



# **Daniel Evokes Isaiah: Allusive Characterization of Foreign Rule in the Hebrew-Aramaic Book of Daniel (The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies)**

*G. Brooke Lester*

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Lester argues here that the book of Daniel contains a complex but poetically unified narrative. This can be identified through certain narrative qualities, including the allusion to Isaiah throughout, which uniquely contributes to the narrative arc. The narrative begins with the inauguration of foreign rule over Israel, and concludes with that rule's end. Each stage of the book's composition casts that foreign rule in terms ever-more-reminiscent of Isaiah's depiction of Assyria. That enemy is first conscripted by God to punish Israel, but then arrogates punitive authority to itself until ultimately punished in its turn and destroyed. Each apocalypse in the book of Daniel carries forward, in its own way, that allusive characterization.

Lester thus argues that an allusive poetics can be investigated as an intentional rhetorical trope in a work for which the concept of "author" is complex; that a narrative criticism can incorporate a critical understanding of composition history. The "Daniel" resulting from this inquiry depicts Daniel's 2nd-century Jewish reader not as suffering punishment for breaking covenant with God, but as enduring in covenant faithfulness the last days of the "Assyrian" arrogator's violent excesses. This narrative problematizes any simplistic narrative conceptions of biblical Israel as ceaselessly rebellious, lending a unique note to conversations about suffering and theodicy in the Hebrew Bible, and about anti-Judaic habits in Christian reading of the Hebrew Bible.

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