# Daniel and Isaiah

Isaiah is one of the scriptural books with which Daniel has significant links.[[1]](#footnote-1) In this paper I first put aspects of Isaiah 40–66 alongside the vision and story in Dan 2 and 3, and thus take up the form of intertextuality that juxtaposes texts that had no direct relationship. I then consider the testimony and visions that speak of the imperial power in Dan 4 and 8–11, and put them alongside Isa 8; 10; and 14. This study involves both juxtaposing texts that do not allude to each other and texts manifesting direction allusion. Thirdly, I focus on Dan 11:40–12:4, which takes up declarations of trust in Isaiah 52:13–53:12 and illustrates one text’s allusion to another in connection with human faithfulness and God’s faithfulness.

Study of influence and allusion in the Old Testament can be complicated by uncertainty about the origin of texts and thus about the direction of influence and allusion. This question arises with Dan 2–4, which is not far in date from parts of Isaiah, but it may be no coincidence that the question is not very troublesome because the comparison and juxtaposition does not depend on influence and allusion. The question does not arise with Dan 8–12 because it is some of the latest if not the actual latest material in the Old Testament; the direction of influence is from Isaiah to Daniel, and the direction of allusion is from Daniel to Isaiah.

## Facing the Same Issues: Daniel 2 and 3 and Isaiah 40–66

Some issues lying behind Isa 40–55 also underlie Dan 1–6, such as the need to convince Judahites of Yahweh’s insight and sovereignty that contrasts with the apparent impressiveness but actual uselessness of the Babylonians’ theological and religious resources. Specifically, Dan 2 declares that Yahweh is sovereign in political events, that he can reveal what will happen, that the empires are going to fall, that Yahweh’s own reign will come, and that the nations will acknowledge him. The messages in Isa 40–55 address Judahites who have no expectation that Yahweh is about to restore Jerusalem and that its exiles will be returning there, and urge them to believe in these prospects. Yahweh intends to make restoration possible through bringing Babylon down by means of Cyrus. These chapters, too, affirm that Yahweh is sovereign in political events, that the Babylonian empire is going to fall, that Yahweh’s own reign will come, and that the nations will acknowledge him.

While Daniel 2 shares these convictions, then, it differs in affirming the possibility of Judahites doing well in Babylon in the meantime, and in saying more about the empire’s own destiny. On the other hand, Daniel 2–6 has no focus on Jerusalem or Judah, no reference to Yahweh as creator, no negative portrait of Israel or role for Israel to play, no talk of forgiveness, no role for the imperial authority to play, no portrait of Yahweh’s agent as persecuted by his people, no appeal to what Yahweh has done in the past, and no declaration that the events of which it speaks are imminent. Within this context, insofar as Dan 2 is “preoccupied by the same problems as Deutero-Isaiah,”[[2]](#footnote-2) its solution is different.

The difference reflects matters of both historical and geographical context. While Isa 40–55 may have been formed into a composition in the Persian period, its individual messages presuppose the 540s, possibly in Babylon, possibly in Judah. Isaiah 56–66 addresses Judahites in that later time. It presupposes that Yahweh has in part fulfilled the promises in Isa 40–55, but by no means in their entirety; it reaffirms them and urges the community in Judah to continue to live in hope and commitment. Daniel 2–6 also comes from the Persian period, but from the dispersion. Although Dan 2 locates itself in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, it does not envisage the coming of Yahweh’s reign in the neo-Babylonian period. Like Isa 56–66, it knows that Yahweh’s reign will come, but unlike Isa 40–55, it makes no promise about its imminence.

Daniel 2 make no concrete allusions to Isaiah; it has more specific and substantial relationships with a variety of Ancient Near Eastern materials, and part of its meaning emerges through comparing it with them. Juxtaposing Isaiah and Daniel puts side by side texts that are unrelated in origin but concern themselves with the same issues. The juxtaposition makes it possible to see aspects of each text that one might otherwise miss and also to set the insights within each text into a broader framework. Such interrelating links theologically with canonical criticism, within whose framework the two texts have a privileged relationship in the context of the Scriptures.

The subsequent story in Daniel of three men thrown into a furnace provides a dramatic embodiment of a promise in Isaiah.

When you walk through fire--you will not burn,

 into flame—it will not consume you.

Because I am Yahweh your God,

 Israel’s holy one, your deliverer. (Isa 43:2–3)

If our God, whom we honor, exists, he is able to rescue us from the red-hot blazing furnace, and he will rescue us from your power, your majesty. Even if he should not, your majesty should be assured that we are not going to honor your gods or bow down to the gold statue that you have set up. (Dan 3:17–18)

Again, there is no verbal link between story and promise, as would have been possible even though one passage is Hebrew and the other Aramaic. Further, part of the significance of the story about a rescue from the furnace is its pairing with the story in Dan 6 about a rescue from a lion pit. Dan 3 does not allude to the promise in Isaiah. The intertextual link is made by the interpreter who perceives a point of connection between the passages and sees comparisons and contrasts.

Isaiah 43 speaks metaphorically; it envisages no literal fire. Judahites have gone through the fire of Babylonian attack, conquest, destruction, and transportation, and Yahweh speaks to survivors of that fire. For themselves, they know that the promise has been proved true. Yahweh does not now promise that there will be no more fire. Actually, Cyrus’s conquest of Babylon will bring fire and flame, perhaps literal (47:14); talk of fire recurs more ambiguously later (50:11). Yahweh does promise that the fire will not burn the people up.

In Daniel 3, metaphor becomes drama. Indeed, the Isaiah passages about fire support the assumption that the Daniel drama is itself a metaphor, a parable. It would be hazardous to suggest that the narrator’s aim was to turn Isa 43:2–3 into a drama or even that the narrator was familiar with the passage. The parallel may arise from prophet and narrator both being familiar with the same imagery. Yahweh can indeed deliver people who are thrown into a furnace, but this story of his doing so is told with more of the devices of fiction than of historiography (hyperbole, repetition, humor). More historiographical writings in the Old Testament do not include accounts of such deliverances, though there is much portrayal of divine deliverance in Isaiah; the motif recurs through Isa 28–38. Daniel 3 is a parabolic, hyperbolic representation of the deliverance that Judahites might expect as “faith is the assurance of things hoped for” (Heb. 11:1, 34). Intertextually, promise and narrative complement each other. Daniel 3 affirms that Yahweh once brought about this marvelous deliverance, but even if it were a historical record, by its nature as a narrative it would carry no implication that he will do it again, only a challenge to emulate the three men in their commitment. Isaiah 43 makes a dangerous affirmation in which the prophet invites people to trust even though it contrasts with the way things were for their grandparents, though its contextual and metaphorical nature provide wiggle room for the times when the faithful do get martyred.

## The Fate of the Imperial Power: Daniel 4 and 8–11 and Isaiah 8; 10; and 14

The mordant story of Nebuchadnezzar’s chastisement and restoration in Dan 4 provides a dramatized version of the threat to Babylon in Isa 14:13–16, which expresses sarcastic regret at the expected fall of the Babylonian king who had aimed to acquire a god-like position in the world. In Dan 4, Nebuchadnezzar recounts how he dreamed of being like a tree whose top reached to the heavens and was visible to the ends of the earth. A supernatural figure demands that the tree be felled; the one for whom the tree stands was to be reduced to the life of an animal for seven periods of time. As Nebuchadnezzar is admiring the magnificence of the Babylon he has built, the angelic commission is fulfilled. Then in due course he is restored. In substance, the Isaianic account of the Babylonian king finds another parallel in Dan 8: a horn that stands for Antiochus Epiphanes “grew extremely big,” indeed “grew as far as the army of the heavens, and made some of the army, some of the stars, fall to earth, and trampled them.” But in due course this horn will break (8:9, 10, 25).

Neither Dan 4 nor Dan 8 overlaps verbally with Isa 14 but the three compare and contrast. Isaiah 14 envisages a once-for-all fall of Babylon and its king, and Dan 4 comes from a time after this fall has happened. Yet Dan 4 also makes clear that a threat like the one in Isa 14 is not bound be fulfilled and also need not be permanent. And as Dan 8 reviews the Hellenistic period in the Levant during the decades after Alexander’s death, it implies that the pattern of domination embodied in Assyria and then in Babylon and in Nebuchadnezzar, along with the reality of downfall, recurs in the story of subsequent imperial powers. The review thus combines facts with some theological interpretation of their significance that bases itself in part on Isaiah and its picture of Assyria and its king.[[3]](#footnote-3) The posturing and apparently dethroning of the imperial sovereign becomes a pattern for another posturing and promised dethroning. It does not quite portray this dethroning as a once-for-all event, though as a reformulating or elaborating of the promise in Dan 7 it implies that this is what it is.

The juxtaposition of Isa 14, Dan 4, and Dan 8 makes for a segue from consideration of thematic intertextual points of connection that may lie in the eye of the beholder, to linguistic points of connection that could have been in the mind of the visionary. These linguistic links are then clearer in Dan 11, which once more recounts the history of the Hellenistic empires, in a superficially mysterious manner with its references to northern and southern kings, incorporating metaphorical expressions and phrases from the Prophets. These allusions enhance the effect of the portrayal of events as working out under Yahweh’s control (the quasi-prophetic form suggests that he could have revealed them ahead of time).

Isaiah had a metaphor for the threatened Assyrian invasion:

There, the Lord is bringing up against them

the water of the River, substantial, vast

(the king of Assyria and all his splendor). . . .

 It will sweep through Judah—flood as it passes over—

it will reach as far as its neck. (Isa 8:7–8)

The expression “flood as it passes over,” שטף ועבר, recurs in Daniel with reference both to Antiochus III and to Antiochus IV:

 He will advance and advance and flood as he passes over. (Dan 11:10, 40)

In Isaiah, the expression is grammatically odd; it comprises a qatal verb followed by a weqatal, where two weqatals are required. When Daniel takes up the phrase, it has ושטף ועבר, the correct grammar. The implication of its first allusion in 11:10 would be that the campaign fought by Antiochus III will be (was) a further embodiment of Sennacherib’s campaign (though Antiochus’s was fortunately not as devastating for Judah). The application of the phrase to Antiochus’s son (11:40) then comes at the point in the chapter when the vision moves from quasi-prophecy to actual prediction. Whereas 11:5–39 can be correlated to the sequence of events from the 320s to the 160s whose story the chapter tells in light of the Scriptures, 11:40–12:13 has no empirical facts to go on and simply portrays the coming downfall of Antiochus IV and the entire Hellenistic order in light of Scriptures such as Isaiah. The scriptural pattern or precedent makes it possible to portray what will happen.

In between the occurrences of the phrase “flood as it passes over,” Gabriel declares that the southern king “will magnify himself” (11:36), using a verb form that features when Isa 10:15 pictures the nonsensical idea that a saw, standing for the Assyrian king, “will magnify itself” (יתגדל). Gabriel goes on to a further declaration about the southern king.

והצליח עד כלה זעם

 כי נחצרה נעשתה

He will succeed, until wrath finishes,

because a thing that has been determined will be done. (11:36)

The words overlap with further lines in Isaiah:

A finishing is determined,

 flooding [with] faithfulness (צדקה).

Because a finish, a thing determined–

the Lord Yahweh Armies is going to do it. (10:22–23; cf. 28:22)

In a very little while more, wrath finishes. (10:25)

I should comment on the word “faithfulness,” whose translation will also be significant when we come to consider 52:13–53:12 and Daniel 11–12. Here, NRSV has “righteousness,” NJPS “retribution,” CEB “justice.” The root צדק suggests doing the right thing in light of who one is, and the right thing by the people with whom one is in a committed relationship. In bringing disaster on Judah, Yahweh will be in the right, though the reference to faithfulness may also imply a hint that his action will not stop there—as subsequent verses indicate.

In isolation one might wonder if phrases common to Isaiah and Daniel were simply familiar expressions that found their way into Daniel without the author recognizing that they were Isaianic. But the multiplication of the links, and the setting of the Isaianic phrases in Dan 11 in a vision that includes other expressions from the Prophets, enhance the likelihood that the visionary’s wording was shaped by a knowledge of the prophetic text, though it is a different question whether the visionary could have given you the reference. In turn, this argument from the expressions in 11:10, 36, 40 supports the idea that other more isolated expressions allude to Isaiah. When Dan 8:9 and 10 says that the extra horn from the goat “grew big,” it may be no coincidence that the verb (גדל) is the one lying behind the description of the Assyrian king magnifying himself. Likewise, 9:24–27 speaks of a leader bringing about a “flood” (שטף) and of a desolation “determined” (נחרצת), until “a finish, a thing determined” (כלה ונחצרה) comes about, all in the context of a promise that a time set “to bring in lasting faithfulness” (צדק; cf. צדקה in Isa 10:22). As is the case with parallels in Dan 2, Isaiah is not the most important source of the allusions in Dan 9, but Dan 9 does use Isaiah as well as Leviticus to explain Jeremiah.

If the visionary in Dan 8–11 looks at Judah’s situation in the 160s in light of Isaiah, what are the interpretive presuppositions or implications? Daniel 9 may see Jer 25 as a prophecy referring to the situation of the community in the 160s, and might then be seen as engaged in an exegesis of that prophecy. It is less likely that Dan 8–11 is exegeting Isaiah. It does not focus on explaining the Isaianic text, nor is it seeking to resolve an exegetical problem, as Dan 9 is. Someone might see an analogy between Judah’s situation in the 700s and the 160s, between Yahweh’s message to it, and between the act of deliverance that Yahweh did and the one he is about to do, and thus to be thinking typologically. But there is no “as . . . so . . .” language (contrast Luke 17:26; John 3:14; Rom 5:12–21). While modern interpreters, then, might apply a typological framework to the link between the situations and Yahweh’s actions, the adoption of isolated phrases from Isaiah does not suggest the visionary’s having a typological framework. Most likely, the visionary simply assumes the living, ongoing power of the words from Isaiah.

It is yet another question how far the author expects people to recognize the Isaianic phrases. Some people might; many surely would not. The function of the Isaianic phrases is thus not rhetorical; they do not arouse attention or facilitate understanding or enhance plausibility. For the visionary, they played a key role in gaining insight. For the audience, they are simply an element in the vision as a whole that has its own force and authority rather than a force and authority that it gains from Isaiah. The original authority of Isaiah’s prophecies derived from their compelling nature and subsequent vindication; the dynamic with the Danielic vision would be similar. There is an analogy with the much more substantial influence of the Prophets on the Revelation to John. Revelation could never have come into being without the Prophets, but Christian readers are at most only vaguely aware that Revelation reuses prophetic material, and they could hardly identify John’s sources. Revelation’s authority for them comes from John’s reformulation.

Indeed, readers who recognized the Isaianic phrases might be bemused or worried. In Isaiah these declarations speak of someone who is unwittingly chastising Judah for its waywardness, and Dan 9 sees Jerusalem’s ongoing reduced state as a continuation of such chastisement. In general, however, Daniel does not portray the Judahites as wayward, but rather implies that Judah is an undeserving victim, suffering collateral damage from a conflict among the empires. While Dan 11 sees the community as including faithless as well as faithful people, it does not see it as fundamentally wayward, as Isaiah does in his time. So the visionary’s hearers or readers might be wise not to look too closely at the original context and meaning of Isaiah’s words. Daniel’s taking up individual phrases does not imply an exegesis of the passages as wholes. It rather implies that further significance attaches to the individual phrases.

## Encouragement for the Faithful: Daniel 11–12 and Isaiah 52:13–53:12

Study of the intertextual relationship between Daniel and Isa 40–55 began in observations concerning Dan 11–12 and Isa 52:13–53:12,[[4]](#footnote-4) some decades before intertextuality was invented. As is the case with Isa 8 and 10, the links are scattered but numerous and distinctive enough to suggest that Daniel does allude to Isaiah. The visionary has found Isa 52:13–53:12 illuminating and its phrases thus find a way into the vision.

Whereas the chapter divisions in printed Bibles separate Isa 52 from Isa 53, MT treats 52:13–53:12 as a single subunit—that is, a setumah follows 52:12 and another follows 53:12. The implication that 52:13–53:12 is a subunit fits the modern awareness that 52:13–53:12 may be seen as a palistrophe. Both Isa 52:13–53:12 and Dan 11:21–12:4 manifest ambiguities and have been the subject of suggestions for emendation, but I do not discuss these where they do not affect our concern with the relationship between the passages.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Daniel 11:21–12:4 includes the following phrases in its account of Antiochus IV’s reign and of what will follow.

ומשכילי עם יבינו לרבים

Insightful ones in a people will enable the multitude to understand (11:33)

והמשכילים יזהרו כזהר הרקיע

ומצדיקי הרבים ככוכבים לעולם ועד

,The insightful ones will shine like the moon in the sky

those who make the multitude faithful [will shine] like the stars to all eternity (12:3)

ישטטו רבים ותרבה הדעת

A multitude will hurry to and fro and knowledge/humbling will increase (12:4)

The insightful people are teachers with whom the visionary identifies, who seek to help the community as a whole understand what is really going on in its life, to take the right attitude to it, and to be faithful in a situation where the imperial authorities are preventing proper adherence to the Torah. We know from sources such as 1 and 2 Maccabees that the perspective expressed in the vision is by no means the only possible one. As commonly happens within Judaism and within the church, the community’s leadership is divided in its view of what counts as understanding and faithfulness. The vision aims to bolster the faith and commitment of the teachers who share its understanding.

The related passages from Isa 52:13–53:12 are:

הנה ישכיל עבדי

There, my servant will act with insight (52:13)

כאשר שממו עליך רבים

Just as a multitude were appalled at you (52:14)

כן יזה גוים רבים

So he will sprinkle a multitude of nations (52:15)

ואשר לא שמעו התבוננו

What they have not heard they will understand (52:15)

איש מכאבות וידוע חלי

 A person of great sufferings and knowledgeable/humbled in weakness (53:3)

צדיק עבדי לרבים בדעתו יצדיק

ועונתם הוא יסבל

לכן אחלק לו ברבים

By his knowledge/humbling my faithful servant will show he is faithful to the multitude,

when it was their waywardness that he was carrying.

Therefore I will give him a share among the multitude. (53:11–12)

“My servant will act with insight” (שכל hiphil). The verb is a little ambiguous. In Tg the servant will “succeed” (cf. BDB), but LXX and Vg assume the more usual meaning “have insight”; the rendering “act with insight” points to the link between the two possible understandings. Daniel uses the verb in its participial form to refer to the faithful leaders who are משכילי עם. This expression might mean that they enable the people to have insight, but more likely they are the leaders among the people who themselves have insight. Either way, it is Isaiah’s verb and description of Yahweh’s servant that provides Daniel with an epithet for these teachers. The vision implies a statement of faith about their destiny that is comparable to the one implied in Isaiah. Yahweh’s servant did not look like someone who had insight or acted with insight; he acted in a way that brought persecution. But Isa 52:13–53:12 affirms that the appearance was deceptive. The same is true of the faithful leaders in Daniel.

The vision does not refer to the teachers as Yahweh’s servants. Nebuchadnezzar applied the Aramaic word to the three young men in 3:26, 28, Darius applied it to Daniel in 6:21 [20], and Daniel applied the Hebrew word to himself in 9:17; 10:17. Perhaps the vision sees Daniel as Yahweh’s servant in the Isaianic sense; it would be a plausible reading of Isa 52:13–53:12. The teachers then have a vocation that overlaps with Yahweh’s servant/Daniel, but they are not an embodiment of Yahweh’s servant, nor are they Yahweh’s servants themselves. Yet Yahweh’s promise regarding his servant applies to them.

Isaiah 52:13–53:12 and Dan 11–12 share a further ambiguity, indicated in the translations above by the expressions “knowledge/humbling” and “knowledgeable/humbled.”[[6]](#footnote-6) The dual translation recognizes the possibility that the familiar verb ידע meaning “know” has a homonym meaning “be submissive/humbled.” Scholarly opinions differ over whether any of our passages involve occurrences of the second verb rather than the more familiar one. A point of significance in our present context is that establishing the meaning in Isaiah does not establish the meaning in Daniel, nor vice versa.

Then there is the “multitude,” more literally the “many” (רבים). Isaiah 52:14 offers no clue regarding the identity of this multitude, though general considerations suggest that “many” Judahites and foreigners might be appalled at what had happened to Yahweh’s servant. “A multitude of nations” might make their identity more specific (cf. 2:2–4), though it would be odd if “my faithful servant will show he is faithful to the multitude, when it was their waywardness that he was carrying” (53:11) did not at least include Judahites. On the other hand, “I will give him a share among the multitude” might again sound like a reference to the nations among whom he will receive a reward, like plunder. In Daniel, there is no doubt that the multitude are the Judahite community, or the faithful among them, or the bulk of the community that the visionary longs will be the faithful.

In their ministry to them, the teachers are practicing faithfulness. In this connection, there is another subtle difference between Dan 12:3 and Isa 53:11. At first sight, the obvious implication of the verb in Isa 53:11 (צדק hiphil) is that Yahweh’s servant will “declare that a faithful person is faithful,” will declare that “a person who is in the right is in the right,” as in 1 Kgs 8:32. But “to the multitude” (לרבים) then does not follow very well, and “when it was their waywardness that he was carrying” follows much less well. Vg has “he will justify many,” taking the ל on לרבים as the sign of the object, as it is in Dan 11:33 (so GK 117n; also Tg). But it fits more usual usage of ל to take the verb as an internal or inwardly transitive hiphil (cf. GK 53def): the servant will be faithful and will thus show to the multitude that he is faithful.

Either way, there is a comparison and contrast when Dan 12:3 omits the preposition and thus makes clear that the multitude are the verb’s object: these teachers will make the multitude faithful. Given that ל as the sign of the object appeared in 11:33 (it is a “solecism of the later period” according to GK 117n), the difference in 12:3 is noteworthy and ironic. The new wording might imply a recognition that the Isaianic usage is ambiguous and needs to be clarified, or that in Isaiah the preposition has its usual meaning and that in this context something different needs to be said. Daniel is then clarifying the meaning of Isaiah or using the words from Isaiah with a new significance or implying that Isaiah used some words that stimulated the visionary into seeing something different or indicating a desire that people hearing those words in Isaiah should come to think about this different point. Daniel would accept that the teachers are showing themselves faithful as Yahweh’s servant did, and that they, too, are paying the ultimate price for doing so. But Daniel’s own point is that beyond the faithfulness that they are showing is the faithfulness that they are encouraging in many people in the community.

The collocation of passages in Daniel taking up phrases from Isa 52:13–53:12 subverts another medieval chapter division, this time the one that separates the promise of Michael’s coming from what precedes; MT’s division treats Dan 11:1–12:3 as a chapter (that is, it locates a petuhah at either end). Continuing to speak of the multitude, the vision declares:

ורבים מישני אדמת עפר יקיצו

אלה לחיי עולם

ואלה לחרפות לדראון עולם

Thus many of the people who sleep in the land of dirt will wake up,

some to life for all time,

some to great reviling, to abhorrence for all time. (12:2)

The wording does not recall Isa 53:12–53:12, but it does parallel two other Isaianic passages:

הקיצו ורננו שכני עפר

Wake up and chant, you who dwell in the dirt . (26:19)

והיו דראון לכל בשר

They will be an abhorrence to all flesh. (66:24)

The expressions “who sleep in the land of dirt, “who dwell in the dirt, and “abhorrence” are all unique to these passages, which makes it reasonable to think that the Isaianic ones somewhere behind the visionary’s formulation. On the other hand, the isolated nature of the references in Isaiah may suggest that they are a less conscious or less deliberate reflection of Isaiah than the phrases the vision has in common with 52:13–53:12. Further, the two Isaianic passages may be among the very latest in the book of Isaiah and thus be not far in date from the Danielic vision, which complicates the question about the direction of dependence.

The author of Dan 11–12 might hope that the community’s teachers would recognize the vision’s allusions to Isa 52:13–53:12 and be encouraged by its incorporating promises that already had prophetic authority. But Dan 12 implies that the vision addressed the faithful in general not just its leaders, and it again seems less likely that they would be familiar enough with Isaiah to recognize the allusions. The chief significance of the intertextual links is the role they played in the visionary’s own inspiration.

## Conclusion

Hermeneutically, what might be the implications of Daniel’s taking up Isaiah’s words? There are at least four possibilities.

Daniel might understand the Isaiah passages as predictions or prophecies from Yahweh of an arrogant Hellenistic invader whose forces will flood into Judah and of a servant of Yahweh who will act faithfully, and might be implying that God has now fulfilled his predictions or is now fulfilling them. One difficulty with this understanding arises from the fact that Yahweh does not really predict things; human beings do that. Yahweh declares intentions that he goes on to fulfill.

To reformulate that possibility, then, Daniel might understand the Isaiah passages as Yahweh’s declarations of intent to send the arrogant invader and restore a servant of Yahweh who has suffered for his faithfulness, and the visions might be affirming that God has fulfilled his warnings and will fulfil his promise. The questions raised by this understanding include that the warning prophecies followed on Judah’s waywardness, whereas it is not clear that the second-century community deserves such chastisement or that the vision sees it that way. But a different question arises with Isa 52:13–53:12, which speaks of suffering that was already actual in the prophet’s day; it is the servant’s restoration that is the future event. Now prophets often speak of something future as if it had already happened (in God’s purpose it already has), and it would also be possible for a prophet who sees a sequence of future events to be put in a position where (in the vision) some have happened and some are still to come. But not only does this seem forced; the broader context of the passage in Isa 40–55 describes Yahweh’s servant as one who actually has experienced suffering in the prophet’s day but not yet experienced restoration, and that is more likely the actual situation in the background of 52:13–53:12. Appropriately, Dan 11–12 would then imply that the faithful teachers in the 160s occupy the same in-between position. The community and its teachers have been going through persecution and martyrdom, and the promises in Isa 52:13–53:12 offer encouragement.

One might then think in terms of a typological relationship between the events described in Isaiah and in Daniel. Antiochus (father and son) repeat the pattern set by Sennacherib. The persecution of the faithful teachers in the 160s that will be followed by restoration repeats the pattern set in Isa 52:13–53:12. While the visionary does not suggest seeing things typologically, the modern interpreter might.

The most likely understanding is that the link between Daniel and Isaiah is purely verbal. Words in Isaiah sparked thinking on the part of Daniel. The process reflects the inspired nature of the prophetic text, the “vitality” in the Scriptures that finds expression as they get adapted to new situations in which they “live.”[[7]](#footnote-7) The visionary simply picks up words that are illuminating and encouraging. Daniel is not concerned with the words’ meaning in their Isaianic context, it is seeing something of their significance for a different context.

In its relationship with Isaiah, Danielic intertextuality does not aim to replace the text it takes up, though neither does it aim to encourage people to go and read it. There are no “as it is written” phrases that draw the audience’s attention back to the Isaianic text (contrast, e.g., John 12:38). There is no assumption that the new text should correspond in meaning to the old text, and the new text is not a guide to the meaning of the old text. Yet Daniel is not changing the meaning of Isaiah; Isaiah meant what it meant, and someone else cannot change its meaning. Daniel takes up phrases from Isaiah because they are illuminating in the present context. It is not seeking to exegete the text, explain it, clarify it, or resolve problems it raises. Indeed, if exegesis is concerned to discover the meaning of the text as an act of communication with its audience, “inner-biblical exegesis” seems a misleading way to describe the process of interpretation within the Scriptures.

Daniel does implicitly honor Isaiah by showing that it has a significance going beyond its inherent meaning. It does imply that Isaiah has assisted it in reaching new insight and making new statements that it might not otherwise have made. And it does implicitly claim its support in connection with its own statement. Further, by a feedback process its allusions to Isaiah might raise questions regarding Daniel itself and its context. Might there be a link between the community’s trouble and its waywardness? What is the identity of groups with different faith perspectives, and what are the conflicts within the leadership of the Judahite community and within the community itself, which are presupposed by Daniel and by Isa 40–55, and by Isa 52:13–53:12 in particular? Yet further, the new text contributes, partly subconsciously, to a wider understanding of the subject that it has in common with the old text (such as the possibility of an imperial power repenting or being restored, and the destiny of an insightful teacher who is persecuted or martyred).

1. In what follows, I presuppose views concerning the origin and exegesis of Isaiah and Daniel that appear in John Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40–55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* (London: T & T Clark, 2005); Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, International Critical Commentary (London: T & T Clark, 2006); Goldingay, *Isaiah 56–66*, International Critical Commentary (London: T & T Clark, 2014); Goldingay, *Miracle in Isaiah: Divine Marvel and Prophetic Word* (forthcoming Minneapolis: Fortress, 2022); Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary 30, revised edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019). All translations are my own. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ida Fröhlich, *“Time and Times and Half a Time”: Historical Consciousness in the Jewish Literature of the Persian and Hellenistic Eras*, Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha 19 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 47; cf. Fröhlich, “Daniel 2 and Deutero-Isaiah,” in *The Book of Daniel: In the Light of New Findings,* ed. A. S. van der Woude, BETL 106 (Leuven: University Press, 1993), 266–70. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The link between Daniel and these prophecies in Isaiah is the central focus in G. Brooke Lester, *Daniel Evokes Isaiah*: *Allusive Characterization of Foreign Rule in the Hebrew-Aramaic Book of Daniel* (LHBOTS 606; London: T&T Clark, 2015); see further Andrew Teeter, “Isaiah and the King of As/Syria in Daniel’s Final

Vision,” in Eric F. Mason, ed., *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 153 (Leiden: Brill, 2012) 1:169–99. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See I. Engnell, “The ʿEbed Yahweh Songs and the Suffering Messiah in ‘Deutero-Isaiah,’” *BJRL* 31 (1948): 54–93; H. L. Ginsberg, “The Oldest Interpretation of the Suffering Servant,” *VT* 3 (1953): 400–4. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See the works listed in note 1 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See Leslie C. Allen, “Isaiah liii. 11 and Its Echoes,” *Vox Evangelica* 1 (1962): 24–28; John Day, “*Da'at* ‘Humiliation’ in Isaiah liii 11 in the Light of Isaiah liii 3 and Daniel xii 4, and the Oldest Known Interpretation of the Suffering Servant,” *VT* 30 (1980): 97–103. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Hindy Najman, “The Vitality of Scripture Within and Beyond the ‘Canon,’” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 43 (2012): 497–518 (515–18). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)