings clearly explains the connection between the two parts of the passage. It also resolves the contradiction between the opening of the Aramaic section (“he is superior to them”) and the Hebrew section (Daniel saw more than the Second Temple era prophets), as well as the statement that Daniel was not a prophet. This provides a means of resolving the contradiction: although Daniel saw more than the others (as stated
in the Hebrew section), they are superior to him (as related in the Aramaic section) first and foremost because their books, unlike that of Daniel, are included in the Prophets.

This example illustrates how the methods of modern scholarship of rabbinic literature can in fact assist the religious reader in confronting contradictions between his religious perspective and scholarly opinion.

The Vision of the Four Kingdoms: The Connection between Biblical and Extrabiblical Traditions

As we have seen, there is an affinity between ancient extrabiblical traditions describing the structure of history in terms of four kingdoms and the vision of the four kingdoms in Daniel 2:7. Scholars have thus concluded that the authors of the book of Daniel used these traditions and adapted them to Jewish audiences of the Hellenistic period. This conclusion contradicts the way in which the book itself presents the subject at the beginning of chapter 7: “Daniel saw a dream and a vision of his mind in bed; afterward he wrote down the dream. Beginning the account, Daniel related the following . . .” The problem is that in chapter 2, the biblical narrative first reveals the rubric of the four kingdoms in the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Dan. 2:31–45). Although Nebuchadnezzar needs Daniel to remind him of the dream and explain it, the origin of the dream is Nebuchadnezzar, a gentile.

In my opinion, the way in which the biblical narrative reveals the idea of the four kingdoms to the reader is compatible with scholarly findings. God revealed the concept of the four kingdoms to the nations of the world and it is therefore not surprising that such extrabiblical traditions exist. Nonetheless, to be fully understood, these traditions must be studied in their biblical version, as presented in Daniel.

We may conclude from this example that revisiting verses and carefully analyzing their diction can be a means of confronting the contradictions between the religious perspective and scholarly opinion. In this example, we distinguished between the data, or facts, and scholarly conclusions. In my opinion, while it is impossible to reject or ignore the facts, their interpretation and the conclusions derived are not unequivocal, and this allows the religious reader flexibility in confronting the challenges that they pose.

Historical Accuracy of the Bible

Our perception of the historical accuracy of the events described in the Bible also requires more thorough clarification in light of modern biblical
scholarship. We shall examine several basic ways of confronting this issue before looking at an example from the book of Daniel.

First, the reader can reexamine or reinterpret historical data. There are religious students of the Bible who try to contend with the contradictions between historical truth as reflected by the Bible and extrabiblical findings through a “critique of the critique”—that is, a reexamination or reinterpretation of the extrabiblical findings.

Second, not all scriptural passages reflect historical truth. A study of traditional Jewish exegesis reveals occasional objections to simple readings that assume the literal historical correctness of the text. One example is the way in which Se’adyah Ga’on and Gersonides understand the conversation between Eve and the snake.53 This approach is rarely exhibited and cannot in my opinion serve as the primary means of resolving difficulties. Nonetheless, its existence is evidence of the ongoing discussion of this issue throughout Jewish history.

Finally, the historical meaning of the text is dynamic. According to the audacious approach to historical meaning in the Bible proposed by Abraham Isaac Kook in the early twentieth century, the biblical story be seen as dynamic, changing throughout time:

The sacred impressions that all those events that the supreme, divine wisdom decided should be written in the Torah, and the way in which they are intended to be impressed upon us, are precisely measured according to divine standards. When this meaning of the story, its inner essence, which is intended to be impressed upon the soul, is described according to its literal meaning, we are sometimes unable, from a distance in time, to understand the essence of its truth. We must then evaluate, by means of divine standards, following the all-knowing God, what external form the story should take, so that when it reaches us, its fundamental principle will be exactly the same principle that was intended to be impressed upon us.54

According to Rav Kook, the aim of the Bible is ethical; the historical story within it is worded so as to achieve this purpose. When the reader is removed in time from the period in which the events occurred, he must tell the story anew, sometimes in a different way, so that its original ethical meaning is expressed. The midrashim of the sages thus serve as intermediaries and retell the biblical story, turning it into a vibrant parable whose external form changes over time.
This radical approach is based to a large extent on the interpretation of midrash, which often reconstructs biblical stories. Rav Kook calls upon the religious student of the Bible to attempt a new understanding of the historical layer of the biblical text.

An illustration of the attempt to grapple with the historical accuracy of the Bible can be found in the identification of Darius the Mede. Some scholars have explained the perplexing historical evidence of the reign of Darius by identifying Darius with a historical figure. Josephus (Antiquities, book 10, 11:4) identifies Darius as a relative of Cyrus. According to him, King Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon and destroyed it in cooperation with Darius. Several scholars followed this approach and suggested identifying Darius the Mede with Ugbaro, the ruler of Gutium who in actuality conquered Babylon and was appointed to govern it. This identification enables the reader to see historical truth in the verses of chapter 6 of Daniel: “and Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old” (Dan. 6:1). To be precise, Darius the Mede, not the king of Media, was appointed king of Babylon.

In fact, when we examine the way in which the sages understood Darius, it appears that none of them perceived him as the king of Media. Based on the tradition in Seder Olam, he was understood to be the king of Babylon: “Seventy years since Nebuchadnezzar had begun his reign, seventy years less one since he had subdued Jehoiakim, and then Darius came and completed one more year for Babylon.”

In other traditions within classical rabbinic literature, Darius was considered to be a Persian king. For example, in a midrash in Mekhilta that discusses the four kingdoms, the kingdom of Darius is called Media, although it is clear that the reference is to Persia.

Concerning the kings of Babylon, what does it say? “The nation or kingdom that does not serve him—King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon” (Jer. 27:8). About the kingship of Media, what does it say? “Then King Darius wrote to all peoples” (Dan. 6:26). Regarding the kings of Greece, what does it say? “The beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it” (7:6). Concerning the fourth kingdom, what does it say? It says, “It will devour the whole earth, tread it down, and crush it” (23).

The midrash in Mekhilta uses a verse from chapter 6 of Daniel that discusses the kingship of Darius the Mede as representing the kingdom of Persia.
The example of Darius the Mede illustrates that when facing arguments against the historical veracity of the biblical text, the religious reader has strategies at his disposal, including both reexamination of extrabiblical data and occasional use of exegetical traditions in the classical rabbinic literature that reconstruct the meaning of the biblical text and are surprisingly similar to conclusions presented in scholarly literature.

**Conclusion**

Methods of confronting difficulties within the biblical text have been developed throughout the generations, and remain effective today. They include linguistic analysis and the use of exegetical traditions that address similar challenges. Moreover, the method of critiquing the critique—that is, reexamining and reinterpreting extrabiblical findings—should produce effective results in confronting these challenges. Above all, the basic foundations of Bible study in religious circles must be reevaluated, while at the same time deepened and expanded.

From a personal perspective, as someone who studies the classical rabbinical commentaries to Daniel, I find that the conflict between the different perspectives raises challenging questions. It inspires a thorough search for answers, and consequently a deeper understanding of the biblical text and classical rabbinic interpretations of it. Moreover, modern findings have more than once led me to reevaluate both the biblical text and *midrashim*. It was the encounter between the modern questions and the biblical text that made me realize that the sages themselves searched for new meanings for the biblical material and that they thus can provide us with answers to modern questions. The religious reader’s encounter with biblical scholarship is fraught with complications and liable, as we know, to weaken him religiously, and therefore requires great caution. However, it also can empower us and enable us to glean new understandings from both the book of books and traditional Jewish biblical commentary.

**Endnotes**

1. Rashbam, Gen. 37:2.
2. Some include chapter 7 in the “Book of Tales”; see: J. J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. F. M. Cross (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 24–29.
3. Hartman and DiLella argue that four different authors wrote the four visions, the last of whom, the author of chapter 9, left his mark on all the visions. In contrast, Haran argues that
one author wrote all of the visions and reedited the “Book of Tales.” See L. F. Hartman and A. A. DiLella, *The Book of Daniel* (New York: Doubleday, 1978), 13–14; M. Haran, *Ha-Asufah ha-Mikra’it* [The biblical collection] (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1996), 1:116.

4. For example, Esther and Tobit. See Michael V. Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 145–148.

5. For a discussion of the subject, see: E. Eshel, "Possible Sources of the Book of Daniel," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, ed. J. J. Collins and P.W. Flint (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 387–393.

6. For a discussion of the connection between this passage and the throne vision in chapter 7, see: Ryan E. Stokes, “The Throne Visions of Daniel 7, 1 Enoch 14, and the Qumran Book of Giants (4Q530): An Analysis of Their Literary Relationship," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 15 (2008): 340–358.

7. See L. T. Stuckenbruck, “Daniel and Early Enoch Traditions in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, 368–386.

8. See H. H. Rowley, *The Aramaic of the OT* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), 138; Haran, *Ha-Asufah*, 106.

9. The “Book of Tales” contains twenty Persian words, most of which are titles of royal bureaucrats or articles of clothing. There are two Persian words in the “Book of Visions.” See Haran, *Ha-Asufah*, 106–108. Some scholars see the Greek words scattered throughout the “Book of Tales” as further proof that the book was written in the Hellenistic period, while others have argued that as these words are few and mostly from the field of music (such as *psanterin*, *somphonia*, denoting psaltery and the bagpipe, in 3:5), they cannot be seen as evidence for a late dating of the “Book of Tales.” See Haran, *Ha-Asufah*, 102; S. R. Driver, *Daniel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 118–119.

10. See 1 Maccabees 1:59–60. The First Book of Maccabees is dated to approximately 100 BCE. The argument that the author of that book knew the Daniel tales but not his visions was refuted by the findings in Qumran. See Collins, *Daniel*, 72–73; Haran, *Ha-Asufah*, 51–121.

11. The debate regarding the dating of the book of Daniel continues until today. In any case, almost all scholars agree that parts of the book are linked to the period of Antiochus Epiphanes. The exceptions, Kitchen and Wiseman, argue that the entire book predates the time of Antiochus. See: H. L. Ginsberg, “Daniel,” *Entzeklopedia Mikra’it* [Encyclopaedia biblica], ed. Umberto Casutto (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1954), 2:686–697; D. J. Wiseman, “Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel,” in *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, ed. D. J., Wiseman (London: Tyndale, 1965), 35–44; Collins, *Daniel*, 18–19; Haran, *Ha-Asufah*, 103–124.

12. J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 102.

13. See Haran, *Ha-Asufah*, 117.

14. See Collins’s survey of scholarly attempts to resolve some of these contradictions: Collins, *Daniel*, 29–33.

15. The historical identity of Belshazzar also presents a dilemma. The name Belshazzar does not appear among the kings of Babylon. See Y. Avishur, “The Royal Court of the Last Kings of Babylon, Nabonid and Belshazzar, and the Function of Daniel and Other Provincials According to the Bible and Other Sources," *Transeuphratène* 37 (2009): 21–36.

16. Cf. Daniel 5:30, 6:1.

17. H. H., Rowley, *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel: A Historical Study of Contemporary Theories* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1935).

18. See Collins, *Daniel*, 30.
19. See K. Koch, “Is Daniel Also among the Prophets?,” in Interpreting the Prophets, ed. J. L. Mays and P. J. Achtemeier (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 237–248.
20. Jerome’s preface to the book of Daniel.
21. See D. Boyarin, “Daniel 7, Intertextuality, and the History of Israel’s Cult,” Harvard Theological Review 105 (2012): 139–162.
22. For many years there has been ongoing scholarly debate on the relationship between these traditions. The first to point out the connection between the Judaeo-Christian division of the four kingdoms and ancient Persian sources was Eduard Meyer, Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1921), 2:189. Several subsequent studies proved that this was an accepted conceptual framework throughout the ancient world, beginning in the eighth century BCE. See J. W. Swain, “The Theory of the Four Monarchies: Opposition History under the Roman Empire,” Classical Philology 35 (1940): 1–21, and the extension of the discussion in D. Flusser, “The Four Empires in the Fourth Sibyl and in the Book of Daniel,” Israel Oriental Studies 2 (1972): 148–172.
23. It is interesting to note that classical rabbinic literature reflects a desire to hide the contents of the book of Daniel from its readers, albeit for different reasons. There are several indications that Daniel was considered problematic in the reality of life under the rule of the kingdoms. Criticism focused primarily on the problem of using the book to calculate the end of days. See tractates Sanhedrin 97b and Megillah 3a.
24. Daniel is the only biblical source (at least in the simple meaning of the text) for many ideas such as the belief in the resurrection of the dead, the schematization of history according to the four kingdoms, the chronography of the Second Temple period in rabbinic literature, the dedication required to maintain a Jewish existence in the Diaspora, the dates of the End of Days, the guardian angels of the nations, and understanding the experience of prophecy.
25. Sanhedrin 93a.
26. For an explanation of the essential differences between modern and (both Jewish and Christian!) religious interpretations of the Bible, see B. S. Childs, “Critical Reflections on Barr’s Understanding of the Literal and the Allegorical,” Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 46 (1990): 3–9; J. Barr, “The Literal, the Allegorical, and Modern Biblical Scholarship,” Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 44 (1989): 3–17.
27. Seder Olam: Mahadurah Madda’it, Perush u-Mavo [Seder Olam: Critical edition, commentary, and introduction], ed. Chaim Milikowsky (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2013), 322 (chap. 30).
28. The sages considered prophecy a necessary condition for the continued composition of biblical books. On the dating of the cessation of this phenomenon, see Chaim Milikowsky, “Sof ha-Nevuah ve-Sof ha-Mikra be-Einei Seder Olam, Sifrut Hazal ve-ha-Sifrut mi-Sa-viv Lah” [The end of prophecy and the end of the period of canonization as viewed by Seder Olam, classical rabbinic literature, and contemporary literature], Sidra 10 (1994): 83–94. See also contrasting discussion in Ephraim Urbach, “Matai Pasekah ha-Nevuah?” [When did prophecy cease?], Me-Olamam shel Ḥakhamim: Kovetz Ma’ovetz [From the world of the sages: A collection of articles] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988), 9–20.
29. Simeon the Righteous, described as one of the “last surviving members of the Great Assembly” (Avot 1:1), is described by the Talmud as having lived in the time of Alexander the Great: “When the Samaritans requested the house of our God from Alexander the Great in order to destroy it, he gave it to them. Simeon the Righteous was informed” (Yoma 69a). On scholarly opinion about the source material on the historical background of Simeon the Righteous, see Amram Tropper, Simeon the Righteous in rabbinic Literature (Leiden: Brill, 2013).
30. Bava Batra 15a.
31. See Rashi, Ezek. 1:1.
32. See Rashbam, Eccles. 1:1, 12:8.
33. The verse reads: “These also are by the sages: It is not right to be partial in judgment.”
34. Rashi, Ezek. 1:1.
35. For further examples, see Israel Ta-Shma, “Mashehu al Bikkoret ha-Mikra be-Ashkenaz bi-Ye-meih ha-Beinayim” [A note on biblical criticism in Ashkenaz in the Middle Ages], in Ha-Mikra bi-Re’i Mefareshav [The Bible in the eyes of its exegetes], ed. Sara Japhet (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1994), 453–459; R. Harris, “Muda’ut la-Arikhat ha-Mikra’ etzel Parshanei Tzefon Tzaret” [Awareness of the redaction of the Bible among the exegetes of northern France], Shnaton: An Annual for Biblical and Near Eastern Studies 12 (2000): 289–310.
36. Fragments of eight Daniel scrolls were found in Qumran, while three other Qumran documents quote it and describe Daniel as a prophet. See L. T. Stuckenbruck, “Daniel and Early Enoch Traditions,” 368 n.1.
37. Judean Antiquities, books 8–10, trans. Christopher T. Begg and Paul Spilsbury (Leiden: Brill, 2005), vol. 5 of Steve Mason, ed., Josephus Flavius: Translation and Commentary (Leiden: Brill, 2000), book 10, sec. 194, 275, sec. 203, 280; Against Apion, trans. John M. G. Barclay (Leiden: Brill, 2007), vol. 10 of Steve Mason, ed., Josephus Flavius: Translation and Commentary (Leiden: Brill, 2000), book 1, sec. 40, 30.
38. For a more thorough discussion, see Rivka Raviv, “Al Mekomo shel Sefer Daniyyel ba-Tanakh ha-Ivri” [On the original position of the book of Daniel in the Jewish Bible], Jewish Studies Internet Journal 6 (2007): 1–12.
39. Seder Olam, chap. 20.
40. Bereshit Rabbah, 27:1.
41. Va-yikra Rabbah, 13:5.
42. Midrash Tanhuma, Bo’ 5.
43. Aggadat Bereshit, chap. 14.
44. Megillah 3a; Sanhedrin 93b–94a. It is clear from examination of the manuscripts that there are no meaningful differences between the text of printed editions and that of the manuscripts, with the exception of MS Firenze of Sanhedrin, whose text apparently was used by Rashi.
45. Mishnah, tractate Yoma 1:3.
46. Bracketed clarification is per Arukh.
47. Bereshit Rabbah, 74:14.
48. Megillah 3a.
49. See note 27 above.
50. Abraham Isaac Kook addressed the subject of extrabiblical findings predating the Bible which are also revelations in the Torah: “It is not well-known that among the early generations there were those with knowledge of the Divine, prophets, men of a high spiritual level, such as Methuselah, Enoch, Shem and Eber, and others. Is it possible that they did not in any way influence the people of their generations, even if their efforts were not as well known as the outstanding work of Ethan the Ezrahite, our father Abraham, may his memory be for a blessing? How is it possible that they would have had no impact on their contemporaries? Moreover, their teachings must have been similar to those of the Torah.” Eder ha-Yekar (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1982), 42–44.
51. See the recent book by Amnon Bazak, Ad ha-Yom ha-Zeh: She’elot Yesod be-Limmud Tanakh [Until this day: Fundamental questions in Bible teaching] (Jerusalem: Yediot, 2013), 247–316.
52. See, e.g., the prescient words of Yoel Elitzur in “Al Ofnot be-Heker Toledot Yisrael” [Trends in Jewish historical research], Al Atar 7 (2001): 23–41.

53. See their comments to Gen. 3.

54. Rav Kook, Ein Ayah B (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1999), 43.

55. For a complete discussion, see Rivka Raviv, “Daryavesh ha-Madi al pi Sifrut Hazal” [Darius the Mede according to classical rabbinic literature], Sidra 27–28 (2013): 245–257.

56. Cyrus was recognized as king of Babylon only about one year after its conquest. See R. D. Wilson, Studies in the Book of Daniel (New York: Revell, 1938), 263; Collins, Daniel, 31n299–303.

57. Seder Olam, chap. 28.

58. The phrase “Media and Persia” appears four times in Daniel: 5:28; 6:9,13; 8:20. The book of Esther appears to indicate that its author regarded Media as part of the kingdom of Persia, rather than an independent kingdom. Cook and Tuplin have proven that non-Jews as well as Jews referred to Persia as Media during the Hellenistic period. See C. Tuplin, “Persians as Medes,” Achaemenid History 8 (1994): 235–256.

59. Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael, Be-shallah, A, 87.