Daniel 12:2 and the Threat of Shame: Interpreting Sociological Themes Concerning Death, Burial and Corpse Exposure as Punishment in the Hebrew Bible

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ABSTRACT

Since at least the post-Nicene period, Dan 12:2 has been cited often as a foundational text for the eschatological conception of hell within the Christian Bible. However, when examined within its original sociological context, this passage can be more accurately understood as reflecting a specific threat of shame deeply embedded in the honour-based society of the ancient Mediterranean during the Second Temple Period. The linguistic connection of דראון *("contempt, abhorrence") to Isaiah, particularly concerning the fear of non-burial and corpse exposure, reinforces this interpretation by emphasising the concept of shame tied to one's manner of death (Isa 66:24). This study employs a sociological approach to explore the language of "shame and contempt" in Dan 12:2 within its Judaic cultural framework, focusing on burial practices and the associated threat of non-burial. It argues that the author intended to depict an extremely specific and detailed punishment of shame by corpse exposure as a punitive consequence rather than implying a prototype of eternal torment in a place called "hell."*

KEYWORDS: Daniel 12:2, Shame, Death, Burial, Punishment

A THE INTERPRETIVE HISTORY CONNECTING DAN 12:2 WITH "HELL"

The concept of eternal conscious torment (ECT) in hell was ubiquitous in the post-Nicene church, leading many to infer that Dan 12:2 intended to portray a place of torment for the reprobate. Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 313–386 C.E.) and Jerome (c. 342–420 C.E.) both connected this verse to the idea of ECT in their writings. The former believes that Dan 12:2 describes a physical resurrection for the righteous, who experience eternity with Choirs of Angels, but the sinners will

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have a bodily resurrection specifically for the purpose of everlasting torment.[1] The latter suggests that the righteous will witness those who rise to shame and everlasting "confusion,"[2] who will then be subsequently punished and tortured. Jerome then connects the final verse in Isaiah to Dan 12:2 to explain the ultimate fate of the wicked, albeit without specifying a precise location where this punishment will be executed.[3]

Although some early Christian interpreters argued that Dan 12:2 indicates eternal torment in hell, perspectives on this passage continued to evolve through subsequent centuries. Since the Reformation, many not only preserve the idea that Dan 12:2 equates with the general understanding of afterlife punishment in hell but also appear to advance further the notion that it is precisely where the conception of hell originated. For example, Philip Melanchthon, one of the first generation of Magisterial Reformers, asserts that Dan 12:2 speaks of two groups of people that will endure distinct fates—one to "eternal glory" and one to "never-ending torment."[4] Robert H. Charles argues that Dan 12:2 *implies* the punishment of "Gehenna," associating it with "the *final* and *not the immediate* abode of apostates in the next world" (emphasis original).[5] Much like Jerome, James Montgomery similarly connects Dan 12:2 with Isa 66:24 and states that both verses express "the first glimpse of the eternal pains of the damned in Gehenna."[6]

In the modern era, Stephen Miller asserts that Dan 12:2 expresses the concept of death and that when the "spirit of an unbeliever departs, it goes immediately to a place of conscious torment."[7] He further writes that even though Dan 12:2 does not support other ideas about the afterlife, such as annihilation or soul sleep, it presents an early doctrine of eternal punishment.[8] Daniel Block describes what he sees as "hints of the netherworld and the afterlife as a

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1 Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catachetial Lectures*. 4.31.

2 Even though the Vulgate renders this phrase *et alii in obprobrium ut videant sempe*, both Jerome and Augustine quote Dan 12:2 as *opprobrium et confusionem aeternam*. See Jerome, *Adversus Pammachium*, 33; Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 20.23.2.

3 Jerome, Adversus Pammachium, 33

4 Philip Melanchthon, *In Danielem Prophetam Commentarius* (Leipzig: Nicolas Wolrab, 1543); as translated in Carl L. Beckwith, *Ezekiel, Daniel* (RCS 12; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008), 856–557.

5 Robert H. Charles, A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, in Judaism, and in Christianity, or, Hebrew, Jewish, and Christian Eschatology from Pre-Prophetic Times Till the Close of the New Testament Canon: Being the First Jowett Lectures Delivered in 1898-99 (2nd ed; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1913), 244.

6 James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (1st ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), 472.

7 Stephen Miller, *Daniel: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (1st ed.; vol. 18; Nashville: B&H Publishing, 1994), 316.

8 Miller, 316.

place/time of eternal torment" in Dan 12:2.[9] Francis Chan and Preston Sprinkle's popular-level work argues that first-century Judaism developed certain beliefs about hell while studying the Old Testament and Dan 12:2 in particular.[10] Many past and present interpretations contend that Dan 12:2 was viewed as an archetype to the afterlife exhibiting a bifurcation subsequent to death, where one goes to either heaven or hell. However, based on an understanding of the sociological context of second-century Judaism, it seems likely that Daniel envisioned a concept unique to a Jewish audience rather than a universal belief of hell applicable for all people.

B AVOIDING EXEGETICAL FALLACY

Recognising what the author of Dan 12:2 initially visualised with this passage requires greater attention to the text's immediate and surrounding context rather than interpreting it through the lens of anachronistic environments from later theologically developed communities, such as the rabbis, early Christians or even contemporary theologians.[11] The emphasis on later interpretive frameworks is closely tied to the concept of "progressive revelation," as proposed by certain interpreters, which suggests that revelation in the Old Testament was only partial and fragmentary "including the relative opaqueness in its description of the nature of the afterlife."[12] Such an approach implies that certain doctrines were not "explicitly realized" within the biblical timeframe, potentially creating tension between traditional beliefs and contemporary interpretations.[13] For example, Miller argues that Dan 12:2 cannot teach a simultaneous resurrection of both the righteous and wicked *precisely* because Rev 20:4-6 explains that the wicked will be raised a thousand years after the righteous.[14] Likewise, J. Vernon McGee suggests that Rev 20:11-15 is a means to interpret Dan 12:2 and that it addresses the lost saints of the Old Testament who were raised for the Great White throne judgment after the Millennium.[15] In these proposals, Miller and McGee contend that later texts refine or clarify the meaning of earlier ones,

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9 Daniel I. Block, "The Old Testament on Hell," in *Hell Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents Eternal Punishment* (ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 51.

10 Francis Chan and Preston M. Sprinkle, *Erasing Hell: What God Said about Eternity, and the Things We Made up* (Colorado Springs: David C Cook, 2011), 28.

11 John Goldingay, Nancy L. deClaisse Walford and Peter H. Davids, *Daniel* (vol. 30; rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019), 547.

12 Sinclair Ferguson, "Pastoral Theology: The Preacher and Hell," in *Hell Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents Eternal Punishment* (ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 226.

13 Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 83.

14 Miller, *Daniel*, 318.

15 J. Vernon McGee, *Daniel* (Thru the Bible Commentary Series 26; Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), 194.

potentially overlooking the possibility that Daniel's vision was contextually situated in Israel's historical and cultural framework rather than serving as a comprehensive doctrinal statement about the afterlife for all individuals.[16]

C ALL OR SOME?

The language in Dan 12:2 appears to suggest a resurrection exclusive to the righteous Jews, rather than encompassing both the righteous and wicked in a universal resurrection. One primary justification is that Dan 12:2 serves as a continuation of thought from verse one, which refers to all of those who have their names recorded in "the book" (בספר) and that "many (רבים) of *those* who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake" (NRSV). The root רב ("many, great deal, numerous, abundantly") generally pertains to a large number of countable events (e.g. Exod 12:38), but can also mean a vast number of substances (sometimes translated as "much" or "very much") such as gold (1 Kgs 10:2), silver (2 Kgs 12:11), bronze (1 Chr 18:8), wine (Est 1:7), property (2 Chr 32:29) and seed (Deut 28:38).[17] Out of the 423 occurrences of this word, nowhere in the Hebrew Bible is רב used to indicate a total amount, a complete number of something or simply "all." If the intention was to justify that *all people* will be resurrected and that some will subsequently have life and some will not, the author may have potentially used the word כל instead of רבים. As a result, it appears reasonable to assume that the author wishes to claim that only *some* will arise to everlasting life in contrast to the others who are not said to be dependent upon a physical resurrection.[18]

With this consideration, it should be noted that while Daniel contains what some consider apocalyptic material, narrowly classifying it as apocalyptic, as some contemporary interpreters have, may be a hermeneutical pitfall.[19] Philip

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16 Though it is challenging to locate precisely when the doctrine of a future bodily resurrection initially originated, Dan 12:2 is considered the most evident in the Hebrew Bible, even above Ezek 37 and Isa 66:24, which are intertwined significantly with Dan 12:2 and seemingly speak to the same idea. However, it is only an anachronistic reading that assumes that those three passages indicate "hell." For further study of when the doctrine of resurrection potentially occurred, see C. D. Elledge, *Resurrection of the Dead in Early Judaism, 200 BCE-200CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

17 James Swanson, *DBL Hebrew*, רב.

18 John J. Collins, Frank Moore Cross, and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 391. A similar claim is made in Joel 3 when God promises to enter into judgement with Israel's enemies in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (החרוץ). Israel's enemies are said to become a desolation or a desolate wilderness, indicating complete destruction. Conversely, Isarel is said to be "inhabited forever" (Joel 3:20).

19 Philip Davies argues that Daniel is not and should not be considered in the genre of "apocalyptic." Much of this comes from contemporary interpreters who opine that Daniel predicts the eschatological future, as evidenced from many commentators who claim that Daniel foretells the anti-Christ, millennium reign of Christ or the second

Davies reasons that Daniel has been ill-served by the "typical" apocalyptic genre primarily because of the seemingly accepted connection between "apocalyptic" and "prophecy."[20] It is more likely, however, that Daniel's audience would recognise the symbolic and emblematic language as it pertains to Israel's covenant community and its present circumstances rather than a prophecy concerning a universal and *individual* eschatological argument for all humanity that occurs in the future.[21]

While debates concerning the apocalyptic nature of Daniel emphasise its symbolic function, interpretations of Dan 12:2 bring the discussion into the realm of two contrasting eschatological destinies, raising questions about its language and imagery. On the other hand, some have contended that the more natural and straightforward reading of Dan 12:2 appears to suggest that both groups will arise and experience contrasting destinies by the construction "some… some…"[22] This interpretation if often based on the assumption that in order for one to experience shame and contempt, it requires being alive. For example, Miller contends that this second group "will be ashamed and disgraced as they stand before the Lord and realize the gravity of their sin, particularly the sin of rejecting God's loving Messiah."[23] Such claims inherently assume a living audience, though the primary emphasis remains that both groups endure a particular and contrasting fate— eternal life or shame and contempt.[24]

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coming. See Philip R. Davies, "Eschatology in the Book of Daniel," *JSOT* 5 (1980): 37.

[20] Ibid., 37–38. Cf. John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 95. Collins also recognises the issues with an "apocalyptic" label, but he further cautions against *disassociating* Daniel completely from the apocalyptic genre. Rather, Daniel should be interpreted based on its own tradition and not based on traditions of other contemporary apocalyptic works (e.g. 1 En).

[21] Cf. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 548. Goldingay suggests that the language of Dan 12:2 "promises the awakening of people individually, but with a view to their sharing a corporate destiny." Though in this instance, "individual" is not used in the context of an individualistic society. The second century B.C.E. Hebrews were a collectivist society and the "individual" resurrection, denoted by the word "some" (אלה) is the righteous, meaning the Hebrew community and not all people from all time.

[22] Collins, *Daniel*, 393. Collins admits that the natural reading appears to suggest two groups who rise, but he additionally makes the disclaimer that Dan 12:2 "makes no mention of a fiery hell."

[23] Miller, *Daniel*, 317.

[24] Cf. Daniel P. Bailey, "The Intertextual Relationship of Daniel 12:2 and Isaiah 26:19: Evidence from Qumran and the Greek Versions," *TB* 51 (2000): 305–308. Bailey, for example, argues that the language of resurrection in Dan 12:2 is directly borrowed from Isa 26:19 (יקומון) primarily because the Hebrew verbal forms for יקומון are identical in both Dan 12:2 and Isa 26:19. He further assumes a singular resurrection of the righteous Jews only because the counterpart to יקומון in Isa 26:19 is found five

Of the two contrasting destinies, the first group is said to be raised to "everlasting life" (לחיי עולם) a phrase that appears in this passage for the first and only time in the entirety of the Hebrew Bible.[25] The LXX rendering of "everlasting life" (ζωὴν αἰώνιον) in Dan 12:2 likewise occurs in the New Testament (e.g. John 3:16 and Matt 25:46), along with Pseudepigraphic works such as 1 En 15:4 and Pss Sol 3:1, all of which indicate "life eternal." This linguistic and conceptual continuity suggests that Dan 12:2 focuses on the eschatological restoration of Israel's covenant community rather than a universal apocalyptic eschatology common to later Christian theology.[26]

D THE THREAT OF SHAME

The second group in Dan 12:2 are those who will receive the punishment of everlasting shame and contempt (לחרפות לדראון עולם), which, according to Collins, does not require experiencing life for a second time or being raised from Sheol.[27] Instead, it distributes a punishment of shame that would be familiar to a second-century B.C.E. Israelite. Honour and shame can be defined as illustrations of social evaluations that reflect and measure the communal ideals from a collective group of people.[28] They are also used to assess not only their own conduct, but the conduct and standards of those around their own community with whom they interact.[29] Ideals of honour and shame are not strictly for the individual however, as social groups also possess their own collective honour and shame principles.[30] As a result, the language of "shame and contempt" in Dan 12:2 ought to be given due consideration, since it reflects deeply ingrained cultural values and serves as a rhetorical device to emphasise lasting consequences. Additionally, recognising sociological terminology (as opposed

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verses earlier in Isa 26:14 and declares, "The dead do not live; shades do not rise" (בל־יקמו). Therefore, those in Isa 26:19 who will arise are contrasted with those in 26:14 who will *not live* and *not rise*.

[25] A similar expression (נצה היי) is found in 1QS 4:7. Otherwise, the notion of an eternal resurrection after death is only implied in the Hebrew Bible.

[26] This notion can further be attested in 4Qinstruction, which speaks of two opposing fates for both the wicked and the elect and states that subsequent to one's death, the individual's destiny will be either the שחת עולם ("eternal pit") or שמחת עולם ("eternal joy"). See Matthew J. Goff, *4QInstruction: Wisdom Literature from the Ancient World* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 231.

[27] Collins, *Daniel*, 393.

[28] J. G. Peristiany, "Introduction," in *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (ed. J. G. Persistiany; London: Weidfeld & Nicolson, 1965), 9-10.

[29] Peristiany, 10.

[30] Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," in *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (ed. J. G. Peristiany; London: Weidfeld & Nicolson, 1965), 35. Pitt-Rivers further clarifies that the dishonour of one individual of any particular group reflects upon the honour (or shame) of the entire group.

to threats of hell) as a means of punishment helps to identify what the author was specifically attempting to express about the second group.

The first part of the punishment is from the Hebrew root חרף (shame, dishonour) and can be defined as the fear of revealing a vulnerability that one desires to keep hidden from the public eye.[31] It evokes emotions such as ostracism, abandonment and betrayal, challenging the individual's sense of "self," resulting in an "embarrassment of existing."[32] In the second century B.C.E., the verbal root חרף is widely attested to outside of biblical Hebrew—in Middle Hebrew, Jewish and Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Syriac, Mandaic and Arabic.[33] However, in biblical Hebrew, the noun represents "abuse, mock, belittle."[34] The verb חרף appears 39 times in the Hebrew Bible (four in the *qal* and 35 in the *pi'el*), with the majority occurring 11 times in Psalms, five times in 1 Sam 17 and four times in Isa 37. The particular noun חרפות in Dan 12:2 is found 73 times in the Hebrew Bible with a general meaning of scorn (27 times), a state of shame (25 times), reproach (20 times) or contemptible thing (once)."[35] Additionally, it describes the damage to one's reputation if an individual is shamed and even more so if one is shamed in front of one's enemies.[36] As a result, the threat in Dan 12:2 reflect a specific cultural value of *shame* rather than a threat of an eschatological punishment in a place called "hell."

The latter part of the punishment for the second group is the rare Hebrew word translated as "contempt" (דראון) in the NRSV and is relatively unique in the Hebrew Bible, occurring in only two places—Dan 12:2 and Isa 66:24. This affords a reasonable linguistic connection between these two texts since they both have to do with דראון within the same contextual reference, which concerns the aftermath of a group of people after death. John Day believes that Dan 12:2 and Isa 66:24 share so much in common that Daniel's use of that particular imagery demonstrates a reliance on the book of Isaiah, especially on Isa 66:24.[37]

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31 Benjamin Kilborne, "Fields of Shame: Anthropologists Abroad," *Ethos* 20 (1992): 231.

32 Kilborne, 231.

33 E. Kutsch, *TDOT* ".5:209 ",חרף Many scholars acknowledge there are two different roots of חרף (*hrp* I [*ḥōrep̄*] and *hrp* II [*ḥarîp̄āʾ*]), with the majority believing that the noun חרפות in Dan 12:2 derives from *hrp* II (*ḥarîp̄āʾ*).

34 *TDOT*, 5:209.

35 Isaiah Hoogendyk, ed., *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2017), חֶרְפָּה.

36 T. M. Lemos, "Shame and Mutilation of Enemies in the Hebrew Bible," *JBL* 125 (2006): 228-229.

37 John Day, "The Development of Belief in Life after Death in Ancient Israel," 231–257 in *After the Exile: Essays in Honour of Rex Mason Festschrift* (ed. Barton and D. J. Reimer; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996), 242. See also G. Brooke Lester,

This concluding verse in Isaiah documents a prophecy concerning the adversaries of Israel after the exile, threatening them with punishment when the author records God declaring, "Then they (the Israelites) will go out and look at the corpses of the people who have rebelled against Me. For their worm will not die and their fire will not be extinguished; and they will be an abhorrence (דראון) to all (כל) mankind."[38] The distinctive Hebrew word דראון generally conveys an intense dislike or eternal loathing, as it does in Dan 12:2 or something repulsive or disgusting, as in Isa 66:24. The corpses considered דראון in Isa 66:24, comparable to those in the second group in Dan 12:2, are *not* restored to experience life through a universal resurrection in order to suffer their humiliation.[39] Instead, it is the *memory* of those who are deemed דראון because of the intense disgust and loathing of people who will observe their rotting corpses lying out in the open since observers will feel repulsed and disgusted at the sight, expressing an identical form of disgust with the rebels in Dan 12:2.[40]

1 Hebrew Scriptures

That an individual's social status influences their standing within their own society and among their peers is evident in the Hebrew Bible within various social systems and religious ideologies, including the penal system and afterlife beliefs.[41] Several instances of the threat of shame as a punitive measure are found in the Hebrew Bible, with one of the more noteworthy incidents occurring in 1 Sam 11. This passage details the account of Nahash the Ammonite who sought to make a covenant with Israel *only* under the condition that he could gouge out the right eye of every man in Jabesh, thereby bestowing "disgrace (חרפות) on all Israel" (1 Sam 11:3; cf. Judg 16:21; 2 Kgs 25:7).[42] The text makes it clear this was meant as a *disgrace* to the people, rather than being a painful form of

Daniel Evokes Isaiah: Allusive Characterization of Foreign Rule in the Hebrew-Aramaic Book of Daniel (LHBOTS 606; London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 99–101.

38 In contrast to Dan 12:2, the author of Isaiah uses the common word for "all" (כל [5375] in the Hebrew Bible) to denote a comprehensive totality of people in number compared to רבים ("many") in Dan 12:2 of those who are a דראון will be remembered eternally in a shameful manner.

39 Collins, *Daniel*, 393.

40 John Goldingay, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 56–66* (ed. G. I. Davies and C. M. Tuckett; International Critical Commentary; London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 524. Goldingay states that the people will have a "reaction of horror at what they see." See also J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC 20; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 460; Francesca Stavrakopoulou, "Gog's Grave and the Use and Abuse of Corpses in Ezekiel 39:11–20," *JBL* 129 (2010): 67–84.

41 Saul M. Olyan, "Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations in Ancient Israel and Its Environment," *JBL* 115 (1996): 203.

42 חרפות is the same word used in Dan 12:2 for "shame," as in 1 Sam 11:2 (disgrace; NRSV).

punishment. Some commentators, including Josephus, claim that gouging out the right eye of every Israelite was to generate a hindrance in war, as an Israelite would generally hold their shield in their left hand, covering their left eye, thereby using only the right eye to see during battle (Josephus, *Ant*. 6.5.70).[43] As a result, if one's right eye was gouged out, they could not fight properly and would be useless in battle. Some assert that Nahash's motive was merely intended to insult an enemy or establish a power dynamic. However, the text nevertheless indicates that Nahash aimed to inflict disgrace.[44]

This theme of shame or disgrace is further echoed in Proverbs, which warns that the one who commits adultery will "get wounds and dishonor, and his disgrace (חרפתו) will not be wiped away" (6:33; cf. 11:2). The Psalmist seeks to avoid shame for himself but rather pleads for the *wicked* to experience shame when he appeals to God saying, "Do not let me be put to shame (אל־אבושה) O LORD, for I call on you let the wicked be put to shame (יבשו); let them go dumbfounded to Sheol" (Ps 31:17). Nahum prophesies about YHWH threatening the Ninevites with intense shame, declaring, "I am against you, says the LORD of hosts, and will lift up your skirts over your face; and I will let nations look on your nakedness and kingdoms on your shame (קלונך). I will throw filth at you and treat you with contempt" (ונבלתי; Nah 3:5-6). These few examples underscore the tremendous impact that shame has while it is used as a tool for moral instruction and divine judgment in the Jewish Scriptures.

2 Extrabiblical Literature

The threat of shame and contempt found in Dan 12:2 and Isa 66:24 is not unique only to the Israelites but is a standard threat within the broader ANE. For example, Apocryphal literature similarly utilises honour and shame language, particularly as threats or warnings of humiliation for certain behaviours.[45] For example, Ben Sira, a contemporary of the book of Daniel, cautions against disrespecting one's parents, asserting, "The glory of one's father is one's own glory, and it is a disgrace for children not to respect their mother" (Sir 3:11; 20:26). The threat of shame is further developed in 1 Enoch where the author

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[43] Cf. Judges 16:21; 2 Kgs 25:7. See also *NIDOTTE* 2:467; Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 182; Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (electronic ed.; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000); Judg 1:6.

[44] Henry Preserved Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel* (International Critical Commentary; New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1899), 77. See also Lemos, "Shame and Mutilation," 230. Lemos wonders additionally if this act of gouging out the eye could potentially be related to the Israelite conception of "wholeness," which affected ideas of beauty and fitness in relation to cultic activities.

[45] David A. deSilva, "The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Honor, Shame, and the Maintenance of the Values of a Minority Culture," *CBQ* 58 (1996): 440.

records God's pronouncement against the arrogant, "The faces of the strong will be slapped and be filled with shame and gloom. Their dwelling places and their beds will be worms. *They shall have no hope to rise from their beds,* for they do not extol the name of the Lord of the Spirits" (1 En 46:6; cf. 22:10–13; 27:1–3; 38:2–4; 62:10–12).[46] Not only is the idea of shame clearly expressed in this passage, but it is also explicitly pronounced that there is no hope for those who are shamed to rise from their graves. Only those who properly worship God are the ones who are raised since the dead in 1 Enoch are said to be specifically shamed and *not* resurrected.

Another instance of the threat of shame connected to Dan 12:2 is found in the writings of St. Basil (fourth-century C.E.). In a letter to Optimus the Bishop, discussing the extrabiblical seven sins of Cain, he argues that shame is the "heaviest of punishments," which he ascertained from Dan 12:2 (Basil, *Letter*, 260.4). Here, he interprets Dan 12:2 as indicating that the most substantial punishment that could be meted out to the recipients of this prophecy is the threat of shame and contempt that lasts forever. Although Basil may believe in a form of punishment for the wicked resembling the modern concept of hell, as evidenced in other writings,[47] he does not impose that particular theology into Dan 12:2. Instead, he emphasises the permanent and continual nature of shame as the ultimate penalty.

E RETAINING A GOOD NAME

The threat of shame is particularly persuasive in ancient Jewish culture for several reasons, but it is primarily because individuals strive to preserve honour for themselves since their own name (and therefore reputation) endures beyond death.[48] However, an individual's reputation is not firmly established until the actual time of death.[49] As a result, if someone dies honourably (such as dying in old age or peacefully) or if someone dies shamefully (such as suffering a violent death or being killed by a woman), their name will be associated with either honour or shame based on the manner of their death, making this particular threat an effective motivator. Retaining a good (or bad) name subsequent to death was

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[46] There are currently no Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek MSS that retain 1 En 46:6. The only available MS is in Ge'ez and renders the word for "shame" in Ethiopian as *ḫäfərätə* ("shame, disgrace, dishonour"). It has been suggested, however, that this Ge'ez word is equivalent to the Hebrew חרף. See Wolf Leslau, *A Comparative Dictionary of Geʿez (Classical Ethiopic): Geʿez-English/English-Geʿez with an Index of the Semitic Roots* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987), 259.

[47] For example, Basil, *Homilies*, XI, writes "Yet death is not absolutely an evil, except in the case of the death of the sinner, in which case departure from this world is a beginning of the punishments of hell."

[48] Heinz-Joseph Fabry, "שֵׁם," *TDOT* 15:134.

[49] Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (NAC 14; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 318.

not merely a label that one received but was used by Jewish culture to express one's underlying nature.[50] In other words, the Jewish community valued not only a "good name" but also their reputation, which many believed would genuinely emanate from their character.[51] As a result, ensuring a good name after death was imperative in second-century B.C.E. Judaic thought because there was no comprehensive doctrine of an afterlife at that time, leaving only one's name and reputation as one's primary legacy.

Having a good name is a subject that is relatively common within the Jewish scriptures. The Hebrew שם (name, standing, reputation, fame) is one of the more frequent words in the Hebrew Bible, with the noun שם found 778 times in the singular and 86 times in the plural.[52] It is likewise found in every book of the Hebrew Bible, except Obadiah, Jonah and Haggai, with an additional 33 occurrences in Sirach.[53] While שם can denote a personal name, it may also indicate one's reputation or recognition within a community, signifying importance or renown.[54] For instance, in Gen 6:4, the Nephilim are described as "warriors of renown (שם)" and the in Tower of Babel story, people seek to "make a name (שם)" for themselves (Gen 11:4). Although the specific term שם is not present in Dan 12:2, the cultural impact of one's name in a second century B.C.E. honour and shame society is evident because a name reflects a personal legacy that will be remembered long after one's death.[55]

1 Hebrew Scriptures

Due to the significance of one's name in Jewish honour and shame culture, the threat of having one's name eternally shamed would have been a powerful incentive to persuade someone to choose a particular course of action. As a result, an Israelite may have felt compelled to make a substantial effort to preserve their name because they believed it revealed something about their character after they die. For example, a recurring theme contained in wisdom literature concerns one's reputation, such as the author of Proverbs who parallels

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50 Michael A. Eaton, *Ecclesiastes: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC 18; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 124–125.

51 Eaton, 124-125.

52 Heinz-Joseph Fabry, "שֵׁם," *TDOT* 15:133.

53 The 33 occurrences of this word is based on the extant Hebrew manuscripts currently known. Though the complete translation of *Sirach* is missing from the MT, scholars estimate that 70 percent of the book has been recovered in Hebrew, though replete with textual difficulties. For an excellent study of the Hebrew of *Sirach*, see Gerhard Karner, Frank Ueberschaer, and Burkard M. Zapff, *Texts and Contexts of the Book of Sirach / Texte und Kontexte des Sirachbuches* (1st ed.; vol. 66; ed. Gerhard Karner, Frank Ueberschaer and Burkard M. Zapff; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 163–188.

54 Fabry, "שֵׁם," *TDOT* 15:133.

55 Ibid., 15:134.

"memory" (זכר) with "name" (שם) in Prov 10:7, indicating that the memory of the righteous is a blessing (ברכה). This analogy is also present in Job 18:17, where Bildad describes the wicked and proclaims, "their memory perishes from the earth, and they have no name (שם) in the street." Many of the Psalms also emphasise the importance of preserving a reputable name, particularly after death, such as Ps 9:5-6, "You have rebuked the nations, you have destroyed the wicked; You have blotted out their name (שם) forever and ever…The very memory of them [the enemy] has perished" (cf. Pss 109:13; 112:6).

Many of the prophets are likewise concerned about the concept of shame being associated with one's name. Isaiah asserts that the righteous will receive an "everlasting name (שם) which will not be eliminated" (Isa 56:5; cf. 66:22). Jeremiah, in the same vein as Daniel, emphasises the connection of shame and disgrace to the everlasting memory of a people group when he declares that God's enemies "will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonour will never be forgotten." (Jer 20:11). Ezekiel describes the Israelites profaning God's holy name (שם), which YHWH declared he was concerned about (Ezek 36:20-23). Therefore, Daniel's threat of shame in 12:2 appears to display a standard Jewish cultural threat that is often revealed in the scriptures and one that would be immediately recognised by his audience.

2 Extrabiblical Literature

The concept of retaining a reputable name after death is not only present in the Hebrew Bible but is also present in apocryphal works further demonstrating its broader cultural significance in Judaism. For example, shame is evident in the writings of Ben Sira, who repeatedly emphasises the value of a good name, warning his readers not to become an enemy of a friend or else risk acquiring a bad name and being shamed (ὄνομα, Sir 6:1).[56] He further writes that an honourable name is highly desirable because a disgraced name will cause one's children to blame the father for his shame (Sir 41:6-7; cf. 20:26; 37:26; 39:9; 41:12-12). Throughout his writing, Ben Sira uses the threat (or warning) of shame alongside the deprivation of one of the most essential blessings a Jew could desire—to be remembered honourably.[57]

Another second-century B.C.E. text illustrates a similar theme as Dan 12:2, contrasting everlasting life with commemoration after death. For example, Wisdom of Solomon affirms how fundamental it is acquiring wisdom in the saying, "Because of her (wisdom) I shall have immortality and leave an everlasting remembrance to those who come after me" (Wis 8:13). Similarly, the Greek *Sentences of Syriac Meander*,[58] a text comparable to canonical Jewish

[56] Compare ὀνειδισμὸν in Dan 12:2 LXX.

[57] deSilva, "Ben Sira," 446.

[58] Dating of the *Sentences of Syriac Meander* is challenging and has garnered much discussion. However, what most can agree on is that it is at least based on Jewish

wisdom material, also continues the theme of an honourable name that is imperative to many Jews when the author proclaims, "Pleasant are life, goods, and buildings, but more pleasant than these is a good name."[59]

F PROPER BURIAL

Building on this theme, one of the more customary means to an individual being imputed with a name that will be eternally shamed and disgraced in Daniel's time is when the deceased is denied a proper burial. Proper burial rites were believed to confer an honourable reputation and a worthy name upon the deceased, while the denial of these same rites would result in shame and disgrace.[60] Before a substantial belief in an afterlife emerged and since many were concerned with the reputation of their name and how they would be memorialised, imposing the threat of non-burial caused significant anxiety on one's sense of self-worth and societal standing.

The threat (or fear) of non-burial has roots in *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (late third millennium B.C.E.). There, one reads about the fear of non-burial and the result of not having a restful afterlife during a discussion between Enkidu and Gilgamesh when Enkidu asks, "Him whose corpse was cast out upon the steppe hast thou seen?" To which Gilgamesh replies, "I have seen: His spirit finds no rest in the nether world."[61] Ancient Egyptian literature was not unlike its ANE counterparts in their custom of casting a corpse out in the land without a proper burial. *The Campaigns of Seti I in Asia* (13th century B.C.E.) records the victory of Egypt over Canaan and proclaims that the Pharaoh "[Pre]vailed over them like a fierce lion. They (the Canaanites) were made into corpses throughout their valleys, stretched out in their (own) blood, like that which has never been."[62] The Egyptian *Story of Sinhue* furthers this thought when it decrees, "It is no small matter that thy corpse be (properly) buried; thou shouldst not be interred by bowmen."[63]

Ancient Greek literature likewise illustrates the significance of a proper burial and the considerable consequences for those who do not receive

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wisdom text and provides "unequivocally Jewish ethics." For an excellent discussion of the dating and composition of the *Sentences of Syriac Meaner*, see Alan Kirk, "The Composed Life of the Syriac Meander," *Studies in Religion* 26 (1997): 169-183.

59 Sentences of Syriac Meander, lines 402-403.

60 A few selected studies that are important to the topic of proper burial practices include Craig Evans, *Jesus and the Ossuaries: What Jewish Burial Practices Reveal about the Beginning of Christianity* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2003); Craig Evans, "Jewish Burial Traditions and the Resurrection of Jesus," *JSHS* 3 (2005): 233-248; Kerry M. Sonia, *Caring for the Dead in Ancient Israel* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2020).

61 *ANET* 99, line 151. See also *ANET* 83, line 41-42.

62 *ANET* 254, c.

63 *ANET* 21, line 259.

appropriate internment. For example, the 6th-5th century B.C.E.. Grecian poet Aeschylus writes in his play *Seven Against Thebes* of a discussion that Antigone and Herald have about burying Antigone's brother, whom the people of the city hate. Antigone subsequently announces, "Be brutal! But this man is not going to remain unburied." To which Herald asks, "This man whom the city hates, you are going to honour him by burial?"[64] The fourth-century B.C.E. philosopher Aristotle depicts a strong parallel to Dan 12:2 when describing the burial of Hermeias, to which the philosopher asks, "And if I had wanted to make an immortal of him, I should never have honoured his body with burial rites."[65] Aristotle associates honourable burial rites specifically with the concept of immortality, thus clarifying the magnitude of proper interment.

1 Hebrew Scriptures

Non-burial is a concept that is transcultural in both the wider ANE as well as Judaism precisely on account of such adverse and negative connotations associated with it. For example, in the Hebrew Bible, there are several references to the importance of a proper burial in a tomb in the narrative of Abraham and Sarah (Gen 23:4-19). Jacob's body is to be taken out of the land and brought back to his homeland of Canaan for proper burial in his own tomb (Gen 50:22-26). David commends those who bury Saul's bones and affords him the appropriate burial method subsequent Saul's defeat at the hands of his enemies (2 Sam 2:4-5).[66] Qohelet writes that if a man has a hundred children and lives many years but "if he does not enjoy life's good things, *or has no burial*, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he" (Eccl 6:3). Even the apostate and criminals who are executed and hung on a tree are afforded proper burial rites so as not to "defile the land" (Deut 21:22-23).

2 Extrabiblical Literature

Second Temple literature further demonstrates an appreciation of the significance of proper burial, when Ben Sira writes that one should not lament over the dead and must "not neglect the burial" (Sir 38:16). Similarly, 1 Enoch expresses the threat of non-burial when the author proclaims, "Woe to you who rejoice in the tribulation of the righteous; for no grave shall be dug for you" (1 En 98:13). Jubilees additionally records another threat of non-burial, which describes God raising up "sinners of the Gentiles" to use violence against Israel

64 Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes*, 1045-1046 (Sommerstein, LCL).

65 Aristotle, *Poems*, 144:216-217.

66 It should be noted though that Saul first died and had his body burned (1 Sam 31:13) suggesting desecration and *not* cremation (Cf. 1 Kgs 13:2; 2 Kgs 23:20; Amos 2:1). After that, Saul's bones were buried indicating an honourable deed in the last possible moment.

so much that "there shall be none (Israelites) to gather and none to bury" (Jub 23:23).

The apocryphal book of Tobit, however, is perhaps the most beneficial text concerning how Jewish culture viewed proper burial rites. In this second century B.C.E. text, Tobit is presented as an honourable and noble character who performed many good deeds during the Babylonian invasion. These good deeds included giving food to the hungry (Tob 1:16), giving his garments to the naked (1:17a) and, most importantly, privately burying any Jew who was thrown out on the streets in Nineveh (1:17b-18). The author expresses an intrepid declaration involving the importance of burial when someone informs Tobit that one of his fellow Jews was strangled (considered shameful due to the violent manner of death) and simply tossed into the marketplace. In response to this news, Tobit declares, "When the sun had set, I went and dug a grave and buried him." Under the dark of night, Tobit desires to offer proper burial to his kinsmen to honour those who have been killed shamefully. Proper burial is extremely important to Tobit, which is also demonstrated by one of his final requests to his son, Tobias, that if he should die, his desire is to be buried; and then when his wife's time comes, she should be buried next to Tobit's grave (Tob 2:3-4).

Further cementing the fear of shame as a result of non-burial in Jewish culture, the fragmentary *War Scroll* references the Battle of Kittim in which those who died during battle have priests (including the high priest) stand over their corpses and praise God. Craig Evans argues that although the priests' exact words were not preserved during this ritual, it is probable that they oversaw the burial of the bodies, so the land does not become defiled according to the Law.[67] Evans suggests that Philo (first century B.C.E.—first century C.E.), however, may provide one of the clearest accounts of the Jewish perspective on non-burial. In his commentary *On Joseph*, Philo recounts Jacob's intense grief over Joseph's presumed death, implying that it primarily stemmed from the denial of a proper burial.[68] Philo spends considerable time recounting how Joseph's presumed death was not only tragic, but was also especially heartbreaking due to the manner of death along with being denied proper burial. Both Second Temple literature and subsequent Jewish writings indicate that, under normal circumstances, both the innocent and guilty, Jew and Gentile, should be buried. Failure to do so results in shame for the deceased, contempt for their name and potential defilement of the land.

G CORPSE EXPOSURE

Though the concept of non-burial is often employed as a threat or a warning to Israel, it is primarily the threat of *exposure* that appears to leave an enduring and

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67 Craig Evans, "Jewish Burial Traditions and the Resurrection of Jesus," *JSHS* 3 (2005): 191.

68 Philo, *On Joseph,* 22–27.

horrifying memory behind, often conveying a sense of the utmost shame and humiliation. Ideologically, exposure is very similar to non-burial, because it is the act of leaving a corpse unburied and out in the open to decompose. However, the difference in this particular threat is that the corpse is specifically said to become food for scavenger animals. It should also be noted that exposure, though to some degree independent from non-burial, is nonetheless the implied outcome of not being suitably buried, just with an added emphasis of shame and humiliation because it is only a matter of time before scavengers devour the corpse.

1 Hebrew Scriptures

In the many instances of non-burial in the Hebrew Bible, corpse exposure is insinuated and often explicitly connected. For example, Ps 79:2 describes the shame that fell upon Israel due to both non-burial and exposure, when the Psalmist writes, "They have given the dead bodies of your servants to the birds of the air as food, the flesh of your faithful to the wild animals of the earth… And there was no one to bury them. We have become a taunt to our neighbours, mocked and derided by those around us." Proverbs likewise threatens exposure as the "ultimate disgrace,"[69] when the writer declares, "The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures" (Prov 30:17; cf. Pss Sol. 4:20). However, one of the more expressive threats of exposure comes in the narrative of Jezebel and her death in 2 Kgs 9:30–37. In this passage, the Eunuchs throw Jezebel out of the window at the command of Jehu, who then orders her to be buried because she is the king's daughter. However, when the people arrive to bury her, they only find her skull, feet and palms of her hands because the dogs (כלבים) have already eaten her corpse, which is said to be like dung (דמן) on the face of the field. This manner of death as documented in 2 Kings about dogs that eat her flesh provides essential information to what the text intends to express about Jezebel and the amount of shame she encountered in death, explicitly due to non-burial, exposure and dogs being specifically the animals to eat her flesh.[70]

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69 deSilva, "Ben Sira," 440.

70 One of the first influential articles on dogs and the role they play in the Hebrew Bible was written by D. Winton Thomas in 1960 who refers to their reputation in the ANE as "vile and contemptible animals." However, since that time many have come to see that dogs were not strictly viewed as vile animals (such as pigs were to Jews) and that some individuals in the ANE may have even had dogs as pets. However, from the context of the Jezebel narrative, it appears that feral dogs who lived on the outside of the city and were mostly scavengers, are in view. For the older influential article by Thomas, see D. Winton Thomas, "Kelebh 'Dog': Its Origin and some Usages of It in the Old Testament," *VT* 10 (1960): 410–427. For a few recent studies that observe how dogs were seen throughout the entire ANE, along with how they were viewed in the Bible, see Ken Stone, "Tracking the Dogs of Exodus," in *Reading the Hebrew Bible*

2 Extrabiblical Literature

The narrative concerning Jezebel's corpse proclaims that it is like "dung" (דמן) on the field, creating a revolting image for ancient readers and hearers. The term "dung" (דמן) in 2 Kgs 9:37 is used to describe only corpses and appears only five times in the Hebrew Bible (Ps 83:11; Jer 8:2; 9:21, 16:4; 25:33; 2 Kgs 9:37).[71] Additional evidence of the association between corpses and דמן comes from the recently discovered "Gabriel Revelation" or the "Vision of Gabriel," a late first-century B.C.E. or early first-century C.E. stone tablet.[72] Although fragmentary, it narrates an apocalyptic tale where the "prince of princes" becomes (ן_ד)[73] of the rocky crevices [] … []"[74] The context of this inscription is comparable to the Jezebel narrative because a person of nobility is said to be דמן with their body lying out in the open.

The idea that endless shame resides with an individual due to corpse exposure is not exclusive to a Jewish sociological context. Much like non-burial, it is a common threat in other ANE literature, predating the book of Daniel and continuing throughout the centuries, rendering it an established and common literary motif among many ANE cultures. For example, the grandson of Sennacherib (ca. seventh century B.C.E.) writes of his defeat of those who uttered blasphemies against his god Ashur, "I fed their corpses, cut into small pieces, to dogs, pigs, *zîbu*-birds, vultures, the birds of the sky and (also) to the fish of the ocean."[75] In the exceptionally long Treaty of Esarhaddon (ca. seventh century B.C.E.), the composer uses the same imagery of corpse exposure to threaten the

with Animal Studies (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 45–65; Lawrence B. Porter, "Dogs in the Bible: A Closer Look and Theological Conclusion," *The Bible Today* 54 (2016): 111–118. For a study of the general consensus on dogs in the Iron Age Levant, see Lidar Sapir-Hen and Deirdre N. Fulton, "A Dog's Life in the Iron Age of the Southern Levant: Connecting the Textual and Archaeological Evidence," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 42 (2023): 152–165.

71 *BDB*, s.v. "דמן" 199.

72 Though debate still continues as to the validity of this stone, many in the archaeological community affirm the stone's authenticity. For an excellent treatment of the "Gabriel Revelation," see Ada Yardeni and Binyamin Elizur, "A Hebrew Prophetic Text on Stone from the Early Herodian Period: A Preliminary Report," in *Hazon Gabriel: New Readings of the Gabriel Revelation. Early Judaism and Its Literature* (ed. Matthias Henze; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 11–29.

73 The Hebrew *mem* is missing from the inscription, but it can easily be observed from the context of non-burial that the Hebrew דמן is intended here. See Israel Knohl, "By Three Days, Live: Messiahs, Resurrection, and Ascent to Heaven in Hazon Gabriel." *The Journal of Religion* 88/2 (2008): 157–158.

74 The English translation is taken from Israel Knohl, "The Messiah Son of Joseph: 'Gabriel's Revelation' and the Birth of a New Messianic Model," *BAR* 34 (2008): 58–62. The relevant text comes from column 2, line 81.

75 *ANET* 288, line 69-71.

one who breaks the agreement. In this treaty, the two parties agree that if one sins against the treaty of Esarhaddon, the god Palil will allow "eagles and vultures to eat your flesh."[76] Subsequent Greek literature likewise expresses this same warning when Aeschylus writes about exposure during the Antigone and Herald discussion when Antigone boldly proclaims about her dead brother.

> His flesh <shall not be eaten by dogs or birds> nor torn by hollow-bellied wolves—let no one think it will; for I shall myself, woman though I am, contrive to provide him with a funeral and burial, carrying it in the fold of my fine linen robe, and myself cover him up—and let no one think otherwise.[77]

Nearly every instance of exposure in ancient literature arises from either a context of severe punishment or serves as a warning to avoid at all costs due to the inherent nature of shame and disgrace associated with this manner of death. Ancient Israel, like other ANE societies, viewed corpse exposure as the ultimate punishment that one could endure. As a result, Daniel's threat of eternal shame and contempt would resonate immensely with the original readers and hearers of that message.

H CONCLUSION

Ancient Israelite culture placed significant emphasis on the concepts of honour and shame, both in life and in death. Among the most shameful ways to die was through corpse exposure, a fate that Dan 12:2 and Isa 66:24 explicitly reference by employing the term דראון to describe the eternal contempt reserved for those who rebel against God. For the persecuted Israelites of the second century B.C.E., this language offered assurance of divine justice for their oppressors, who would face eternal shame, a punishment that would leave an indelible stain on their names and reputations. Meanwhile, those loyal to God would be raised to everlasting life, ensuring their honour would endure. This imagery in Dan 12:2 does not suggest a universal doctrine of eschatological "hell" but reflects an understanding of shame as punishment. This threat, rooted in the cultural importance of burial and preserving one's name, aligns with broader themes in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple literature, where non-burial and corpse exposure are regularly employed as severe threats. Within this context, Daniel's vision communicates the ultimate dishonour for Israel's enemies—a disgrace that resonates deeply with the honour-shame dynamics of the times. By situating Dan 12:2 within its historical and sociological framework, it becomes clear that the text emphasises the enduring legacy of one's name and the implications of how one dies. Rather than introducing a universal eschatological concept of hell, this passage reinforces a culturally specific threat of shame and the promise of

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[76] *ANET,* 539 line 519. (cf. *ANET,* 538 line 41).

[77] Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes,* 1025-1030.

honour for the covenant community, reflecting the immediate concerns and values of its audience.

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