

The Divine Council in the Book of Daniel*

* [this is a condensed portion of Mike's dissertation chapter on this subject](#)

The majority of scholars of Israelite religion and Jewish religion contends that the Second Temple period represents the culmination of a religious evolution toward rigid, uncompromising, exclusivistic monotheism. This progression was in part propelled by Jewish authorities who were allegedly so troubled by the wording of verses like Deuteronomy 32:8 that a censorship campaign was mounted during and after the exile.¹ If these presumptions are indeed true, it is shocking that the establishment scribes would bestow canonical status upon a book that contained the following ideas:

- (1) Yahweh-El² was not the lone cosmic authority, since there was more than one throne *in heaven* occupied by members of the divine council;
- (2) One member of this council functioned as Yahweh-El's vice-regent and was referred to by a heretofore exclusive epithet of Yahweh-El (the "Rider Upon the Clouds");
- (3) This vice-regent, by virtue of being made sovereign over all the nations of the earth, occupied "first tier" status above the בני־האלהים (*beney ha-'elohim*; the "sons of God") whom Yahweh had been placed over the nations according to Deuteronomy 4:19-20 and 32:8-9.

This chapter argues that the contents of the book of Daniel created no religious trepidation among Second Temple Jews, as would be logically expected of a zealous, exclusivistic monotheism. Daniel represents continuity and expansion of the Israelite divine council in Judaism. The book's contents bear no resemblance to a religious outlook that presumably had long since seen the

¹ As noted in the discussion prior to this juncture, I do not deny that censorship of texts occurred. However, this activity is more aptly placed in late antiquity as part of the Masoretic "standardization" of the Hebrew text and the rabbinical response to the "Two Powers" heresy.

² My terminology is deliberate here. The Yahweh-El merger in Israelite religion accepted by virtually all biblical scholars has been seemingly overlooked or neglected in the exegesis of Daniel 7 by an overwhelming majority of these same scholars. This fusion is significant for discerning a second deity-level vice-regent under the high god of the council in Daniel 7. As this chapter will demonstrate, Daniel 7 follows the flow of the Baal Cycle and clearly describes the high god in the unmistakable language of Yahweh-El fusion. In fact, the language and fusion imagery is very similar to Ezekiel 1. The high god, Yahweh-El is then distinguished from another figure who bears Yahweh's title of "Cloud Rider," marking him as another deity in *both* the language of the Hebrew Bible and the Baal Cycle. Following the rank, function, and titular of Baal (b'1 zbl ; "Prince Baal"), I also will argue that this figure is Yahweh-El's vice-regent, the "son of man who rides on the clouds" is the "king of the gods" of the council, the "Prince of the host" and "Prince of princes."

collapse of the divine council and the rejection of its divine members.³ These contentions are demonstrable in light of the subject matter of two sections of the book.

Section One

First, there is the divine council scene in Daniel 7. The divine council orientation of the scene is not disputed among scholars, and is readily noted by J. Collins as belonging to "the tradition of biblical throne visions," and the "[widespread] idea of a heavenly court and council of divine beings."⁴ Several items related to this religious orientation compel the conclusion that the pre-exilic divine council of Israelite religion with its divine plurality and monotheism of incomparability survived well into the Second temple period.

Specifically, the plurality of thrones *in heaven* (as opposed to an *earthly* throne or thrones / earthly ruler[s]), and hence a divine bureaucracy, is evident in Daniel 7:9. Part of this heavenly administration, according to Daniel 7, includes a being under Yahweh-El's sovereignty but above the second tier council beings, effectively creating the apparent conundrum of divine co-regency, or two powers in heaven. The book makes this evident in its application of an epithet used exclusively of Yahweh-El in other canonical texts to a being who is not Yahweh-El, and its description of the bestowal of sovereignty over the gentile nations and the second tier בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים (*beney ha-'elohim*; the "sons of God") who govern them by Yahweh-El to this being.

Scholars have long recognized that this religious outlook is drawn from pre-exilic divine council texts such as Deuteronomy 4:19-20 and 32:8-9.⁵ This second divine figure, the "one like a human being," is *not* described as David or a member of the Davidic line. In fact, David and his dynasty are never referenced in Daniel 7 or anywhere else in the book.⁶ This conceptual vacuum undermines

³ In view of the fascination with Daniel in non-canonical Second Temple texts, including the sectarian material from Qumran, it should come as no surprise that some of the clearest and boldest references to plural אֱלֹהִים and exalted divine mediators (as explanations of the "son of man" figure) are found in these very late Jewish texts. It should also come as no surprise that, as A. Segal has demonstrated (*Two Powers in Heaven*), the material expressed divine plurality so clearly that discussion of it had to be suppressed by the rabbis.

⁴ J. Collins, *Daniel*, 300, 303. Among other scholars of Israelite religion and commentators on Daniel who recognize Daniel 7 as a divine council scene (patterned in part on the Ugaritic council scene in *KTU* 1.2) are E. Mullen (*Divine Council*, 120-128), Christopher Rowland, "The Visions of God in Apocalyptic Literature," *JSJ* 10 (1979): 137-154; Matthew Black, "The Throne-Theophany Prophetic Commission and the 'Son of Man'," in *Jews, Greeks, and Christians: Essays in Honor of W.D. Davies*, ed. Robert Hamerton-Kelly and Robin Scroggs (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976): 57-73; J. Emerton, "The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery," *JTS* 9:2 (October, 1958): 227-242; P. Mosca, "Ugarit and Daniel 7: A Missing Link," *Biblica* 67 (1986): 496-517.

⁵ J. Collins, *Daniel*, 374-375.

⁶ *Ibid.*, *Daniel*, 309. This observation does NOT cancel out a connection to Jesus due to the overlap of Daniel 7's divine co-regency with Psalm 89, which clearly speaks to the Davidic line. More will be said in regard to Psalm 89's relationship to the Baal cycle and Daniel 7 in the subsequent discussion and future DC 101

a messianic explanation for the second divine power. Likewise an identification with Michael is negated, since it is Michael's class ("prince" or one of the "chief princes") which is *subordinate* to the sovereignty of the "son of man" (more literally, the "one like a human being").⁷

The majority of scholars also currently believe the subject matter of Daniel reflects a relegation of the old gods of the pre-exilic council to the status of angels. While a study of Second Temple literature like the LXX proves that some of the translators of the LXX sought to redefine the council in this way, other LXX translators did not share this perspective.⁸ The same can be said of the sectarian material from Qumran, which overwhelmingly retains the language of divine plurality in the council.⁹ Defending such a relegation in the book of Daniel requires either dismissing the way Daniel 7 follows the Baal Cycle and appropriates motifs of the Canaanite divine council, or *presuming* that the book's use of such motifs must be explained in light of the operative exclusive monotheistic paradigm. Both approaches assume what they seek to prove, and fail to explain why the Canaanite motifs are not modified to reflect the assumed religious development.

Section Two

The second section of Daniel whose subject matter contributes to discerning the survival of the pre-exilic understanding of the divine council is Daniel 8-10. This section of the book depicts relationships between members of the heavenly host in ways that complement and reinforce the "co-regency" described in Daniel 7. In Daniel 8-10 it is apparent that there is a being under Yahweh-El who outranks Michael and those council beings of Michael's class, the "princes" or "chief princes." The ambiguity reflected in this wording stems from the fact that Michael is referred to as both a "prince" (10:21; שָׂר ; *sar*) and "one of the chief princes" (הַרְאִישִׁים הָרִימִים; *ha-sarim ha-rish'onim* ; 10:13). It is therefore not completely certain whether these are separate or synonymous classes. Other Second temple literature refers to Michael and a few other heavenly beings as "archangels" (ἀρχαγγέλος ; *archanggelos*). The archangels are also referred to as "Watchers" (Aramaic עִירִין, עִיר) in books such as 1 Enoch and Jubilees, and are equated with the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים (*beney ha-'elohim*; the "sons of God") of Genesis 6:1-

lessons.

⁷ As the discussion will demonstrate, in second temple angelology, the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים set over the nations are referred to as "princes" in Daniel. Michael is named as one of these princes. Subsequent Second Temple and early rabbinic speculation as to the identity of the "one like a human being" included the idea that this figure was Michael, but many Jewish teachers and writers found this explanation dissatisfying since Michael and the "prince of the princes" are treated as separate characters in Daniel.

⁸ See Chapter Four of the present study.

⁹ See Chapter Five of the present study.

4. Daniel 4 also uses this term of heavenly beings.¹⁰ In any case, there is *only one* "Prince of princes" (שָׂר־שָׂרִים; *sar-sarim*; Dan. 8:25) but *several* archangels in Second Temple angelology. This makes a Michael identification very unlikely.

Another obstacle to Michael being the first-tier vice-regent, or second power in heaven, is the fact that scholarship has built a compelling case that the "Prince of princes" of 8:25 is also the "Prince of the host" in Daniel 8:11. Both these texts are paralleled by 11:36, which mandates that these titles refer to the highest tier of the council, which would again outrank Michael. The parallel with 11:36 has prompted some scholars to attribute these titles to Yahweh-El himself, but this solution means that the author of Daniel referred to the God of Israel with the hierarchically subordinate term "prince," which is without precedent.¹¹ It is more coherent to view the bearer of this title, which signifies rulership of the beings who govern the nations, as the "one like a human being" of Daniel 7. This suggestion is plausible, since Baal, the Canaanite referent of the "one like a human being" of Daniel 7 is also called "prince Baal" and "king of the gods" at Ugarit.¹²

The bureaucracy suggested by Daniel 7 and 8-10 is one consistent with the pre-exilic divine council and its monotheism of incomparability. It is difficult, if not impossible, to do justice to the use of Baal Cycle and the hierarchical terminology for divine beings in these chapters and simultaneously argue that the divine council of earlier Israelite religion has "collapsed." Both these sections of Daniel and their contents will now be examined in detail.

The Divine Council Meeting in Daniel 7

Daniel 7:1-14 contains a vision of four creatures described by the prophet Daniel in five distinct sections, each introduced by a formulaic expression containing the Aramaic verbal compound חִזַּה הוֹיָה ("I watched") or וַאֲרֹ ("and behold"), often in tandem.¹³ 7:15-18 then supply the interpretation, followed in turn by an elaboration (7:19-28) regarding the fourth beast. Although the entire

¹⁰ Daniel 4:10 (Hebrew), 4:14, 20 (Aramaic). The term appears nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible of heavenly beings.

¹¹ Collins (*Daniel*, 375) argues that the prince of the host is the God of Israel, but offers only the title in Josh. 5:14 as justification (שָׂר־צְבָא־יְהוָה; *sar tseba' YHWH*; "prince of Yahweh's host"). It is far from clear (and really implausible) that this individual is God ("the Father") himself. The fact that this figure commands Joshua to remove his sandals because "the place where you stand is holy" is not evidence of such an equation. The same command is given in the burning bush encounter in Exodus 3, where both the מַלְאֲכֵי־יְהוָה (*mal'ak YHWH*; "the angel of the LORD") and the God of Israel, clearly separate figures elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, are both present in the bush. See also Judges 6:11-23, especially verses 21-23 (... וַיֵּלֶךְ אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה הַלֵּךְ מִעֵינָיו ... 21 - "and the angel of the LORD departed from before him . . . and Yahweh said to him . . .").

¹² See the ensuing discussion for texts relating to Baal's titles and this correlation.

¹³ J. Collins, *Daniel*, 277.

chapter has relevance for the divine council context and overlaps other passages in the Hebrew Bible that speak to the divine council, verses 9-14 are the focus here:

9 As I looked on, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took His seat. His garment was like white snow, and the hair of His head was like lamb's wool. His throne was tongues of flame; its wheels were blazing fire. ¹⁰ A river of fire streamed forth before Him; thousands upon thousands served Him; myriads upon myriads attended Him; the court sat and the books were opened. ¹¹ I looked on. Then, because of the arrogant words that the horn spoke, the beast was killed as I looked on; its body was destroyed and it was consigned to the flames. ¹² The dominion of the other beasts was taken away, but an extension of life was given to them for a time and season. ¹³ As I looked on, in the night vision, One like a human being came with the clouds of heaven; he reached the Ancient of Days and was presented to Him. ¹⁴ Dominion, glory, and kingship were given to him; all peoples and nations of every language must serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship, one that shall not be destroyed.

A plurality of thrones (כְּרִסְוֹן) is clearly described in the vision. Contrary to the view that the plurality is incidental since only one individual is seated for judgment,¹⁴ or the rabbinical interpretation that the plurality here denoted one throne for God and another for David,¹⁵ the text clearly states that it was the *council* that was collectively seated (יְהִינָא יְתַב) along with the Ancient of Days. The setting of this meeting of the divine council is apparently in heaven, but these thrones *are not located in clouds*. This observation is important since it rules out the idea that the plurality refers to a second throne upon which the "one like a human being" (כְּבַר אֲנָשׁ), who receives everlasting dominion, was seated. This figure comes with the clouds later in the scene, after the court has already been seated. Although the later tradition that has the "one like a human being" occupying an elevated throne in heaven is logical, having been drawn on the basis of this figure's reception of everlasting rule, the text never states that this individual was seated. Rather, this figure is brought before the Ancient of Days (וּקְרָמוּהִי הַקְּרִבוּהִי), apparently by some of the "thousand thousands" who were "serving" the enthroned sovereign, who in turn bestowed everlasting dominion upon the "one like a human being." This division of status among these heavenly beings is subtle, but significant. Just as in Ugaritic and earlier canonical Hebrew literature, Daniel 7 describes a hierarchy of an upper tier of beings (those seated in council), a servant class of heavenly beings, and a vice-regent who is given authority over the earth and, by extension, over all the sons of God who were thought to rule the earth in light of Psalm 82:1,6 and Deuteronomy 4:19-20; 32:8-9.

¹⁴ James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: Clark, 1927): 296.

¹⁵ This was the judgment of Rabbi Akiba (*b. Hag. 14a; b. Sanh. 38b*; cited in Collins, *Daniel*, 301, note 210).

The Ancient of Days occupies a throne ablaze with fire (7:9; כְּרִסְיָהּ שְׂבִיבֵינִי דֵי־נֹר (פְּרִסְיָהּ שְׂבִיבֵינִי דֵי־נֹר), a "standard element in biblical theophanies."¹⁶ When coupled with the reference to the throne's "wheels" (7:9) that were also burning with fire (נִלְגְלוּהִי נֹר דְּלֶק), the imagery of Ezekiel's vision of the divine fiery chariot (Ezek. 1:15-21; 10:2) immediately comes to mind. It is no surprise that the vast majority of scholars recognize that Daniel 7 draws its throne chariot motifs from Ezekiel's vision.¹⁷

That the visions of Ezekiel and Daniel both contain the same motifs is noteworthy, for these overlaps speak not only to an appearance of Yahweh, but of the divine council. In his study on fire in Canaanite and Israelite "fire mythology," P. Miller notes that in the divine council scene that precedes the conflict of Baal with Yamm, the divine messengers of Yamm are fiery beings (ʿištū).¹⁸ Miller goes on to draw attention to the Israelite conception of Yahweh's divine warriors as bearing flaming swords in Eden to block the way back into the cosmic meeting place of the council. Likewise in Psalm 104, a psalm containing familiar divine council imagery, Yahweh's servants (מְשָׁרְתָיו) - in parallel to מַלְאָכָאֵי (מַלְאָכָאֵי) are referred to as "fiery flames" (אֵשׁ לֹהֵט).¹⁹

Another striking overlap between Ezekiel 1 and Daniel 7 concerns the seated figures. In Ezekiel the throne chariot is associated with both El (אֱלֹהֵי־שָׁמַיִם ; *El-Shadday* ; 1:24; cf. 10:5) and Yahweh (1:28; 10:4), evincing the expected Yahweh-El fusion by the time of the exile. The author of Daniel 7, following Ezekiel, assumed the Yahweh-El correlation, thereby identifying Yahweh-El as the Ancient of Days. **It is therefore not correct to identify El with the Ancient of Days and Yahweh with the "one like a human being,"** as though the author of Daniel relapsed back into an antiquated El (Father) and Yahweh (a son of El) polytheism. Rather, the "one like a human being" is a character distinct from Yahweh-El, but who is also associated with divine Baal motif of the fiery chariot in the heavens. This duality was not lost upon Second Temple Jewish writers, a number of whom did not identify the Ancient of Days with El and Yahweh with the "one like a human being," but understood the high God, the Ancient of Days, to be Yahweh-El, accompanied by a second exalted divine being. More will be said in this regard momentarily.

The overlap with Ugaritic fire mythology prompts the question of the background of Daniel 7. This vision has long been considered to have derived

¹⁶ J. Collins, *Daniel*, 302. See also Patrick D. Miller, "Fire in the Mythology of Canaan and Israel," *CBQ* 27 (1965): 257-258.

¹⁷ J. Collins, *Daniel*, 302. See also David Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision*, *Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum* 16 (Tubingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1988), 77ff.

¹⁸ P. Miller, "Fire in the Mythology," 258.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 260.

from outside the Hebrew Bible,²⁰ and the debate over its religio-historical background has produced a plethora of positions, most of which are summarized succinctly by J. Collins.²¹ This writer concurs with Collins' carefully argued rejections of an Iranian or Babylonian background for the visions in favor of a Canaanite provenance, specifically that of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle.²² This is no idiosyncratic conclusion, for scholars prior to Collins' work had reached the same verdict.²³ Although some scholars still oppose a Canaanite mythological background,²⁴ most would agree with Collins' comments that "[N]o other material now extant provides as good an explanation of the configuration of imagery in Daniel's dream,"²⁵ and "[T]he background of this scene lies in ancient traditions about the council of 'El, where the gods sit on their 'princely thrones'."²⁶

One of the major obstacles that has impeded consensus on this identification (or any identification of a foreign background) is the tendency among scholars to either expect or insist upon complete congruence between the presumed background material and the pious Judaism of Daniel's author. In this regard, Collins' comments are fitting:

"Appropriation of foreign motifs and thought patterns requires that some aspect of the presumed background be congenial to the author but does not require identity of outlook . . . The use of imagery associated with Marduk or Ba'al may serve to make the claim that Yahweh, not the pagan deities, is the true deliverer. Whether pagan myths constitute the background to Daniel 7 must be judged by the light they throw on the text, not prejudged by modern assumptions about what is permissible for an ancient Jew . . . No one suggests that the author of Daniel knew the Ugaritic texts directly or tried to reproduce the Ba'al cycle fully . . . When a Canaanite myth is used in the Hebrew Bible, it is inevitably torn from its original context and given a new meaning . . . Daniel 7 is not simply a reproduction

²⁰ Carsten Colpe, "ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου," *TDNT* 8 (1968): 406-420.

²¹ J. Collins, *Daniel*, 280-294. H. Kvanvig enumerated nearly two dozen proposed answers in his study of the son of man tradition. See Helge S. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and the Son of Man* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988).

²² J. Collins, *Daniel*, 286-291.

²³ J. Emerton, "The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery," 228; A. Bentzen, *Daniel*, HAT 19, 2nd ed. (Tubingen: J. C. Mohr, 1952); idem, *King and Messiah* (London, 1952)

²⁴ One of the more insistent objectors to the Ugaritic provenance is Arthur J. Ferch, *The Son of Man in Daniel 7*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 6 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1979); idem, "Daniel 7 and Ugarit: A Reconsideration," *JBL* 99 (1980): 80-81. For Collins' response to Ferch, see J. J. Collins, "Apocalyptic Genre and Mythic Allusions in Daniel," *JSOT* 21 (1981): 83-100.

²⁵ J. Collins, *Daniel*, 291.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 301 (Collins cites *KTU* 1.2.i:19-27). See also F.M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973): 98-99.

of an older source, Canaanite or other. It is a new composition, which is not restricted to a single source for its imagery."²⁷

These assertions are significant in the context of this study. One must not assume that a foreign motif such as the divine council be inappropriate for a pious Second Temple Jew. The assumption that the belief in a Canaanite divine council is incompatible with exilic or post-exilic Jewish religion presumes both an inability on the part of biblical authors and scribes of those periods to adapt the concept in their own way, and an inability on the part of Second Temple authors to detect such adaptations or formulate their own.

The identification of a specifically Ugaritic provenance and a divine council milieu for Daniel 7 is based on a number of considerations. For example, Ugaritic El is referred to as *ʿab šnm*, which is translated by many scholars as "father of years" and considered a parallel to the meaning of "Ancient of Days."²⁸ This translation of the Ugaritic phrase has been disputed on the basis that the Ugaritic plural "years" is spelled *šnt*, not *šnm*. Defenders of the above translation counter in a threefold manner: (1) other nouns have variant plural spellings; (2) no other translation has proven coherent or free from similar problems; and (3) El is often portrayed at Ugarit as an aged god with a gray beard.²⁹ One could also add that, although the phrase in Daniel (עֵלִיּוֹן יוֹמִין) has no precise parallel elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, there are conceptual equivalents such as אָבִיעַד ("everlasting father"; Isa. 9:5 [Hebrew]) and מֶלֶךְ עוֹלָם ("everlasting king"; Jer. 10:10). Even more striking is Isaiah 40:28's אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם יְהוָה בּוֹרֵא קְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ ("the eternal God, the Lord, creator of the ends of the earth"), which is quite similar to the El epithet אֵל עֵלְיוֹן קִנְהַ שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ ("El Elyon, creator of heaven and earth") in Genesis 14:19,22.

The argument for Daniel 7's Ugaritic provenance is dramatically strengthened by congruencies between that chapter and the Baal Cycle. Shortly after the discovery of the Ugaritic texts, O. Eissfeldt suggested that the fourth beast of Daniel's vision should be interpreted against the backdrop of the Ugaritic chaos monster *Lôtān* or *Liwyatān* / *Lītānu* (biblical Leviathan),³⁰ described in the Baal cycle as *btn brḥ* ("the twisting serpent"), *btn ʿqtln* ("the

²⁷ Ibid., *Daniel*, 282, 286, 289.

²⁸ Ibid., 290. See also Mullen, *Divine Council*, 22-23; John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 161.

²⁹ Collins, *Daniel*, 290, 301.

³⁰ The two forms derive from two different noun stems (*lawt* and *lawyat*). C. Uehlinger, "Leviathan," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Second extensively revised edition, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Becking (Leiden: Brill, 1999): 511-515.

coiled serpent"), and šlyt d.šb^ct. r^ašm ("Šilyat of the seven heads").³¹ Although these suggestions are not exact matches to the terminology used in Daniel 7, the pervasiveness of the Ugaritic Leviathan tradition in the Hebrew Bible has led numerous scholars to conclude that it is in that light (correlated by other evidences for Ugaritic provenance) that Daniel 7 should be understood.³² The divine council motif in Daniel 7 is also bolstered by the correlation with the divine council context of Psalm 89:9-11, where Yahweh conquers the sea and its monster Rahab.

The battle of Baal and Yamm in *KTU* 1. 2.i and 1.2.iv probably offers the strongest set of conjunctions with Daniel 7. The specific context of this struggle is a banquet at El's abode, the traditional meeting place of El and his council. El is present at the feast with various members of his retinue, most significantly, Baal, who is depicted as standing beside El. Yamm sends messengers to El demanding that Baal be surrendered. El expresses a willingness to do so, a move that angers Baal. Soon thereafter, the story describes Yamm and Baal in combat with each other. When Baal appears to be losing the battle, the craftsman-god Kotar-wa-Hasis fashions two clubs with which Baal is able to subdue and kill Yamm.

As M. Smith notes, the major focal point of the Baal cycle is "a competition among the gods for kingship."³³ In this myth, the defeat of Yamm ("sea") leads to Baal's declaration as king of the gods at the approval of El. Early studies of divine kingship among the gods at Ugarit typically saw this struggle as the deposition of El as the high god.³⁴ More recent scholarship, however, has refuted this view in favor of the bestowal of kingship upon Baal (including the title, "king of the gods") under the continuing authority of El.³⁵ Baal continues to appear in willing subordination to El as his vice-regent in Ugaritic texts outside the Baal Cycle, such as *KTU* 1.108: 2b-3a:³⁶

³¹ *KTU* 1.5.i:2; *KTU* 1.5.i:1-3; *KTU* 1.3.iii:38 respectively. Compare Job 26:13 (נְהַשׁ בְּרִיחַ) and Isa. 27:1 (לְיַתֵּן נְהַשׁ עֲקֵלְתוֹן).

³² Collins, *Daniel*, 288-289.

³³ Mark S. Smith, "Interpreting the Ba'al Cycle," *UF* 18 (1986): 323.

³⁴ See Marvin H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*; U. Oldenburg, *The Conflict Between El and Baal in Canaanite Religion*.

³⁵ See C. L'Heureux, *Rank among the Canaanite Gods: El, Ba'al, and the Repha'im*, 3-28; Mullen, *The Divine Council*, 22-45; J.C.L. Gibson, "The Theology of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle," *Or* 53 (1984): 202-219 (esp. 207ff.).

³⁶ L'Heureux, *Rank Among the Canaanite Gods*, 43. See also A. J. Ferrera and S. B. Parker, "Seating Arrangements at Divine Banquets," *UF* 4 (1972): 37-39. As Collins (*Daniel*, 287) adds, "there are also some possible references to El's appointment of Ba'al as king in fragmentary texts."

'il ytb b' ttrt	El sits enthroned with 'Attart,
'il tpt bhd r'y	El sits as judge with Haddu (Baal) his shepherd.

Likewise in Daniel 7, the defeat of the beasts which rise from the great sea (אֲנִי כְּאָדָם) results in kingship being granted to the "one like a human being" by El, the Ancient of Days. Though the human-like figure's dominion is everlasting, it is at the behest of the high God. The "one like a human being" is never considered to have usurped the authority of the Ancient of Days, either in Daniel or in later Second Temple literature.

Several explicit parallels between the Baal Cycle's account of Baal's struggle against Yamm and Daniel 7:9-14 have led to the widespread endorsement of an Ugaritic provenance:³⁷

lrgmt lk lzbl b' l	<i>Truly I say to you, O Prince Baal</i>
tnt lrkb ' rpt	<i>I repeat [to you], O Rider of the Clouds;</i>
ht 'ibk b' lm	<i>Behold, your enemy, O Baal</i>
ht 'ibk tmhs	<i>Behold, your enemy you will smite,</i>
ht tsmt srtk	<i>Behold, you will smite your foe.</i>
tqh mlk 'lmk	<i>You will take your everlasting kingdom,</i>
drkt dt drdk	<i>Your dominion forever and ever.</i>

Ba'al's stock epithet, "Rider of the Clouds,"³⁸ occurs in this passage and is considered to be behind the אֲנִי כְּאָדָם הָיָה in Daniel 7:13 ("One like a human being came with the clouds of heaven"). In his commentary on the book of Daniel, Montgomery argued that the choice of the preposition עַל ("with / upon") in the verse denoted a theological adjustment on the part of the author, who would not wish to convey the impression that the scene contains a second deity.³⁹ He has been followed in this argument by Hartman and DiLella in their commentary.⁴⁰ This presumed distinction has been shown to be imaginary. The inquiry of R.B.Y. Scott into the issue has demonstrated that the prepositions עַל and בְּ are interchangeable and can mean "on" or "in," appealing to Daniel 2:43 and 7:2 as examples.⁴¹ J. Collins follows Scott, noting that "there is no basis for the distinction," since the act of coming upon or in the clouds, or

³⁷ Collins, *Daniel*, 290.

³⁸ N. Wyatt, "The Titles of the Ugaritic Storm-God," *UF* 24 (1992): 417-419.

³⁹ Montgomery, *Commentary on Daniel*, 303.

⁴⁰ Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. DiLella, *The Book of Daniel*, Anchor Bible 23 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1978): 206.

⁴¹ R.B.Y. Scott, "Behold He Cometh with Clouds," *NTS* 5 (1959): 127-132.

with an "entourage of clouds" denoted divine status in ancient Israel and Canaan.⁴² As J. Emerton noted in his influential article on the subject, "The act of coming with the clouds suggests a theophany of Yahwe himself. If Daniel vii.13 does not refer to a divine being, then it is the only exception out of about seventy passages in the Old Testament."⁴³ The passages below bear this out, for all references to the one "riding" (רִכַּב; *rokeb*) upon clouds or through the heavens in the Hebrew Bible speak of the God of Israel.⁴⁴

Psalm 68:5 (Hebrew) exhorts the reader to "Extol the Rider upon the clouds by his name, Yah" (סִלּוּ לְרִכַּב בְּעֲרָבוֹת בְּיַהּ שָׁמוֹ) and to "(Sing praises) To Him who rides on the ancient high heavens" ([שִׁירוּ] לְרִכַּב בְּשָׁמַי שְׁמַי־קָדָם). In this passage Yahweh's titles are לְרִכַּב בְּעֲרָבוֹת (ל) and לְרִכַּב בְּשָׁמַי שְׁמַי־קָדָם. Hebrew עֲרָבוֹת in the phrase לְרִכַּב בְּעֲרָבוֹת means "wilderness" or "desert," which would be an appropriate translation given the context, but the word is considered by scholars as evincing a linguistic *b/p* interchange of the Ugaritic phrase *rkb* ʿrpt ("Rider of the Clouds"), an epithet of Baal.⁴⁵

The argument for an interchange is strengthened by the reference to Yahweh as לְרִכַּב בְּשָׁמַי שְׁמַי־קָדָם and by explicit references to Yahweh in other texts as the "Cloud Rider" using heavenly terminology instead of עֲרָבוֹת. Isaiah 19:1 reads: "The oracle against Egypt: Behold, the LORD (יְהוָה; Yahweh) rides upon a swift cloud (עַל־עַב קַל)." Yahweh "makes the clouds his chariot (הַשָּׁמַי־עֲבִים רִכּוּבוֹ)" and "walks on the wings of the wind" (הַמְהִלָּךְ עַל־כַּנְפֵי־רוּחַ) in Psalm 104:1-3. Finally, in Deuteronomy 33:26, we read, "O Jeshurun, there is none like God (אֵל), who rides the heavens (רִכַּב שָׁמַיִם) to help you; (who rides) the clouds (שְׁחָקִים) in His majesty."

Some scholars have disputed the *b/p* interchange.⁴⁶ In light of the contextual support in Psalm 68 for a meaning of "desert" for עֲרָבוֹת and the

⁴² Collins, *Daniel*, 311, 290.

⁴³ Emerton, "The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery," 231-232.

⁴⁴ Some would argue that Elijah's transportation in II Kings 2:11 would be an example of a human being (and hence not a divine being) riding upon the clouds. The phraseology is reminiscent, but there is clearly no divine epithet in the passage. The work of Galling is important here, for his study demonstrates that *rōkēb* denotes a charioteer, not merely a passenger (K. Galling, "Der Ehrenname Elisas und die Entrückung Elias," *ZTK* 53 [1956]: 129-148). Other studies have argued forcefully that the preposition ֿ in the context of the heavenly chariot "show that God is te driver of the nubilous vehicle" (W. Herrmann, "Rider Upon the Clouds," *DDD* [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999]: 703-705, citing the work of S.E. Loewenstamm, "Grenzgebiete ugaritischer Sprach- und Stilvergleichung," *UF* 3 [1971]: 93-100 [esp. 99-100]). Habakkuk 3:8 would affirm such an analysis, where תִּרְכַּב is used of both horses and chariots in parallel. Additionally, the context of II Kings 2:11 informs us that Elijah is not to be considered divine, and is not associated with divine activity or rule, unlike the son of man figure in Daniel 7, who is given everlasting dominion over the earth.

⁴⁵ See S. Moscati, *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages*, second edition (Wiesbaden, 1980): 25-26.

⁴⁶ L. L. Grabbe, "Hebrew pāʿal / Ugaritic bʿl and the Supposed *b/p* Interchange," *UF* 11 (1979): 307-314.

equally evident motif elsewhere that Yahweh was considered a deity who drove a heavenly throne chariot, scholars have concluded that the title *לְרִכָב בְּעֶרְבֹת* in Psalm 68:5 is in fact a borrowing from Ugaritic Baal language, but that the epithet has been adapted to Yahweh's march from the South (Sinai) through the desert described in Hab. 3:3; Judges 5:4-5; Deut. 33: 23.⁴⁷ The effect would be a subtle distinguishing of Yahweh from Baal while simultaneously appropriating one of Baal's titles.

It is important to note that whereas Psalm 68 referenced Yahweh as the heavenly charioteer, Deuteronomy 33:26 utilizes the familiar Baal imagery to describe El. As was briefly noted above, the late canonical book of Ezekiel maintained this fusion (1:24, 28; cf. 10:4-5). Given that all scholars would assign a later date of composition to Daniel than Psalm 68, Deuteronomy 33, and Ezekiel 1, it can only be coherently argued that by the time of the book of Daniel, the El-Yahweh connection was assumed. This may seem obvious, but this religious fusion has been overlooked in some treatments of Daniel 7's divine council scene and its central figures, the Ancient of Days and "the one like a human being" who comes to the Ancient of Days with the mythological cloud entourage.

Modern scholars at times argue that the passage is hearkening back to a formerly polytheistic division between El and Yahweh as divine "Father and Son." These scholars base their argument on the observation that the images of authoritative sovereign and recipient of rulership evoked by the Ancient of Days and the "one like a human being" scene parallels the relationship between the El and Baal at Ugarit. Such a relationship is no doubt present in Daniel 7, as noted above in the discussion of the religio-historical background, but that relationship is not *precisely* paralleled in Daniel 7. The question is not whether a "sovereign-to-vice-regent" relationship appears in Daniel, but whether the vice-regent here is Yahweh, thus ruling out a "second god" in Jewish theology. That an El and Yahweh separation in Daniel 7 is a misguided explanation for the scene is demonstrated by the persistence in Jewish speculation and exegesis of the "two powers in heaven" debate during the Second Temple period.⁴⁸

Scholars have long recognized that the Ancient of Days is indeed described in terminology strikingly similar to that of El at Ugarit, and the "one like a human being" is clearly a Baal figure. Nevertheless, the Ancient of Days (El) is depicted as riding a fiery throne-chariot, a stock Baal descriptor not used of El at Ugarit.⁴⁹ The fact that *both* the Ancient of Days and the "one like a human being" are associated with heavenly Baal throne-chariot imagery mars a strict El

⁴⁷W. Herrmann, "Rider Upon the Clouds," *DDD* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999): 703-705; P. D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973): 41; S. Mowinkel, "Drive and / or Ride in the Old Testament," *VT* 12 (1962): 278-299; E. Ullendorff, "Ugaritic Studies within their Semitic and Eastern Mediterranean Setting," *BJRL* 46 (1963-64): 236-249.

⁴⁸ See A. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, and the discussion in Chapter Six of the present study.

⁴⁹ The closest one comes to a direct El association with the root *rk* is in the title Rakib-el (cf. *KAI*, II 34, commentary at no. 24:16; cited by Herrmann, "Rider Upon the Clouds," 704).

and Baal model for Daniel 7, and thus an El and Yahweh separation. The conspicuous attribution of Baal's stock throne-chariot imagery to an El figure convincingly demonstrates an El-Yahweh fusion of the high god in the book of Daniel, and therefore a being other than El or Yahweh played the Baal role of vice-regent under the high god:

Ugarit / Baal Cycle	Daniel 7
(A) El, the aged high God, is the ultimate sovereign in the council.	(A) The Ancient of Days, is the ultimate sovereign in council, and thus plays the El role in the scene. However, he is also seated on the fiery, wheeled throne-chariot, which is a Baal motif. The Ancient of Days therefore appropriates both El and Baal features. The Ancient of Days therefore represents the Yahweh-El fusion of earlier canonical literature, where this well-known Baal motif was attributed to both Yahweh and El, even in the same passage at times, as here.
(B) Baal defeats Yamm	(B) The Ancient of Days also fulfills a Baal role here, since he, along with the council, decide that the fourth beast from the sea (𐎓𐎗𐎟 ; <i>yamma'</i>) must be killed. He also plays an El role, by withdrawing kingship from the other three beasts. ⁵⁰
(C) El bestows kingship upon the god Baal, the Cloud-Rider.	(C) Yahweh-El, the Ancient of Days, bestows kingship upon the "one like a human being" who rides the clouds. Yahweh is thus not the Cloud-Rider, since he is fused to the El character, the Ancient of Days.
(D) Baal is king of the gods and El's vice-regent. His rule is everlasting.	(D) The "one like a human being" is given everlasting dominion as a deity-level vice-regent to Yahweh-El. He is king of all the nations and so their gods (cf. Deut. 32:8-9).

In effect, Daniel 7 utilizes the Canaanite imagery to both reinforce the El-Yahweh fusion and draw attention to Israelite religion's own version of the divine vice-regent pattern under Israel's high God. The divine council and its bureaucratic relationships – in canonical literature, no less – have not, in Smith's words, "collapsed." Neither have they been censored. On the contrary, the language of divine plurality created considerable speculation among Second Temple Jewish exegetes. The literary reality of Jewish speculation in Second Temple writings concerning a second tier of gods under the high God of Israel and his first-tier divine vice-regent is only comprehensible precisely because the idea of divine plurality was *familiar*, due to the *retention* of such categories in canonical texts.⁵¹

There were Jewish exegetes, however, who resisted the implication of two divine beings in Daniel 7. One common answer to the language of Daniel 7 was

⁵⁰ See *KTU* 1.2.III:17-18 and 1.6.VI:26-29, where Athtar and Mot respectively are threatened by El with the withdrawal of their kingship.

⁵¹ As Chapter Six will detail, there was no shortage of interpretive options among Jewish writers who sought to explain this plurality and divine vice-regency.

that Yahweh-El's vice-regent was the Davidic king. This interpretation would be expected in view of several passages in the Hebrew Bible that speak to the universal rule of the Davidic king.⁵² The assumption of two thrones in Psalm 110 (one for the Davidic king) and the reference to plural thrones in Jerusalem in Psalm 122:5 would also appear to support such an answer. Likewise the relationship of the Baal Cycle to Psalm 89, where the flow of verses 7-19 follows the Baal Cycle to demonstrate the enthronement of Yahweh-El, but verses 20-38 apply Baal motifs to the Davidic throne:

Psalm 89	The Baal Cycle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebration of Yahweh's incomparability in the divine assembly and its members (7-9). • Yahweh's superior status is based on his control over the swelling of the sea (גְּאוּת הַיָּם) and his primeval victory over Rahab (10-11) and other enemies. • The psalm moves to the establishment of the world (12-14), an allusion to Zaphon (ṣaphon, v. 13), a description of the divine throne (v. 15), and the reaction of Yahweh's people, Israel (16-18). • Verse 19 is a triumphant shout of Yahweh's kingship: "For the Lord is our shield, and the Holy One of Israel our king." <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 89:26 King Yahweh promises to "set the hand" of the Davidic king "upon the sea (יָם)" and "upon the rivers (נְהַרֹת)." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Davidic king is God's son (89:28-29), his בְּכוֹר, whom he declares to be עֶלְיוֹן over the kings of the earth forever (89:30, 38a). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • El and his council are confronted with the revolt of Yamm. • Yamm is defeated by Baal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baal moves to Ṣaphon and is enthroned. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baal is proclaimed king. <p>Baal imagery transferred to David; David's throne plays the role of Baal, since he : (1) gains victory over Yamm / Nahar; (2) is son to Yahweh as Baal is to El; and (3) appropriates Baal's title of עֶלְיוֹן.</p>

There seems little doubt that Psalm 89 does indeed follow the flow of the Baal Cycle, and that the Davidic king's eternal rule is articulated with the assistance of the eternal nature of Baal's rule. This perspective would require that the Davidic king be the son of Israel's God, which is not foreign to the Hebrew Bible. Nevertheless, three interrelated questions must be raised and addressed: (1) Does Psalm 89 utilize the Baal Cycle in the same way and for the same reason as Daniel 7?; (2) Is it possible that the biblical authors draw upon different aspects of Canaanite Baal to make their respective points?; and (3) Can it really be argued that the merely human Davidic king fulfills the Baal imagery?

Scholars have disagreed as to whether this terminology speaks of an adoption of the king as God's son or whether the king was to be literally regarded as a god on earth (*deus incarnatus*) from birth (*hieros gamos*). With regard to the incarnation view, there are texts in the Hebrew Bible that confirm the Davidic king as God's son (Psa. 2:7; 110:3) and which regarded him as an אֱלֹהִים under Yahweh (Psa. 45:7).⁵³ The famous passage in Isaiah 9 also comes to

⁵² Cf. II Samuel 7:8-16; 23:1-7; Isaiah 9:6-7; Psalm 110.

⁵³ The statement above takes אֱלֹהִים as in the vocative. Some scholars argue against this by contending that

mind, where the titles אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹר ("mighty God") and אָבִיעַד ("everlasting father") occur with respect to the child which was most likely Hezekiah.⁵⁴ Against this understanding, other human beings besides the Davidic king were referred to as divine sons,⁵⁵ but were not thought of as gods. The idea of incarnation also appears to run counter to Psalm 122:5, which bears no hint that one of the thrones in heaven is occupied by a divine being. Moreover, the divine status of the Davidic king in the Hebrew Bible appears to have been bestowed at a definite point in time. The king was "taken" from the sheep (II Samuel 7:8) and appointed נָגִיד at that time.⁵⁶ The wording of Psalm 2:7 suggests the same:

בְּנֵי אֲתָהָ אֲנִי הַיּוֹם יְלֻדְתִּיךָ. In Psalm 89 the king remains "manifestly a human being,"⁵⁷ since he was chosen from among the people (89:20).

While preferring the former option, John Day points out that there is evidence that suggests both ideas may be the case, since at Ugarit the king was apparently considered a god and the son of the god El. For example, each of the names of the dead kings in the Ugaritic king list is preceded by the word 'il.⁵⁸ The king was also considered a god prior to death. In the Keret Epic, when King Keret is ill, his son says, "Is then Keret the son of El, the offspring of Lṭpn and the Holy One? . . . Shall you then die, father, as men? . . . How can it be said that Keret is the son of El, the offspring of Lṭpn and the Holy One? Shall gods die?"

In point of fact, the truth is that Daniel 7 and Psalm 89 are two sides of the same coin – one has God's co-ruler as a deity, the other as a human being in David's line. This is why the New Testament portrays Jesus as both god and man.

The Princely Hierarchy of Daniel and "Prince of the Host" / "Prince of Princes"

The third exegetical option, that the figure of Daniel 7 is a heavenly being, is strengthened by the fact that elsewhere in Daniel human figures are heavenly beings.⁵⁹ This view is typically articulated in terms of Michael, who is called the

an original prefixed הָ has been omitted from the text on the grounds of euphony, or translate the verse "Your throne is God's forever and ever." The vocative is more natural here, however, as many scholars have recognized.

⁵⁴ This is not to say that the New Testament application of these prophecies to Jesus is unwarranted. Isaiah 8 clearly describes the initial fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14, but (as I have written elsewhere – see the chapter in *Islam and Armageddon*), prophecy often gets fulfilled in repeated phases toward its ultimate fulfillment.

⁵⁵ See Exodus 4:23 and Hosea 1:10, where the people are referred to in such terms.

⁵⁶ The term נָגִיד is taken by scholars as referring to the crown prince. See the lengthy treatment of this issue in Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings*, Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series 8 (C.W.K. Gleerup, date): 151-184, 254-293.

⁵⁷ The phrase is Mettinger's (*King and Messiah*, 263).

⁵⁸ John Day, "The Canaanite Inheritance of the Israelite Monarchy," in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day, JSOT Supplement Series 270 (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 2000): 72-90 [82]. See *KTU* 1.113.

⁵⁹ See 8:15; 10:5; 12:5-7.

prince of Israel (10:21; 12:1), though Z. Zevit has tried to argue for Gabriel as the "one like a human being."⁶⁰ J. Collins defends the identification of the "one like a human being" with Michael on the grounds of analogy (angels are elsewhere described as human appearance⁶¹) and his position as prince of Israel.⁶² He also argues that Michael is, in his words, the "leader of the heavenly host," a phrase which he believes equates Michael with the "one like a human being" in Daniel 7:13.⁶³

It is important to note that J. Collins is *not* referring to the titles "prince of the host" or "Prince of princes" by the phrase "leader of the heavenly host." The phrase is merely a pragmatic designation, for it does not appear in the text; that is, it is not a title Daniel uses in distinction from "prince of the host" or "Prince of princes" (8:11; 8:25). Collins apparently feels constrained to this position because Daniel 8:11 and 8:25 are paralleled in Daniel 11:36 by phrases that clearly reference the top tier of the council:

Daniel 8:11, 25	Daniel 11:36
<p>8:11 - He (the little horn) was magnified even up to the prince of the host, from whom the daily sacrifice was taken away, and whose sanctuary was cast down.</p> <p>8:25 – He (the little horn) will grow great in his own mind, and shall destroy many off guard. He will stand against the Prince of princes . . .</p>	<p>11:36 - Dan 11:36 And the king (the "fulfillment" of the little horn vision) shall do as he wishes; and he shall exalt magnify himself above every god, and he shall speak wondrous things against the God of gods . . .</p>

The parallel references in Daniel 11:36 are what lead Collins to argue that the titles of 8:11 and 8:25 are epithets that refer to God himself.⁶⁴ Daniel 11:36 informs us that when the little horn opposes the "prince of the host" and the "Prince of princes," he is actually opposing God. Collins defends this equation on the basis that the title "prince" is applied to an angel in Joshua 5:14,⁶⁵ but it is far from clear how this supports identifying Yahweh as a prince, since Yahweh is not an angel, and "prince" implies subordination to a superior. In Collins' interpretation, to argue for any other figure than Yahweh bearing these titles

⁶⁰ Z. Zevit, "The Structure and Individual Elements of Daniel 7," ZAW 80 (1968): 394-396. The weakness of Zevit's view is that it requires that the phrase "the man Gabriel whom I had seen in the vision at first" refer to the "one like a human being" in Daniel 7:13 rather than the angelic interpreter of 7:16. The latter is more coherent since Gabriel serves as an interpreter in 8:15 and 9:21. It would also seem odd that Gabriel, a being of equal rank with Michael, Israel's prince, should inherit everlasting dominion. See the ensuing discussion on this last point.

⁶¹ See for example Gen. 18:2; Josh 5:13; Eze. 8:2; 9-10; Zech. 1:8; 2:5.

⁶² J. Collins, *Daniel*, 309-310, 318-319.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 318.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 333.

⁶⁵ J. Collins, *Daniel*, 375.

contradicts the operating assumption about the monotheism of Israel during the Second Temple period – that by the time of Daniel's composition there were no other gods in Israel's religion.

There are problems with both of Collins' views: that Yahweh is the "prince of the host" / "Prince of princes," and that Michael is the "one like a human being." Since both are reflective of the views of many other scholars, and since this study offers an alternative understanding, the problems need to be brought into focus.

First, the problem with Collins' identification of the "prince of the host" / "Prince of princes" is not that he insists that Daniel 8:11, 25 and 11:36 point to a deity figure above all other princes. The text seems quite clear in this regard making that conclusion unavoidable. The problem is that Collins' assumption about the rejection of divine plurality in Second Temple Judaism and his notion that Yahweh can be called "prince" undermine both the divine council context of Daniel 7-10 and the relationship of Daniel's description of the divine hierarchy with the Baal Cycle. As Chapter Two detailed, it is not accurate to assume that the Judaism of the exile and subsequent centuries had dispensed with the belief in other gods who served Yahweh in his divine council. The congruence between the council at Ugarit and in the Hebrew Bible is now axiomatic in biblical studies, and a survival of the divine council motif in Daniel compels the exegete to look for interpretations consistent with the use of such motifs.

As a deity level being with authority over all other divine beings (the "princes"), the "prince of the host" of Daniel 8:11 and the "Prince of princes" of 8:25 should be identified as a being of highest rank under the high God, Yahweh-El. The Baal Cycle provides the operative paradigm for interpreting the heavenly bureaucracy in Daniel. As Baal was elevated to kingship with El, effectively functioning as the high sovereign over El's sons while remaining "ontologically" inferior to El, so the "prince of the host" and the "Prince of princes" should be identified not with Yahweh-El but with his vice-regent in Daniel 7. Yahweh-El is not a "prince" as though he is subordinate to any other being in Daniel's worldview. This idea is without precedent. Neither can it be argued that the Yahweh as "son" under El is in view in Daniel's terminology, for the Yahweh-El fusion in Daniel (and in other exilic and post-exilic canonical literature) is secure. The vice-regent of Daniel 7, on the other hand, fills this role precisely as the Baal figure under Yahweh-El. Baal's title *b'1 zbl* ("Prince Baal"⁶⁶ or "Ruler Baal"⁶⁷), his title "king of the gods," and his adoption by El are all noteworthy in this regard. It is common knowledge among biblical and Ugaritic scholars that during the early decades of research into the Ras Shamra corpus one of the major difficulties in interpretation was which deity ruled at the head

⁶⁶ M. Dietrich and O. Loretz, "Die Ba'al-Titel *b'1 'arš* und *'aliy qrdm*," *UF* 12 (1980): 391-393; W. Herrmann, "Baal Zebub," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Second extensively revised edition, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Becking (Leiden: Brill, 1999): 154-156.

⁶⁷ M. Dietrich and O. Loretz, "Die Ba'al-Titel," 393; L.K. Handy, *UF* 20 (1988): 59.

of the divine council. The answer embraced by virtually all scholars in these fields now is that both El and Baal ruled the gods, the latter obtaining this sovereignty at the pleasure of the former after the defeat of Yamm. Baal was king over El's sons as his vice-ruler, yet he did not outrank El. To oppose Baal's role as king was to assault El's authority. Daniel 7 evinces the same bureaucratic arrangement. The "one like a human being" receives dominion from Yahweh-El after the beast from the sea is destroyed, and, like Baal, serves as the high ruler or "prince" of Yahweh-El's host. When the little horn vaunts himself against the "Prince of the host" / "Prince of princes," he opposes the high God who granted the vice-regent this sovereignty.

The above proposal is congruent with the divine character of the "one like a human being" in Daniel 7. The imagery and flow of Daniel 7 points to a deity figure that shares the sovereign rule of the highest tier of the council. These considerations effectively eliminate Michael from consideration, contra Collins, as several Jewish writers in the Second Temple period and later recognized.⁶⁸ While I would agree that since they rule nations, Michael and the other archangels should be viewed as בני־האלהים (*beney ha-'elohim*; the "sons of God") members of the second tier of the divine council,⁶⁹ this does not justify considering Michael above the members of his own tier for several reasons.

Neither Michael nor any other angel is associated with the throne-chariot theophany, which motif is only mentioned in Daniel at 7:13, and is elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible only attributed to a being of the first tier of the council. It is one thing to be a member of the second tier בני־האלהים (*beney ha-'elohim*; the "sons of God") but quite another to be spoken of as being at Yahweh-El's level. Also working against the Michael identification is the fact that it is special pleading to devise a title "leader of the host" and then distinguish it from the titles the book of Daniel actually uses: "the prince of the host" (8:11) and the "Prince of princes" (8:25), the being who rules over Michael's own class since Michael is "one of the chief princes" (10:13).⁷⁰ Michael cannot simultaneously be one among equals in this class of beings and be above them. It is not coherent to argue that Michael (as the "one like a human being") exercises everlasting dominion over all the chief princes (the בני־האלהים) and their corresponding

⁶⁸ See page 114, note 446, where several Second Temple texts understood the figure to be pre-existent or "named before creation."

⁶⁹ In Chapter Six of this study I will demonstrate that in Second Temple Jewish texts the "archangels" are also referred to as "watchers," who are in turn equated with the בני־האלהים of the Hebrew Bible. Hence the word "archangel" is actually the nomenclature of Second Temple Judaism for the second tier of council deities. Since the book of Daniel is contemporaneous with this literature and, in light of its canonical status served as a reference point for these texts, the possibility that the terminology used in these texts is congruent should be investigated. No study of Second Temple angelology to date seriously considers the divine council hierarchy as a backdrop to the terms in Daniel used for heavenly beings. Doing so solves the major riddles brought to light by these prior studies that have persisted to the present day.

⁷⁰ The title "chief prince" can neither refer to a single leader (as in Collins' speculative "leader of the host") nor the vice-regent figure, since, according to Daniel 10:13, there are more than one of these beings.

nations while being spoken of as a "species equal" with these chief princes. The titles of Daniel 7:13, 8:11, and 8:25 require a deity level figure who exercises sovereignty granted by the high god over all the nations and their gods / divine princes. Michael does not fit these criteria.

But what of Michael's relationship to Israel as her prince and the affiliation of the "one like a human being" with the "people of the holy ones?" Does not this argue for Michael's identification as the "one like a human being?" It is my judgment that it does not, since, on one hand, this argument fails to solve the problems detailed above with respect to the Michael identification and, on the other hand, there is a lucid alternative.⁷¹

Daniel 7:18, 27 link the "one like a human being" and his dominion with the holy ones of the divine council⁷² and the people of Israel. Both groups are said to rule in the same manner as the vice-regent:

18 וַיִּקְבְּלוּן מַלְכוּתָא קְדִישִׁי עֲלִיוֹנִין וַיְחַסּוּ נוֹן
מַלְכוּתָא עַד- עַלְמָא וְעַד עַלְמָא וְעַד עַלְמָא:

But the holy ones of the most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

27 וּמַלְכוּתָהּ וְשִׁלְטָןָּא נָא וּרְבוּתָהּ דִּי מַלְכוּתָּהּ תְּחֻת
כָּל-שָׂמַיָא יְהִי בְּתַלְעָם קְדִישִׁי עֲלִיוֹנִין מַלְכוּתָהּ מִלְּכֻתָּהּ
עַלְמָא

The kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under all heaven, shall be given to the people of the holy ones of the most High, whose⁷³ kingdom is an everlasting kingdom . . .

This reception of rule, however, *does not* mean that the dominion of the "one like a human being" has been usurped or replaced, for 7:27 concludes that the reign of this figure is still in view: ("... and all dominions shall serve and obey him").⁷⁴ The picture that emerges from Daniel's vision and its description is that Yahweh-El's vice-regent represents the interests of the divine council and Yahweh-El's chosen people, Israel, in such a way that the everlasting dominion envisioned is *shared* under the authority of Yahweh-

⁷¹ This will be the subject of next month's lesson.

⁷² As Collins notes, the "holy ones" in Daniel 7 are in all probability heavenly beings (J. Collins, *Daniel*, 313-317). Collins' work follows several foundational studies of the term: Martin Noth, "The Holy Ones of the Most High," in idem, *The Laws of the Pentateuch and Other Essays* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1966; reprint, London: SCM, 1984): 215-228; L. Dequeker, "The Saints of the Most High," *OTS* 18 (1973): 108-187; J. Goldingay, "'Holy Ones on High' in Daniel 7:18," *JBL* 107 (1988): 497-499.

⁷³ The reference is to the people, not God, since the most logical antecedent of the suffix is the grammatically singular noun עַם, not עֲלִיוֹנִין.

⁷⁴ לָהּ may refer to Yahweh-El, but the point is moot since the vice-regent reigns at his behest and the high God's sovereignty was extended to the vice-regent.

El.⁷⁵ If Michael, who is Israel's prince (Daniel 10:21), is not the figure of Daniel 7, what other being could be so associated with the divine council and the chosen nation?

The New Testament answer to this question is clear. As noted in Lesson 7 in the last newsletter, Jesus quotes Daniel 7:13 (cf. Matt. 26) when pressed by Caiaphas the high priest to confess who he was - HE is the rider on the clouds, the "son of man," the "one like a human being" who is Yahweh's co-ruler, the "Prince of princes," the "Prince of the host," and therefore "THE Prince of the host of Yahweh" in Joshua 5.

Next month we will pick up here and look into Psalm 89's overlaps with Daniel 7 - there is more "co-deity" language there that is quoted in the New Testament of Jesus. Until then . . .

⁷⁵ This is one reason why, in the New Testament, believers are called "the sons of God" (John 1:12; I John 3:1-3; Romans 8:14, 19) who will be set "over the nations" (Revelation 2:26). Believers are / will be the re-constituted "second tier" of the divine council.